



North 24 Parganas **GNAMAMI GANGE**

Documentation of Ganga from Gomukh to Gangasagar



Report submitted by:
Intangible Cultural Heritage Division

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INTRODUCTION:

CHAPTER 1. BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

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

The key achievements under Namami Gange programme are:

- a. **Creating Sewerage Treatment Capacity:-** 63 sewerage management projects under implementation in the States of Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal. 12 new sewerage management Projects Launched in these states. Work is under construction for creating Sewerage capacity of 1187.33 (MLD). Hybrid Annuity PPP Model based two projects has been initiated for Jagjeetpur, Haridwar and Ramanna, Varanasi.
- b. **Creating River-Front Development:-** 28 River-Front Development projects and 33 Entry level Projects for construction, modernization and renovation of 182 Ghats and 118 crematoria have been initiated.
- c. **River Surface Cleaning:-** River Surface cleaning for collection of floating solid waste from the surface of the Ghats and River and its disposal are afoot and pushed into service at 11 locations.
- d. **Bio-Diversity Conservation:-** Several Bio-Diversity conservation projects are namely: Biodiversity Conservation and Ganga Rejuvenation, Fish and Fishery Conservation in Ganga River, Ganges River Dolphin Conservation Education Programme has been initiated. 5 Bio-Diversity center’s at Dehradun, Narora, Allahabad, Varanasi and Barrackpore has been developed for restoration of identified priority species.
- e. **Afforestation:** Forestry interventions for Ganga through Wildlife Institute of India; Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute and Centre for Environment Education has been initiated. Forestry interventions for Ganga have been executed as per the Detailed Project Report prepared by Forest Research Institute, Dehradun for a period of 5 years (2016-2021) at project cost of Rs.2300 Crores. Work has been commenced in 7 districts of Uttarakhand for medicinal plants.
- f. **Public Awareness:** A series of activities such as events, workshops, seminars and conferences and numerous IEC activities were organized to make a strong pitch for public outreach and community participation in the programme. Various awareness activities through rallies, campaigns, exhibitions, *shram daan*, cleanliness drives, competitions, plantation drives and development and distribution of resource materials were organized and for wider publicity the mass mediums such as TV/Radio, print media advertisements, advertorials, featured articles and advertorials were published. [Gange Theme song](#) was released widely and played on digital media to enhance the visibility of the programme. NMCG ensured presence at Social Media platforms like [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) etc.
- g. **Industrial Effluent Monitoring:** The number of Grossly Polluting Industries (GPIs) in April, 2019 is 1072. Regulation and enforcement through regular and surprise inspections of GPIs is carried out for compliance verification against stipulated environmental norms. The GPIs are also inspected on annual basis for compliance verification of the pollution norms and process modification, wherever required

through third party technical institutes. First round of inspection of GPIs by the third-party technical institutes has been carried out in 2017. Second round of inspection of GPIs has been completed in 2018. Out of 961 GPIs inspected in 2018, 636 are complying, 110 are non-complying and 215 are self-closed. Action has been taken against 110 non-complying GPIs and is issued closure directions under Section 5 of the E (P) Act. Online Continuous Effluent Monitoring Stations (OCEMS) connectivity established to CPCB server in 885 out of 1072 GPIs.

- h. **Ganga Gram:** Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation (MoDWS) identified 1674 Gram Panchayats situated on the bank of River Ganga in 5 State (Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal). Rs. 578 Crores has been released to Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation (MoDWS) for construction of toilets in 1674 Gram Panchayats of 5 Ganga Basin States. Out of the targeted 15, 27,105 units, [MoDWS has completed construction](#) of 8, 53,397 toilets. Consortium of 7 IITs has been engaged in the preparation of Ganga River basin Plan and 65 villages have been adopted by 13 IITs to develop as model villages. [UNDP](#) has been engaged as the executing agency for rural sanitation programme and to develop Jharkhand as a model State at an estimated cost of Rs. 127 Crore.

[National Mission for Clean Ganga](#) (NMCG) endeavors to deploy best available knowledge and resources across the world for Ganga rejuvenation. [Clean Ganga](#) has been a perennial attraction for many international countries that have expertise in river rejuvenation. Countries such as Australia, United Kingdom, Germany, Finland, Israel etc. have shown interest in collaborating with India for Ganga rejuvenation. Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) were signed with various Central Ministries viz.- Ministry of Human Resource Development, Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Railways, Ministry of Shipping, Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Ayush, Ministry of Petroleum, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Ministry of Drinking Water & Sanitation and Ministry of Agriculture for synergizing the Government schemes.

Why we need "Namami Gange" programmes?

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

Aim & Objective of NMCG

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

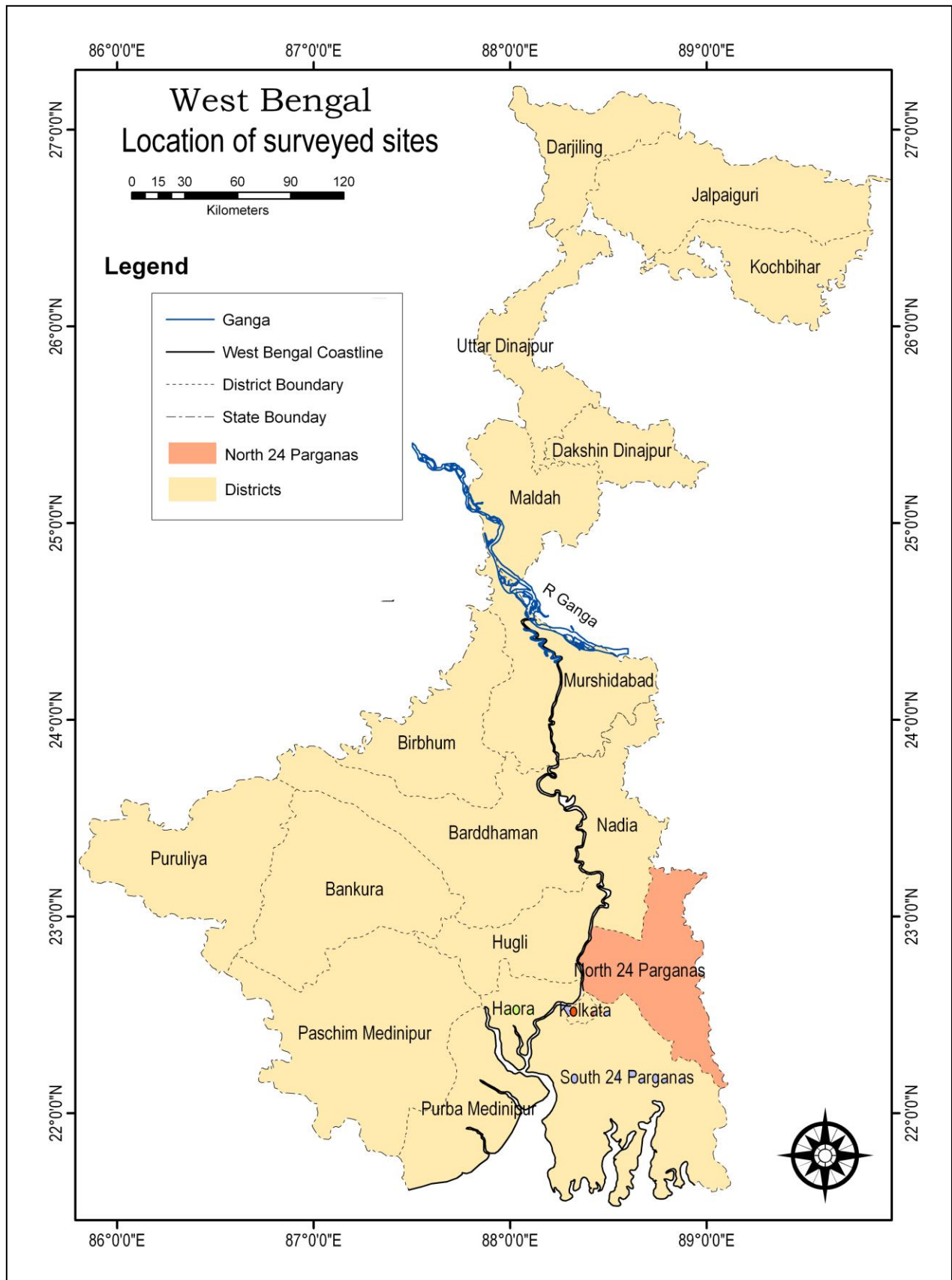
1. To ensure effective abatement of pollution and rejuvenation of the river Ganga by adopting a river basin approach to promote inter-sectoral co-ordination for comprehensive planning and management and
2. To maintain minimum ecological flows in the river Ganga with the aim of ensuring water quality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

2. GANGA CULTURAL DOCUMENTATION

India is endowed with rich water resources with approximately 45,000 km long riverine systems criss-cross the length and breadth of the country. The Ganga river basin is the largest of the basins of India with an area of 8,61,452 Sq.km in India, draining into the 11 states of the country, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi, Bihar, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and West Bengal. The Ganga river has many tributaries, both in the Himalayan region before it enters the plains at Haridwar and further downstream before its confluence with the Bay of Bengal. The basin has a total drainage length of about 624235.73 Sq.km. The Ganga basin lies between east longitudes 73°2' to 89°5' and north latitudes 21°6' to 31°21' having maximum length and width of approx. 1,543 km and 1024 km. The average water resource potential of the basin has been assessed as 525020 Million Cubic Meters (MCM).

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

2. G. INTANGIBLE CULTURAL DOCUMENTATION FOR NORTH 24 PARGANAS.

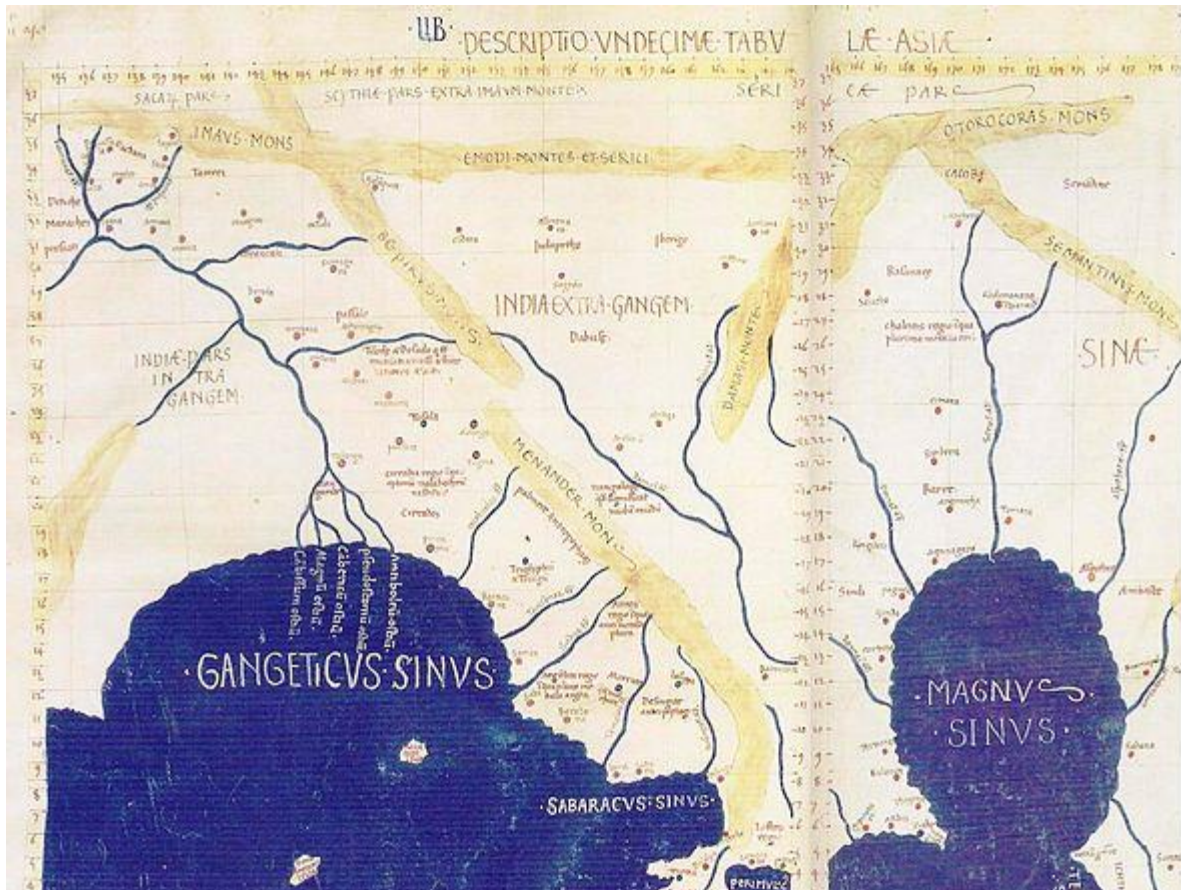


CHAPTER 2 – NORTH 24 PARGANAS THROUGH AGES

There is a river near it called the Ganges, and it rises and falls in the same way as the Nile. On its bank is a market-town which has the same name as the river, Ganges. Through this place are brought malabathrum and Gangetic spikenard and pearls, and muslin of the finest sorts, which are called Gangetic. It is said that there are gold-mines near these places, and there is a gold coin which is called caltis.

Anonymous, Periplus of the Erythraean Sea. Translated by Wilfred Harvey Schoff

According to Ptolemy's Geography, written in the 2nd century A.D., the ancient land of Gangaridi was stretched between the rivers Bhagirathi-Hugli (lower Ganges) and Padma-Meghna. The modern-day 24 Parganas was the southern and the south-eastern territory of that legendary kingdom.



Map 2 : Ptolemy's Map showing the mouth of Ganges.

Archaeological excavation at Berachampa village in Deganga PS proves that though the area was not directly attached to the rule of the Guptas, yet it could not shun their cultural influence. Xuanzang (c. 629-685) visited 30 Buddhist Biharas and 100 Hindu Temples in India and some of these were in the Greater 24 Parganas region.

The district was not a part of Shashanka's unified Bengali empire known as Gauda, but it is assumed that the district which was the south-west frontier territory of ancient Bengal, was comprised in under the rule of Dharmapala (estimated c. 770-810). The Pala rule was not quite strong in this part, as no excavation uncovered any of Buddhist Pala antiquities but many Hindu Sena sculptures.

In the middle of the 16th century, Portuguese pirates began to invade and plunder many of the waterways and prosperous human settlements in the lower delta region. People left these places out of the fear of being murdered, raped, or captured to be sold as slaves. The Basirhat sub-division of North 24 Parganas suffered most from these torments. Shrihari (Shridhar), a Kayastha, was an influential officer in the service of Daud Khan Karrani. On the fall of Daud he fled away with the government treasure in his custody. He then set up a kingdom for himself in the marshy land to the extreme south of Khulna district (1574) and assumed the title of Maharaja. Pratapaditya succeeded to the kingship in 1574. The baharistan and the travel diary of Abdul Latif and the contemporary European writers, all testify to the personal ability of Pratapaditya, his political pre-eminence, material resources. His territories covered the greater part of what is now included in the greater Jessore, Khulna and Barisal districts. He established his capital at Dhumghat, a strategic position at the confluence of the Jamuna and Ichhamati before it was shifted to Ishwaripur.

Maharaja Pratapaditya, soon became one of the 12 feudal lords of Bengal who not only declared their sovereignty from the Mughal Empire in the ruling of Jessore, Khulna, Barisal and Greater 24 Parganas, but also fought and resisted the Portuguese in the early years of the 17th century. When he was finally defeated by the Mughals. Pratapaditya lost both the battles of Salka and Magrahat. His fate was sealed and he was compelled to tender submission to Islam Khan at Dhaka. His kingdom was annexed. He probably died at Benares on his way to Delhi from Dhaka, as a prisoner of war to the Mughals.

After his death, Bhavanand Majumdar, who had been in the service of Pratapaditya, was given the throne by Raja Man Singh, and he later became the founder of the Nadiya Raj

family Laksmikanta Gangopadhyay better known as Laksmikanta Roy Choudhury, the well known Brahmin scholar who was the son of great saint Kamdev Brahmachari and also a close associate of Raja Basanta Ray, was given tax free jaigir of eight parganas, including the areas in and around Kalikatah as Gurudakshina by Raja Man Singh in 1608.

The territory of Greater 24 Parganas were under the **Satgaon (ancient Saptagram, now in Hugli district)** administration during the Mughal era and later it was included in Hugli chakla (district under post-Mughal Nawabi rule) during the rule of Murshid Quli Khan. In 1757, after the Battle of Plassey, Nawab Mir Jafar conferred the Zamindari of 24 parganas and janglimahals (small administrative units) upon the British East India Company. These were Amirpur, Akbarpur, Balia, Birati, Azimabad, Basandhari, Baridhati, Bagjola, Kalikata, Garh, Hatiagarh, Islampur, Dakshin Sagar, Kharijuri, Khaspur, Ikhtiarpur, Magura, Medanmalla, Maida, Manpur, Barasat, Madhyamgram, Muragachha, Pechakuli, Paikan, Rajarhat, Shahpur, Shahnagar, Satal, New Barrackpore, Aharampur and Uttar Pargana. Since then, this entire territory is known as Twenty 24 Parganas. The treaty by which the session is recorded says that "*all the land lying to the south of Calcutta as far as Culpee, shall be under the Zemindari of the English Company and all the officers of this Zemindari shall be under their jurisdiction. The revenue to be paid by it (the company) in the same manner with other Zemindari*".

The Parwana notifying effect to the Treaty mentions the name of the 24 units of granted land. The District of 24-Parganas started taking shape under Clause Nos.2, 3 and 9 of the Regulation of 1793. The respective jurisdictions of the civil and criminal courts for the district and revenue jurisdiction of the District Collector were demarcated by the Regulations.

In 1751, the Company assigned John Zephaniah Holwell as *zemindar* of the District. In 1759, after the Bengali War of 1756–1757, the Company assigned it to Lord Clive as a personal Jaghir (zamindari) and after his death it again came under the direct authority of the Company.

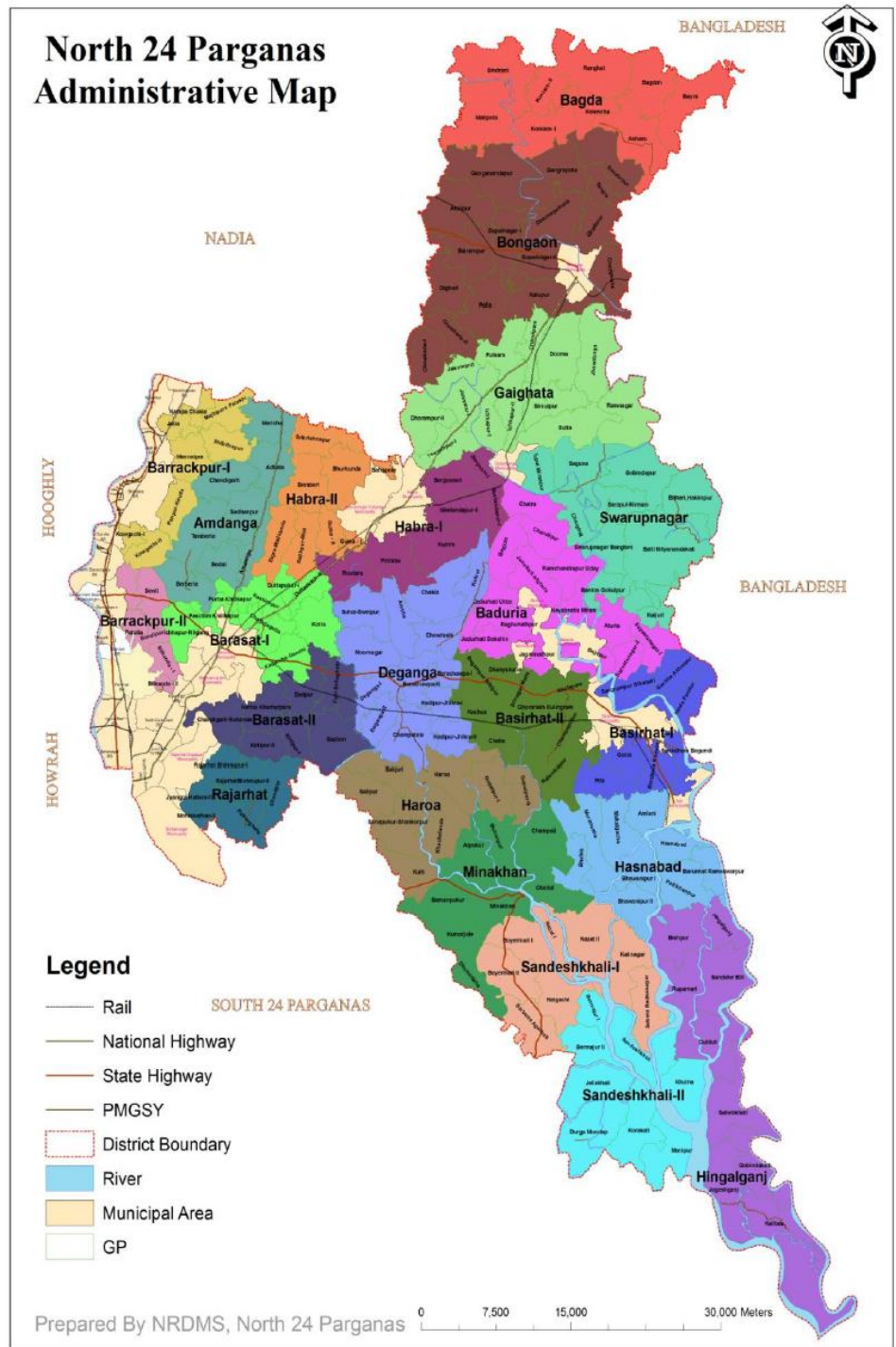
In 1793, during the rule of Lord Cornwallis, entire Sunderbans were in Twenty 24 Parganas. In 1802, some parganas on the western banks of river Hugli were included into it. These parganas were in Nadia earlier. In 1814, a separate collectorate was established in Twenty-four Parganas. In 1817, Falta and Baranagar and in 1820, some portions of Nadia's Balanda and Anwarpur were encompassed to it. In 1824, portions of Barasat, Khulna and

Bakhargunge (now in Bangladesh) were also included to it. In 1824, the district headquarters was shifted from Kolkata to Baruipur, but in 1828, it was removed to Alipore. In 1834, the district was split into two districts – Alipore and Barasat, but later these were united again.

In 1905, some portion of this district around the Sunderbans was detached and linked to Khulna and Barishal. These parts remained in Bangladesh territories where Jessore's Bangaon was joined to Twenty 24 Pargana after the 1947

partition. In 1980, an administrative reform committee under the chairmanship of Dr. Ashok Mitra suggested to split the district into two and as per the recommendation of the committee

MAP OF NORTH 24 PARGANAS DISTRICT



in 1986, 1 March two districts – North 24 Parganas (24 PGS (N)) and South 24 Parganas (24 PGS (S)) were created.

The **North 24 Parganas** which was included to the Presidency Division has been formed with five sub-divisions of the Greater 24 Parganas, namely Barasat Sadar (Headquarters), Barrackpore, Basirhat, Bangaon, and Bidhannagar (a satellite township of Kolkata, popularly known as Salt Lake).

2.1. Study Area: Our Study area covers the bank of North 24 Parganas district covering the **Barrackpur Subdivision**. Barrackpore Subdivision, under District of North 24 Parganas in the state of West Bengal, is an old and famous administrative territory, dotted with people from almost all provinces of India. It is a place of historical significance in many ways, and the revolt for independence of 1857 got off to a start from here, by the legendary martyr, Mangal Pandey.

The present administrative set up of this Sub-Division consists of - 2 Blocks – Barrackpore I & II , 16 Municipalities – Kanchrapara Municipality , Halisahar , Naihati , Bhatpara , Garulia , North Barrackpur , Barrackpur Municipality , Titagarh Municipality , Khardah Municipality , Panihati Municipality , New Barrackpur Municipality , North Dum Dum Municipality , Kamarhati Municipality , Baranagar Municipality , Dum Dum Municipality , South Dum Dum Municipality , One Cantonment Board, 13 Police Stations.

The Hugli River has been an important waterway. Many industries came up on the banks of this river; big jute and engineering factories were set up during the British period. The Dutch, British, Portuguese and French businessman used this river as trade route. At one time the Portuguese pirates became very powerful who used to loot traders. There were several types of boats like *Pansi*, *Chhip*, *Bajra*. Several water sports and competitions used to be held by the *Zamindars* and the *Babus*. Popular among them was the '*Baich*' competition (Rao, 1973). There are mentions in the *Padma Puran* about places on the eastern bank of the river. They are: **Bhatpara, Kankinara, Mulazore, Ichapore, Banki Bazar, Nimai Tirtha, Chanak, Khardaha, Sukchar, Panihati, Kamarhati, Ariadaha** etc. Some of the above cities / towns were famous business and trade centers like **Panihati, Sukchar, Nemai Tirtha, Ariadaha** as mentioned in the old literature. During the British period, several industries came up particularly of jute, paper, engineering etc. The Barrackpore Sub-division thus became one of

the first industrially prominent Subdivisions in India. Map 5 : Location Map of North 24 Parganas.

BARRACKPORE I & II BLOCK (NORTH 24 PARGANAS)
GANGA DODUMENTATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES

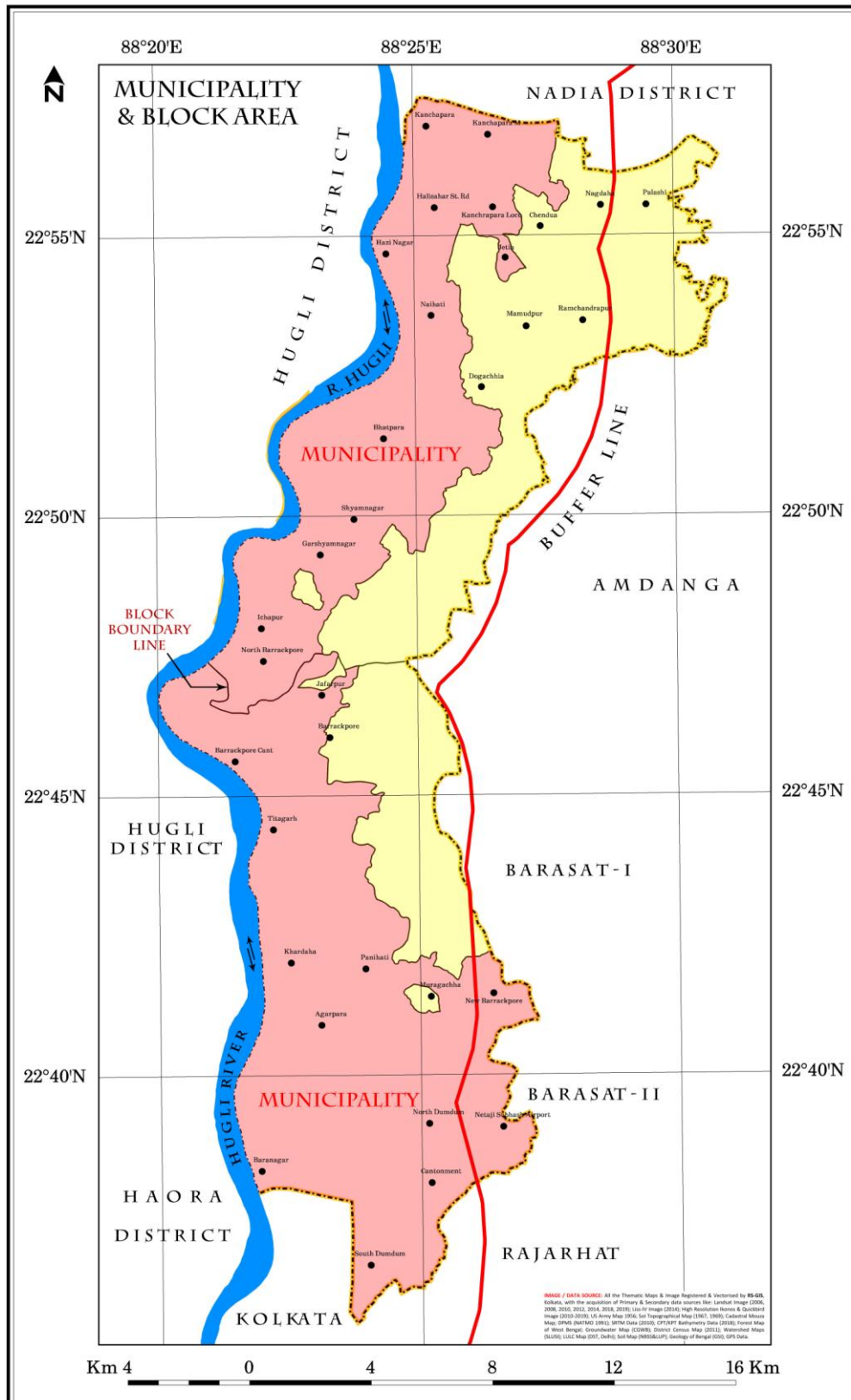




Plate 1 – Bhagirathi Hugli River in Panihati , or Punya Hati .



Plate 2 – Baranagar Sarbamangala Ghat

CHAPTER 3 : CELEBRATED CITIZENS OF THE STUDY AREA

A. Citizens of the Study Area:

The study area of Barrackpore sub-division have rich cultural heritage and ancient history. In 1871, Dinabandhu Mitra in his *Suradhoni* made a brief mention of some places namely, Halishahar, Garifa, Naihati, Bhatpara, Mulajore, Ichhapur, Chanak, Khardah and Agarpara. Much before Kolkata was developed as a town, places like Naihati, Halishahar, Kanchrapara, and Bhatpara rose to prominence for numerous scholars, Sanskrit studies, and Nyaya studies.

Residences of illustrious pundits like **Haladhar Tarka Churamani, Sen Shivananda, Shivchandra Sarbabhoum, Mahamohopadhyay Panchanan Tarkaratna, Pramathanath Tarkabhushan, Nandakumar Nyayschanchu, Mahamohopadhyay Haraprasad Shastri, Harinath De and Binayotosh Bhattacharyya** were located in Barrackpore sub-division.

This sub-division also witnessed a remarkable spread of English education. The district that gave birth to distinguished poets, authors and personalities took a pioneering role in education, culture, politics and music. **Poet Krishnachandra Das, Ramprasad Sen, Rishi Bankim Chandra Chattapadhyay, poet Ishwarchandra Gupta, poet Baldev Palit, Khirodprasad Vidyabinod, Ramkamal Sen, Keshabchandra Sen, Troilokyanath Mukhopadhyay, poet Satyendranath Dutta and Mohitlal Mazumdar, novelist Bibhutibhusan Bandyopadhyay, eminent freedom fighter and thinker Rashtraguru Surendranath Bandyopadhyay, freedom fighter Pramathanath Mitra, Bipin Behari Ganguli, Nagendrakumari Devi, Rani Rashmani, Mrinalkanti Ghosh** and numerous eminent personalities in the post-Independence period were born in this sub-division.

Here is the contribution of some of the important personalities –

3a. Haraprasad Shastri – (6 December 1853 – 17 November 1931), He was also known as Hara Prasad Bhattacharya, was an Indian academic, Sanskrit scholar, archivist and historian of Bengali literature. He is most known for discovering the



Plate 3 : Haraprasad Shastri

Charyapada, the earliest known examples of Bengali literature. Hara Prasad Shastri was born to a family that hailed from **Naihati in North 24 Parganas**.

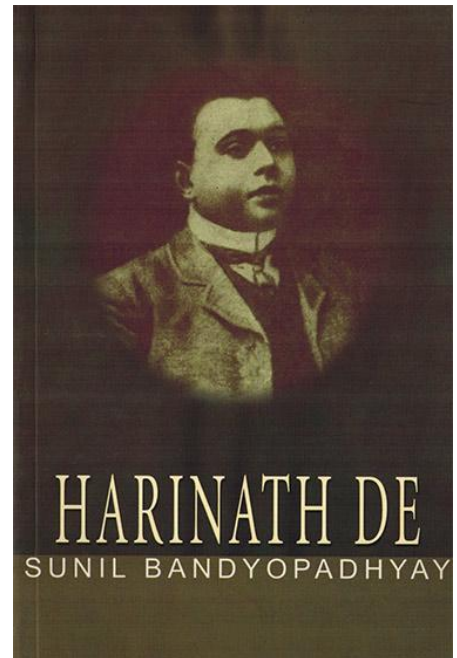
Shastri studied at the village school initially and then at Sanskrit College and Presidency College in Calcutta (now Kolkata). While in Calcutta, he stayed with the noted Bengali scholar and social reformer, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, who was a friend of Shastri's older brother Nandakumar Nyayachunchu. Shastri passed entrance (school-leaving) examination in 1871, First Arts, the undergraduate degree, in 1873, received a BA in 1876 and Honours in Sanskrit in 1877. Later, he was conferred the title of Shastri when he received a MA degree. The Shastri title was conferred on those who secured a first class (highest grade) and he was the only student in his batch (class) to do so. He then joined Hare School as a teacher in 1878. Hara Prasad Shastri held numerous positions. He became a professor at the Sanskrit College in 1883. At the same time, he worked as an Assistant Translator with the Bengal government. Between 1886 and 1894, besides teaching at the Sanskrit College, he was the Librarian of the Bengal Library. In 1895 he headed the Sanskrit department at Presidency College.

During the winter 1898-99 he assisted Dr. Cecil Bendall during research in Nepal, collecting informations from the private Durbar Library of the Rana Prime Minister Bir Shumsher Jung Bahadur Rana, and the total registration of manuscripts was later published as A Catalogue of Palm-Leaf and selected Paper Manuscripts belonging to the Durbar Library, Nepal (Calcutta 1905) with historical introduction by Cecil Bendall (including description of Gopal Raj Vamshavali). He became Principal of Sanskrit College in 1900, leaving in 1908 to join the government's Bureau of Information. Also, from 1921–1924, he was Professor and Head of the Department of Bengali and Sanskrit at Dhaka University. Shastri held different positions within the Asiatic Society, and was its President for two years. He was also President of Vangiya Sahitya Parishad for twelve years and was an honorary member of the Royal Asiatic Society in London. Shastri's first research article was "Bharat mahila", published in the periodical Bangadarshan when he was a student. Later, Shastri became a regular contributor to the periodical, which was then edited by the noted Bengali author Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay, authoring around thirty articles on different topics, as well as novel reviews. He was first introduced to research by Rajendralal Mitra, a noted Indologist, and translated the Buddhist Puranas which Mitra included in the book The Sanskrit Buddhist Literature of Nepal. Shastri was also Mitra's assistant at the Asiatic Society, and became Director of Operations in Search of Sanskrit Manuscripts after Mitra's death.

Shastri was instrumental in preparing the Catalogue of the Asiatic Society's approximately ten thousand manuscripts with the assistance of a few others. The long introduction to the Catalogue contains invaluable information on the history of Sanskrit literature.

Shastri gradually became interested in collecting old Bengali manuscripts and ended up visiting Nepal several times, where, in 1907, he discovered the Charyageeti or Charyapada manuscripts. His painstaking research on the manuscript led to the establishment of Charyapada as the earliest known evidence of Bengali language. Shastri wrote about this finding in a 1916 paper titled "হাজার বছরের পুরোনো বাংলা ভাষায় রচিত বৌদ্ধ গান ও দোঁহা " meaning "Buddhist songs and verses written in Bengali a thousand years ago". Shastri was the collector and publisher of many other old works, author of many research articles, a noted historiographer, and recipient of a number of awards and titles. Some of his notable works were: Balmikir jai, Meghdoot byakshya, Beneyer Meye (The Merchant's Daughter, a novel), Kancanmala (novel), Sachitra Ramayan, Prachin Banglar Gourab, and Bouddha dharma. His English works include: Magadhan Literature, Sanskrit Culture in Modern India, and Discovery of Living Buddhism in Bengal. He also discovered an old palm-leaf manuscript of Skanda Purana in a Kathmandu library in Nepal, written in Gupta script.

2.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. He was born in Ariadaha of Kamarhati (in present North 24 Parganas district) near Kolkata. His father Roy Bahadur Bhutnath De was a government official in Raipur, Central Provinces (now Chhattisgarh), where the family of young Narendranath Dutta (future Swami Vivekananda) also stayed in the same building, briefly from 1877 to 1879.



He attended Raipur High School, and went to study at Presidency College, Kolkata (then in the University of Calcutta), followed by Christ's College, Cambridge. A polyglot and linguistic prodigy, he was expert in 34 languages, including Plate 4 : Harinath De stern languages such as Chinese, Tibetan, Pali, Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic, English, Greek, Latin, out of which he was M.A in 14. De was the first Indian Education Service officer among Indians. He was Professor of English of Dhaka University and of Presidency College, Kolkata. He was appointed the first lecturer of the newly created department of Linguistics of Calcutta University in 1907. He was appointed the second librarian and first Indian librarian of the Imperial Library, after the death of John Macfarlane, who was previously Assistant Librarian of the British Museum, London, who was the first librarian of the newly merged Imperial Library. In 1902 De published a new edition of Macaulay's Essay on Milton. In 1903 he edited and published a new version of Palgrave's Golden Treasury. Then he translated Rihla, the travelogue written by Ibn Battuta and Jalaluddin Abu Zafar Muhammad's book Al-fakhri to English. He also worked on Arabic grammar. The most important works of De included writing an English–Persian lexicon, translation of a part of Rig Veda with original slokas, editing of Lankabatar Sutra, Nirbanbyakhya Shastram, etc. He also translated a few Sanskrit plays to English like Vasavdatta of Subandhu and Abhigyan Shakuntalam of Kalidasa. His works, 88 volumes on literature, linguistics and Hinduism, are now part of the National Library of India, known as the **Harinath Dey Collection**.

3. Sadhok Ramprasad Sen- (1723 – c. 1775) was a Hindu Shakta poet and saint of eighteenth century Bengal. His bhakti poems, known as Ramprasadi, are still popular in Bengal—they are usually addressed to the Hindu goddess Kali and written in Bengali. Stories of Ramprasad's life typically include legends and myths mixed with biographical details.

It is said that, Ramprasad was born into a Tantric family, and showed an inclination towards poetry from an early age. He became a disciple of **Krishnananda Agamavagisha**, a Tantric scholar and yogi. Ramprasad became well known for his devotional songs, eventually becoming the court poet of Raja Krishnachandra of Nadia. His life has been the subject of many stories depicting his devotion to, and relationship with, Kali. Ramprasad's literary works

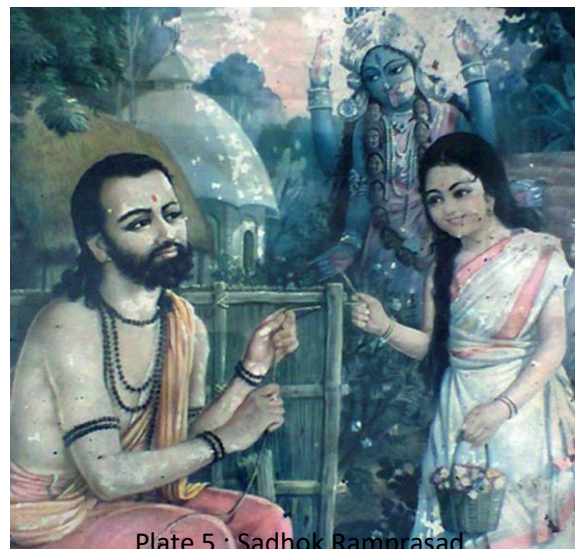


Plate 5 : Sadhok Ramprasad

include Vidyasundar, Kali-kirtana, Krishna-kirtana and Shaktigiti.

Ramprasad is credited with creating a new compositional form that combined the Bengali folk style of Baul music with classical melodies and kirtan. The new style took root in Bengali culture with many poet-composers combining folk and raga-based melodies, mixing every common style of music from classical to semi-classical and folk. His songs are sung today, with a popular collection—Ramprasadi Sangit ("Songs of Ramprasad")—sold at Shakta temples and pithas in Bengal.

Ramprasad Sen is regarded as one of the notable figures of the bhakti movement in Bengal during the eighteenth century. He is credited with popularizing the bhakti Shakta tradition and Shyama Sangeet—devotional songs to the goddess Kali. Ramprasad was the first Shakta poet to address Kali with such intimate devotion, and to sing of her as a tender loving mother or even as a little girl. After him, a school of Shakta poets continued the Kali-bhakti tradition.

Ramprasad created a new compositional form that combined the Bengali folk style of Baul music with classical melodies and kirtan. This new form took root in Bengali culture for the next hundred and fifty years, with hundreds of poet-composers combining folk and raga-based melodies, and bringing together styles of music that included classical, semi-classical, and folk. His poetic style has been described as "sweet, familiar and unsophisticated", though his lyrics were sung in classical style rather than a folk style. Two of his notable successors as composers in the same style were Kamalakanta Bhattacharya and Mahendranath Bhattacharya.

Ramprasad's songs are known as Ramprasadi. The devotion to Kali often included as a background the events in Bengal during his time, such as the Bengal famine of 1770, economic hardships, and the deterioration of rural culture. His poems were very popular during his lifetime.

Ramprasad's literary works include **Vidyasundar** (or Kalikaman-gala) (ca. sixth or seventh decade of the 18th century), **Kali-kirtana**, the fragmentary Krishna-kirtana, and Shaktigiti. Kali-kirtana is a collection of lyric and narrative poetry describing the early life of Uma. Krishna-kirtana is an incomplete book of poems and songs to Krishna—the complete collection is yet to be discovered. Vidyasundara Kavya is written in a narrative style that was already popular in Bengali literature, telling the traditional love story of Vidya and Sundara—children of kings who are aided by Kali in meeting, falling in love, and marrying. Shaktigiti is Ramprasad's well known and respected work, in which he expresses his deepest feelings

and love for Kali. In Shaktigiti, he shares the most intimate relationship with Kali—a child who can both love and quarrel with his mother over the inequities of human birth.

One of Ramprasad's hymns to the Goddess is as follows:

*You'll find Mother In any house.
Do I dare say it in public?
She is Bhairavi with Shiva,
Durga with Her children,
Sita with Lakshmana.
She's mother, daughter, wife, sister—
Every woman close to you.
What more can Ramprasad say?
You work the rest out from these hints.*

Another of his popular poems describes the human attempt to understand the Goddess:

*You think you understand the Goddess?
Even philosophers can not explain her.
The scriptures say that she, herself,
is the essence of us all. It is she, herself,
who brings life through her sweet will.*

*You think you understand her?
I can only smile, you think that you can
truly know her? I can only laugh!
But what our minds accept, our hearts do not.
Ants try to grasp the moon, we the goddess.*

Ramprasad's songs are still popular in Bengal and recited regularly in the worship of Kali. Scholar Shuma Chakrovarty notes that his songs are "broadcast over the radio and sung on the streets and in the homes and temples of Calcutta by a cross-section of people—children, the elderly, housewives, businessmen, scholars, the illiterate, monks, householders, and the youth of all classes". Many of his songs were sung by popular **Shyama Sangeet** singers like Dhananjay Bhattacharya, Pannalal Bhattacharya, and Anup Ghosal. Still his master literature combination of simple words in the songs melts one's hearts and floods the eye with tears. An [anekanta] vadin reading of Ramprasad's texts is also found.

4. **Ishwar Chandra Gupta** - Ishwar Chandra Gupta was born in a Baidya family. He was brought up in his uncle's house after the death of his mother. Gupta spent most of his childhood in Kolkata. At that time, poets were named Kobiwala and the kobiwalas were not so civilized in language. Sexual words and clashes were common. But Ishwar Chandra Gupta created a different style of poetry. He started the newspaper Sambad Prabhakar with Jogendra Mohan Tagore on January 28, 1831, which finally became a daily on June 4, 1839. Many Bengali writers of the 19th century started their careers with that magazine. He reintroduced into Bengali poetry the mediaeval style with double meaning (already seen in Sandhyakaranandi and Bharatchandra). He brought modern era of poetry in Bengali. He did not describe the life of Gods and Goddesses, but the daily life of human beings. He also wrote biographies of many Bengali poets and musicians. Ishwarchandra Gupta always satires the so-called modern class who blindly followed the colonial British power. In the early days he was a conservative, opposing the Young Bengal movement as well as frowning on widow remarriage. His views on widow remarriage put him at odds with Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar. He was one of the earliest advocates of a Hindu view of Indian society. Later in his life, his views began to change and he championed the cause for the remarriage of virgin widows and women's education.

5. **Rishi Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya** - (26 June 1838 – 8 April 1894) was an Indian novelist, poet and journalist. 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,

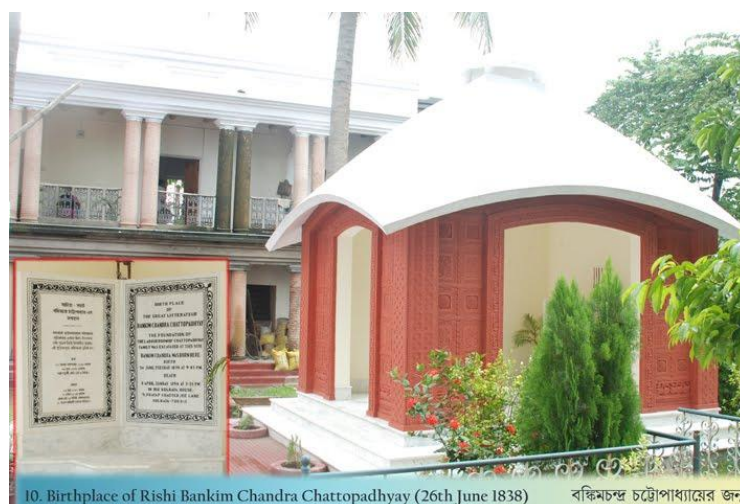
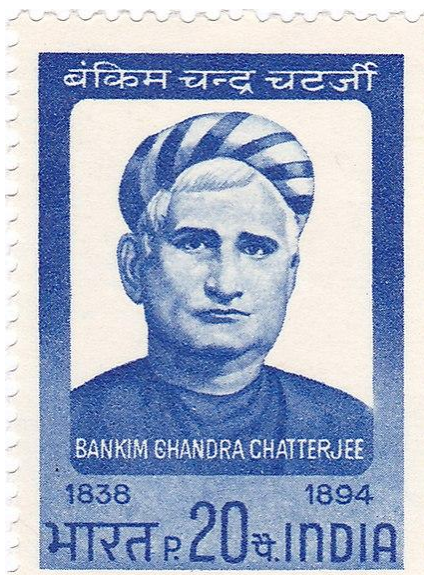


Plate 6 a & b – Rishi Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's birth place in Naihati, North 24

Chandra Chattopadhyaya and Durgadebi. His father, a

government official, went on to become the Deputy Collector of Midnapur. One of his brothers, Sanjib Chandra Chattopadhyay was also a novelist and he is known for his famous book "Palamau". Bankim Chandra and his elder brother both had their schooling from Hooghly Collegiate School (then Governmental Zilla School), where he wrote his first poem. He was educated at the Hooghly Mohsin College (founded by Bengali philanthropist Muhammad Mohsin) and later at Presidency College, Kolkata, graduating with a degree in Arts in 1858. He later attended the University of Calcutta and was one of the two candidates who passed the final exam to become the school's first graduates. He later obtained a degree in Law as well, in 1869. In 1858, he was appointed a Deputy Collector (the same type of position held by his father) of Jessore. He went on to become a Deputy Magistrate, retiring from government service in 1891. His years at work were replete with incidents that brought him into conflict with the ruling British. He was, however, made a Companion in the Order of the Indian Empire in 1894.



Plate 7 – Rishi Bankim Chandra's House has now turned into a library cum Museum

6. **Keshub Chandra Sen** - (19 November 1838 – 8 January 1884) was a Hindu philosopher and social reformer who attempted to incorporate Christian theology within the framework of Hindu thought. Born a Hindu in the Bengal Presidency of British India, he became a member of the Brahmo Samaj in 1857 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 . Later in his life Keshab Chandra Sen came under the influence of Ramakrishna and founded



Plate 8 : Keshab Chandra Sen

a syncretic "New Dispensation" inspired by Christianity, and Vaishnav bhakti, and Hindu practices. He was born on 19 November 1838 into an affluent Kayastha family of Calcutta (now Kolkata). His family originally belonged to Gariffa village on the banks of the river Hooghly. His grandfather was Ramkamal Sen (1783–1844), a well known pro-sati Hindu activist and lifelong opponent of Ram Mohan Roy . His father Peary Mohan Sen died when he was ten, and Sen was brought up by his uncle. As a boy, he attended the Bengali Pathshala elementary school and later attended Hindu College in 1845.

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In 1855 he founded an evening school for the children of working men, which continued through 1858. In 1855, he became **Secretary to the Goodwill Fraternity**, a Masonic lodge



associated with the Unitarian Rev. Charles Dall and a Christian missionary Rev. James Long who also helped Sen establish a "British Indian Association" in the same year. Around this time he began to be attracted to the ideas of the Brahmo Samaj.

Keshub Sen was also briefly appointed as Secretary of the Asiatic Society in 1854. For a short time thereafter Sen was also a clerk in the Bank of Bengal, but resigned his post to devote himself exclusively to literature and philosophy. On this, Professor Oman who knew him well writes, "Endowed with an emotional temperament, earnest piety, a gift of ready

speech and a strong leaven of vanity, Keshub Chunder Sen found the sober, monotonous duties of a bank clerk intolerable, and very soon sought a more congenial field for the exercise of his abilities." and he formally joined the Brahma Samaj in 1859.

Plate 9 : Brahmo Sabha

On 24th January 1868, Keshub laid the foundation

stone of his new church, the Tabernacle of New Dispensation and the newly constructed chapel was consecrated on 22nd August 1869. He declared, "we believe in the Church Universal, which is the respiratory of all ancient wisdom and the receptacle of all modern science, which recognise in all prophets and saints a harmony, in all scriptures a unity and though all dispensations a continuity, which abjures all that separates and divides and always magnifies unity and peace, which harmonises reason, faith and Bhakti, asceticism and social duty in their highest forms and which shall make of all nations and sects one kingdom and one family in the fullness of time." In the anniversary festival of 1879, Keshub announced the birth of the New Dispensation. He introduced into the church the Pilgrimage to saints, the Homa ceremony, the Baptismal ceremony, the Lord's supper, the Flag ceremony, the Arati, the vow of Poverty, the Savitri Vrata, the Nightingale Vrata, and other innovations. He mentions that this New Dispensation is "...a Divine message sent to

Plate 10 : Symbol of Brahmo Samaj



India... It comes not to destroy but to fulfil the law and the prophets." His most important contribution is the habit of daily devotion. He felt the necessity of daily domestic devotion and laid down the essential condition of domestic life in his Nava Samhita. In 1869, universalism was further strengthened by publishing of four books - Gour Govinda Roys' work on the Gita, P C Mozoomdar's book The Oriental Christ, Aghor Nath Gupta's study on Buddha and Girish Chandra Sen's Tapasmala - life of Muslim saints and his Bengali translation of Koran and Hadis. There was also a Pilgrimage to the Saints - special service held in the memory of great men like Moses, Socrates, Sakya, The Rishis, Christ, Muhammad, Chaitanya, Scientific men.

7. Kshirode Prasad Vidyavinode (12 April 1863 – 4 July 1927), born Kshirode Chandra Bhattacharya was a Bengali Indian poet, novelist, dramatist and nationalist.

He was born Kshirode Chandra Bhattacharya in Khardah on 12 April 1863, to a Brahmin family. He had joined Khardah Banga Vidyalaya and passed his upper primary examination in 1874. Later he joined the Barrackpore Government School, after changing his middle name and became known as Kshirode Prasad Bhattacharya. He passed his entrance examination under the University of Calcutta in 1881, and for graduation, joined the General Assembly's Institution, (now known as the Scottish Church College). After earning his postgraduate degree from the University of Calcutta, he joined the Chandernagore Dupleix College as its chemistry teacher, and subsequently taught at his alma mater, the General Assembly's Institution. After adopting a different surname Vidyavinode, he embarked on a long and distinguished literary career, and wrote stories, dramas, novels and poems. The thespian on the Bengali stage, Sisir Bhaduri began his professional career with Kshirode Prasad's play Alamgir. Some of his notable plays were Ali Baba, Banger Pratap Aditya (Pratapaditya of Bengal), Palashir Prayashchitta (The Remorse of Plassey), Nabanarayan and Dada Didi (Brother and Sister). He also edited the journal Aloukik Rahasya (Tales of the Supernatural). The British colonial regime banned Palashir Prayashchitta and Dada Didi because of their anti-colonial stances. He had joined the movement protesting the partition of Bengal in 1905. He lived in Bagbazar, north Calcutta, and died on 4 July 1927 in Bankura.

8. **Sir Surendranath Banerjee** - *“A pilgrim of freedom battle. As Ashoke and Akbar dreamt, the Indian National Congress achieved through Surendranath”* – described by Acharya Jagadish Chandra Bose. A patriot, scholar and orator. Mahatma Gandhi said, *“He as ever be remembered as one of the makers of modern India”*.

(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**. The house of Surendranath at **Monirampur** of **Barrackpore** ,North 24 Parganas has been converted into the Mahadevananda Mahavidyalaya and Netaji Subhas Open University.

After graduating from the University of Calcutta, he travelled to England in 1868, along with Romesh Chunder Dutt and Behari Lal Gupta, to compete in the Indian Civil Service examinations. He cleared the competitive examination in 1869, but was barred owing to a claim he had misrepresented his age. After clearing the matter in the courts by arguing that he calculated his age according to the Hindu custom of reckoning age from the date of conception rather than from birth, Banerjee cleared the exam again in 1871 and was posted as assistant magistrate in Sylhet. Banerjee also attended classes at University College, London. He took his final exams in 1871 and returned to India in August 1871. In 1874, Banerjee returned to London and became a student at the Middle Temple. Banerjee was soon dismissed for making a minor judicial error. He went to England to appeal his discharge, but was unsuccessful because, he felt, of racial discrimination. He would return to India bitter and disillusioned with the British. During his stay in England (1874–1875), he studied the works of Edmund Burke and other liberal philosophers. These works guided him in his protests against the British. He was known as the Indian Burke. Surendranath was



Plate 11 : Statue of Surendranath Banerjee

influenced by the writings of Italian nationalist Giuseppe Mazzini. He studied the writings of Mazzini in his stay in England (1874-1875) on Anandmohan's suggestion. Upon his return to India in June 1875, Banerjee became an English professor at the Metropolitan Institution, the Free Church Institution and at the Rippon College, now Surendranath College, founded by



Plate 12 - Surendranath Bannerjee's ancestral house at Monirampur, Barrackpur

him in 1882. He began delivering public speeches on nationalist and liberal political subjects, as well as Indian history. He founded the Indian National Association with Anandamohan Bose, one of the earliest Indian political organizations of its kind, on 26 July 1876. In 1878 in a meeting to preach the Indian people he said "The great doctrine of peace & goodwill between Hindus & Musulmans, Christians & Paresees, aye between all sections of our country's progress. Let the word "Unity" be inscribed therein characters of glittering gold.....There may be religious difference between us. There may be social difference between us. But there is a common platform where we may all meet, the platform of our country's welfare". He used the organization to tackle the issue of the age-limit for Indian students appearing for ICS examinations. He condemned the racial discrimination perpetrated by British officials in India through speeches all over the country, which made him very popular.

In 1879, he founded the newspaper, **The Bengalee**. In 1883, when Banerjee was arrested for publishing remarks in his paper, in contempt of court, protests and hartals erupted across Bengal, and in Indian cities such as Agra, Faizabad, Amritsar, Lahore and Pune. He became

the first Indian journalist to be imprisoned. The INC expanded considerably, and hundreds of delegates from across India came to attend its annual conference in Calcutta. After the founding of the Indian National Congress in 1885 in Bombay, Banerjee merged his organization with it owing to their common objectives and memberships in 1886. He was elected the Congress President in 1895 at Poona and in 1902 at Ahmedabad. Surendranath was one of the most important public leaders who protested the partition of the Bengal province in 1905. Banerjee was in the forefront of the movement and organized protests, petitions and extensive public support across Bengal and India, which finally compelled the British to reverse the bifurcation of Bengal in 1912. Banerjee became the patron of rising Indian leaders like Gopal Krishna Gokhale and Sarojini Naidu. Banerjee was also one of the senior-most leaders of the moderate Congress — those who favoured accommodation and dialogue with the British — after the "extremists" — those who advocated revolution and political independence — led by Bal Gangadhar Tilak left the party in 1906. Banerjee was an important figure in the Swadeshi movement — advocating goods manufactured in India against foreign products — and his popularity at its apex made him, in words of admirers, the uncrowned king of Bengal

9. Bipin Behari Ganguly (5 November 1887 - 14 January 1954) was a member of Indian independence movement and a politician. He was born in **Halisahar North 24 pgs**, on 5 November 1887. His father's name was Akshaynath Ganguly. As a close associate of Barindra Kumar Ghosh and Rashbehari Bose he took active part in the revolutionary activities. He had a direct connection to the incidents like Muraripukur conspiracy and the bomb case. He was the founder member of Atmonnati Samiti, a secret revolutionary society and a fraction of Jugantar Group. During the beginning of World War I (1914-1918), the Indian revolutionaries decided to do something daring which would result in the procurement of a sufficient number of firearms for their cause of the struggle for Indian Independence. Already the scenario of protest against the British Rule had increased to an extreme after the 1905 partition of Bengal. It started with sedition case against the 'Vande Matram' newspaper charging leaders like Aurobindo Ghosh and Bipin Bihari Ganguly to prove their involvement in promoting protests against the Government. Bipin Bihari Ganguly was imprisoned for 6 months. Bipin Behari Ganguli planned a daring armed robbery on 24 August 1914. The robbery is known as "**Rodda company arms heist**". The heist took place on 26 August 1914 and was a very sensational incident. The Statesman, in its edition on 30 August 1914 described the heist as "The greatest daylight robbery". In 1925, the robbery of car by the

Jugantar group and in the office of a Businessman in Beliaghata, Kolkata, he assisted Jatindranath Mukherjee. He was arrested for those incidents with arms. Bipin Behari Ganguly joined the Indian National Congress during the Non-Cooperation Movement in 1921 and presided over at the conference of Bengal State Committee in 1930. He joined at the Quit India movement in 1942. He was imprisoned at Mandalay, Rangoon and Alopore on 24 occasions throughout his life.



Bepin Bihari Ganguly



Anukul Chandra Mukherjee



Srish Chandra Paul



Girindra Nath Banerjee



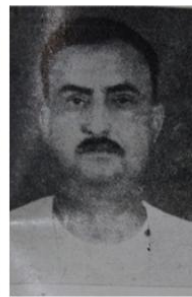
Haridas Datta



Prabhu Dayal Himmat Singhka



Kalidas Basu



Narendra Nath Banerjee



Bhujanga Bhusan Dhar

Plate13 - Bipin Behari Ganguli planned a daring armed robbery on 24 August 1914. The robbery is known as "**Rodda company arms heist**".

10. 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



Plate 14 : Rani Rashmoni

considerable charity to the Imperial Library (now the National Library of India), the Hindu College (now Presidency University).

She was born on 28 September 1793. Her father, Harekrishna Das, lived in Kona village, in present-day **Halisahar, North 24 Parganas**. Exceptionally beautiful, she was married to Babu Rajachandra Das (Marh) of Janbazar, Kolkata, a member of a wealthy zamindar family, when she was eleven years old. They had four daughters. The daughters were Padmamani, Kumari, Karunamoyee and Jagadamba. Padmamani was married to Ramchandra Ata. Kumari was married to Pairimohan Chowdhury, and she died early, in 1837. Karunamoyee was married to Mathurmohan Biswas (or Madhur-mohan Biswas). She died in 1833 after childbirth, and after her death, her younger sister Jagadamba was married to her husband Mathurmohan Biswas. 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 University). 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

Vidyadhar Bhattacharya- (1693-1751) was the chief architect and city planner of Jaipur, Rajasthan. A Bengali architect, who hailed from **Naihati** of, he was already working in the Amer state as Junior Auditor when approached by Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh II in 1727 to build one of the earliest planned cities of India. Along with Sir Samuel Swinton Jacob, he is credited as the architect of City Palace, Jaipur. He used principles of **Shilpa Shastra** and Vaastu Shastra to create a grid-based model of city. The Vidyadhar Garden, located at Ghat ki Guni, near Galtaji, was built in memory of Purohit Vidyadhar Bhattacharya. Built in 1988, the garden was designed based on "Shilpa Shastra", the ancient book on Indian architecture that Vidyadhar Bhattacharya referred to while designing the pink city of Jaipur. Before the garden was built, the area, situated close to the Sisodia Garden, was believed to be a vineyard.

The garden, nestled in the lap of a valley in Jaipur, has crystal waters, tranquil lakes, flower beds and well maintained gardens. It offers a panoramic view of the city. The garden is the perfect combination of contemporary Hindu and Mughal styles with its beautiful sylvan lakes, terraced lawns, fountains and the majestic pavilions with lord Krishna's murals and paintings. The place is managed by the government of Rajasthan and was used to host private get-togethers, but now it is banned by the government of Rajasthan.



Plate 15- Jaipur City Palace

B. Important Visitors of the Study area

“Pujilo Nimaitirtha koria uttam
Neemgaache dekhe joba oti anupam
Chanak bahiya jai buduniar desh
Tahar melan bahe aakna Mahesh.”-

Manasavijay , Bipradas Piplai , 1495

Chanak or Barrackpore villages are mentioned in Vijaygupta’s *Padmapuran* written in 1495. Among the places mentioned in Vijaygupta’s book from the river Ajay to the Bay are **Nimai Tirtha** (known as Manirumpur now), **Chanak** (known as Barrackpore now), **Kumarhatta**, **Bhatpara**, **Mulajore** (now known as **Shyamnagar**), **Sukhchar**, **Kamarhati**, **Ichhapur**, **Nawabganj** or **Bakibazar**, **Ariadaha**. In Bipradas Piplai’s *Manasavijay*, the author mentioned many places along the banks of the Ganges while Chandsadagar was sailing his boat towards Singhal. Among them is Chanak village. **Sri Chaitanya** halted at **Panihati Mohotsavtala Ghat** twice, once in A.D. 1515 on his way to Puri and another time when going to Vrindaban from Puri via Gaud. He came here in the month of Kartik and stayed in the house of Raghav Pandit, his disciple. The image of Madan Mohan worshiped by Sri Chaitanya in the house of Raghav, as also the Samadhi of Raghav under a canopy of Madhabi creepers can still be seen in the Raghav Bhawan or Pat Bari.



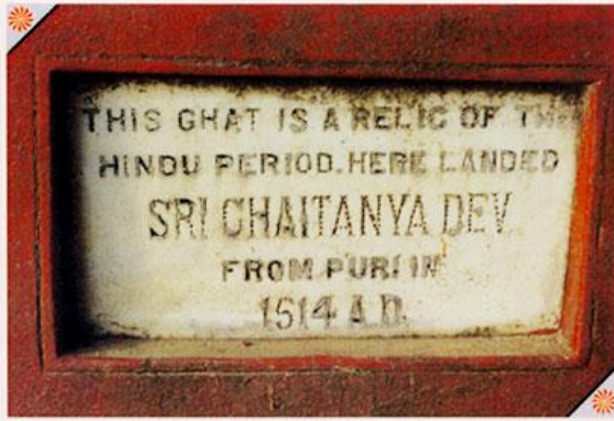
Plate 16 : Sri Chaitanya halted at Panihati Mohotsavtala Ghat, Syamarani dasi , Iskon

Sri Nityananda also came here in A.D. 1516 when he was on a missionary errand for spreading religion of love in Gaud. Raghunath Narayandev, a renowned zamindar of Saptagram met Nityananda under a Banyan Tree by the Ganga. On Nityananda's advice, the zamindar distributed chira & curd to the pilgrims assembled there in the month of Jyaishta of 1517. The festival is celebrated still now and it's called Danda Utsav. The commemorative festival recalling Sri Chaitanya's visit to Raghav Bhawan on his way back from Puri is celebrated since 1321 B.S. in the Bengali month Kartik. Because of holy footsteps of Shri Chaitanna, Nityananda and subsequent movement, 'It is a great pilgrim centre of the Vaishnavas. There are the famous **Asvattha (Peepal) and Bat (Banyan)** trees on the bank of the river where **Sri Chaitanya** and **Nityananda** supposedly had rested for some time. The place has been referred to in different Vaishnava books, namely, Chaitanya Mangal, Chaitanya Bhagavat, Chaitanya Charitamrita, Bhakti Ratnakar, Chaitanya Chandrodaya (drama), Bansi Bistar by Nityananda, Vaishnava Namdeva by Debaki Nanda and Vaishnava Achar Darpan.'Shri Ramkrishna Paramansha also visited and participated in the chida mela.

Ref: West Bengal District Gazetteers - 24 Parganas,
Edited By Dr. Barun De, March 1994.



Plate 17 : **Asvattha (Peepal) and Bat (Banyan)** trees on the bank of the river where **Sri Chaitanya** and **Nityananda** supposedly had rested for some time. **Syamarani dasi , Iskon**



১৫১৪ খ্রীষ্টাব্দে এই বটগাছা তলে চৈতন্যদেব পানিহাটিতে অবতরণ করেছিলেন। মূল বটগাছের এটি প্রোথিত কৃতি

শ্রীচৈতন্য চরিতামৃত গ্রন্থের মধ্য লীলার বোড়শ পরিচ্ছেদে উল্লেখ আছে—
 “সেই নৌকা চড়ি প্রভু আইলা পানিহাটি।
 নাবিকেরে পরাইল নিজ কৃপাশাটি।
 প্রভু আইলা করি লোকে হৈল কোলাহল।
 মনুষ্যে ভরিল সব জল আর স্থল।।” ২০

এরপর বৃন্দাবন থেকে পুরী ফেরার পথেও মহাপ্রভু পানিহাটিতে এসেছিলেন। তিথিটি ছিল কার্তিক মাসের কৃষ্ণাষাঢ়াশী। শ্রীচৈতন্যভাগবত গ্রন্থে উল্লেখ রয়েছে।—
 “কত দিন থাকি প্রভু শ্রীবাসের ঘরে
 তবে গেলা পানিহাটি রাখব মন্দিরে।।



Plate 18, 19,20, 21– Paatbari , Panihati



Sri Ramakrishna had visited Panihati and participated in the Chira Utsav or Danda Mahotsab, incarnated with Sri Chaitanya Dev and Sri Nityanada Mahaprabhu. Sri Ramkrishna was invited by Moni Sen a bhakta and Rasatdar of Sri Ramkrishna after demise of Mathur Babu, residing near the Mahotsavtala. First visit was in 1858 which is described in Sri Ramkrishna Lila Prasanga. His visit at 1883 is described at Sri Ramkrishna Kathamrita. It is noted in the above publications of the profound spiritual experiences at the Mahotsavtala



Plate 22 : Ramakrishna in Sangkirtan , Halley Goswami

during the visits. In other places we also find the high regards towards Panihati being the holy place sanctified by Sri Chaitanna Deb, Nityananda, Raghav Pandit.

Sri Ramakrishna attended Mohotsavtala last time in June, 1885 when he was accompanied by Narendra Nath (Vivekananda) and 24 other disciples. All of them came by boats along the Ganga from Dakshineswar. . Besides Narendra Nath other femous

disciples who used to accompany Sri Ramakrishna included Balaram Basu, Girish Chandra Ghosh, Mohendranath Dutta (Srimo the writer of RamKrishna kathmirta) Swami Abhedananda, Swami Brahmananda, Swami Abhutananda, Joginmaa and Gopal Maa.

He halted in the house of Mani Sen and later joined the Kirtan and visited Raghav Pandit's House There are references in

Ramakrishna Kathamrita and writings of Swami Saradananda of the Samadhi of Sri Ramakrishna



Plate 23 : Chira Utsav or Danda Mahotsab Ghat , Panihati

and his Kirtan. Sri Ramakrishna referred Mohotsav Utsav as very Sacred and insisted his disciples and bhaktas to visit the Panihati and participate in Danda Mahatsob.

Mahatma Gandhi and Sodepur -The Sodepur Khadi Partisthan has a special place in the life of Mahatma Gandhi and Indian Freedom Struggle. Sodepur Khadi Ashram which Gandhiji called his 2nd home and stayed here when he used to come at Calcutta. Mahatma Gandhi inaugurated Kalasala at Sodepur Khadi Pratisthan which was near Sodepur Railway Station on a plot of 15 Bigha, on 2nd January, 1927 in presence of Pandit Matilal Nehru, Srinivas Iyengar, Congress president, Sir P. C. Roy and others. Three addresses, from Panihati Municipality, the Anti Malaria Association and another institution, were given to Gandhiji. His speech at the inauguration ceremony touched the 6,000 pepole gathered and still relevant to day.He had visited Sodepur Khadi Pratisthan several times in 1939, 1945, 1946 and 1947. Gandhiji satayed at Sodepur crucial days before independence from 9th Aug'1947 to 13th Aug'1947 before moving to the riot affected Beliaghta. Plate 24 : Gandhiji at Sodepur Khadi Pratisthan



143. Addressing the prayer meeting at Sodepur.

सोदपुर मे प्रार्थना सभा मे भाषण देते हुए ।

Many top leaders of India had come at Khadi Ashram for discussions/ meetings: Subhas Chandra Bose, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, Sardar Ballav Bhai Patel, Sarat Chandra Bose,



Plate 25 : The historic meet of Netaji and Gandhiji

Shyamaprasad Mukherjee, G. D. Birla, Jamanlal Bajaj, Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, Sarojini Naidu, Shurabordi, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Bidhan Chandra Roy, P. C. Ghosh and others. There are many letters and communications which were written by Mahatma Gandhi at Sodepur. He went to Panihati Mahotsab Tala Ghat or Gouranga Ghat from Sodepur Khadi Ashram on foot on 18th January 1946 and was shown the old Bata Tree, venerated by the Vaishnavas, on the bank of Ganga. He was also shown several things said to have been used by Sri Chaitanya there. Then Chairman of Panihati Municipality Sushil Krishna

Ghosh and Phanindranath Mukherjee were the main organisers of the visit. Khadi Pratisthan was setup by Satish Chandra Dasgupta, an expert chemist who was superintendent of Bengal Chemicals and Pharmaceutical works in Maniktala in North Calcutta decided to give up employment and setup an Ashram for spinning, weaving and materials of Khadi as well as other Cottage Industrial Commodities. He located his Swadeshi enterprise at a part close to Calcutta, from where his commodities would be marketed. This was the Khadi Pratisthan at Sodepur.

The history of Barrackpore was further enhanced by the immersion of **Mahatma Gandhi's Ashes** here on the 12th February, 1948, after his demise on the 30th January, 1948 (2 k.m east of the Station, Talpukur) and establishment of the Gandhi Memorial Museum (3 k.m.



Plate 26 : Gandhi Ghat, Barrackpore

GANDHI GHAT, BARRACKPORE

west of the Station, Mistrighat More) commemorating the Father of the Nation (as declared by Netaji Subash Chandra Basu).



The Gandhi Museum at Barrackpore is the main resource centre in eastern India and perhaps the most organised Museum on Gandhiji in our country. The Museum has in its collection huge materials on the Mahatma – more than 800 photographs, original, used articles of the Mahatma, historic, rare and valuable collections in its galleries.

Plate 27 : Gandhi Museum

Peneti or Panihati in the study area has a special place in the life of **Rabindra Nath** as depicted by Rabindra Nath in his book (*Jibon Smriti* or *My reminiscences*).

Rabindranath Tagore visited this garden house in his boyhood in order to avoid an epidemic of Dengu fever, than prevailing (1971-72) in Calcutta. That was his first acquaintance with the outside world. He visited this place for the second time on 29 May 1919, that is, the day preceding 30 May 1919 when he forsook the Knighthood in protest against the Jalianwallabagh killing in Punjab. He was accompanied by P.C. Mahalanbis at that time. He visited this building for the third time on 5 March 1933 to attend the marriage ceremony of a girl of the Ashram. He also planted a mango tree there on that day. It has some marble rooms and 2 tanks within the area. It has altogether 14 living rooms and 2 halls at present (1977).

Rabindranath in his boyhood days at the age of 11 years first came to Peneti Bagan bari



Plate 28 : Garden House , Sukhchar

which he referred in his book "*Jibon Smriti*" later on, which gives a very fond memory of Kabiguru about Peneti or Panihati. An imposing two-storied building with big columns and a spacious garden, on the bank of the river, now houses Gobinda Kumar Home. This

building was once a garden house of Asutosh De, son of the merchant Ramdulal De of Calcutta. It was then called Mokshadham, though people called it Chhatubabu's garden house after Asutosh Deb who was called Chhatubabu or Satubabu. Gobinda Kumar Chaudhuri, the zamindar of Serpur in Mymensingh District (Bangladesh) purchased the garden house on 22 February 1886. His son Gopal Das Chaudhury handed it over on 29 March 1928 to a Board of Trustees to establish Gobinda Kumar Home after the name of his father, housing destitute women.

The Gobinda Home has been declared as the heritage home. He inaugurated the Basanti Cotton Mill in Panihati on 8 August 1934.



Plate 29 & 30 : Gobindo Home , Panihati , Bust of Rabindranath Tagore



A historic town, **Barrackpore** has been a witness to numerous incidents. **Nawab Sirajdaullah** took the route of Barrackpore before launching assaults on the Fort William in Kolkata on June 20, 1756. In 1790, Lord Cornwallis sent his troops on the sea route from Barrackpore to Madras to fight against Tipu Sultan. However, this town is particularly known because of the memories of Sepoy Mutiny which fuelled the revolt against the British across the country.

The town came into being with the setting up of '**Barrackpore Cantonment**' in 1765. A board was formed to run the Cantonment. Two bazaars named 'Sadar' and 'Ardali Bazaar' were set up. In 1798, Lord Wellesley was appointed as Governor-General of India. Fascinated by the beauty of Barrackpore, he built many palatial buildings and elegant gardens here. A serpentine Lake was about to be built at his bidding. However, Lord Wellesley had to leave India at the behest of the British government a few days after he set about doing the work. Later, whoever came to India as Governor-General, they took serious initiative for the beautification of the town. A bus driven by three horses was introduced from Barrackpore to Esplanade on November 22, 1830. Plate 30 :



Plate 31: Governor General's House & Park at Barrackpore. Water colour by Edward Hawk Locker. 1808. Courtesy: British Library

In 1785, Sir John Mcpherson bought 220-bigha land at Rs 2500 from Captain John Inter in order to build a house for the commander-in-chief of Barrackpore. Sir John Shore also purchased nine-bigha land adjacent to it in 1797. During the time of Lord Wellesley (1798-1805), the amount of land was increased to 1008 bighas. He wanted to build a spectacular park emulating parks in England. Various kinds of plants were brought to this park from abroad. A serpentine lake was created with small mound. Barrackpore Trunk Road was built to connect with Kolkata. Then the construction began to build a huge Latbhaban like Kolkata. However, the authorities in England didn't give the nod to build the 50,000-pound 'Bhaban'. Leaving the project incomplete, Lord Welleslwy went back to England in 1895. Lord Cornwallis demolished the incomplete house after he took over as Commander-in-chief of British India. He however built a temporary house close to it which gradually became Laabhaban. Later Lord Hastings revamped this house and built an aviary in the park. Lord Auckland (1836-1842) constructed a balcony on the west side and Lord Ripon (1808-1884) built staircases and... Lord Minto (1905-1910) brought electricity to the Laabhaban and made it a spectacular house.

The 'Barrackpore Park' or 'Laabagan' has now been named as 'Mangal Pandey Uddyan'. West Bengal Police Training College and Detective Training College are located in this Uddyan. Training for State Armed Constabulary is also being given at this Uddyan.



Plate 32: This photograph of Government House in Barrackpore was taken in the 1860s by Samuel Borne. British Library.

In 1804, Lord Wellesly built a zoo at Barrackpore. He brought eminent biologist **Francis Buchanan** in order to set up a centre for biology here. There's a saying that Lord Bentinck used to move around this place riding an elephant. The name 'Chiriamore' carries the memories of the zoo still today. Two British ladies—**Emily Eden and Lady Canning** -- are also associated with the history of the town. When Lord Auckland came to India in 1835, his sister Emily accompanied him. Lord Auckland set up Eden School and put Emily at the helm of the school. The school is now known as **Barrackpore High school**. Lady Eden established a library for the public. Lady Canning also had an intimate connection with Barrackpore. Lord Canning came to India as Governor-General in 1856. His wife was a scholar and she was struck by the charm of Barrackpore. She used to come to Barrackpore every weekend with latest cameras. She made special efforts to beautify Barrackpore Park. Her burial place at the Mangal Pandey Garden still attracts visitors.



Here is a colourful description of a cheetah hunt in Lord Wellesley's Park at Barrackpore. A cheetah is chasing a deer with huntsmen on horseback and elephant at Barrackpore, located 14 miles from Calcutta and was originally a permanent barracks. When Marquess Wellesley took over the Commander-in-Chief's residence in 1801, he decided to make improvements to the area. He created a summer residence for future Governor-Generals' and he landscaped the gardens while adding an aviary, a menagerie and a theatre. As a result, Barrackpore Park became a popular place for leisure pursuits, including organised hunts, as seen in this image. *Watercolour by Sir Charles D'Oyly (1781-1845) painted in c1802, Plate 33*



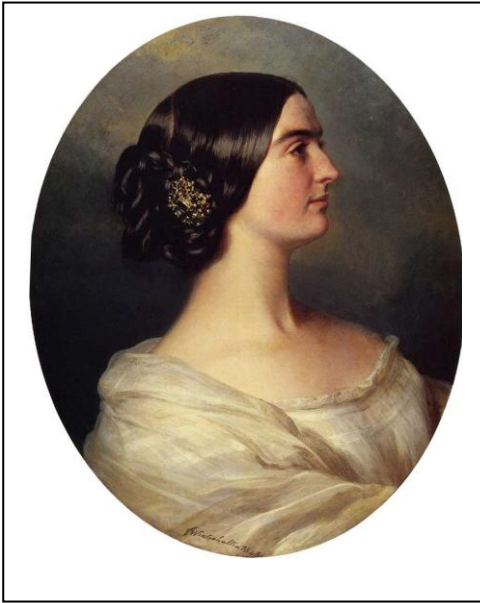
A hand-coloured print of Aviary at Barakpur Park with gardeners at work in foreground, from the Fiebig Collection: Views of Calcutta and Surrounding Districts, taken by Frederick Fiebig in 1851. Barrackpore, 24 km to the north of Calcutta on the river Hooghly, was originally permanent barracks for the British army and later became the summer residence of the British Governor Generals. Marquess Wellesley was British Governor-General in Calcutta from 1797 to 1805, and made many improvements to Barrackpore. The Aviary was one of the improvements to Barrackpore, he also designed the 'English Style' Park and added a theatre and a menagerie to the area. Plate 34



Emily Eden (3 March 1797 – 5 August 1869) was an English poet and novelist who gave witty accounts of English life in the early 19th century. She wrote a celebrated account of her travels in India, and two novels that sold well. She was also an accomplished amateur artist. Born in Westminster, Eden was the seventh daughter of [William Eden, 1st Baron Auckland](#), and his wife Eleanor Elliot. She was the great-great-great-aunt of Prime Minister [Anthony Eden](#).

In her late thirties, she and her sister Fanny travelled to India, where her brother [George Eden, 1st Earl of Auckland](#) was in residence there as Governor-General from 1835 to 1842. She wrote accounts of her time in India, later collected in the volume *Up The Country: Letters Written to Her Sister from the Upper Provinces of India* (1867). While the emphasis of her Indian writings was on travel descriptions, local colour and details of the ceremonial and social functions that she attended,. Plate 35

Charlotte Canning, Countess Canning (née Stuart; 31 March 1817 – 18 November 1861) was a British artist and the first vicereine of India. She was one of India's most prolific



women artists – two portfolios in the Victoria and Albert Museum contain some 350 watercolours by her, the result of four major tours in the country. Her husband was Charles Canning, who served as Governor-General of India from 1856 to 1858 and then as Viceroy of India until 1862. Plate 36

As the elder daughter of the British ambassador to France, she was born and raised in Paris. She moved to England with her family in 1831, marrying Canning four years later. From 1842 to 1855, Lady Canning served as a Lady of the Bedchamber to Queen Victoria and was a favourite of the monarch. She moved to Calcutta in 1856 upon her husband's appointment, and two years later she became India's first vicereine when the country fell under control of the British Crown. As an artist and botanist Lady Canning collected flowers and plants

during her frequent trips around India, while drawing the natural scenes around her. She became ill shortly before her scheduled return to England, and died of malaria in Calcutta. Her death was widely reported in England, where she was exemplified as a symbol of feminine virtue in the Victorian era. A type of Indian dessert, ledikeni, is named after her.



Plate 37: She was buried on the grounds of Barrackpore, in a small garden her husband described as a "beautiful spot" that looked upon a river she "was so fond of drawing". However, her grave was transferred to Calcutta, adjacent to St. John's church.

CHAPTER 4 - ARTS AND CRAFTS IN NORTH 24 PARGANAS

A. Crafts – Existing Crafts of the Study Area

The existence of traditional crafts in north 24 parganas is much lesser in comparison to other districts in West Bengal. Although there were several clusters of handmade crafts before the colonization following rampant industrialization {mainly jute}, urbanization, arrival of migrated labours from other provinces for the colonial interest. Noticeably, the areas adjacent to bank of river Hooghly were much affected since late 19th century. Craft production is necessarily tied with the pattern of daily life. So, the separation between "Craft" and "life" is only colonially engendered. The British civil servant O'Malley in his district gazetteer {1914} had also identified few handmade products such as embroidered needle work called 'Chikan', products from brass at Natagarh (Locks) near Sodepur, locks at Dumdum, musical instruments at Baranagar, Kashipur and Sinthi. The decline of handcraft traditions in the river adjacent localities of the district happened gradually after the colonial advent. But handful of crafts are still prevalent in some rural segments in the East twenty to thirty kilometers' far of the banks of Hooghly river. The reason is the displacement of artisans {weaving, clay pottery, toymaking, metal utensils, basketry etc.} from urban sectors to rural seclusion. However, in the process of area survey evidenced few residues of handmade crafts in the urban segments {from Branagar to Bijpur} near the river banks are respectively

. The existing crafts are respectively as follows

- 1, Jewelry- Gold and silver jewelry {mainly in Shyamnagar and Naihati}**
- 2, Khadi {Sodepur}**
- 3, Pottery and deity making {Shyamnagar, Naihati and Halisahar}**
- 4, Bamboo work to produce fishing instruments and bucketry {by the Muslim community in the Belle village of Naihati}**
- 5, Conch or Sankho {Barrackpore}**
- 6, Making of musical instruments {Branagar and Naihati}**
- 7. Fish Net making**

1. Clay Pottery and Deity making - Every village, of almost every districts of South Bengal, has a potter (Khumbar or Kumhar) who 'wheels' out an amazing variety of household utensils and other objects of utility. The rich traditions of pottery are found in both the banks of Bhagirathi-Hugli River . Each area has different styles of pottery. Local traditions and the type of clay available influence the shapes, forms and the decorative designs . The potter, Kumbhar, as we will see is an integral part of the life of the people.

a. Clay Pottery – Bhar (Clay Pots) are widely prepared all along the banks of Bhagirathi-Hugli River. **i.** In our study area , Kumorpara , **Gouripur** in Naihati Municipality has a significant clay pot making hub. The major ingredient used for the pot making are - Belemati {clay with sand}, Atamati {sticky clay collected from paddy field}.The products are sold in



Plate 38 – Bhar/Pot making by the artisans in Naihati , 22°53'19.26"N 88°25'2.32"E

the local markets usually in the tea and sweet shops. In the early days the handmade wheels or chak were used for making the pots but now electric wheels are used which results in higher production . Other than hammer to soften up the clay no other instruments are used for pot making. These artisans are said to be as the descendants of Vishwakarma the god of

crafts. These group of potters never run their wheel in the month of **Boisakh** following Bengali calendar {April} as it is the month of marriage of Lord Shiva and Parvati.



Plate 39 – Bhar making in the handmade Vati (furnace)



Plate 40– Bhar making in progress

Ramesh Pandit and Sarju Pandit ,the two hereditary artisans of Gouripur have their ancestors migrated almost hundred years back from Bihar. In our interview they stated that though this craft of making clay pots are eco friendly but now losing their local markets because of declining demands. This traditional craft is facing huge competition from paper and plastic cups mostly because of low cost and easy production. In order to stay in the market they keep minimum profit for their production. This craft requires immediate revival and diversification from getting extinction.

ii. Bhar Patti at Titagarh - 22°44'20.81"N 88°22'2.04"E



Plate 41- Adjoining River Bhagirathi hugli there is an entire colony of clay potters . They mostly prepare bhars (Earthen cups) / Diyas (earthen lamps) , pots etc.



Plate 42– Biharis are mostly into Bhar making in this areas



Plate 43– Diyas are also prepared and sold in adjoining market

Stella Kramrisch had mentioned the deity making developed from the handmade toy making which is timeless and it is the extension of pre-Sindhu civilisation'.



Plate 44 – Tools used for making Idols, Chisels or Kamkathi.

b. Idol Making : Bengali specializes in presenting the age old traditional of making clay idols. Such unmatched skills come in the limelight during the festival occasion of Dura Puja. Months before the puja clay artists start to breathe in life in the images of Dura. Bamboo sticks cut in various shapes and size are required to make armature(the basic structure) of the Idol of Goddess Durga and the platform on which the colossal statue stands. Dura's figure is then imparted shape with straw tied with jute strings. Creating fascinating figurines of hindu Gods and Goddesses has been an age old tradition for the pals (the clay artisans).The intricate art of clay idol making where in sticky clay, straw and rice husk are used in proportion, requires a high degree of craftsmanship. This fine art has been mastered by the artisans of **Nadia district** in Bengal who all with the increase of demands travelled to other districts to continue with their profession. These artisans are mostly with the surname "Pal" or "Malakar" and they are the best in business as far as clay idolmaking is concerned.

In our study area, there is a big hub in **Prasad Nagar, Naihati District** (Prasad Nagar, Garifa, Naihati, pin-743166, North 24 PGS {N}, W. Bengal) where the idols are prepared. The local ingredients like clay from the adjoining River Hugli, bamboo strips, straws, earthen colures, cotton are used. The idol making involves 5 different stages.

1. Making of the basic armature, 2. Clay modeling for initial plastic formation, 3. the armature of the deity, 4. Applying colures to render detailing of figure, eyes and eye brows and 5. ornamentation of deities using various decorative materials.

Clay is first mixed with straw and is applied over bamboo to build the basic skeleton of the idol. This skeleton is then either heated or sun dried to make it solid and hard. The clay from the river Hooghly (Ganga Maati) is then mixed with fine jute fibres and is applied over the dry skeleton to give a smooth finishing to the structure. Primarily the entire deity making starts from the making of armature made by bamboo strips, thread on the wooden pedestal and primary modelling of the figure has to be formed. After drying the clay figure the detailing has to be done with chisel. The final work is application of colures and decoration starts following the particular character of the deity using cotton, silk, furs, hairs. The major Equipments / Tools used are — chisels for modelling called kamkathi, Tuli {brush}, Earthen colures and gum. Gham tel {burnish}, cloths {cotton and silk} etc. As per the norms of Hindu tradition, when the idol is prepared, three things are very important. These include mud from the banks of the Ganga, cow dung, cow urine. But in the making of Goddess Durga they need a small amount of soil from outside brothels {known as 'Nishiddho Palli'}, without which the idol is considered incomplete. According to traditional beliefs, the soil should be begged and received from a sex worker's hand as a gift and blessing since it is known as 'punya mati' or the sacred soil.

Associated Deities—through the interview of Deity makers we understand that they are the ancestors of the wooden deity makers community in the villages of Bengal. Through the interview of a craftsman {deity maker} Swapan Pal {son of late Kartik Pal} it is anticipated that they had a tradition of clay toy making {called tepa putul} few decades ago in which they used to paint on the toy and used to sale in the local market. However, this marketing has lost the market due to the advent of plastic Toys.

These artisan community is the ancestors of 'Sutradhar' a craftsman community either wood carvers or clay modelers by profession. This deity maker community generally migrated from East Bengal {Bangladesh} to Gangetic Bengal almost a century ago. No threat identified as such as there are sustainable demands for deity worship in Hindu community throughout the year. But the problem is the crisis of allied artisans of deity making. Mainly the Malakar

section {those who decorate the deity with final ornamentation called Daker Saj} of the locality gradually losing their job for the uses of synthetic foils, tharmocol and synthetic dresses. Through the tradition of deity making the craft of **Shola Shilpa** had a major role in traditional decoration.



Plate 45 – Durga idol making workshop , Prasad Nagar , Naihati



Plate 46– Artist – Kartick Pal , Stages of making Durga Idol , Naihati



Plate 47– Stages of making Durga Idol , Naihati

2. Musical Instruments making Workshops:

a. Haridas Ghosh Road of Naihati has a very old Musical Instrument Manufacturing Workshop specializing in creation of Harmonium. The workshop is run by the father and son duo **Dwijendra nath Biswas and Dipak Biswas**. The most widely-known and used free-reed aerophone in India is the harmonium and have been imported from the West. This musical instrument was brought to India in late 19th century by the Western traders or missionaries. It was first invented by Alexandre Debain in 1840 in France, who patented his Harmonium in Paris on August 9, 1840. In India Shruti Harmonium was created by Vidyadhar Oke. Shruti-Harmonium enables the creation of any Raga with all the notes perfectly consonant with a Tanpura. No foreign instrument, however, has caused such a commotion as the harmonium and none is used so extensively, be it in classical, light, film or folk music. It is probably the most commonly used instrument in northern India. In the Bharata, Sarang deva Indian Musical Instruments had a systematic classification. As per the classification, Harmonium belongs to ‘Sushira’ category (Wind Instruments). The materials used for its manufacturing are - Teak, Frame, Franko assembling key, bari, reed, blower.



Plate 48 & 49 : Harmonium Making , Dipak Biswas





Plate 50– Harmonium Making , Dipak Biswas

Batali {sharp chisel}, Reda {sharpener}, Driller, screws, scale, hammer, scissor, rasin-based polish, velvet. It makes sound by blowing air through reeds, which are tuned to different pitches to make musical notes. A **harmonium** can be **made** to work using either the feet or the hands: In a foot-pumped **harmonium**, the player presses two pedals with his or her feet, one at a time.

b.Musical Instrument manufacturing (percussion) – There is another musical instrument workshop in Naihati only mostly specializing in percussion instruments like **Tabla,Dhol,Khol,Madal** etc.

Tabla in Indian music act as a Sabhya Badya Jantra {as it belongs to the Sabhya group of musical instruments}. On the other hand, Khol, Dhol and Nal belong to the **Mangalik group** of musical instruments like **Sitar and Bina**. Tabla made from black sirish wood and Baya made by baked clay. Then the top covered up by the skin of goat or cow. The tools are chisels, hammer, drill machine, screw. Tabla is a membranophone percussion instrument originating from the Indian subcontinent consisting of a pair of drums, used in traditional, classical, popular and folk music. It has been a particularly important instrument in Hindustani classical and folk music. It has been a particularly important instrument in Hindustani classical music since the 18th century, and remains in use in India, Afghanistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka. The name tabla likely comes from tabl. Dhol used to exist during the Indus Valley Civilisation. Dhol is depicted in earliest ancient Indian sculptural arts as one of the

chief percussion instruments for ancient Indian music along with tabla, describes the use of Dhol in the orchestra of the Mughal emperor Akbar. The Indo-Aryan word Dhol appears in print in the treatise Sangitasara. Khol most widely used percussion instrument in eastern India. It is also called mridang, because it is made of clay or mrit or mud. It is a barrel shaped asymmetrical drum. Its two faces are of different sizes, and it seems to resemble the ancient Gopuchha shape of drums, as described by Bharat in his Natya Shastra. This instrument is closely associated with Vaishnavite music of Bengal and Assam. Naal is a wooden two-headed drum. This instrument mostly used in folk music and marriage celebrations in India. It is a percussion instrument like pakhwaj.



Plate 51 : Debi Das , working on Tabla in his workshop



Plate 52 : Tabla is getting prepared in the wokshop



Plate 53– Instruments used for making percussion instrument

Tabla , Khol and Nall belong to the basically originated from Mridangam as described in the puranas as follows: “when Mahadeva elated by his victory over the invincible demon Tripurasura, began to dance, surrounded by Indra and other deities, Brahma is said to have invented the mridangam to serve as an accompaniment, and under his directions the god Ganesh first performed upon it primitive classical mridangams somewhat resemble the khole and mardola found in use among the aboriginal hill tribes. With some the khole, even to the present day, passes under the appellation of mridangam. The demands of this musical instrument is facing problem because of gradual demands of electronic instruments in the market.

Yamaha Musical Industries in Ichapur, North 24 Parganas - Yamaha Musical Industries in North 24 Parganas is one of the leading businesses in the Guitar Manufacturers and Dealers. It is famous as Guitar Dealers, Electric Guitar Manufacturers, Guitar Manufacturers, Guitar String Manufacturers,



Bass Guitar Manufacturers, Acoustic Guitar

Manufacturers and much more.

Roy Musical Instrument , Kowgacchi , Shyamnagar , N.24 Parganas – Another important Guitar manufacturer and dealer is Row Music Shop at Kowgacchi , Shyamnagar . It produces a huge number of Guiters and mostly exports to Kolkata.



3. Kantha Shilpa - Needle work - Kantha is a form of embroidery often practiced by rural women. The traditional form of Kantha embroidery was done with soft dhotis and saris, with a simple running stitch along the edges. Depending on the use of the finished product they were known as *Lepkantha* or *Sujni Kantha*. This design clearly indicates Islamic Decorative



Plate 57– Muslim woman is engaged in Kantha Work

patterns in kantha. And somehow these patterns show a sort of Central Asian connection. After the field study it is evident Islamic infinite pattern which had travelled beyond geographical boundaries entered the storehouse of Bengali, weavers and eventually in the kantha art. This indigenous embroidery is known as “Bunoner Kaaj”. One of the very interesting fact about Kaantha Shilpo is that the work of Hindu women is very different from Muslim women. Noticeably this kind of textile craft produces by the housewives in their leisure time. Muslim women produce much decorative and less narrative Kantha Work.

Kantha work is embroidery done on used apparel, renewing their looks and extending their life. It is a unique art from Murshidabad in former Bengal. Kantha Work is essentially done on old sarees, dhotis and other apparel. It is a running stitch on the sarees in the form of motifs such as animals, birds, flowers, simple geometrical shapes and scenes from everyday life.

Vabagachi Village of Naihati has 4 Muslim families with 20 members area dedicated to Kantha Work. All the family members are roped in to do the work. Akiran Bibi and Sulema Bibi in their interview showed us the Quilt, Saree and some ornaments prepared by them. The tradition of Kantha making is passed through generations. Old and soft sarees are

mostly used for making this craft. This indigenous craft is mostly used to cater the local demand. Plate 58 & 59 : Kantha making is very common in the study area.





Plate 60 – Kantha Stitch making in Vabagachchi village

4. Crafting Conches , Sankharis of Barrackpore - Raw conch shells are produced by a species of sea snails, *Turbinella pyrum*, which are found in the Gulf of Mannar and the Indian Ocean coastline. Rameswaram, Tuticorin and Tirunelveli in Tamil Nadu are three districts which supply the bulk of raw conches. The conch pickers and suppliers are mostly Muslims. A community of Tamil Muslims live in Barrackpore, and they act as the principal suppliers of raw conches to workshops in North 24 Parganas district. The value of conch depends on its white colour—a symbol of purity. The white conch has wide representation in Indian art and iconography. The Panchajanya sankha is associated with Lord Vishnu. Along with Vishnu's chakra (Sudarshana), the Panchajanya are depicted outside Vishnu temples across India. The sankha is also held by various avatars of Vishnu, like Matsya, Kurma, Varaha and Vamana (universally), and other important Hindu deities like Lakshmi, Surya, Indra, Kartikeya and Durga (with regional variations). The sankha is also associated with Gautama Buddha, hence held sacred in Buddhism. The right-turning white conch is one of the Ashtamangalas, the eight auspicious symbols (also sacred in Hinduism and Jainism) in Tibetan Buddhism. In Buddhism, the conch's piercing sound is perceived to remove ignorance and awaken the inner consciousness from slumber. In Jainism, the conch is the symbol of Neminatha, the twenty-second Tirthankara. Till the state merged with India in 1949, the erstwhile Kingdom of Travancore (in modern Kerala) had the sankha represented on their official flag.

On the discovery of Harappan sites from the 1920s, archaeologists found ample evidence of conch shell craft in the Indus Valley Civilisation. The smooth, shiny surface of conches gives them a porcelain-like quality, and the hard material is ideal for carving. The conches used in religious rituals only involve drilling a small hole through the apex. These conches can then be blown like a trumpet producing a deep, sonorous sound (sankhanaad). Sankhanaad symbolises the Om sound, sacred in Hinduism and Buddhism. In ancient times, the blowing of conches announced the commencement of wars. During the Mahabharata War, all five Pandava brothers are described having their own shankhas, with individual names. Though conches are no longer used in battle, they are still blown during important Hindu religious rituals, and a smaller conch (Jala sankha) is used to store/pour holy water.

Conch traders are known as **Sankhabanik** and the craftsmen are known as Sankhari. Sankharis either work directly on the intact conch surface or cut multiple bangles from a single conch. The bangles are then polished and engraved, and the finished bangles are worn predominantly by Hindu Bengali women, hence the craft thrived in Bengal, Assam and Odisha. In Bengali culture, **sankha bangles** are gifted to a bride on her wedding day as a symbol of marriage, and she is expected to wear them throughout her married life, discarding them only after the demise of her husband. This custom derives from an ancient association of the conch with fertility, because of the distinct shape of the conch that resembles a female vulva.



Plate 61– Sonkhyo Bhandar , shops selling Sankhya, Plate 62 – Raw Conch shells getting cleaned



the craft in the past. Famous English zoologist and ethnographer James Hornell (1865-1949) did extensive research on marine organisms and indigenous watercrafts in Southern India and Sri Lanka. He came to the conclusion that conch craft existed in Tamil Nadu from the first century CE and artisans from Southern India settled in Dhaka during the fourteenth century (or probably earlier). Since then, the epicentre of the Sankhari community in undivided Bengal was in Dhaka, in the old Sankhari Bazaar.

In 1947, Dhaka, and other hubs at Rangpur, Faridpur, Pabna and Chittagaon, became part of East Pakistan (modern Bangladesh). The Sankhari communities which arrived as refugees in newly created West Bengal were settled in Kolkata. In 1953, the refugee rehabilitation department tried to create a Sankhari Colony at Ashok Nagar, in Habra, for around 300 families who were living in the slums of Raja Bazar and Bag Bazar areas. They were offered 6 katah of land and 2000 rupees compensation for each family, but the programme failed because people refused to resettle. In 1956, the refugee rehabilitation department tried to establish a colony again, this time in Barrackpore, a suburb around 20 kilometres from Kolkata. This time they were successful and, together with the artisans, the traders and wholesalers also settled here. Since then, Barrackpore has developed as a hub of conch craft. One can easily find numerous conch traders and shops selling conch products along Ghoshpara Road.

Unfortunately, unlike in Barrackpore, the craft has steadily declined in Kolkata. Even a few decades ago, there used to be pockets in Bhawanipur, College Street, Keshab Chandra Street and Dumdum, where the Sankhari community lived in large numbers. Now, many old Sankhari settlements are completely extinct. ‘Earlier, traders used to request me to work for them at a premium price, especially during festivals, but now it is difficult to find employment for more than 15 days in a month,’ says Bankim Samanta, who has been in this trade from the age of 15. Now in his early sixties, he looks like a malnourished and emaciated man. ‘Who bothers to wear old-fashioned bangles?’ asks Samanta.

In a bid to survive, traders and craftsmen are diversifying their product range by making rings, hair clips, brooches, earrings, necklaces, pendants, paperweights, small boxes, agarbatti stands, buttons, vermilion containers, spoons, forks, etc. Even so, low-level workers like Snehangshu Sen, an artisan from Shankha Nagar Colony, Barrackpore, are struggling. He cannot afford therapy for his autistic son. ‘I know the future will be tough. There is no government scheme to support us, unlike other art forms such as dokra or chhau mask making. There is no pension. I will pass my skills to my wife so that she can run the show after if I die.’ In a bid to survive, conch bangles are combined with intricate gold filigree work, and these fetch a higher price. However, these changes may only sustain the industry in the short term and the Sankhari community is currently looking at an uncertain future.



Plate 63– Crafting Sankhas from Conches



Plate 64 – Sankhya making going on in Barrackpore , Sankharipara



Plate 65– Instruments used for making Sankhya

Plate 66 & 67 : The finished products are polished properly before selling in the market.





Plate 68 & 69 : Family members are involved in the process.

5. Wood work –(Boat Making) - The tradition of woodworking industry goes back to antiquity. Generally, the wood-carvers, boat-builders and carpenters, constituted the different categories of woodworkers in Bengal till the mid-nineteenth century. The wood-carvers were mainly art workers, while the last two categories belonged to the artisan class. All these categories catered to the needs of a distinct group of clientele. Bengal had a magnificent past in the art of wood-carving. The carvings of themes of the Purana, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, and of images of various deities on the pillars of chandimandaps, wooden temple doors testify to their craftsmanship. Again, boat - builders were artisans who served one of the primary needs of the people of Bengal for centuries. Till the introduction of the modern means of communications particularly railways, boats played an important role as a means of transport and communications throughout Bengal. The Ganges and the Hooghly were vital arteries of commerce in Bengal. Boat-builders were spread at different centres of Bengal. Carpenters were generally found in towns and the large villages.

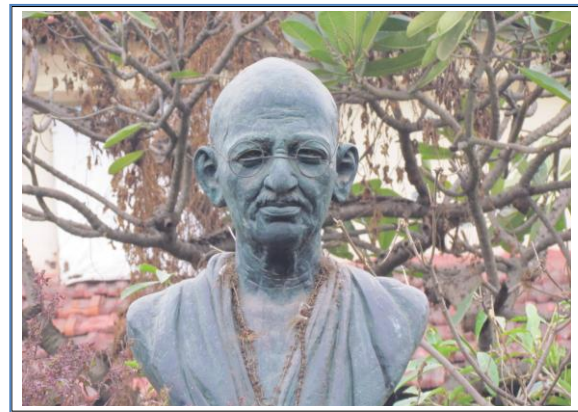
The character of the woodworking industry and the woodworkers in late colonial Bengal underwent significant changes under the impact of changing socioeconomic conditions and commercialization. Introduction of steamers, motor launches and railways since the second half of the nineteenth century affected the industry of boat-building. The Feeder Rivers were greatly damaged by construction of railway bridges which led to silting-up of rivers, consequently affecting river-borne traffic and trade.¹⁶⁹ Railways, especially the East Indian Railway, played a significant role in developing urban settlements as it operated over a large area. A change in the pattern of consumption created a domestic market which gave an impetus to the remarkable development of new kinds of woodworking industries, viz., the cabinet and furniture making, the making of packing cases and wooden casks etc. The massive railway construction, introduction of buses, trams led to the establishment of units such as railway workshops, building workshops, saw mills etc. Side by side with small scale cottage industries scattered in the rural areas, the period saw the growth of medium sized and large scale units in the industry.

In the past, a community named **Aghore**, who were specialized in boat making, used to live here. Earlier this place was known as Agrapalli, from where the name has been changed into Agarpara. Agarpara Union was officially established on 23 July 1867. Sen estate and Sen family had been the recorded oldest inhabitant of Agarpara. Also, Ghosh family of Tarapukur, Parbat family of East Station Road and Majumder family of North Station Road

are the three oldest living families in this town. This craft is a 500 year old art and mention of which specially Balagarh Boat Making Hub gets mentioned even in Ain-i-Akbari. It is said that , from Agarpara only one artisan named Nimai Chandra Barick learned the art of boat making from Amulyadhan Das and started working in Balagarh. The artisans of Agarpara were involved in making and repairing boat for the last 6 generations . The first motor boat , M.V Chaya , which ran in River Hugli was created by this Das family of Agarpara. But unfortunately this traditional boat making hub has no trace now. Baccuse of decline in demand of boats , the artisans left this tradition to get employed in the other industries.

Plate70 : Bust of Mahatma Gandhi at Sodepur Khadi

6. Sodepur Khadi Pratisthan -The Sodepur Khadi Partisthan has a special place in the life of Mashtam Gandhi and Indian Freedom Struggle. Sodepur Khadi Ashram which Gandhiji called his 2nd home and stayed here when he used to come at Calcutta.



Mahatma Gandhi inaugurated **Kalasala** at Sodepur Khadi Pratisthan which was near Sodepur Railway Station on a plot of 15 Bigha, on 2nd January, 1927 in presence of Pandit Matilal Nehru, Srinivas Iyengar, Congress president, Sir P. C. Roy and others. Three addresses, from Panihati Municipality, the Anti Malaria Association and another institution, were given to Gandhiji. His speech at the inauguration ceremony touched the 6,000 pepole gathered and still relevant to day.

He had visited Sodepur Khadi Pratisthan several times in 1939, 1945, 1946 and 1947. Gandhiji satayed at Sodepur crucial days before independence from 9th Aug'1947 to 13th Aug'1947 before moving to the riot affected Beliaghta.

Many top leadres of India had come at Khadi Ashram for discussions/ meetings: Subhas Chandra Bose, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, Sardar Ballav Bhai Patel, Sarat Chandra Bose, Shyamaprasad Mukherjee, G. D. Birla, Jamanlal Bajaj, Khan abdul Gaffar Khan, Sarojini Naidu, Shurabordi, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Bidhan Chandra Roy, P. C. Ghosh and others.

There are many letters and communications which were written by Mahatma Gandhi at Sodepur.

He went to Panihati Mahotsab Tala Ghat or Gouranga Ghat from Sodepur Khadi Ashram on foot on 18th January 1946 and was shown the old Bata Tree, venerated by the Vaishnavas, on the bank of Ganga. He was also shown several things said to have been used by Sri Chaityanya there. Then Chairman of Panihati Municipality Sushil Krishna Ghosh and Phanindranath Mukherjee were the main organisers of the visit.

Khadi Pratisthan was setup by Satish Chandra Dasgupta, an expert chemist who was superintendent of Bengal Chemicals and Pharmaceutical works in Maniktala in North Calcutta decided to give up employment and setup an Ashram for spinning, weaving and materials of Khadi as well as other Cottage Industrial Commodities. He located his Swadeshi



Plate 71 – Sodepur Khadi Pratisthan , cutting of threads in Charkha is going on.

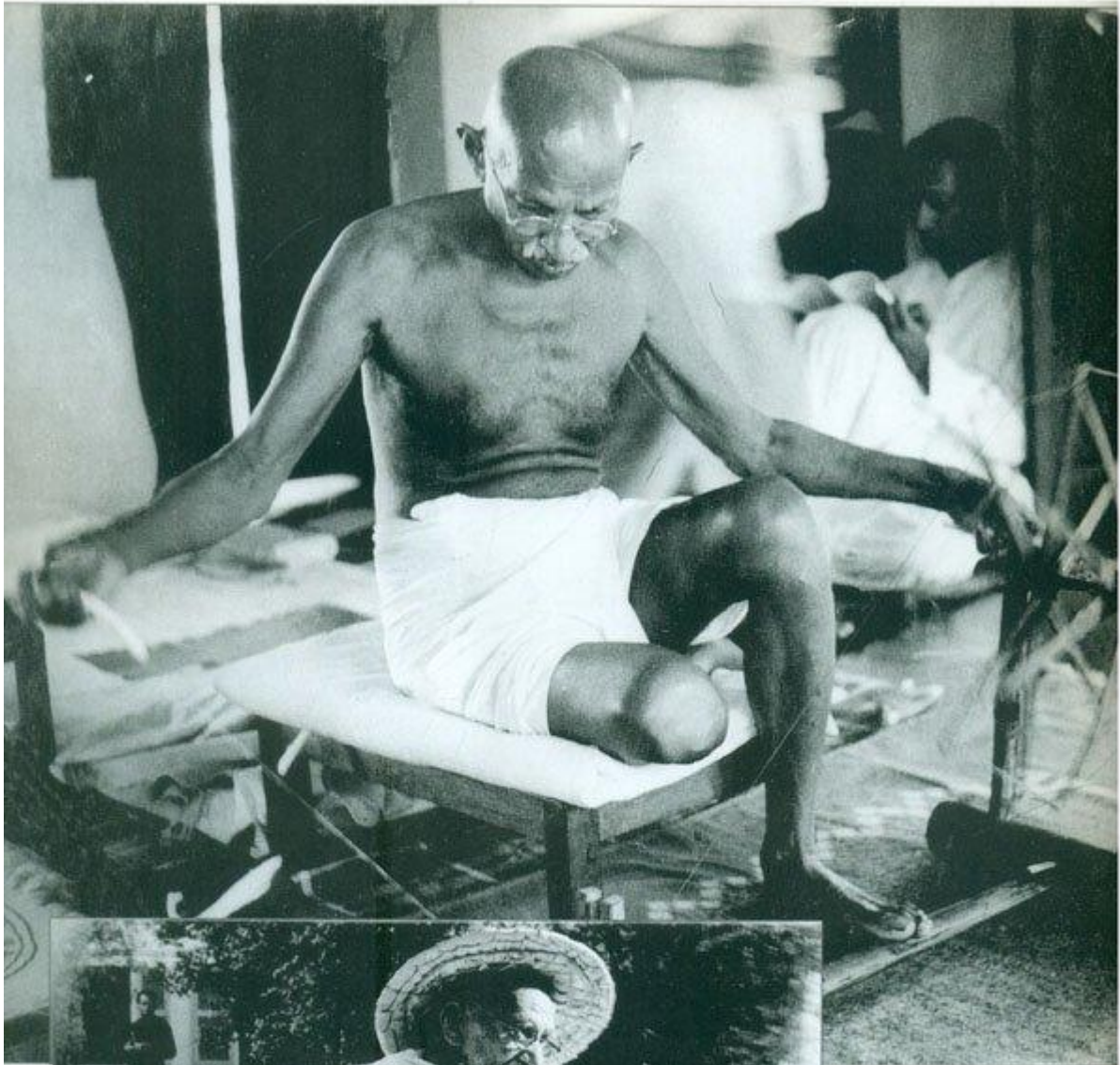
enterprise at a part close to Calcutta, from where his commodities would be marketed. This was the Khadi Pratisthan at produced

items of the Khadi

Pratisthan were paper, cotton spinning and weaving clothes (Khaddar Production), Dairy Goods like Ghee , Condensed Milk Production, Mustard oil production, leather products creation (from tannery to shoe making), fertiliser making from the bone dust of the animals, bee keeping , ink production. (Satish Chandra Dasgupta and his Vocational Training Schools by Bijoy Krisigna Bhattacharya).However the condition of the Pratisthan is in very shape. The

production has stopped long time ago and though it has still some rooms filled with Charkha and other instruments , it needs total renovation.

Mahatma Gandhi spinning at Khadi Pratisthan, Sodepur, Calcutta, October 1946.



Mahatma Gandhi spinning in the garden of Birla House, New Delhi, November 1947.

Plate 72 : Mahatma Gandhi at Sodepur Khadi Pratisthan



Plate 73 & 74 – Sodepur Khadi Pratisthan , present condition

8.Net Making: There are 20 houses of Mahato Families in Khardah area where they carry on fishing as their livelihood. This communities prepare their fishing nets also. Their ancestors came here from Paschim Medinipur. Basically they were labours in the adjoining paper industry. Since the industry got shut down therefore they are now into fishing.



Plate 75 & 76 – Net preparation is going on by the family members .

CHAPTER 5: FAIRS AND FESTIVALS

The greatness of a culture can be found in its festivals.- Siddharth Katragadda

Fair and festival are the space of celebration where everyone from all casts and class join with joyous mood. Social norms and regulations seem to be less strictly maintained during the duration of fair. Although, many fairs and festivals have originated from certain religious order but during the celebration these become very secular in nature and mood.

North 24 Parganas district has unique nature to celebrate various traditional fairs and festivals. This district has many notable fairs and festivals as follows Durga Puja, Kali Puja and Deepavali, Dol Jatra, Ras mela, Gajan and Charak, Chat Puja. Mulajor Shyamnagar mela, Kalpataru Utsav, Annakut Utsav, Gopastami, Ratha Jatra, X-Mass in Churches and many cultural festivals like “Town Festivals” and “Book Fairs”.

1.Durga Puja festival in the district

Durga goddess, known to Hindus as the ‘destroyer of evil’, is characterized by her ten arms carrying various lethal weapons, as well as her vehicle – the lion. Also known as Bhavani, Amba, Chandrika, Gauri, Parvati, Mahishasuramardini, Durga is the ‘Mother goddess’ and the ‘Protector of the Righteous’ to Hindu devotees. In Bengal Durga puja more became social celebration rather than a religious celebration. In North24 Parganas traditionally Durga Puja was much restricted in the traditional Hindu families but increasingly with the popularisation of *community or /Sarbojanin* puja over the years. Strikingly, by being social and secular festival, Durga puja has transcended the boundaries of religion which is somewhat restrictive, for it is no more recognised as a Hindu festival only, at least in the districts of Bengal in urban atmosphere and became a mass festival. Durga Puja in urban atmosphere, remote from the actual relation with nature the celebration of festivals tended to get secularised. The unique characteristic of Durga Puja is that it may be enjoyed by all irrespective of caste and religion. So, the unique feature of this Durga Puja or Durgotsav is a festivity that may be enjoyed by all irrespective of caste and religion in all over the Bengal. The first majestic worship of goddess **Durga** is thought to have been in the late 1500s. Folklore says that the landlords of Dinajpur and Malda **initiated** the first **Durga Puja in Bengal**. Another legend states that Raja Kangshanarayan of Taherpur in Nadiya district

organised the first autumn **Durga Puja in Bengal** in 1606 . The family of Sabarna Ray Chaudhury has been celebrating Durga Puja since 1610 in their ancestral home at Barisha, Kolkata. It is possibly the oldest organised festival in the Kolkata region. Panchanan Gangopadhyay (Panchu Saktikhan) of the family acquired the Khan title from the Mughal Emperor Humayun in the sixteenth century, for his bravery as a cavalry officer in charge of Pathan soldiers. Around the middle of that century he constructed a palace at a place which came to be known as **Haveli Sahar** or **Halisahar**. It was from Halisahar that the family spread far and wide, including, to Uttarpara, Birati, Barisha and Kheput. However , at present the Sabarna family of Halisahar is almost nonexistent.

Major Durga Puja of North 24 Parganas-

Historical evidence suggests that the Durga puja has evolved over time, becoming more elaborate, social, and creative. In this district, this festival had earlier been a domestic puja of the old and rich families following restricted ritual and worshipping manner. But it had also come to be celebrated in the *sarvajanin* (public) form, where communities get together, pool their resources and efforts to set up *pandals* and illuminations, and celebrate carnival type of form like Calcutta and other districts of Bengal. However, the tradition of domestic “Durga Puja festival celebrated in this district is very old after the oldest Durga Puja in Barisha {Calcutta} in 1601 in the family of Sabarno Roychoudury” {Ram Shasanka Bhattacharya, old member of the Kantalpara Thakur Bari}. The rituals of the Durga puja also varies from being Vedic, Puranic, or Tantric, or a combination of these. Generally, Durga puja rituals in this district typically combine all three. To follow puranic or tantric rituals are difficult for the unavailability of necessary materials and tough to maintain in domestic domain.

Durga Puja in Kantalpara Thakur Bari is one of the oldest Durga Puja in North 24 Parganas. **Kantalpara** Thakur Bari is the old Brahmin family established in 16th century after receiving huge land {Zamindari} from Barovuiya. Durga puja of this family began approximately between 1680-90. The long puja tradition was uninterrupted with full of grandeur in Kantalpara. But during the time of Japanese attack in Calcutta during the second world war it was interrupted. The family members claim this festival was first started in the Barjora village in northern UP and puja was again started after they migrated to Kantalpara. Thakur Bari celebrate this puja every year in their courtyard as the large Pujar Dalan {place

of worship} has been heavily damaged. The majestic arrangements of the festival have lost its

splendor for the decline of Zamindari and financial constraints of the family.



Plate 77 ,78 ,79–Durga Puja festival in Kantalpara , Naihati. Plate 80– Jatra pala during the festival



Durga Puja in Nawabganj,Ichapur,Mondalbari

Nawabganj Mondal Bari is located on the bank Ganga river in Nawabganj, a small town between Ichapur and Palta under north Barrackpore Municipality. This family is one of the old Zamindar family in the district. Durga Puja of the Mondal family is celebrated with full splendor and tradition for about 170 years. However, the place of worship is actually the Radha-Krishna Jew Thakur Bari where Hara-Gouri {Shiva and Durga} is being worshipped not Durga as Mahisamardini the demon killer Goddess.



Plate 81– Hara Gouri Durga Idol in Mondolbari



Plate 82– Mondal bari , Nawabganj , Ichapur

b. Kalipuja Festival in the study area-

Kali Puja is the most important festival of the region particularly in Halisahar . Kali Puja or Shyama puja started in **Bengal** during the 18th century, by King Krishna Chandra of Krishnanagar. This festival increased in the community in the 19th century, with Krishnachandra's grandson Ishwarchandra. There is a belief that **Krishnanada Agamayavahish** a famous Tantric scholar had once dreamt of Goddess Kali the goddess associated with death and darkness, is believed to have instructed Agamavagisha to worship her in a form that incorporated in her forms of feminine domesticity. Agamayavahish is credited for worshipping a certain image of Kali in the region. The zamindars of later centuries supported the tradition and turned them into flamboyant projects to showcase wealth and power.

i. Kali Puja in Ramprasad Vita , Halisahar - Halisahar or erstwhile Kumarhatta was the birthplace of Ramprasad Sen , a great yogi who created a new form of poetry known as 'Sakta Padabali' in Bengali, and a new style of singing called 'Prasadi'. After Ramprasad there was a remarkable outburst of Sakta poetry in Bengal. Ramprasad Sen is regarded as one of the notable figures of the bhakti movement in Bengal during the eighteenth century. He is credited with popularizing the bhakti Shakta tradition and Shyama Sangeet—devotional songs to the goddess Kali. Ramprasad was the first Shakta poet to address Kali with such intimate devotion, and to sing of her as a tender loving mother or even as a little girl. After him, a school of Shakta poets continued the Kali-bhakti tradition. Ramprasad created a new compositional form that combined the Bengali folk style of Baul music with classical melodies and kirtan. This new form took root in Bengali culture for the next hundred and fifty years, with hundreds of poet-composers combining folk and raga-based melodies, and bringing together styles of music that included classical, semi-classical, and folk. His poetic style has been described as "sweet, familiar and unsophisticated", though his lyrics were sung in classical style rather than a folk style. Two of his notable successors as composers in the same style were Kamalakanta Bhattacharya and Mahendranath Bhattacharya.

One of the oldest Kali Puja festivals started around long time ago by the great singer devotee Ramprasad Sen {1720-1795} in Halisahar. Kali puja celebrates in Ramprasad's birth place with huge participations of not only local people and many devotees and travelers from different parts of the district. The prime event of the puja is to produce huge amount of sacred Vog {rice} for all people. There is a belief that the worship of Kali started by Ramprasad



Plate 83 – Ramprasader Vite ,

when he himself made the deity with the clay from Ganga and worshiped in the same day. Finally, in the next day of the worship he took the deity on his head and disappeared in the river.

ii. Shyam Sundar Kali Puja , Naihati

Shyama Sundari puja is one of the oldest puja festivals near the Banerjee Para Ghat in



Plate 84 & 85– Shyam Sundar Kali Puja , Naihati

Naihati. This Puja was started in 1720-1721 by Ramananda Bramhachari on the foundation of Ghat and Panchamundir Ason. But the deity of Shyama Sundari was made during 1820-1825 by the Kaliprasad Bhattacharya an ancestor of Bramhachari. Like other Kali worships in Bengal the ritual of worship based on Tantric method. A huge number of visitors come to visit this puja and relish the sacred food from the temple. In this area only Shyama Sundari temple make Hilsa Fish as one of the major items of the sacred food {vog}. It is saying that famous poet Kaji Nazrul Islam had visited this puja festival several times.

iii.Baroma Kali Puja Festival

Like other Kali worships in Bengal the ritual of worship based on Tantric method. A huge



Plate 86– Baroma , Naihati

number of visitors come to visit this puja and relish the sacred food from the temple. In this area only Shyama Sundari temple make Hilsa Fish as one of the major items of the sacred food {vog}. It is saying that famous poet Kaji Nazrul Islam had visited this puja festival several times. Baroma Kali Puja festival is the most striking and flamboyant festival located on the Arabinda Road market place. This road ends in the ferry ghat of Naihati. Although there are few large Kali deities also being worshiped on the road but Baroma is the tallest deity among all. This deity was first made 90 years ago by the initiative of Bhabesh Chakrabarti a noted person in Naihati town. Since last five decades this particular festival created enormous popularity and euphoria among the all levels of people not only in the town but from all over the district with its many myths, believes, spiritual stories and faith.

number of visitors come to visit this puja and relish the sacred food from the temple. In this area only Shyama Sundari temple make Hilsa Fish as one of the major items of the sacred food {vog}. It is saying that famous poet Kaji Nazrul Islam had visited this puja festival several times. Baroma Kali Puja festival is the most striking and flamboyant festival located on the Arabinda Road market place. This road ends in the ferry ghat of Naihati.

Although

there are few



Plate 87– Kali Deity , Baroma

iv.Kali Puja in Shyamnagar, Mulajore Temple - Kali Puja festival is one of the most important festival in Mulajore Kalibari or Bromhomoyee Kali Mandir in Shyamnagar beside Ganga river. This temple was founded by Gopimohon Thakur a relative of Jorasanko Thakur Bari around 200 years ago before the foundation of Dakhshineswar Kali Temple. Kali



Plate 88 & 89– Kali Puja in Shyamnagar

Puja in this temple celebrates with huge splendor and devotion. A



large number of people come here during the Puja. Not only Kali Puja

also Poushmela and Navaratri festivals are important events in this Temple.

v.Kali Puja in Annapurna Temple, Barrackpore -Kali Puja in Annapurna Temple on the eastern bank of river in Barrackpore is another important festival in the district. This temple was built by Jagadamba Debi younger daughter of Rani Rasmani 20 years after the foundation of Dakhsineswar temple. This temple was inaugurated by great sage Ramkrishna Dev in 1875. It is a nabaratna temple and a sort of replica of Dakhsineswar temple.

However , **Annapurna puja** is celebrated every year with pomp and gaeity. Apart from the daily worship, special puja is held on Astami tithi of Sukla paksha (the period from full moon to new moon) when apart from puja hom is also performed.



Plate 90 –Annapurna Deity in Annapurna Temple , Titagarh

vi. Dakshina Kali Puja in Dakshineswar- It is the most famous Kali Temple in Kolkata after Kalighat. **Dakshineswar Kali Temple** is a Hindu navaratna temple located at Dakshineswar. Situated on the eastern bank of the Hooghly River, the presiding deity of the temple is Bhavatarini, an aspect of Kali, who is form of Adi Shakti. The temple was built in 1855 by Rani Rashmoni, a philanthropist and a devotee of Kali. The temple is famous for its association with Ramakrishna and Ma Sarada Devi, mystics of 19th Century Bengal.

Adyashakti is the primordial energy-consciousness-bliss, she is the Mahamaya who creates the universe and liberates the jiva from the clutches of Maya. The sky is Her clothes. Her eyes have the spread from ear to ear. The Gods were defeated in the war against Shumbha and Nishumbha, the two Asura brothers. They were driven out of the heaven. They then composed a hymn to the Devi and prayed to Her. At this, a Devi came out of the body of the Adyashakti. She was named Kousiki. As a result, the color of Adyashakti turned into black. So she became



Plate91– Dakshina Kali , Dakshineswar

known as Kali or Kalika(the dark). Though in course of time, she got

black Her original color. In another version, during Ambika's (the mother) war against Shumbha and Nishumbha, at the moment of killing Chandasur Kali sprang forth from the forehead of Ambika. During the war between the gods and the asuras Kali spread out Her tongue and drank all the blood of Raktabij. That is why Her tongue is out. Kali is the first Vidya of ten Mahavidyas. She wears tigerskin. She plays with mahakal and so she is Mahakali or Kali. Kali has so many forms. She is terrible and at the same time calm and benefactress of the world.

The Dakshineswar Kali Temple was founded around the middle of the 19th century by Rani Rashmoni. Rani Rashmoni was a Mahishya by casteband was well known for her philanthropic activities. In the year 1847, Rashmoni prepared to go upon a long pilgrimage to the sacred Hindu city of Kashi to express her devotions to the Divine Mother. Rani was to travel in twenty-four boats, carrying relatives, servants, and supplies. According to traditional accounts, the night before the pilgrimage began, Rashmoni had a vision of the Divine Mother in the form of the goddess Kali in a dream and reportedly said,

There is no need to go to Banaras. Install my statue in a beautiful temple on the banks of the Ganges river and arrange for my worship there. Then I shall manifest myself in the image and accept worship at that place.

Profoundly affected by the dream, Rani immediately looked for and purchased a 30,000-acre plot in the village of Dakshineswar. The large temple complex was built between 1847 and 1855. The 20-acre (81,000 m²) plot was bought from an Englishman, Jake Hastie, and was then popularly known as Saheban Bagicha. Partly old Muslim burial ground shaped like a tortoise, considered befitting for the worship of Shakti according to Tantra



Plate 92 – Old Photo of Dakshineswar Temple

traditions, it took eight years and nine hundred thousand rupees to complete the construction. The idol of Goddess Kali was installed on the Snana Yatra day on 31 May 1855 amid festivities at the temple formally known as Sri Sri Jagadishwari Mahakali, with Ramkumar Chhattopadhyay as the head priest. Soon his younger brother Gadai or Gadadhar (later known as Ramakrishna) moved in and so did his nephew Hriday to assist him. On 31 May 1855 more than 1 lakh (one hundred thousand) Brahmins were invited from different parts of the country to grace the auspicious occasion. The next year, Ramkumar Chattopadhyay died, and the position was given to Ramakrishna along with his wife Sarada Devi, who stayed in the south side of the Nahabat (music room) in a small room on the ground floor, which is now a shrine dedicated to her. Ramakrishna was responsible for

bringing much in the way of both fame and pilgrims to the temple. Rani Rashmoni lived for only five years and nine months after the inauguration of the temple. She fell seriously ill in 1861. Realizing that her death was near, she decided to hand over the property she had purchased in Dinajpur (now in Bangladesh) as a legacy for the maintenance of the temple to the temple trust. She accomplished her task on 18 February 1861 and died on the next day. After her death, her sons-in-law took to celebrating Durga Puja in their respective premises. Dakshineswar temple becomes a center of attraction mainly during the Kali Puja. The temple is decorated wonderfully with flowers and amazing lighting ;

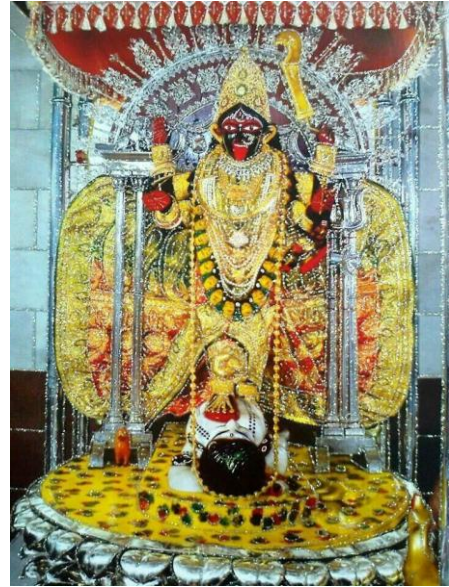


Plate 93–Dakhina Kali Idol

morning start making beeline to offer their prayer to the presiding deity of Dakshina Kali of the temple. The music of beautiful religious songs that play on the temple premise on the day of Kali puja, enhances the religious appeal of the place even more. Beside this, on every “amabashya”, the temple is also decked up beautifully and an elaborate evening arati is also performed.



Plate 94– Dakhineswar Temple , Kali Puja

vii.Adyashakti , Ariadaha- In 1915, a young Brahmin named Annada Charan Bhattacharya was setting up a successful practice in Ayurvedic medicine in Calcutta. A capable scientist, he had discovered seven patent medicines and went on to become a renowned doctor all over Bengal. **Annada Thakur**, as he came to be known, was a deeply religious man, filled with devotion to the Divine Mother Kali and Her great nineteenth-century Bengali saint, Sri Ramakrishna. Nevertheless, even such a spiritual man as Annada was taken aback by the strange visions and dreams he began to have: A vision of four girls carrying an image (murthi) of the Divine Mother Kali down a Calcutta street, invisible to all but Annada, yet so real that he folded his palms and, to the puzzlement of passersby, bowed to thin air. Two dreams of a sannyasin telling him to shave his head and bathe in the Ganges, to which the outraged Annada replied, "Reverend Sir, if you again talk of head-shaving, I shall hold you by the neck and push you out of the room." Then, stranger yet, dreams of Sri Ramakrishna himself, so real that Annada was convinced the venerable saint, though long departed from this life, had been in the room with him. When the order came from Sri Ramakrishna to shave his head and bathe in the Ganges, Annada could hardly refuse. Sri Ramakrishna then told him to go to the Eden Gardens, a magnificent British-built public garden in Calcutta, and to look there for a murthi of the Divine Mother where a coconut tree and a pakur tree grew together. There, at the bottom of a pond, Annada and three companions found the image. A commemorative plaque marks the spot today.

She was a little more than a foot tall, carved out of one solid piece of black marble, with sparkling jewels set in her eyes. She was completely intact; not one lotus petal, not one finger, was chipped or cracked. Her form was that of the goddess Kali.

Annada's household worshipped her in the traditional manner, offering flower garlands, fruit, cheese, sweets, sandal paste, and incense. As word of Her miraculous appearance spread, devotees came from all over the city to make offerings. Her very presence seemed to inspire the deepest devotion. Even prostitutes wept when they offered flowers to Her. Plate 95



Adya Ma

Three men from a Calcutta museum came also. Judging the image to be very ancient, from the Bhuddistic period, they offered a large sum of money for it, which Annada refused. A later encounter with a sadhu confirmed that the image had indeed originated in antiquity, in a temple in the district of Gaya. Then the strangest dreams of all began. The Divine Mother Kali Herself appeared to Annada and, to his horror, commanded him to immerse the image in the Ganges. According to Her command, the image was photographed the following morning and copies circulated to any devotees who wanted them. Then, with a few companions, Annada hired a boat, rowed out into the middle of the Ganges, and plunged Her into the water. There, as far as anyone knows, She remains today. The Divine Mother continued to appear to Annada in dreams. "I am Adyashakti ('Primordial Force'), and I am to be worshipped as Adya Ma," She said. She dictated to him a Sanskrit hymn in Her honor, the Adyastotram, promising that anyone who sang it with devotion would find favor with her. In 1919, Sri Ramakrishna revealed what Annada's life's work was to be: the establishment of a temple to the Divine Mother Adya Ma. The temple was to be in reality three temples enveloping one another: the first to Sri Ramakrishna, the second to Adya Ma, and the third to Krishna and Radha. The altar was to be three altars built like large stairsteps: Ramakrishna on the bottom, Adya Ma in the middle, and Krishna and Radha on the top, encircled by the sacred syllable om. In conjunction with the temple, there were to be separate ashrams for men and women, boys' and girls' orphanages and schools, a free clinic to prevent the spread of contagious disease, and distribution of food and clothing to the poor. At Sri Ramakrishna's behest, Annada Thakur spent a year with his parents in Raujan, in what is now Bangladesh, and then returned to Calcutta and carried out spiritual practices for a year on the bank of the Ganges. Then, on January 14, 1921, a celebration was held, which is still celebrated at the temple as Siddhotsab. The same year a committee was formed for the establishment of the Dakshineswar Ramakrishna Sangha. In early 1927, the Sangha acquired a piece of land with some adjoining old Shiva temples, and on January 31, 1928, Annada Thakur broke ground for the temple on a compound of nearly 14 acres.



Having seen his dreams begin to bear fruit, Annada died in January, 1929, at the age of 38, of a lung infection. Before his death, however, he wrote his remarkable story in the Bengali book *Swapna-Jeevana*, later translated into English as *A Life of Visions*. Plate 96 : Adya Maa Kaali Deity

The dream of the temple lived on through the work of a group of devotees. The Shiva temples were restored, the girls' school was built in 1942, and the boys' orphanage was completed in 1951. The free clinic moved to a new building on the temple grounds in 1959.

The temple itself, built of pure white marble, was completed in a number of phases and consecrated on January 14, 1967. Sri Ramakrishna had predicted that after the establishment of this temple, there would be a new religious stir in the country, starting in Bengal. At least three devotees each year, he said, would receive a direct vision of God in this temple and would dedicate their lives for the welfare of the world. Today, hundreds of pilgrims and devotees visit the temple daily, and its charitable outreach serves many hundreds of needy people.

7 Maagh, 21 January, Sunday: Makar Sankranti (End of month)
Special puja and homa ceremony in celebration of 87th lunar date of Siddhilav of the Founder Sri Annada Thakur and 41th Inauguration day of Main Temple is done.

3.Chat Puja- Chat puja is an ancient Hindu festival, devoted to Surya Dev {sun god} and Chhathi Maiya the sister of Surya, Chat Puja is the indigenous worship in the states of Bihar, Jharkhand, Eastern Uttar Pradesh and Nepal. It is the only Vedic festival that is dedicated to the Sun God, who is supposed to be the source of all powers and Chhathi Maiya (Goddess Usha) from the Vedic period. The god of light, energy and life force is worshipped in order to promote well-being, development and the prosperity of human beings. Through this festival, people aim towards thanking the Sun God for a period of four days. The devotees who observe the fast during this festival are called *Vrati*. Chat Puja in this district was not a homegrown festival in north 24 Parganas. Chat Puja celebration grew up in the community of the migrated workers from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.



Plate 97– Chhat Puja in the study area

Since the early part of 20th century a huge number of workers settled down in the small towns of the district on the eastern side of river from Dumdum to Halisahar. However, they became the part of community living with adaption of local culture. Chat Puja is now an integral part of festivals of this district.



Plate 98– Chhat Puja offering near Jubilee Bridge , Naihati

4. Gajan/Charak Festival - Gajan is another very important Hindu festival in this district. This festival of Bengal is against the backdrop of a historically lived tradition of plurality, within which subsist various tensions, conflicts as also possibilities of reconciliation and co-existence. This a festival associated with lord Shiva, Neel and Dharmaraj. It is a festival of hardship mostly celebrated by the lower cast people as devotees {male and female} called Sannayasi. The word “Gajan” in Bengali comes from the word “Garjan” or roars the Sanyasis release during the festival. However, Gajan is a festival in which of all classes of people participate to show their respect to god. Gajan in this district like all districts of Bengal spans around a week by the end Chaitra month of Bengali calendar and ends with Charak Puja before the Bengali new year {called poila Boisakh} devotion, sacrifice and pain to show the extreme respect to lord Shiva.

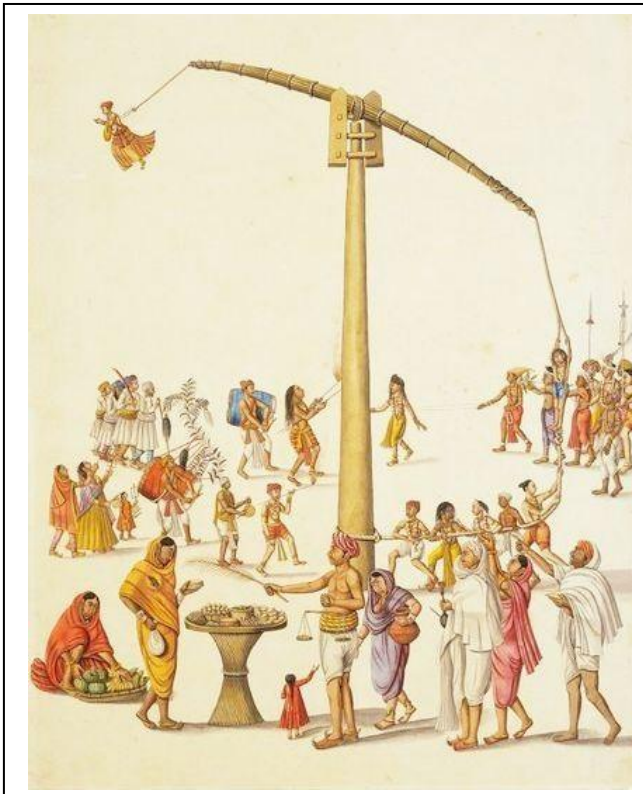


Plate 99– Gajan Sannyasis

Plate 100- Charak Festival in Bengal, painted by Company School of Painter in late 19th century

Plate 101- Charak Festival practice at present time.

Neel Shashti is celebrated a day before the Charak when Bengali housewives observe a day fasting called Uposh. However, the form of Charak mela has changed its nature. The artisans of the nearby villages almost disappeared in the Charak mela to display their hand made toys and other crafts. Instead, plastic made toys are much popular in the mela. The nature of festival follows the recent trend of fairs in Bengal.



Plate 102 & 103 - Crocodile made with clay and seeds –an integral part of Charak



'NeelShashti' is the day in the Bengali month of Chaitra when Bengalis celebrate the marriage of Lord Shiva with Devi Parvati by offering puja to the Lord. This puja is done by the married women folk to seek the blessings of the Lord for their husbands & children. On the hot day of Chaitra the women fast through out the day & finally in the evening they visit the nearby temple of the Lord Shiva & pour milk over the ' Shiva lingam' & offer bel leaves & flowers.

5. "Chida Utsab"/ "DANDA MAHOTSAB"- Perhaps the oldest , biggest and most renewed festival of the study area is the **Danda Mahotsab /Chida Utsab**.

This festival is related to **Sri Chaitannya Mahaprabhu** and **Sri Nityananda Mahaprabhu**, having an immense religious value for the Vaisnavs. The festival is organised in the Month of Jaistha on Shukla Troyodoshi Tithi or June Month every year. This festival is held at the River bank of the Ganges at Mahotsob Ghat. Sri Ramkrishna Paramsansha used to participate in this festival with his disciples and Bhaktos which included Rakhil Chandra, Girish Chandra Ghosh, Narendra Nath Dutta (Swami Vivekananda), Mahendra Nath Dutta and others. Mention of this has been made at Sri Ramkrishna Kathamrita and Sri Sri Ramkrishna Lila Prosongo. Sri Chaitanya halted at Panihati Mohotsavtala Ghat twice, once in A.D. 1515 on his way to Puri and another time when going to Vrindaban from Puri via Gaud. He came here in the month of Kartik and stayed in the house of Raghav Pandit, his disciple. The image of Madan Mohan worshiped by Sri Chaitanya in the house of Raghav, as also the Samadhi of Raghav under a canopy of Madhabi creepers can still be seen in the Raghav Bhawan or Pat Bari. Sri Nityananda also came here in A.D. 1516 when he was on a missionary errand for spreading religion of love in Gaud. Raghunath Narayandev, a renowned zamindar of Saptagram met Nityananda under a Bat Tree by the Ganga. On Nityananda's advice, the zamindar distributed chira & curd to the pilgrims assembled there in the month of Jyaishta of 1517. The festival is celebrated still now and it's called Danda Utsav.



Plate 104– Chida Utsab , Panihati Mahotsabtala Ghat



Plate 105 : Panihati Mahotsab

Sri Ramakrishna had visited Panihati and participated in the Chira Utsav or Danda Mahotsab, incarnated with Sri Chaitanya Dev and Sri Nityanada Mahaprabhu. Sri Ramakrishna was invited by Moni Sen a bhakta and Rasatdar of Sri Ramakrishna after demise of Mathur Babu, residing near the Mahotsavtala. First visit was in 1858 which is described in Sri Ramakrishna Lila Prasanga. His visit at 1883 is described at Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita. It is noted in the above publications of the profound spiritual experiences at the Mahotsavtala during the visits. In other places we also find the high regards towards Panihati being the holy place sanctified by Sri Chaitanna Deb, Nityananda, Raghav Pandit.

Sri Ramakrishna attended Mohotsavtala last time in June, 1885 when he was accompanied by Narendra Nath (Vivekananda) and 24 other disciples. All of them came by boats along the Ganga from Dakshineswar. Besides Narendra Nath other famous disciples who used to accompany Sri Ramakrishna included Balaram Basu, Girish Chandra Ghosh, Mohendranath Dutta (Srimo the writer of RamKishna kathmirta) Swami Abhedananda, Swami Brahmananda, Swami Abhutananda, Joginmaa and Gopal Maa.

He halted in the house of Mani Sen and later joined the Kirtan and visited Raghav Pandit's House There are references in Ramakrishna Kathamrita and writings of Swami Saradananda of the Samadhi of Sri Ramakrishna and his Kirtan. Sri Ramakrishna referred Mohotsav Utsav

as very Sacred and insisted his disciples and bhaktas to visit the Panihati and participate in Danda Mahatsob.

Danda Mahotsab and Mahatma Gandhi -The Sodepur Khadi Partisthan has a special place in the life of Mashtam Gandhi and Indian Freedom Struggle. Sodepur Khadi Ashram which Gandhiji called his 2nd home and stayed here when he used to come at Calcutta. Mahatma Gandhi inaugurated Kalasala at Sodepur Khadi Pratisthan which was near Sodepur Railway Station on a plot of 15 Bigha, on 2nd January, 1927 in presence of Pandit Matilal Nehru, Srinivas Iyengar, Congress president, Sir P. C. Roy and others. Three addresses, from Panihati Municipality, the Anti Malaria Association and another institution, were given to Gandhiji. He went to Panihati Mahotsab Tala Ghat or Gouranga Ghat from Sodepur Khadi Ashram on foot on 18th January 1946 and was shown the old Bata Tree, venerated by the Vaishnavas, on the bank of Ganga. He was also shown several things said to have been used by Sri Chaityanya there. Then Chairman of Panihati Municipality Sushil Krishna Ghosh and Phanindranath Mukherjee were the main organisers of the visit.

Danda Mahatsab and Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami – He is one of the Six Gosvamis of Vrindavana. The Six Gosvamis of Vrindavana represent a class of highly perfected personalities, who threw away all prospects of the most attractive pleasures like pebbles in the street. By hearing about their lives and teachings, a seeker gets insight into the possibilities awaiting him if he simply continues sincerely on this path. They have painstakingly constructed aesthetically pleasing temples for the pleasure of the Lord and the spiritual upliftment of mankind. Raghunatha dasa was the son of an extremely wealthy zamindar, Govardhana Majumadara. His family's fabulous opulence and wealth equalled that Indra, the king of heaven. From childhood, he was uninterested in material enjoyment. When he was very small, he was blessed with the association of Srila Haridasa Thakura. He was so much influenced by Haridasa Thakura that he had no attachment for any of the materialistic things. This posed a big problem for his parents because they wanted him to take over everything. He met Lord Caitanya for the first time when Lord came to Santipura after accepting His sannyasa. By the mercy of Advaita Acarya he got chance to partake remnants of Lord and render service to Him. After returning home, Raghunatha dasa became mad with ecstatic love. Raghunatha dasa used to run away from home again and again to go to Jagannatha Puri, but his father kept binding him and bringing him back. He employed 11 people to incessantly keep Raghunatha dasa under control. When Lord Caitanya again came to Santipura to the way to Vrindavana, Raghunatha dasa again met Lord Caitanya. He had

offered to dedicate his life at the Lord's lotus feet. However Lord instructed him not to become a show-bottle renunciate. Lord said, "Within your heart you should keep yourself very faithful, but externally you may behave like an ordinary man. Thus Krishna will soon be very pleased and deliver you from the clutches of maya. You may see Me at Nilacala, Jagannatha Puri, when I return after visiting Vrindavana. By that time you can think of some trick to escape. What kind of means you will have to use at that time will be revealed by Krishna. If one has Krishna's mercy, no one can check him." For one year he gave up all craziness and external pseudo renunciation and engaged in his household duties without attachment. Meantime, a Muslim official became envious of Hiranya dasa, Raghunatha dasa Gosvami's uncle, and induced some big official court minister to have him arrested. By the intelligence of Raghunatha dasa the misunderstanding was mitigated. Then Raghunatha dasa went to Panihati, and following the order of Nityananda Prabhu, he observed a festival (cida-dadhi-mahotsava) by distributing chipped rice mixed with yogurt. The day after the festival, Nityananda Prabhu gave Raghunatha dasa the blessing that he would very soon attain the shelter of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. After this incident, Raghunatha dasa, with the help of his priest, whose name was Yadunandana Acarya, got out of his house by trickery and thus ran away. Not touching the general path, he secretly went to Jagannatha Puri. After 12 days, hardly eating or drinking anything for all these days, he arrived in Jagannatha Puri at the lotus feet of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. When Raghunatha dasa met Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Lord said, "The mercy of Lord Krishna is stronger than anything else. Therefore the Lord has delivered you from the ditch of materialistic life, which is like a hole into which people pass stool. My dear Raghunatha dasa, your father and his elder brother are just like worms in stool in the ditch of material enjoyment, for the great disease of the poison of material enjoyment is what they consider happiness. Although your father and uncle are charitable to brahmanas and greatly help them, they are nevertheless not pure Vaisnavas. However, they are almost like Vaisnavas. Those who are attached to materialistic life and are blind to spiritual life must act in such a way that they are bound to repeated birth and death by the actions and reactions of their activities. By His own free will, Lord Krishna has delivered you from such a condemned materialistic life. Therefore the glories of Lord Krishna's causeless mercy cannot be expressed." Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu entrusted Raghunatha dasa to Svarupa Damodara Gosvami. For 5 days Raghunatha dasa Gosvami took prasadam at the temple, but later he would stand at the Simha-dvara gate and eat only whatever he could gather by alms. When Raghunatha's father received news of this, he sent some men and money, but Raghunatha dasa refused to accept the money. Thereafter, he used to eat rejected food that he had

collected and washed. This renounced life greatly pleased both Svarupa Damodara Gosvami and Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. One day Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu took by force some of the same food, thus blessing Raghunatha dasa for his renunciation. Pleased by the renunciation of Raghunatha dasa, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu bestowed His mercy and gifted him with His own Govardhana sila and gunja-mala that Lord got from Vrindavana. Raghunatha dasa lived in Jagannatha Puri as personal associate of Lord Caitanya for 16 years. When Lord Caitanya disappeared from this world, in the pangs of separation, he decided to go to the holy land of Vrindavana and commit suicide by jumping from the highest peak of Govardhana Hill. When he reached Vrindavana, he met Srila Rupa Gosvami and Srila Sanatana Gosvami. Upon seeing them, he felt a revival in his heart, and he lived in their association. He was given residence on the banks of Sri Radhakunda. There he was constantly immersed in the ecstasy of love and devotion to Lord Gauranga and Sri Sri Radha and Krishna. He would bow down to the Supreme Personality of Godhead a minimum of 1000 times every day. One time, as the tiger was drinking water from Shyamakunda, Lord Krishna appeared with a stick in His hand to protect Raghunatha dasa Gosvami when he was immersed in his bhajan. Next time Sanatana Gosvami saw Srimati Radharani appear and with the veil of Her sari She was shading Raghunatha dasa Gosvami's head when he was immersed in the chanting of the holy names on a very hot summer day. At Govardhana he discovered the "Tongue of Govardhana". Sri Radhakunda and Sri Shyamakunda was also renovated with his instructions.

Srila Prabhupada told that Raghunatha dasa Gosvami was so austere that he would just have a little buttermilk every day sometimes every few days. Even while honouring that little buttermilk, he would feel ashamed of himself and think, "If one has love and devotion, to Lord Krishna, that love is so satisfying that one should not be concerned with maintaining this physical body." He is the prayojana acarya - teaching by his writings and his example the highest principles of love in separation as an associate of Srimati Radharani.

6.Khardah Shyam Sundar Temple Nearly 500 years ago in SRICHAITANYAYUG once SriKrishnavatar SRICHAITANYA MAHAPRABHU called SRINITYANANDA n said," i ll conclude this birth very soon and again I will take birth as your son." Soon Sri Nityananda Mahaprabhu'S house a divine child named VEERVADRA GOSWAMI was born in 1457 AD in Khardah Kunjbaati- where SRINITAI used to live with his consort VASUDHA DEVI . Veervadra's brilliance n devotion was divine. He was born in such time when tantra n buddism were the two most popular religious trend in Bengal. He then as per Sri Chaitanya mahaprabhu's will has started gathering vaishnavas from Dhaka, Jassore,Khulna n Barishal in the place called KHARDAH and started doing sadhana in a forest called Kunjvati there. In his sadhana he got to know that a KASTHIPATTHAR (a special type of black marble stone) is there in Gaud Palace on which Krishna stood at the time of rajsua yagna by dharamraj Yudhisthir andwashed charanas of the guests. He also got to know that stone was kept there by Maharaj Parikshit who used to worship it and offered pranama there everyday. This very stone held three different roopas- MOHINI, SHYAM and VATSALYA. He was eager to bring that stone to shape these three idols.For that he started uniting and organising more n more vaishnavas and then leaded for mahdah doing harinaam sankirtan with them. When they were about to enter Maldah- the spy of Badshah informed him about the group approaching the palace. Badshah's son-in-law was serious that time n he came more worried knowing that. He planned to pray veervadra to stay in his palace as guest n to convert Veerbhadra by offering him beaf to eat in conspiracy.But veervadra has turned that into lotuses by his power of sadhana. Again badshah tried to make him drink sura (alcohol) telling that is syrup. And when Veervadra opened the cover of the glass- badshah saw there is a glassful of milk in his hand. He then came to know this vaishnav is someone very special and blessed.He bowed before him and prayed to cure his son-in-law.Veeerbhadra granted his wish n asked to give him that stone to make idols. Badshah immidiately offered him that . HE got to see krishna in his dream telling "its impossible to carry the stone through the conventinal route so I will go flowing into the dhara of river Ganges. Next day the have flowed the stone into river Ganga in maldah and stone came floating upto khardah. Where it was collected there its known as SHYAMER GHAT. The three idols whom he has seen in his Dhyana were made by a vaishnava devotee and artist named Nayan and three Roopa s were made as 1.VALLAVJI- THE MOHINIROOP OF SRIKRISHNA in which HE has entertained SriRadhika 2. SHYAMSUNDER- IN SUNDER ROOP OF SRIKRISHNA- in which HE was with SatyaShiva 3.NAND DULAAL- IN VATSYALYA ROOP OF SRIKRISHNA- in which form HE was with Yashodama and on the day of MAAGHIPOORNIMA the three idols got

PRATISHTHITH at Ballavpur as Ballavji, at Khardah as SHYAMSUNDER and at Saivaan as Nand dulaal. Khardah ShyamsundarMandir is a heritage n a place for lakhs of pilgrims to seis a very large “at-chala temple with porch on triple entrance.” A stone plaque on the entrance to the temple states that the temple is renovated by P. C. Robertson who happens to be the manager of Khardah Jute Mills. Apart from the daily worship special puja is performed on the days of Phuldol, Jhulanyatra, Janmastami, Rashyatra and Dolyatra. According to Bengal District Gazetteer Khardah happens to be a favourite place of pilgrimage for Vaishnavas and they visit it more especially during the Rashyatra and Phuldol.

Rash Purnima in Khardah- At the time of Rashyatra, which falls in the month of November, the idols of Radha Shyamsundar Jiu are taken out from the main temple and taken to the nearby Rashmancha. On the three days of the Rash festival, the idols of Radha Shyamsundar Jiu are placed in the Rashmancha during the late evening. A month-long fair is still held there and apart from the food stalls different types of household commodities are sold. The beautiful octagonal white-coloured Rashmancha is situated in an open space. The turrets here are placed in an unique way. David McCutchion has described this rasmancha as of an “octagonal anomalous low design” type. On the day of Dolyatra, the idols of Radha Shyamsundar Jiu are taken out of the main temple and taken to the nearby beautiful brick-coloured elevated char-chala (four-roofed) Dolmancha by a palanquin before dawn. First devdol is performed first at dawn.



of Radha Shyamsundar Jiu are taken out of the main temple and taken to the nearby beautiful brick-coloured elevated char-chala (four-roofed) Dolmancha by a palanquin before dawn. First devdol is performed first at dawn.

Plate 106 & 107: Raash Purnima at Khardah , idol and the Raas Mancha



Plate 109 , 110 ,111& 112– Shyam Sundar Jiu idols during different festivals . a.Jhulan
b.Fuldolc.c.Kalipujad.Gopashtami

7.Jhulan Utsab in Baranagar Path Bari- The history of this place would take us back almost five hundred years. On his way to Puri, **Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu** was moving along the Ganges downstream from Panihati, till a sweet reading of the Bhagavata entered his ears. He looked for its origin, to find a brahmin in his tiny cottage reading the text, his cheeks flooding with ecstatic tears. Shri Chaitanya resided at the hut for three days, consulted philosophy with the brahmin, listened to his reading of Bhagavata, and rendered him the title of Shri Bhagavatacharya. The place boasts in keeping the **wooden sandals of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu**. The place remained undiscovered until some two hundred years back, a Vaishnavite Saint named **Ramdas Babaji** rediscovered it and set up an ashrama or hermitage there. At his death bed, he had commanded his disciples to chant the holy names. Since then, for twenty four hours round the clock, they have been chanting the sacred name of *Hare Krishna*. Apart from this the ashrama also takes pride in its library, the largest of the Vaishnavite ones of the state. It boasts a collection of almost all the original manuscripts of Shri Chaitanya's first disciples, including **Rup Goswami** and **Sanatan Goswami**.



Plate 113: Paatbari , Baranagar



Plate 113 , 114 ,115 : Baranagar Paatbaari with the wooden sandals of Mahaprabhu



8.Christmas in Barrackpore- The first British barrack or cantonment in India was built in the town in 1772. After the British crown assumed direct control of India, the sprawling Government House and the Government Estate were built in Barrackpore to provide the viceroy with a suburban residence 15 miles (24 km) outside of Calcutta.No wonder that this place has number of churches from the yesteryears and Christmas is celebrated with



much aplomb and
gaity.

St.Bartholomew's
Cathedral, CNI
Protestant Church
– Built in 1831 ,
this garrison
church is one of

the most important church where Christmas is celebrated in a a grand way.

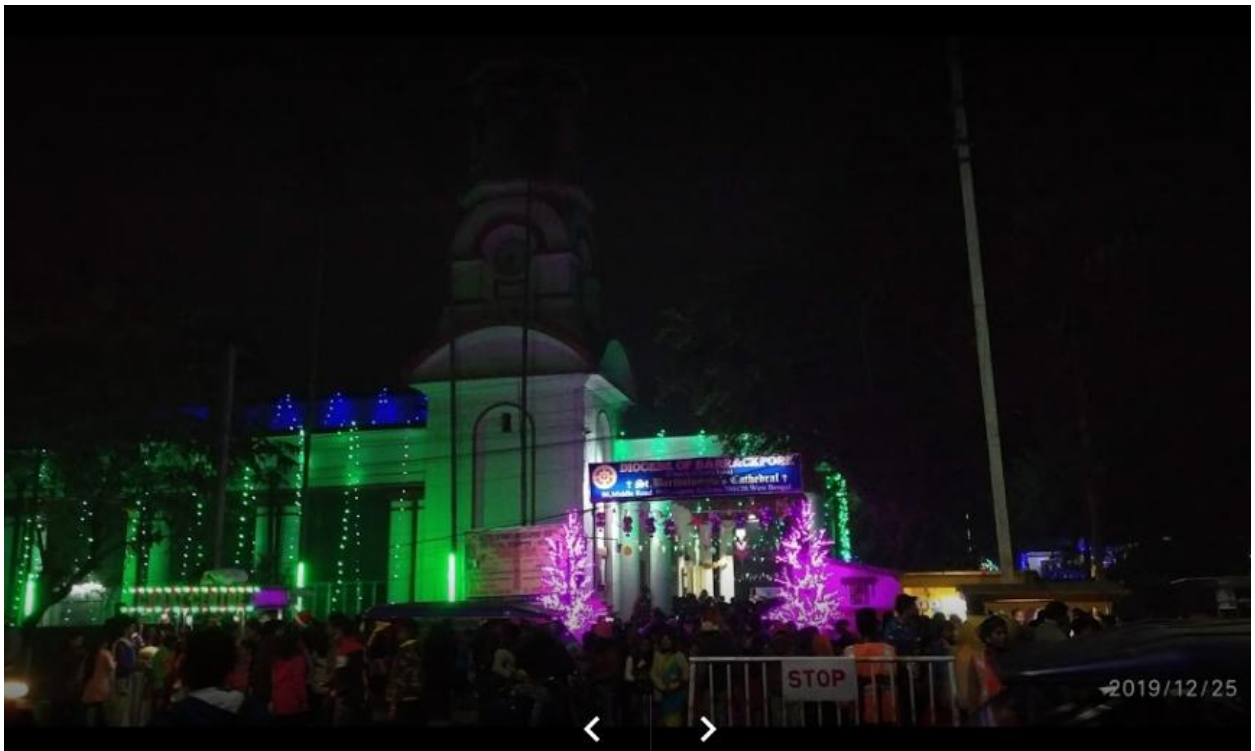


Plate 116 & 117– Christmas celebration at St.Bartholomew's Cathedral,Barrackpore

9. Some of the important Fares of the Study Area are as follows-

- A great fair of the “RASJATRA MELA” has been organising by the Roy Chowdhury family of *Panihati* every year since long ago.
- A great fair in the name of *Lord Shiva* has been taking place at *Sukchar* is called “CHARAK-SANKRANTI MELA”, which plays a great role in Hindu religious belief.
- Since 1890, a great fair has been organizing by Kolkata Pinjrapole Society at *Sodepur*, called “GOPASTOMI MELA”. This fair is concerned for the welfare of the cattle, arranged by the Marwari community of Kolkata.
- Since long past a fair related to the Buddhism has been organizing at H.B.Town of *Sodepur*. This fair is known as “BUDDHA MELA”.
- There is a chariot fair takes place at *Panchanantala* of *Natagarh* every year, which is called “RATHER MELA”. It had an early social and cultural importance.
- A great fair is going to be organize by the local Muslim community near the darga of *Tara Shah Pir* at *Agarpara* every year. This fair is called as “MURGIR MELA”.
- A big fair takes place at *Mollarhat* in *Agarpara* in the occasion of MUHARAM.
- From 1987 a new addition had made among the local fairs which was “PANIHATI BOOK FAIR”. Today it is very popular and famous with its own cultural aspects.



পঞ্চম বর্ষ

পানিহাটি উৎসব ও বইমেলা

২০শে ডিসেম্বর থেকে ৩১শে ডিসেম্বর ২০১৭ • স্থান : অমরাবতী ময়দান, সোদপুর

• সাংস্কৃতিক উৎসব • আই টি পার্ক • চিল্ড্রেন পার্ক • ফুড পার্ক • স্বনিযুক্তি গ্যালারী
• শিল্প বাণিজ্য গ্যালারী • আর্ট গ্যালারী • পুষ্প প্রদর্শনী • অঙ্কন প্রতিযোগিতা
• বিনামূল্যে মেডিক্যাল ক্যাম্প • সঙ্গীত, নৃত্য ও আবৃত্তি প্রতিযোগিতা • সেমিনার

স্টল / গ্যালারী / প্যাভিলিয়নের জন্য যোগাযোগ করুন
প্রধান কার্যালয় : পানিহাটি লোকসংস্কৃতি ভবন (দ্বিতল) সময় : সন্ধ্যা ৬টা থেকে রাত্রি ৯টা



প্রতিযোগিতার আবেদনপত্র পাওয়া যাবে :
জেনেসিস ও চমশিল্প (লোকসংস্কৃতি ভবন সংলগ্ন)
যোগাযোগ :
৯৪৩৩০৪৬২১৭, ৯০৫১৯৫৭৫১৯, ৯৮৩০১৪৬২৭১, ৯৮৩১৫৭১২৩২



Plate 118, 119 & 120 – Panihati Utsab & Bookfare

CHAPTER 6 – FOOD AND DRINK OF NORTH 24 PARGANAS

‘Every aspect of life from something as simple as breathing, eating, sitting and standing was evolved as a spiritual process in this culture’—Sadh guru

6.1. General Composition of Meal : West Bengal has had a long tradition of food and cuisine as an integral part of life and culture. It has absorbed various means of cuisines and recipes and transformed these with creative modification in its own manner of food culture. Therefore, traditional Bengali cuisine has shown a process of indigenous to hybrid and the cuisine of West Bengal is as rich and distinct as the state itself. However, the cuisines and food habits in many cases are region specific following the topography and climate, agriculture, availability of food grains, vegetable and spices. So, evidently there are many differences of food habits in North Bengal, South Bengal and Rarh Bengal {Birbhum, Bankura, Purulia, Midnapore districts}.

But as a whole, in Bengal predominantly the staple food is Rice, Pulses, Curry and Fishes {vat, dal, tarkari and mach}. Rice, the staple of Bengalis since ancient times, has remained untouched by the currents of religious change and its preparation has held to a continuing high standard. One crop a year was sufficient to sustain the people, providing ample leisure time for the Bengalis to pursue cultural ideals: folklore, music, and the culinary arts. Before the arrival of Europeans in the early 16th century, the staple of Bengali cuisine was locally grown rice, as it is today. According to **Shunya Purana**, a medieval text, fifty kinds of rice were grown in Bengal.



Plate 121: A typical Bengali Meal with rice , dal , vegetables and fish

Bengalis are vegetarians in many parts of the world, but in Bengal, interparts elsewhere, even many Brahmins in Bengal are non-vegetarians. This is in sharp contrast to the orthodox upper caste Hindu's instinctual dislike of meat. The reason is that Bengal, since ancient times, has been renowned for its extraordinarily fertile agricultural land and production of paddy. Being a riverine state, it has a huge resource of different varieties of fish. That is why rice and fish curry {or Macher jhol} have been the staple food for the Bengalis.



Plate 122 : Fish Curry /Macher Jhol



Plate 123: A very typical fish preparation - Macher Jhal with small fish

A major aspect of Bengali cuisine is the combination of two different styles in West {Paschim Banga} and riverine East Bengal {purba Banga, now Bangladesh}. Although, this combination is much evident in South and North Bengal close to the border of opar Bangla {East Bengal}. However, there is a fascinating sweet and sour rivalry in preparing fish and Tarkari between Bengalis of East and West called rivalry of Ghati-Bangal {west and eastern Bengali} even exist after the partition of Bengal. Bangal-Ghoti tussle was a social expression of the perceived cultural superiority or inferiority. The food habit of Bangal and Ghoti are different. While food without much spices cannot make Bangals feel great about their lunch and dinner, Ghotis choose to avoid much spices and prefer their food to be little sweet. Although, the food culture of Bengal developed with incorporation of multiple recipes of West and East which makes Bengali food exclusive.

6.2. Few genres of food habit in the riverside district of NORTH 24 PARGANAS

The food cultures in riverside towns have had multiple Genres of culinary. This culinary tradition emerged in this area based on the cast, customs, believes, religions depending on the availability of local ingredients. The river systems, heat and humidity combine with the fertile soil to allow rice and an abundance of vegetables to thrive; these became the corner stones of the diet. Fruits like mangoes, bananas, papayas, figs, spinaches, coconuts, and cane sugar grew in abundance; fish, milk, and meat were plentiful; yogurt and spices such as cumin, turmeric, sesame, ginger, dried chili and black mustard would season the dishes.

One of the major genres would be called the **Brahminical lacto-vegetarian food habits** and then the nonvegetarian food habits of the other casts. Evidently, the growth of purely



Plate 124 - Traditional household Kitchen and Plate 125 - Mud stove {unun} in a Brahmin family in Bhatpara

vegetarian cuisine tied with the advent orthodox Vaidik Brahminical community since the 17th century. The small towns like Bhatpara, Mulajore, Halisahar and Ariadaha in particular became not only the centres' of Sanskrit language and literature but **Smriti, Naya, Tantra, Astrology, Vedanta and Sankha** philosophy. So, the entire holistic ambience of scholarly practices, regular worship of Hindu god and goddess in the temples close to household,

celebration of rituals and in the professional priest ship and related life style played seminal influence on the food habits and to maintain the sanctity of conservative in house kitchen by the housewives.

Bipradas Piplai mentioned this in his Mansa ‘Bijay Kavya’ on the growth of these villages like Kumarhatta {Halisahar}, Naihati, Bhatpara, Kakinara, Mulajore {Shyamnagar}, Ariadaha, Panihati. In these small riverside towns, the indigenous tradition of exclusive vegetarian cuisines still exists in few orthodox families which were influenced by the old Brahminical and Gudiya Vaishnab tradition of Lacto- vegetarian diet. They abstain from consumption of all types of animal flesh, fish, eggs, onions and garlic. Therefore, a specific style of vegetarian cuisine developed in these townships close to river. In which the presence of Bengali Widows in Bengali households those who maintained a very strict standard of cleanliness to prepare Satvik Food. But since the middle of 20th century a large numbers of Brahmin family in these areas eat fish and celebrations like marriage and other is complete without it. Although, in regular life many Brahmin families still do not allow chicken and goat meats in their inhouse kitchen.



Plate 126 – A Brahmin Widow Household (*Kanshar basan*).

Plate 127 -Bell Metal or Brass Utensils used in Brahmin Household

However, the Shaktas consumed mutton and fish only on specific occasions. So, In the traditional food culture in the district this specific vegetarian cuisine has enormous contribution for its Brahminical lineage in one hand and non-vegetarian cuisine on the other which makes the fascinating food culture in the district. Thus, varieties of dishes developed in the riverside towns both vegetarian dishes gifted by Bengali widows and later many of the dishes have been adapted non-vegetarian ingredients like shrimps and other fishes. The Widows did not consume onion and garlic, meat and fish and led a pure life. These culinary limitations of widows inadvertently contributed to the development of a rich vegetarian cuisine in these riverside towns. Widows contributed greatly to the range and originality of Bengali vegetarian dishes.

On the other hand, there were many settlements of non-Brahmin casts in this riverside villages even before the advent of Vaidik Brahmins. There were well-off Kayasthas, Kaibartas, noujibis {navigators}, jaliks{fishermen},

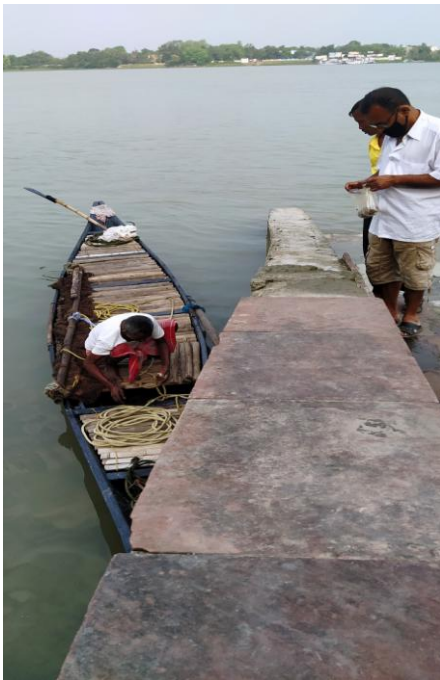


Plate 128- Fisherman in the riverside river



Plate 129- Fish market near the

sadgops, sutradhar {carpenters}, tantis {weavers}.

This segment also maintains the Hindu convention of food habit and do not consume beef or pork in household culinary.

Though they are not so stringent to follow the sense of

sanctity like Brahminical families

in the locality. So, in their household culinary the cooking of all types of fishes, chicken, mutton with garlic and onion are plentiful. However, a particular community called Kaoras {scheduled cast mostly involve in fishing and agriculture and pig shepherds} are habitual to household.



Plate 130: Kaora fishermen at work

In the progress of vegetarian culinary in these riverside towns the widows have major contribution. This culinary developed from the soil and availability of local vegetables, spices.” Even water for culinary in the century ago had to be used water from Ganga river “{said Indu Sekhar Bhattacharya a Bhatpara based school teacher and ancestor of Nyathirtha family}.

These culinary of Brahmin widows had significantly contributed to the development of a rich vegetarian cuisine in the riverside towns like Bhatpara, Naihati, Mulajore or Shyamnagar, Halisahar, Ariadaha, Panihati in north 24 parganas. They have contributed greatly to the range and originality of Bengali vegetarian dishes which was not well documented in the research of Calcutta centric urban food culture dominated by the cuisine culture by so called neo-urban class.

6.3. VARIETIES IN VEGETERIAN AND NON VEGETERIAN FOODS IN BRAHMHNICAL AND NON BRAMHNICAL HOUSEHOLDS

a.Sukto is a vegetable combination. It consists an array of vegetables. Bitter gourd is the main ingredient of this dish and the other vegetables in this recipe are pumpkin, plantain, sweet potato, ridge gourd, drumsticks, eggplant and raw papaya.



Plate 131 : Shukto , a very important delicacy of any Bengali household.

c.Jhinge-Aloo Posto {poppy seed} is a unique Bengali food which is immensely popular in the district but almost all districts in West Bengal and in Odisha. *it is a popular food*

In this recipe, Ridge Gourd and Potatoes are cooked in Poppy seeds paste, green Chillies and Nigella seeds. It is mostly accompanied with steamed rice.

Dumurer Dalna is a unique vegetarian dish popular

b.Dried lentil dumplings (badi) is also an important ingredient in sukto. It tempers with a spice called radhuni. If both are unavailable then methi seeds can be used and mustard paste are used along with milk and ghee, but in sukto they never use green chilies. It is a popular Bengali dish and it is served only at lunch time as a first item in menu with hot steamed rice.



Plate132 : Jhinge-Aloo Posto {poppy seed}

during the lunch in the district. This made with local figs {dumur}, potatoes, ginger and cumin pest, sugar, turmeric and garam mashala.

d. Echorer Danla-- Echor is also known as 'Gach Patha' in Bengal means tree goat. Echor is actually cooked with two manners. One is the same spices as we would use to cook mutton and the curry also tastes like meat only. So, vegetarians who want to enjoy the taste of mutton without actually having it can have this curry. Second is purely vegetarian without garlic and onion using cumin, ginger, turmeric and garam mashala. This second recipe is popular in



Plate 133 : Fig Curry , a local delicacy

Ghati {west Bengal} Brahmin family cuisine as a part of Bamun Barir ranna.

e.'Mochar Ghonto' is a traditional Bengali preparation, where the banana flowers are cooked along with potato and aromatic spices. Mochar Ghonto is a dry curry recipe and is often served along with steaming hot rice and ghee.

Bengali Niramish Thorer Ghonto is a delicacy in lunch with rice. This Bengali recipe of Thor Ghonto is Niramish or completely vegetarian.



f.Thorh is banana stems, which are highly nutritious. Thorh is sold as the cylindrical, white part of the stem of a banana plant available in all local markets. Kalai Dal and Aluposto is one of the most delicious combination of dishes with rice generally in the time of summer. Kalai is a particular type of pulses cooked with ginger, snuffs, chilly and little hing or asafoedita. Aluposto made with potato and poppy seeds paste mustered oil. Like other districts in West Bengal it is widely common in this district.

Plate 134 : Mochar Ghonto

g.Dhokar Danla a most lovely Bengali dish, Dhokar Dalna has fried chana dal cakes marinated along with potato cubes dipped in a thick gravy of cumin seeds, hing, and bay leaf along with ginger and red chili paste.

6.4. FISH AND FEW SPECIAL DISHES IN THE HOUSEHOLD OF THE DISTRICT

The genre of cooking fish in the household in the riverside towns has two different manners. First one is the uses of garlic and onion and other spices in making fish curry. On the other hand, there is another type of cooking of fish without garlic and onion which is generally grew from Brahminical lineage.

In the many Brahmin families till this time the notion of fish being a vegetarian item at the time because it was obvious that vegetarianism had not so much to do with any notion of animal protection or non-violent foods, but the idea that meat, and in particular chicken, was dirty and ‘polluted’. None of the younger members of the traditional family is a full’ vegetarian, but they could not consume meat inside the house because the, the ageing mother and widows who exclude fish, chicken, meat, garlic and onion from their diet. In this trail many recipes of fish developed without using garlic and onion for the other family members.

In many dishes of fish and vegetable stew seasoned with ground spices like ginger, cumin, coriander, chili, mastered seeds, mustered oil, hing{asafoedita} and turmeric with pieces of fish and longitudinal slices of vegetables floating in it. The gravy is thin yet extremely testy. In this course we find few items like jhol, jhal, dalna and Kalia, vapa and vaja.



Plate -135 . Katla macher Jhal



Plate -136 – ilish Vapa

6.5. SPICES IN BENGALI CUISINE –A BRIEF

Until the 12th century, spices used in Bengali culinary were limited to turmeric, ginger, mustard seed, long pepper, poppy seeds, asafoetida, and sour lemon. Long pepper was replaced first by black peppercorns brought from the west coast of India and later by the

cheaper chili, which flourished in Bengali soil. Spice traders also brought cinnamon, cardamom, and cloves components {for Garam Mshala –the aromatic spice}. Various methods of preparation were used, including frying in both shallow and deep fat. Cooking media included ghee by those who could afford it, mustard oil, still popular today in Bengal.

6.6. RITUALS , FOOD OF WOMEN

HOUSEHOLD CUISINE RELATED TO BRATO AND SHASTI FOR THE BETTERMENT OF NEXT GENERATION

In Bengali brato means fasting. Talking about fast. *Shashti Brato*/fast is the main fasting ritual of married Bengali ladies and specifically blessed with children. In this district

a. Nil Shasti - Nil Shasti is the celebration by the Hindu mothers in the Chaitra {March} Sankranti. Nil Puja celebrate a day before Gazan. There is a Bengali proverb ‘নীলেরঘরে দিয়ে বাতি, জলখাওগো পুত্রবতী’ । For the betterment of children. In this celebration housewives observe long fasting till evening and after the worship of Shiva they eat fruits and many of them make luchi and vegetarian tarkari at night.

b. Jamai Shasti - In the Bengali month Jaistha {June} all Bengali mother in laws celebrate this Shasti for the betterment of son in-laws. In this district Jamaishasti is an important event when all mother in laws strictly maintain vegetarian food and fruits but for the son in laws, they cook all sort of non veg dishes with fishes and meat.

c. Loton Shasti- Loton Shasti celebrate in the Bengali month Srabon {August} in which women prepare luchi and tarkari with potato and mustered oil. In addition, they make sweet chandar payesh from milk for the lunch and in the evening, they eat only fruits.

d. Chapra Shasti- This is a most important event in Bengal and in the district as well. In this event in the month of Bhadra {August- September} Bengali women generally eat vegetarian food with rice and vegetables. In the evening they make chapra {like small chapati} with rice dust, coconut grain, salt and sugar. This look like a sort of Indian roti Bengali women will first offered to river in the afternoon they eat Sabu {sago} curd and fruits.

e. Durga Shasti- Durga Shasti is another event celebrate by Bengali mother in the first day of Durga puja every year. In the afternoon they cook special luchi and vegetarian tarkari for lunch. In the evening they eat fruits and mild product only.

f. Shital Shasti- It is another celebration of Bengali women in Bengali month of Magh {January} next day of Saraswathi puja. The important vegetarian dish is called Gota Siddha or steamed product of few vegetable such as six brinjals, six beans, six seems, six potatoes and mug dal. Kuler chatni is also they eat as side dish.



Plate 137a & b: Jamai Sashti Speciality – Fish Head Curry (Generally Carp)

Plate 138- Sabu Khichuri in Chhapra Shasti Plate 139– Gota Sheddho in Shital shasti

6.7. SWEETS AND CONFECTIONARIES

All Bengalis love of sweets which goes back into the Middle Ages. Sugar has been grown in Bengal and India since ancient times, as showed by its Sanskrit name, sharkara. Texts dating back to the 12th and 13th century texts describe a number of dishes based on milk, partly thickened milk, and milk solids. Sweet is the essential part of living food culture. Offering sweet is the important part in the felicitation of guests and serving sweet in all feasts and banquets is the cultural identity of Bengal. The most inventive part of making sweets in Bengal was the uses of chana {a kind of Bengali cottage cheese} which made Bengali sweets unique and variant from district to district. Calcutta is certainly the hub of Sweets but in every district of Bengal has its indigenous manner of making sweets.



Plate 140 – Rosogolla



Plate 141- Singhara

6.7.1. Home Made Sweets - Like other districts of Bengal this district has its own manner of homemade sweets. Sometimes for the family occasions and for the celebration of various seasonal Pala/Parbon.

Various kinds of *Pitha* (a pancake like sweet base of semolina or flour which is rolled around a variety of fillings like coconut and kheer and fried in ghee -*chandrapuli*, *gokul*, *pati shapta*, *chitai piṭha*, *saruchagli*, *muger puli* and *dudh puli*). *Pithas* are usually made from rice or wheat flour mixed with sugar, jaggery, grated coconut etc. These are usually enjoyed with the sweet syrups of *Khejur gur* (Date tree molasses) they are usually fried or steamed – the most common ones include *bhapapitha* (steamed), *Pakanpitha* (fried) and *Pulipitha* (dumplings).



Plate 142 a ,b,c,d– Patishapta , Plate – Paraki , Plate – Pithe (Fried) Plate – Dudh Puli

6.7.2. FOOD IN PUBLIC SPHERE

LOCAL SWEETS SHOPS -In the evening of all riverside towns fried sweets like Amriti, Khastar gaja and Labangalatika and hot makha Sandesh a most delicious item are the prime attractions of the local people in the markets.



Plate143 :Famous Sweet Shop in Mulajore , Shyamnagar Plate144 – Mishti doi of Atpur Plate 145 : Makha Sandesh of Halisahar.

6.7.3 . SWEETS AND SANCTITY

Bhatpara has few sweet shops which maintain the old tradition of sweet production with sanctity using only Chana and Kheer and avoid any sort of oil fried sweets or snacks. Most of the widows and priests' families are the main customers. Bhatpara is famous for Red Rasagulla, Chanarmurki, Danadar, peda and Sandesh and batasha from gur {molasses}



Plate 146 , 147 Khoka's Mistanna Vandar Bhatpara temple campus Plate 148– Chhanar Murki & Red Rosogolla

6.8. MULTI-CULTURAL POPULAR SNACKS AND DRINK

In the varied domain of Bengali food habits in the industry based {jute mills} riverside towns many other provincial snacks are popular. Litthi {a kind of small baked food}, Chat and fuchka are among them. Sugarcane juice in the summer also a popular drink beside coconuts and lassi {drink from curd} Even fast food in Chinese manner are widely available on the street corners.



Plate 149 ,150 & 151 : Chaats , Lithis & Pizza Shops



Plate 152– Road side Chole Bhature Shop shop



Plate 153–Phucka and Chaat shop



Plate 154 – Tea stalls are found every nook and corner



Plate 155– Sugarcane Juice Seller



Plate 156 - Local Bakery and Confectionaries in Kakinara and Sodepur



Plate 157 , 158 & 159 : Roll and Momo shop

6.9. MULTI CUISINE RESTUARANTS AND PICE HOTELS

HISTORY AND SOCIAL IMPORTANCE : The name ‘pice hotel’ invented from the fact that in these hotels, everything is individually priced, be it extra helpings of rice, *daal*, vegetables, fish, to pieces of lemon and even the banana leaves that the meal is served on. The source of the ‘Pice’ term could have come from the time when the Paisa was at its peak in the Indian economy. At one time meals could have been priced at 1 paisa, hence the term associated with them. Gradually prices increased, but the name-tag remained, the arrangement of serving food remaining untouched

Pice hotels play a major role to serve food in moderate price affordable for middle and lower middle-class people, tourists, homeless un organized section of Laboures, rickshaw pullers, street dwellers. The growth of pice hotels in the district begun since the development of industries and advent of migrated workers during the end of 19th century. One such legacy of comfort food in the district is the ‘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.



Plate 160 : A Hub of Pice Hotels near Barrackpur station

In this trail, in all the riverside towns and throughout on the Barrackpore Trunk road from Kolkata to Halisahar evidently these pice hotels grew by the ownership of Hindu Bengalis, Odiyas, Biharis and Sikh Punjabis. However, the pice hotels run by the Muslim where most of the customers are Muslim people. Handful of Hindu customers consume food there. On the other hand, all casts of common people have no hesitation to consume in the pice hotels run by the Punjabis in this area.



Plate 161- Thakurer Pice Hotel in the Rishi Bankim Chandra Road at Naihati

HOTEL YOUNG BENGAL	
শুভ্রম উদ্য → ২০/-	পাবনা বড় জাম → ২২০/-
৩ প্রসি মতা → ০/-	পমামুচ মন্ড মৌপিয়া → ২২০/-
মাতাল উচ্চর উও রতাল → ২০/-	কাতলা কালিয়া → ১০/-
ডাল → ২০/-	আর মাতুর জাবমা → ১০/-
ডালের বহার কাল → ১০০/-	চুড়চুড় কাল → ১০/-
মাড় বড়ি মন্ড → ১০০/-	বিড়ি ডাল কাল → ১০/-
কিরতলা জাপ্ত → ৩৫/-	বুই মন্ড - কাল → ৫০/-
	মর্চন জাবী → ১০০/-
	চিজনকারী → ২০/-
	আমর চাটনি → ২০/-

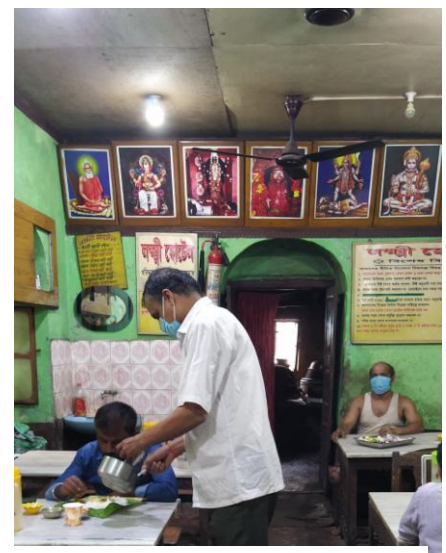


Plate 162 - Lakshmi Hotel in the Naihati Market area

6.10. MULTI CUISINE RESTURANTS / DHABAS AND HOTELS

Since few decades the food culture also made a paradigm shift in the downtowns like Kolkata city. Neo urban Bengali people became much open to relish provincial and international foods. In this trail not only the multi cuisine restaurants but so-called fast food shops have come to the fore. However, by the uses of local ingredients, spices, oil, vegetables and local cooks the global manner of food may be called as Glocal.



Plate 163– Yara Da Dhaba in Nilganj, Ichapore

6.11. FAST FOOD CULTURE IN DOWNTOWNS --- INFLUENCE OF GLOBAL FOOD HABITS

Consumption of Fast food is a growing trend among the younger generation is evident. But, the take home practice to consume fast food in the households also an increasing trend in the downtowns of the district. The reason perhaps for the ready availability, taste, low cost, marketing strategies and peer pressure make them popular not only with children and adolescents but among the aged inhabitants as well. However, many Junk foods, a type of fast foods are less calorie food.

The notion of ready-cooked food for sale is closely linked with urban developments. Homes in downtowns often lacked suitable space or proper food preparation accessories procuring cooking fuel could cost as much as purchased produce.



Plate 164 ,165 ,166 & 167- Fast Food shop in Gouripur Bazar near Garifa

6.12. POPULAR ITEMS OF FAST FOOD IN ALL OVER THE RIVERSIDE TOWNS OF THE DISTRICT



Plate 168 - Dada boudir Biryani , Ghosh Para Road , Barrackpur , one of the most popular food destination in the entire study area.



Plate 169- Dada Haji Biryani, Halisahar, produces special Kachchi Biryani

Kacchi biryani, raw marinated meat is layered with raw rice before being cooked together. It is also known as *kacchi yeqni*. Purely a Mughlai recipe. But somehow became a street food in Halisahar.

Plate 170 – Indian dhaba , Kamarhati .



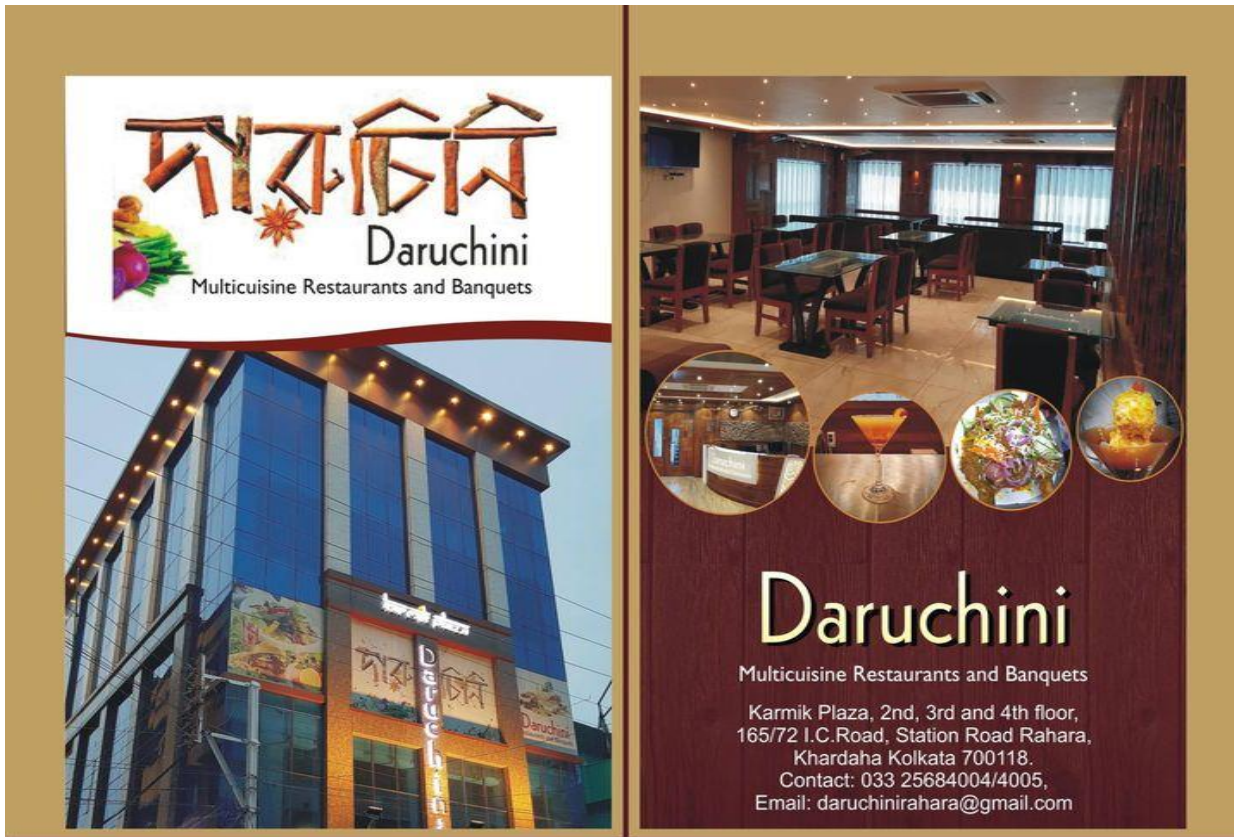


Plate 171 : Daruchini , Raharaa



Plate 172 – Aminia , Sodpur

Chapter 7: Traditional Knowledge

‘The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence’—Rabindra Nath Tagore

Traditional knowledge is the sum-total of knowledge and practices which are based on people accrued experiences dealing with situations and problems. More specifically traditional knowledge refers to the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities. Developed from experience gained over the centuries and adapted to the local culture and environment and transmitted orally via legends, myths, stories with traditional technical skills from generation to generation. It is typically distinguishing one community from another. In some communities, traditional knowledge takes personal and spiritual meanings.

This knowledge also reflects a community's interests. Some communities depend on their traditional knowledge for survival. However, despite huge resources, Bengal like other provinces in India had a huge source indigenous knowledge system. Firstly, Colonization in 18th century caused immense onslaught on this system as Western science and its propagation used to consider traditional knowledge a mere superstition. Through the attempt of colonizer's so-called civilizational mission in all spheres of social and cultural life in many cases damaged our knowledge system such as the water supply and harvesting, medicine, folklores, marital arts, handicrafts, expertise in architecture and preservation of ecology and artisans—all aspects became subservient and many concerned communities shifted to rural seclusion. On the other hand, rampant urbanization and decline of rural culture also caused the perpetual interruption in the flow of various genres of indigenous knowledge. In many cases colonial education since late 18th century was responsible for "marginalise potential inherited learning. However. In the post-colonial discourse the attention in traditional knowledge received much attention.

7.1. TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM IN BENGAL

Bengal in the 19th century evidenced the emergence of new social and religious rethinking which had ample impact in socio-economic and cultural life mostly in the urban segments. This emergence affected every aspect of social, economic, cultural and political life of the

country. North 24 Pargana district is adjacent to Calcutta. So, new changes in the Calcutta also made impact on the urban and quasi urban sectors of the district.

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.

The decline of various traditional knowledge systems during the British rule has been studied mostly by historians and anthropologists. These studies focus on a complex array of factors responsible for the decay of such systems, ranging from imperialism to incomplete understanding of local ecology to disruptive social organisation introduced by the British. We argue that all of them hinted at incompatibility of two knowledge systems, albeit implicitly. The reason for a lack of explicit reference to the literature on knowledge, in our view, is the then state of the global literature on knowledge, which was only in its nascent phase to appreciate plurality of knowledge. The attitude of Western science was such that it used to call the traditional knowledge systems of Bengal a mere superstition.

2. TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM IN NORTH 24 PARGANAS

The most unique features of traditional knowledge in the district is the growth of Sanskrit language, literature and philosophy on the bank of river side town from **Bhatpara, Mulajore, Halisahar and Panihati**. In these places not only the language and grammar or literature flourished but remarkably the study of **smriti, naya, tantra, astrology** and the deep research of Sankhya and Vedanta philosophy were prevalent. Since the early part of 18th century till 20th century there were more than 60 Chatuspaty in the district. Bhatpara is situated on the bank of Hugli river. It is known for its rich traditions in the field of Sanskrit learning. The name 'Bhatpara' originates from the ancient name "Bhatta-Palli", where 'Bhatta' denotes the sect of Bramhin Sanskrit pandits and 'palli' denotes locality or village.



Plate 173: The passage to Sanskrit Epistemology, House of Pandit Dinanath

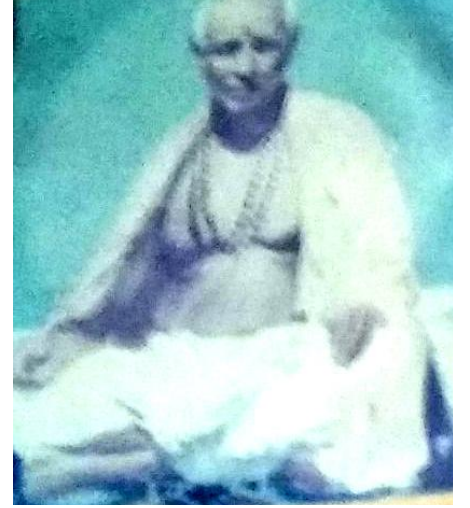


Plate 174 : Pandit Dinanath

During 17th century eminent Buddha Tantric and traveller Kabiram had mentioned in his ‘Digvijay Prakash Grantham’ where he says since the 17th century the prime centre was Bhatpara where the culture of traditional Sanskrit tradition flourished with the involvement of noted scholars. In this district Bhatpara was called as Naba Nabaddyip for their traditional scholarship on Naya, Smriti and Vedanta Philosophy. Great thinker and social reformer Raja Rammohun Roy in 1815 published books ‘Vedanta Sar’ and Upanishad based on AdoityabadiBramhobad made huge impact on scholars in Bhatpara, Mulajore and Halisahar. In this trail we find a large number of Pandits emerged in the field of traditional scholarship such as Pandit Haladhar Tarkachuramoni, ShivchandraSarbovoumya,RakhaldasNayaratna , Pandit PramathanathTarkavusan, Pandit PanchananTarkavusan,



Plate 175 : Old picture of Sanskrit college in Bhatpara, established in 1890

Pandit Srejeev Nayatirtha, Pandit Jayram Nayavushan, Harprasad Shastri and other noted scholars. Bhatpara became the epicentre of traditional knowledge practices which encouraged many Sanskrit scholars in the places like Naihati, Gouriva, Mulajore, Halisahar, Panihati to propagate the main ideals in their localities also.

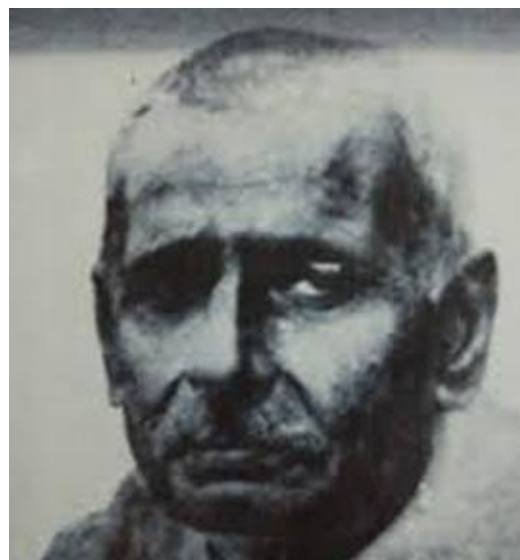
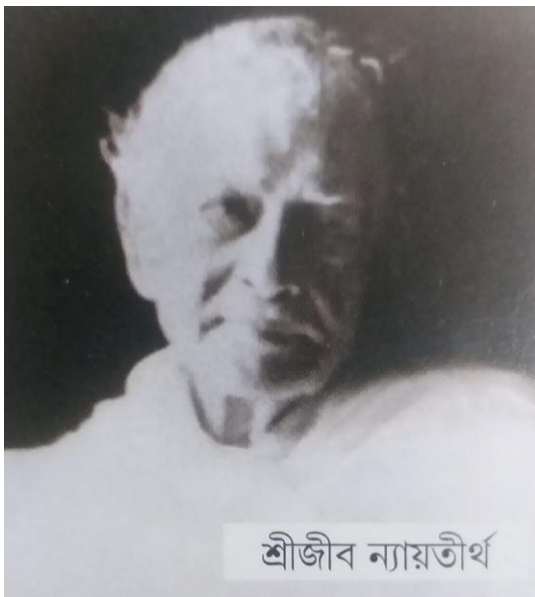


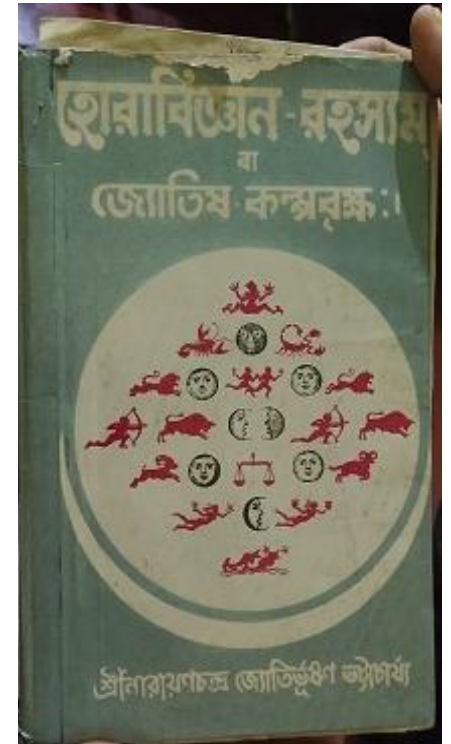
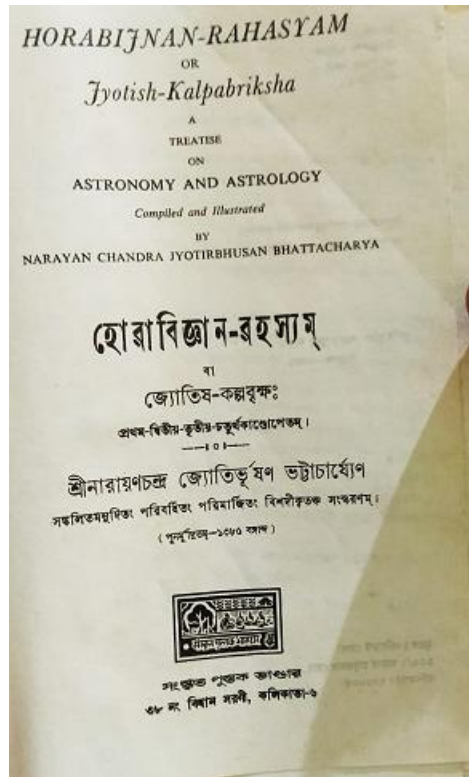
Plate 176 & 177 : Pandit SrejeevNyatirtha

After Navaddyip the riverside towns of North 24 Parganas emerged as the great centres of traditional knowledge which was not only pervaded in the Bengal but in the many centers in India. This district found two major thinkers such as Keshab Chandra Sen –the founder of Bengal BramhoSamaj and Mahamyopadhyay Haraparasd Shastri a great philosopher, writer and pandit of Buddhist studies.

3.ASTROLOGICAL PRACTICES IN THE DISTRICT

Primarily the astrological research and practices in the district developed from the Chatuspathi centric Sanskrit studies cantered in Bhatpara which made huge impact in the astrological /palmist studies in the Bengal. Pandit Jotish Shastri Narayan Chandra

Bhattacharya was the pioneer of the studies. Narayan Chandra was the first scholar who wrote the 'HoraBigyanRahasyam' or 'JotishKalpabrikhya'-The compilation of old astronomical manuscripts. The book is still a primary source of the astrological studies for the Palmist practitioners in Bengal and India as well. Not only Pandit Narayan Chandra but there were many astrologists made consistent contribution such as Khetranath



Jotishratna, Pandit Haricharan Vidya Ratna, Pandit Viswanath Nyatirtha in halisahar, Ambika charanNayatirtha in KantalparaNaihati, Plate 178 & 179 : Books of Astrology

The astrological research has had long tradition. Celebrated Astrologer Ganapati Bhatta wrote his famous astrological book 'Bhaswati' in 1512. The traditional practices of astrology grew up from the Chatuspathi where not only the study of Sanskrit Grammar, Naya and

Sankhya philosophy but Tantra, arithmetic and trigonometry were essential as a part of traditional knowledge.

Raghunath Smriti Tirtha and other made remarkable contribution in the research of Astrology and Palmistry in the district. Gradually, many places in the district such as Mulajore, Panihati, Ariadaha, Halisahar witnessed many scholars in applied astrology. Following the foundation of astrology in the 1970 a center titled ‘theNaihati-Bhatpara center for astrology and allied subject’ was founded by Shyamaparsad Bhattacharya.



180 & 181 : An Astrological center in Naihati & Bhatpara.

4.THE LEARNING OF GOUDIYA VAISHNAV TRADITION IN THE DISTRICT

Apart from the indigenous Brahminical knowledge practices in the district there was a development in Gaudiya Vaishnav tradition from the beginning of Chaitanya's bhakti movement. This movement had the openness beyond the traditional cast system. This movement influenced the district after the visit of Nityananda in Kharadaha which witnessed the foundation of Gaudiya Math by Bhaktisiddhanta Thakur in the late 19th century

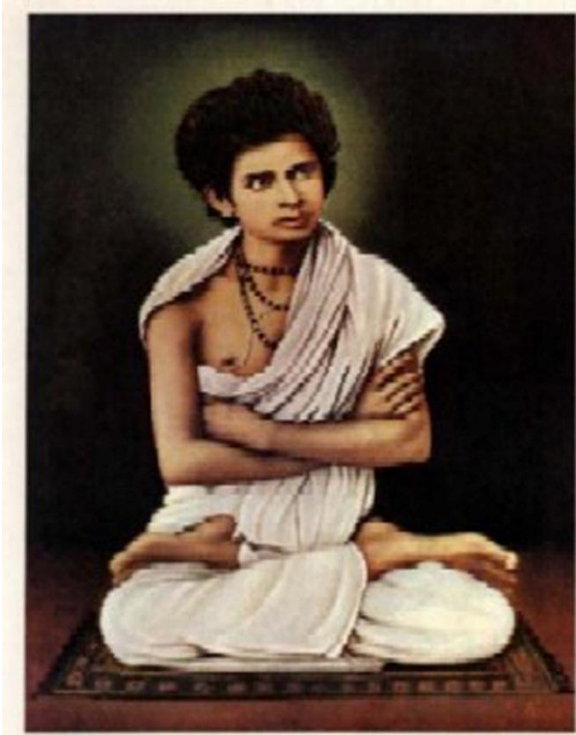


Plate 182 : Prabhu Nityananda

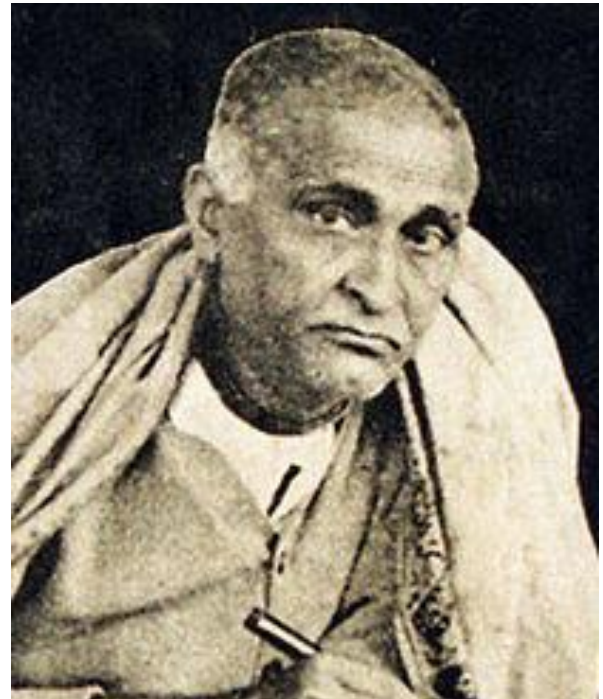


Plate 183 : Bhaktisiddhanta



Plate 184 : The deity of the Math



Plate 185 : Kunja Vatika, Goudiya math, Khardaha

CHAPTER 8 – GHATS ALONG THE RIVER BHAGIRATHI-HUGLI

The Hugli is the major river which flows all along the western stretch of about 50 km of the Barrackpore Sub-division. This river is also known as the Bhagirathi or the Ganga / Ganges. There are nos. of ghats built along the river. The Ghats were built for bathing purpose, trading activities, crematoriums and resting places. Some ghats have mandirs and ashrams also. Many has eye pleasing constructions. This culturally rich area oozes out history and heritage through its Ghats and cultural practises associated with them.

Sl.n	Name of the Ghats	Location	GCP	Purpose
1	Rani Rashmoni Ghat	Halisahar	22°57'28.23"N 88°24'44.93"E	Domestic
2	Ittkhola Ghat	Halisahar	22°56'41.37"N 88°24'47.67"E	Domestic
3	'Sreemat Swami Nigamananda Swaraswati Ashram Ghat	Halisahar	22°56'26.20"N 88°24'49.98"E	Domestic
4.	Halisahar Launch Ghat	Halisahar	22°56'17.24"N 88°24'49.23"E	Ferry
5	Ramprasad Ghat	Halisahar	22°56'19.68"N 88°24'49.21"E	Domestic
6	Bandhaghat Park	Halisahar	22°56'3.37"N 88°24'46.19"	Domestic
7	Boldeghata Park	Halisahar	22°56'2.72"N 88°24'45.87"E	Domestic
8	Balida Ghata Siddheswari Ghat	Halisahar	22°55'55.16"N 88°24'43.83"E	Domestic
9	Jagannath Temple Ghat of Halisahar	Halisahar	22°55'28.22"N 88°24'28.51"E	Domestic
10	Chandani Ghat Jagannath Temple	Halisahar	22°55'0.40"N 88°24'12.24"E	Domestic
11	Halisahar Maha Swamsan Ghat -	Halisahar	22°54'57.03"N 88°24'12.77"E	
12	Garifa-Hooghly Ghat Ferry Service	Naihati	22°54'22.15"N , 88°24'19.96"E	Ferry
13	Sidi Ghat / Sita Ghat	Naihati	22°54'7.94"N, 88°24'27.24"E	Domestic
14	Naihati Ferry Service Pier (Naihati Ghat)	Naihati	22°53'24.21"N 88°24'41.09"E	Ferry
15	Lichubagan Ghat	Naihati	22°53'8.17"N 88°24'42.24"E	Domestic
16	Muktarpur Burning Ghat		22°52'48.77"N 88°24'36.13"E	Domestic

17	Kalimandir Ghat and Park	Bhatpara	22°52'35.64"N 88°24'26.30"E	Domestic
18	Meye Ghat & Park	Bhatpara	22°52'35.46"N 88°24'26.28"E	Domestic
19	Raj Krishna Ghat & Park	Bhatpara	22°52'20.64"N 88°24'7.72"E	Domestic
20	Kankinara Ghat	Bhatpara	22°52'9.44"N 88°23'37.10"E	Domestic
21	Jagaddal Raw Water Pump Station	Bhatpara	22°51'51.00"N 88°22'51.43"E	Ferry
22	Jagaddal Ghat	Bhatpara	22°51'30.56"N 88°22'27.04"E	Domestic
23	Athpur Ferry Ghat	Bhatpara	22°50'40.24"N 88°22'31.86"E	Ferry
24	Shyamnagore Mulajore Ferry Ghat	Garulia	22°49'46.50"N 88°22'40.74"E	Ferry
25	Ratneswar Ghat	Garulia	22°49'37.29"N 88°22'23.99"E	Domestic
26	Babu Ghat	Garulia	22°49'32.70"N 88°21'39.51"E	Domestic
27	Debitala Ferry Ghat	Garulia	22°48'37.03"N 88°21'32.01"E	Ferry
28	Debitala Shamshan Ghat	Garulia	22°48'43.08"N 88°21'35.07"E	
29	Gaji Sahebtala Ghat	Garulia	22°47'49.95"N 88°21'21.92"E	Domestic
30	Mondal Ghat	Nababgang	22°47'47.56"N 88°21'22.42"E	Domestic
31	Du Paisar Ghat	Barrackpur	22°46'40.22"N 88°20'1.11"E	Ferry
32	College ghat or Manirampur ghat	Barrackpur	22°46'21.71"N 88°20'6.69"E	Domestic
33	Dhobighat, Barrack Pore	Barrackpur	22°45'54.91"N 88°20'39.77"E	Ferry
34	Shib Mandir	Barrackpur	22°45'37.60"N 88°21'10.92"E	Domestic
35	Gandhi Ghat	Barrackpur	22°45'9.86"N 88°21'44.14"E	Domestic
36	Rasmani Ghat	Barrackpur	22°44'57.46"N 88°21'53.36"E	Domestic
37	Lakhi Ghat	Titagarh	22°43'53.13"N 88°21'44.39"E	Domestic
38	Shayam Sundar Ghat	Titagarh	22°43'22.00"N 88°21'43.24"E	Domestic
39	Nathupal Ghat Shamsan	Titagarh	22°43'7.42"N 88°21'50.99"E	
40	Baro Mandir Ghat Panihat	Panihati	22°42'12.37"N 88°21'56.40"E	Domestic
41	Tranbabu Ghat / SATSANG GHAT	Panihati	22°41'59.70"N 88°21'57.15"E	
41	Shri Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu Temple Panihati	Panihati	22°41'48.75"N 88°21'56.60"E	Domestic

42	Panihati Ferry Ghat	Panihati	22°41'45.45"N 88°21'56.88"E	Ferry
43	Giribala Temple	Panihati	22°41'21.98"N 88°22'0.74"E	Domestic
44	Saheb Kutir	Panihati	22°41'16.70"N 88°21'59.91"E	Domestic
45	Anandamayee Ashram	Panihati	22°41'10.58"N 88°22'0.67"E	Domestic
46	Kamarhati Pituri Ghat	Kamarhati	22°40'50.83"N 88°21'54.64"E	Domestic
47	Muktokeshi Mandir	Ariadaha	22°39'59.73"N 88°21'29.34"E	Domestic
48	Ganga Mata Temple	Ariadaha	22°39'57.16"N 88°21'28.43"E	Domestic
49	Dakshineswar - Belur Motor Boat Termina	Dakhineswar	22°39'23.12"N 88°21'24.42"E	Ferry
50	Joy Mitr Kalibari, Kali Temple	Baranagar	22°38'22.47"N 88°21'40.25"E	Domestic
51	Kuthi Ghat	Baranagar	22°38'7.21"N 88°21'48.20"E	Ferry
52	Satidaha Ghat	Baranagar	22°37'57.23"N 88°21'50.44"E	Domestic

8.2. Some of the important ghats are described in details-

a. Rani Rashmoni Ghat – 142-159, Rani Rashmoni Ghat Rd, Halisahar, Kanchrapara, West Bengal 743145. GPS Location - 22°57'27.78"N 88°24'44.49"E

The original place where Rani Rashmoni was born is now under water of Bhagirathi-Hugli. At present this Rashmoni Ghat along the temples denotes the holy birth place of Rani Rashmoni, the founder of the famous Dakshineswar temple. Plate 186



b. 'Sreemat Swami Nigamananda Swaraswati Ashram Ghat (Plate 187) -

22°56'32"N 88°24'52"E Assam Bongeeo Saraswat Math, Head Quarter of 'Sreemat Swami Nigamananda Swaraswati Maharaj',sect of followers. Currently, headed by Sreemat Swami Ganananda Swaraswati Maharaj. Swami Nigamananda Paramahansa (born Nalinikanta Chattopadhyay; 18 August 1880 – 29 November 1935 is a Sadguru, Hindu yogi, guru and mystic well known in Eastern India. He is associated with the shakti cult and viewed as a perfect spiritual master of tantra, gyan, yoga and prema or bhakti. His followers idealized him as their worshipped and beloved thakura. Swami Nigamananda



Paramahansa (born Nalinikanta Chattopadhyay; 18 August 1880– 29 November 1935 is a Sadguru, Hindu yogi, guru and mystic well known in Eastern India. He is associated with the shakti cult and viewed as a perfect spiritual master of tantra, gyan, yoga and prema or bhakti. His followers idealized him as their worshipped and beloved thakura.

c Halisahar Launch Ghat (Plate 188)- 22°56'25.54"N, 88°24'50.06"E. This ferry Service connects Halisahar to Shahgaunge , Dunlop which is in the other side of Hugli River in the district of Higli.



e.Ramprasad Ghat (Plate 189)- 38 west, 32/38, SH 1, Nabanagar, Halisahar Station Road, Kanchrapara, West Bengal 743134. GCP - 22°56'18.88"N, 88°24'49.06"E.

The great Yogi Ramprasad Sen was born and died in Halisahar. Ramprasad spent most of his time in sadhana, meditation, and prayer. Traditional accounts tell of several esoteric sadhanas that he performed, including standing neck-deep in the river Ganges, singing songs to Kali. Ramprasad would regularly practice his sadhana in a panchavati: a grove with five trees—banyan, bael, amalaki, ashoka, and peepul—all regarded as holy in Tantric tradition. He would reportedly spend hours meditating on a panchamundi asana (an altar inside which are interred five skulls—that of a snake, frog, rabbit, fox, and man). According to popular stories he had a vision of Kali in her form of Adyashakti Mahamaya. Raja Krishnachandra of Nadia, a landlord under Nawab Sirajuddaula of Bengal, heard Ramprasad's hymns. Being an ardent devotee of Kali, he appointed Ramprasad as his court poet. Ramprasad rarely attended the Maharaja's court and would spend his time in sadhana and worship of Kali instead. Krishna Chandra became Ramprasad's benefactor, giving him 100 acres (0.40 km²; 0.16 sq mi) of tax free land. Ramprasad, in return, dedicated his book *Vidyasundar* ("Beautiful Knowledge") to the Maharaja. Krishna Chandra also gave Ramprasad the title *Kaviranjana* ("Entertainer of poets"). During the Maharaja's last years, Ramprasad stayed beside him, singing hymns to Kali. Ramprasad's mysticism was recognized by sufis and Nawab Sirajuddaula. Ramprasad is said to have visited the court of the Nawab at the Nawab's fervent request.





Plate 190 a,b,c : Balida Siddheswari Ghat

h. Balida Ghata Siddheswari Ghat- $22^{\circ}55'59.45''N$ $88^{\circ}24'45.09''E$. There is a beautiful temple of Siddheswari along Balida Ghat . Siddeshwari Kali temple built by Sraborno Chaudhury's successor Vidyadhar Raychaudhury at Baldiaghata

Plate 191 : Siddheswari Ghat



i. Jagannath Temple Ghat of Halisahar (Plate 191)- 22°55'27.88"N, 88°24'28.32"E

Located just south of Jubilee Bridge and Sampreeti Bridge is the Garifa – Hooghly Ghat Ferry Service in the Naihati Municipality connecting N24 Parganas with Hooghly .



Plate 192 - The luxury launch passing through Hooghly river with the new bridge, Sampreeti Bridge on the background.

j. Baisnab Para Ferry Ghat (Plate 193)- 22°54'8.07"N , 88°24'27.55"E.



Naihati Ferry Service Jetty Ghat links to Mechuabazar Ferry Service Jetty Ghat across the Hugli at Chinsiah and the Hooghly Garifa Boat Service links Ram Ghat to Hooghly Ghat at Hugli. Plate 194 : Naihati Ferry Service.



j. Baromandir Ghat (Plate 195) – One of the best architecturally maintained ghat of the study area is the Baromandir Ghat of Panihati Municipality. Nabin Chandra Dutta founded



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this Ghat in 1920. In 1924, Port Commissioner of Calcutta surveyed the ghats of the entire banks of Hooghly from Kalna to Ganga Sagar and declared that this is the broadest and most beautiful ghat along the Hugly River. The first engineer of Calcutta Nilmoni Mitra and Sir Bradford Leslie helped in planning this Ghat.

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Plate 196 – Shiv Mandirs along Baro Mandir Ghat



Plate 197– Tran Nath Babur Ghat



Plate 198- Panchratna Kali Mandir along the Tran nath Babur Ghat

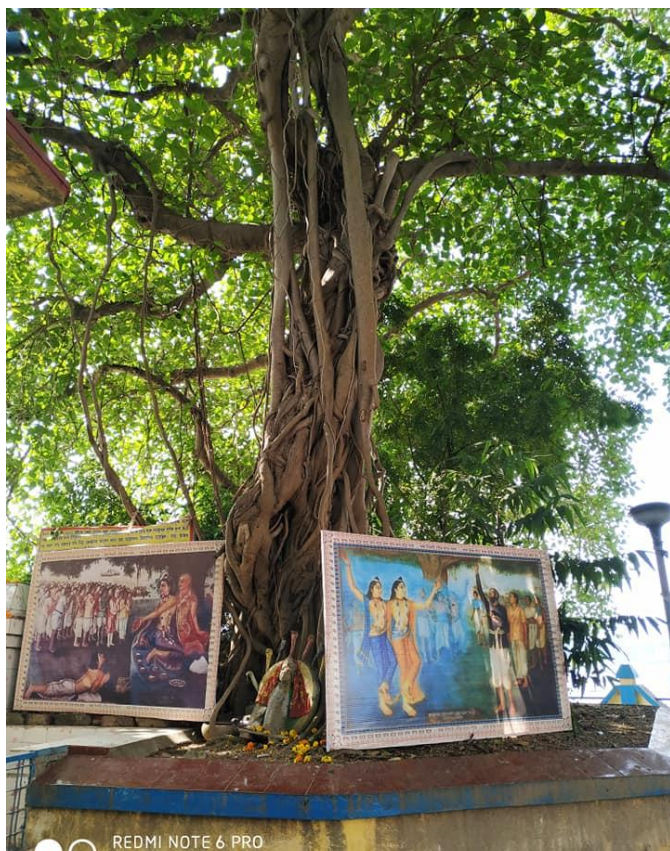


Plate 199 a & b– Panihati , Chaitnya Mahotsab Ghat with the 700 year old tree

I.Chaitnya Mahaprabhu Ghat – It is the oldest recorded Ghat of the study area .Sri Chaitanya and Nityananda Mahaprabhu first came here in 1515 A.D and given the "DANDA" to Raghunath Majumder under a **700 years old banyan tree. This ghat is also called as 'Mahotsavtala'. Every year, in the month of Jyestha, devotees gather at the same place to commemorate the “Chida-Dadhi Mahotsav”. he old banyan tree is still at the Ghat and a small temple dedicated to Shri Chaitanya Dev attracts substantial footfall regularly. Some hoardings have been put up to narrate the story of the festival. Plate 200**



m. Panihati Giribala Mandir Ghat –This ghat was erected by Rani Rashmoni’s grand daughter-in law Giribala Debi , wife of Gopalkrishna Das . She also founded a beautiful Radha-Govinda Temple and 6 shib Mandirs.Plate 201 a & b.

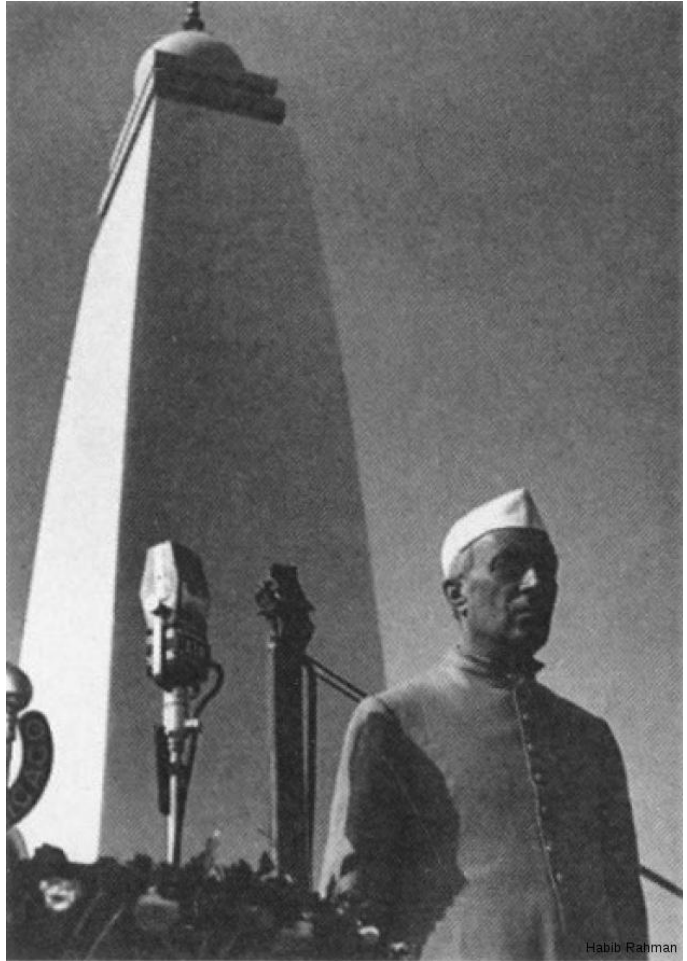


I. Barrackpore Annapurna Ghat – A beautiful nabaratna (nine pinnacled) temple, like that of the famous Dakshineswar Temple is situated in Talpukur area of the subdivisional town of North 24 Parganas – Barrackpore just by the sides of the Ganges. The temple is dedicated to Goddess Annapurna. The construction of this brick-made temple began roughly in 1870 and it took five years to complete. The temple is in a raised platform and there are staircase on the western, northern and southern side. The first floor contains four ratnas while the second floor has five which when sums up comes to nine ratnas or nabaratna. The inauguration took place on 30th Chaitra, 1281, which according to Gregorian calendar was 12th April, 1875; almost two decades after the opening of the Dakshineswar Temple. Ramakrishna Paramahansadev was present not only on the day of inauguration of Annapurna Temple but also on the day of selection of the land for the temple. It was said that previously Serampore on the other side of the Ganges was selected as the place for the temple but finally Chanak (the old name of Barrackpore) was finalised for the construction of this beautiful nabaratna temple. Annapurna Temple was built by the youngest daughter of Rani Rashmoni – Jagatdamba and wife of Mathur Mohan Biswas.



Plate 202– Annapurna Ghat , Barrackpore

m. Gandhi Ghat - *This was the first structure to be built as a memorial to the Father of the Nation. A tomb in the memory of Mahatma Gandhi, a lush green garden dotted with 120 varieties of roses, exquisite plants and trees, a picturesque sunset and an exciting riverfront ' the Gandhi Ghat package is good enough to entice you to break free from crowded Kolkata and set off for Barrackpore, around 30 km north from the heart of the city. Built in 1948 (the year the father of the nation died), the monument on the banks of the river Hooghly and the sprawling garden,*



Jawahar Kunj ' maintained by the state forest department ' can offer a day's respite to city-dwellers. It

Plate 203– Pt. Nehru in front of Gandhi Ghat ,
Barrackpore in the first death anniversary of Bapuji

was inaugurated by Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru. Thrice a year ' August 15, January 26 and October 2 ' the Governor hoists the Tricolour at this location.

n.Mangal Pandey Ghat –The Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 sparked out from Barrackpore when Mangal Pandey, a sepoy revolted against the British autrocities. A park is named 'Shahid Mangal Pandey Maha Udyan' in the memory of Mangal Pandey where he attacked British officers and was hanged, at Barrackpore . The Ghat adjoining to this park is called as the “Mangal Pandey Ghat”.



Plate 204– Mangal Pandey Ghat, Barrackpore

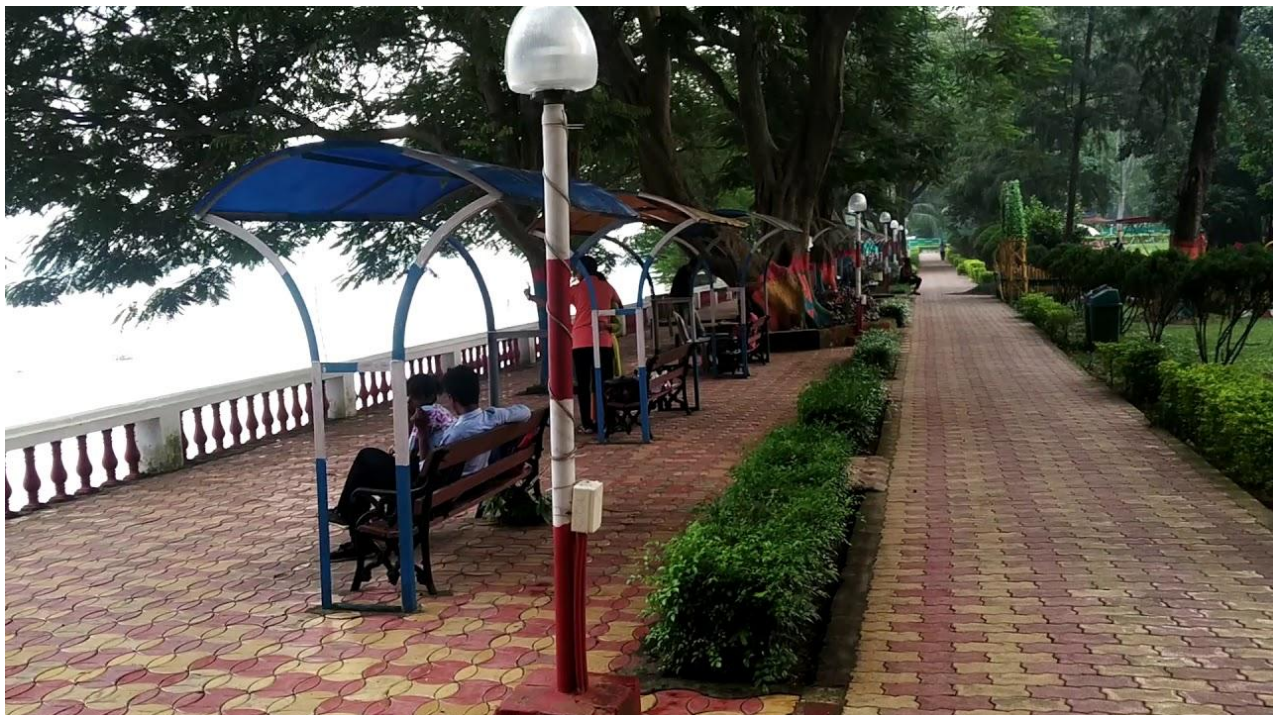


Plate 205– Mangal Pandey Park and Strand

o.Dakhineswar Kali Mandir Ghat - The renowned Kali Temple is situated at Dakshneswar on the Eastern bank of River Hooghly at Ward No. 14 under Kamarhati Municipality. The presiding deity of the temple is BHAVATARINI as aspect of Kali. The temple was built by Rani Rasmoi, a philanthropist and a devotee of Kali in 1855. The temple is famous for its association with Ramkrishna a mystic of 19th century Bengal. The temple compound apart from the nine-spire main temple contains a large courtyard surrounding the temple, with rooms along the boundary walls. There are twelve shrines dedicated to Shiva-Kali's companion- along the riverfront, a temple to Radhe-Krishna, a bathing Ghat on the River, a shrine dedicated to Rani Rasmoni. The chamber in the north western corner just beyond the last of the Shiva Temples, is where Ramkrishna spent a considerable part of his life.

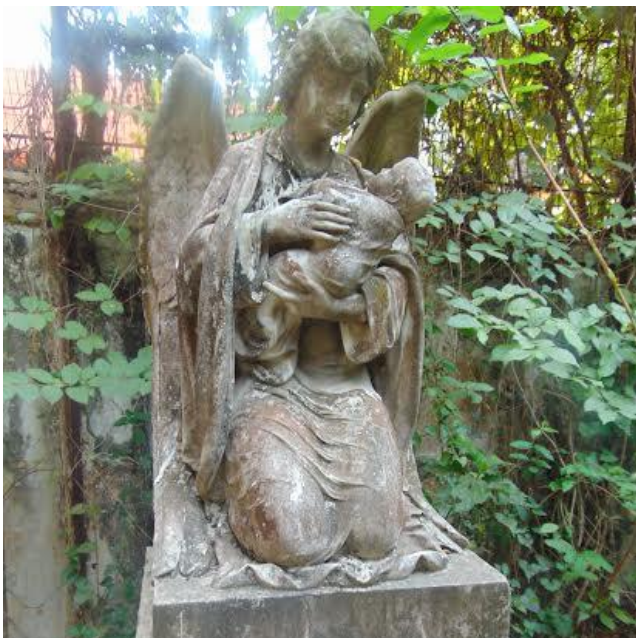


Plate 206– Dakshineswar Temple and Ghat

p.Kuthi Ghat , Baranagar – Kuthighat in Baranagar still bears the history of Dutch Kuthi (House) in its name. The Dutch had homes in this area in the seventeenth century. Streyنشam Master, who visited the area in 1676, spoke of a hog factory where about 3,000 hogs were slaughtered each year and salted for export. Later it became the centre for the jute trade. There was a house (Dutch Kothi) adjacent to this Ghat where existed a plaque on the wall which identified the house as Dutch Kuthi.



Plate 207 a,b& c – Baranagar Kuthi Ghat



q. Joy Mitra Kalibari Ghat - Joy Mitra Kali Bari or Kripamayee Kali Temple and Ghat is another beautiful Ghat in the Baranagar area. Zamindar Joynarayan Mitra from Kolkata's Shovabazar Rajbari family had built this temple. On October 5, 1864, a Dutch merchant ship had crashed into the ‘nahabatkhana’ here, and the ruins from this incident are still around.



Plate 208 – Joy Mitra Kalibari Ghat

r. Satidaho Ghat – Sati (also called suttee) is the practice among some Hindu communities by which a recently widowed woman either voluntarily or by use of force or coercion



commits suicide as a result of her husband's death. The best known form of sati is when a woman burns to death on her husband's funeral pyre. However other forms of sati exist, including being buried alive with the husband's corpse and drowning. There is a Ghat in this area where Raja Rammohan Roy stopped an ongoing Sati Daho .

Plate 209- Sati Daho Ghat , Baranagar

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