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Contents

Pramath Chandra Sarker	1
Factors Influencing the Job Satisfaction of the Government and Non-Government College Teachers: A Study of Rajshahi District in Bangladesh	
Labanya Kumar Sarker	15
Pattern of Friends and Family Communication through Social Media among the HSC Level Students: A Study on a Selected Government College in Rajshahi City	
Dr. Subrata Roy	25
Urbanization Social Change and Cultural Space a Study on the Cities and Towns of Bengal in the 18 th Century	
Md. FaruqueHossain	43
Anthropocentric Approach to the Environment: An Overview	
Dr. Md. Ashif Zamal Lasker	57
Sufi Influence in Medieval Mangalkot: The Land of Eighteen Auliya	
Dr. Md. Rezaul Karim	65
Fakir-Sannyasi Movement in Rajshahi: Regional Study of a Pioneer Peasant Resistance in Colonial Bengal	

Factors Influencing the Job Satisfaction of the Government and Non-Government College Teachers: A Study of Rajshahi District in Bangladesh.

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Abstract: The level of job satisfaction has been recognized as an important factor determining teachers' performance and professional development. Teachers' job satisfaction is affected by different factors such as promotion opportunities, reasonable salary, a good work environment, support from the community, and relationship between colleagues. Teaching environment, Organization, an imbalance between work and lifecycle, unavailable materials, interference from political parties, and pressure groups are the main factors of job dissatisfaction (Sahito and Vaisanen, 2019). The present study was conducted to examine the status of job satisfaction of the government and non-government college teachers in Bangladesh. The key objectives of the study are intended to investigate the factors influencing the job satisfaction of the teachers. Bangla version of Baryfield-Rothe Job Satisfaction Scale (1951) was employed to assess the job satisfaction of the respondent. The findings of the present study revealed that the job satisfaction significantly differed in terms of the type of the colleges and no significant difference was found in terms of gender and residence.

Keywords: Job Satisfaction, Govt. College Teacher, Non-Govt. College Teacher.

Introduction

A country's successful education system requires highly qualified teachers. Furthermore, for a good education system, teachers must have high job satisfaction. For the reason that many researchers found that job satisfaction was vastly correlated with organizational commitment as well as to organizational performance. Job satisfaction is the most vital aspect of an individual's life. It is a positive approach of a person towards work. Job satisfaction states to a psychological state or feeling on which an employee's tendency to do his/her job satisfactorily or dissatisfactorily is dependent (Katoch, 2012). It is a combination of physiological, social, and environmental situations in which the person felt gratification (Hoppock, 1935). Job satisfaction is an attitude or a mental process that can be found by evaluating the degree to which employees like their jobs. It is a focus of the nature of attitude of an employee that he possesses. Good attitude and feeling are the resultant effects of job satisfaction ensures enhanced

productivity and improves the quality and the quantity of the work output. Work satisfaction is a set of optimal or adverse feelings and emotions with which the worker sees their job (Newstrom & Davis, 2005). Locke (1976) defined job satisfaction as a positive attitude or pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job as fulfilling one's important job values, providing these values are compatible with one's needs. Findings from several studies underline pay as one of the most important factors influencing one's level of job satisfaction. Some important factors influencing job satisfaction may be classified into three categories. According to Vroom (1964), There are three types of job satisfaction factors as Personal Factors (Personality, age, experience, health, sex, marital status, intelligence, educational qualification); Job-related Factors (Nature of work, working environment, relation with colleague, job security, supervision, job status, promotion, wage/salary, communication, work time) and Factor outside the job (Family life, social life). But according to another view, Job satisfaction factors are classified into intrinsic and extrinsic factors. A teacher is a person who helps others to acquire knowledge, competencies, or values. The teacher has a powerful and abiding influence in the formation of the character of every future citizen. The role of teachers in any education system is very important. Teaching is one of the most dignified professions and plays a vital role in the development of societies. With the teachers' assistance, students acquire knowledge, information, and motivation for their development and shoulder the responsibility of taking the nation towards development, therefore the teachers are considered as the pillars of the society (Ahsan et. al., 2009). A teacher desires security, recognition, new experience, and self-governing. When these needs are not fulfilled, the teachers become tense, dissatisfied. Job is not only a main source of income but also an important component of life (George et. al., 2008). There are three main levels of the education system/stage in Bangladesh: primary, secondary & higher secondary educations and higher education (National Education Policy, 2010). The controlling authority of secondary & higher secondary educations and higher education falls under the MINISTRY OF EDUCATION (MoEdu), but the DIRECTORATE OF SECONDARY AND HIGHER EDUCATION (DSHE) is implementing policies and programs. A college is an educational institution or a constituent part of one. A college may be a degree-awarding tertiary educational institution, affiliated with national university. At present, the number of government colleges is 598 after nationalizing 271 colleges non-government college is more than 4000 in Bangladesh. (BDnews24, 2018)

Review of literature

Very few studies have been conducted in this concern, but all of them are on foreign Countries. Kumar and Bhatia (2011), Zilli and Zahoor (2012) mentioned that the level of job satisfaction and attitude of the teachers towards teaching is least affected by gender, marital status, minimum qualification, and income group of physical education teachers and their attitude towards teaching. A study in Pakistan by Shafi et al. (2016) revealed that teachers are not satisfied with their job

because of factors considered for promotion is full dissatisfaction of teachers and working place, training, and outcomes of training only satisfied issue of teachers. On payment issues, teachers are very dissatisfied. Kumar and Patnaik (2004) suggested that satisfaction is very important in all aspects of any profession, the occurrence of skills, knowledge, and competencies depends upon the satisfaction of behavior of individuals. Another study by Filak et. al. (2003) found that the job satisfaction of academicians of any institute is required in their behaviors so they will achieve their responsibilities with promise, perseverance, and hard labor to provide the latest information and evidence to apprentices for their progress. Tilak (2013), Murage & Kibera (2014), Buragohain & Hazarika (2015), and Rastegar & Moradi (2016) showed that gender has no impact on job satisfaction. In addition, there was no major difference between Govt. and Private school teachers in the level of satisfaction. In another study, Blum and Naylor (2004) revealed that there exists a relationship between job quality and job satisfaction but it is complex in nature. The relation is affected by a third element, the worker's expectations. Research showed (Ali et al., 2011; Ma & MacMillan, 1999) that in terms of job satisfaction and organizational commitment the mean score for female teachers was higher than male teachers. Chen (2010) examined in a study that Chinese middle school teachers are dissatisfied with a job than younger and less experienced teachers (Murage & Kibera, 2014; Shafi, 2016). Chen (2010) also found that there exists no significant difference in the mean estimates of government school teachers concerning gender and there exist significant differences in non-govt. school teachers concerning gender. A study by Shafiq et al. (2016) revealed that most of the teachers in all ranks and with different qualifications were not satisfied with their job due to a lack of appropriate facility organization and stumpy incomes. But, Khaleque and Rahman (1987) informed that married jute mill workers are more satisfied than unmarried workers. The difference in results of different studies may be due to the difference in situations. John (2010); Mehta (2012), Ghosh (2015), and Shafi (2016) investigated the job satisfaction of the teachers with an aim to know whether the perception of job satisfaction among teachers was affected by the type of organization (Private vs. Govt.) and the gender (male vs. female). Alam et al. (2005) and found that female teacher were more satisfied with the promotion, benefit, and support of teaching but less satisfied with interpersonal relations with colleagues. Sharma (2017) founded that Government teachers are comparatively satisfied than private teaches. Shivendra and Kumar (2016) indicated that the significant difference was found among govt., semi-govt. and private school in relation to job satisfaction and occupational stress. Laxman (2017) concluded that permanent school teachers found significantly high job satisfaction than temporary school teaches. Sultana et al. (2017) revealed that job satisfaction has no relationship between government and private primary school teachers. They also showed that female teachers are more satisfied than male teachers.

Significance of the study

Nowadays, Teacher satisfaction is an important issue both domestically and internationally. There is no substitute for a skilled teacher in order to build a country's adequate human resources and utilize them for effective development. Bangladesh is dreaming of reaching the SDG goals in 2030 and the developed country in 2041. But the education system in Bangladesh is not yet developed. Achieving these goals can be difficult without a successful education system. With the development of the education system, we can get skilled human resources. This is why skilled and satisfied teachers are needed. But the level of job satisfaction of teachers in Bangladesh is very low and so, it is impossible to keep organizational commitment and show the best organizational performance in this situation. On account of this their job satisfaction needs to be increased as per as requires. The focus of the present paper is to find out the level of job satisfaction of govt. and non-govt. college teachers of the Rajshahi district. We want to know the present situation of the job satisfaction of college teachers. In Bangladesh, there is a dearth of research into job satisfaction in this area in college education. Moreover, there are different classes (Govt, non-govt, private, and others) in the education system of Bangladesh, and there have many inequalities at different stages. To conduct this study the BaryfieldRothe (1951) Job Satisfaction Scale is applied. After all the findings of the study can help the government, policy-makers, college authorities to take some effective initiatives to eliminate the problem and try to enhance the level of job satisfaction of college teachers for the better achievement of college education.

Objectives

The study is intended to investigate the factors influencing the job satisfaction of the government and non-government college teachers in Bangladesh. Some specific objectives of the present study were

1. To compare the levels of job satisfaction of college teachers' respect of types of college.
2. To study the levels of job satisfaction of college teachers concerning gender.
3. To investigate whether there are any differences in job satisfaction according to the residence.
4. To investigate whether there is any connection between, salary, and job satisfaction.

Hypothesis

1. There would be no significant mean differences in job satisfaction regarding the type of college, gender, and residence.
2. There would be no relationship among age, experience, salary, and job satisfaction.

METHODS

Research Design

A survey design was followed to conduct the present study. A cross-sectional and quantitative research method based on the survey approach was utilized for the study. This study was conducted in different colleges of the Rajshahi District.

Participants

The present study was conducted on 203 respondents. They were selected a convenience sampling technique (non-probability sampling) from different colleges of the Rajshahi district in Bangladesh. Among the respondents 99 were govt. college teachers and the rest of the 104 were non-govt. college teachers. Their age ranged from 25 to 58 years.

Instruments

In the present study the following instrument was used for data collection from the participant:

Job Satisfaction Scale: Bangla version of the Baryfield-Rothe (1951) job satisfaction scale was administered to measure the job satisfaction of the respondents. The Bangla version of Job satisfaction scale was adapted by Khaleque et al., (1995), cited by Saha et al. (2020). It was an 18 items Likert-type scale with five alternative responses ranging from ‘strongly agree’ (5) to ‘strongly disagree’ (1). The scale contains 9 positive and 9 negative items where negative items are estimated reversely. The total raw estimate of this scale ranges from 18-90, where a high estimate indicates job satisfaction and a lower estimate indicates job dissatisfaction. The neutral point of this scale is 54. Positive items are this scale is 1, 2, 5, 7, 9, 12, 13, 15, and 17 and negative items are 3, 4, 6, 8, 10, 11, 14, 16, and 18. Split half reliability coefficients of the original scale 0.87. In this study, the level of Cronbach’s alfa is at an acceptable level.

Data Collection Procedure

The standard data collection procedure was followed to collect information from the respondents. Firstly, they filled up the personal information sheet, and then they were asked to give his/her opinion to all the items of the scale by tick (✓) marks. Participants were requested to answer the question sincerely and honestly. All possible clarifications were made to any problem faced by the respondents while answering the questions. There is no time limit to answer the questions of the job satisfaction scale. After completion of their task, the questionnaires were collected from them and they were given thanks for their active cooperation.

Ethics

The study was conducted in accordance with Helsinki Declaration and the APA Guidelines. Before starting the survey, each participant was informed about the purpose and benefits and was simply briefed about the questionnaire of the study. They were given a complete idea of the conditions of confidentiality of their information. They were also told that the collection of information was completely

voluntary and no payment would be made. Each participant had the right to withdraw from providing information at any time from the study.

Statistical Analysis

Descriptive Statistics (Frequency, means, and standard deviation) and independent-sample *t*-test were used to find out the statistical significance of the data through Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 26.0. The raw scores for each item were summed up to get the total score. Therefore, the total score of each respondent was computed.

RESULTS

The results of the study were tabulated and interpreted by *t*-test through IBM SPSS version 26. The results of the present study are illustrated in the following tables.

Table-1: Mean differences of Job satisfaction between Govt. and Non-govt. college teachers

Group	N	Mean	SD	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	p
Govt. college	99	68.08	14.18	201	2.22 *	0.02
Non-govt. college	104	64.20	10.31			

Note: **t-value* is significant at the level of 0.05 level

Table 1 suggests that there is a significant difference between Govt. and non-govt. college teachers on their job satisfaction $t(201) = 2.22, p = .02$. The mean scores of Job satisfaction of govt. College teachers (M=68.08, SD=14.18) are higher than non-govt. college teacher (M=64.20, SD=10.31). It means govt. college teachers had higher satisfaction with their job than non-govt. College.

Table 2: Mean differences of Job satisfaction between Govt. and Non-govt. college male teacher

Group	N	Mean	SD	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	p
Govt. college Male teacher	60	68.22	11.52	122	3.29 *	.001
Non-govt. college Male teacher	64	61.80	10.22			

Note: **t-value* is significant at the level of 0.001 level

Table 2 suggests that there is a significant difference between Govt. and non-govt. college male teachers on their job satisfaction $t(122) = 3.29, p = .001$. The mean score of Job satisfaction of Govt. college male teachers (M=68.22, SD=11.52) is higher than non-govt. college male teacher (M=61.80, Sd=10.22). It means govt. college male teachers had higher satisfaction with their job than non-govt. College male teacher.

Table-3: Mean differences of Job satisfaction between Govt. and Non-govt. college female teacher

Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t	p
Govt. college Female teachers	39	67.87	17.67	77	-.05	0.95
Non-govt. college Female teachers	40	68.05	9.34			

Table 3 suggests that there is no significant difference between Govt. and non-govt. college female teachers on their job satisfaction $t(77)=2.22, p=.95$. The mean score of job satisfaction of Govt. college female teachers ($M=67.87, SD=17.67$) is slightly lower than non-govt. college female teacher ($M=68.05, SD=9.34$). It means govt. college female teachers had slightly lower satisfaction with their job than non-govt. College female teacher.

Table-4: Mean differences in Job satisfaction between male and female teachers

Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t	p
male teachers	124	64.90	11.29	201	-1.71	.09
female teachers	79	67.96	13.99			

Table 4 suggests that there is no significant difference between male and female teachers on their job satisfaction $t(201)=-1.71, p=.09$. The mean score of job satisfaction of male teachers ($M=64.90, SD=11.29$) is slightly lower than the female teachers ($M=67.96, SD=13.99$). It means male teachers had slightly lower satisfaction with their job than female teachers.

Table-5: Mean differences in Job satisfaction between urban and rural college teachers

Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t	p
Urban College teacher	116	67.23	13.33	201	1.54	.09
Rural college teacher	87	64.57	11.11			

Table 5 suggests that there is no significant difference between urban and rural college teachers on their job satisfaction $t(201)=1.54, p=.09$. The mean score of job satisfaction of urban college teachers ($M=67.23, SD=13.33$) is slightly higher than rural college teachers ($M=64.57, SD=11.11$). It means urban college teachers had slightly higher satisfaction with their job than rural college teachers.

Table-6: Different levels of job satisfaction according to job satisfaction score quartile

Category	Number of Participants (f)	% of participants	Average age (years)	Average Experience (years)	Average income (Tk.)	Average job Satisfaction score
18-36 (very dissatisfaction)	3	1.50	27.66	3.00	35,000	32.66

37-54 (dissatisfaction)	34	16.70	37.50	9.47	37,300	47.67
55-72 (satisfaction)	97	47.80	43.35	14.30	41,200	64.40
73-90 (High satisfaction)	69	34.00	38.86	10.08	40,947	79.00

Above table 6 shows a positive relation among age, experiences, income, and job satisfaction score. The 1.50% of the very dissatisfaction of the respondents constituted an average score of 32.66 on the job satisfaction scale. Their average age was found to be 27.66 years with a mean experience of 3 years. Respondents whose job satisfaction scores were between 37 and 54 were classified in the dissatisfaction category. The 16.70% of the respondents constituted with an average score of 47.67 on the job satisfaction scale. Their average age was found to be 37.50 years with a mean experience of 9.47 years. Respondents whose job satisfaction scores were between 55 and 72 were classified in the satisfaction category. The 47.80% of the respondents constituted with an average score of 64.40 on the job satisfaction scale. Their average age was found to be 43.35 years with a mean experience of 14.30 years. The 34.00% of the high satisfaction of the respondents constituted with an average score of 79.00 on the job satisfaction scale. Their average age was found to be 38.86 years with a mean experience of 10.08.

DISCUSSIONS

The present research is a comparative study to investigate the condition of job satisfaction of Govt. and non-govt. college teachers in Bangladesh.

The *first* hypothesis of the present research started that there would be no significant mean differences in job satisfaction concerning the type of college, gender, and residence. The results were present in Table 1-5. Computation of t-test indicated that there are significant differences ($t=2.22$) on job satisfaction between Govt. and non-govt. college teachers (Table 1). The mean estimate of job satisfaction for govt. college teachers ($M = 68.08$) are found higher than non-govt. college teachers ($M = 64.20$). These findings are consistent with the findings of Mehta (2012), John (2010), Gahlawat (2017), Sharma (2017), Shivendra and Kumar (2016), Laxman (2017), Galgotra (2013) but contradict the findings of Tilak (2013), Ghosh (2015), and Sultana et al., (2017). The probable reason is that academic promotion, management systems, and others conditions have not similarities in govt. and non-govt. College. But the syllabus, curriculum, academic calendar as well as controlling authority (MINISTRY OF EDUCATION (MOEDU)), Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education-DSHE & National University-NU) are the same. The govt. college teacher's nature of work, working environment, job, and personal security, job status, promotion, wage/salary, opportunities for training, development, etc. are better than non-govt. college teachers in Bangladesh.

In the term of govt. and non-govt college male teachers, computation of t-test indicated that there were significant differences ($t=3.29$) on job satisfaction between Govt. and non-govt. college male teachers (Table 2). The mean score of job satisfaction for govt. college male teachers ($M = 68.22$) are found higher than that of non-govt. college male teachers ($M = 61.80$). In addition, most of the non-govt. college teachers were works weak infrastructure college. Their salary level is so low and no other allowance. For this reason, job satisfaction of non-govt. college teachers are very low. On the others hand, work and salary condition of govt. college teachers were well enough.

In the term of govt. and non-govt. college female teachers, calculation of t-test indicated that there were no significant differences ($t=-.05$) on job satisfaction (Table 3). The mean score of job satisfaction for govt. college female teachers ($M = 67.87$) is found lower than that of non-govt. college female teachers ($M = 68.05$). This result is really surprising and dramatic. How is it possible? The probable reason is that govt. college female teachers expect less from the job so they are satisfied with less. They do have not a higher expectation for promotion and other issues than their male counterparts (Govt. College).

Computation of t-test indicated that there were no significant mean differences ($t=-1.71$) on job satisfaction between male and female teachers (Table 4). The mean score of job satisfaction for male teachers ($M = 64.90$) is found lower than that of female teachers ($M = 67.96$). Female teachers were found to be more satisfied than their counterpart colleagues, this means woman enjoyed their working atmosphere and they have no higher expectations for higher posts but male teachers have. These findings are consistent with the findings of Suki and Suki (2011), Chen (2010), Tilak (2013), Ghosh (2015), Alamet al.(2005), Sultana et al. (2017), Ali et al. (2011; Ma & MacMillan (1999) but contradicts the findings of Kumar and Bhatia (2011), Mehta (2012), John (2010), Nagar (2012).

In the term of urban and rural college teachers, computation of t-test indicated that there were no significant differences ($t=1.54$) on job satisfaction. The mean score of job satisfaction for Urban college teachers ($M = 67.23$) is found higher than that of rural college female teachers ($M = 64.57$).

The *second* hypothesis of the present research started that there would be no relationship between age, experience, salary, and job satisfaction. The results were present in Table 6. The above results show that a strong positive relationship exists among age, experiences, income, and job satisfaction scores. The results of the study clearly show that there is a connection between job satisfaction with age, experiences, and income, but job satisfaction with higher-level teachers is in this study only 34%. These all findings are consistent with the findings of Ghenghesh (2013), Murage & Kibera (2014), Restergar & Mordi (2016), and Shafi (2016).

Concluding Remarks

The teaching profession is said to be the best profession in the world and teachers play an momentous role in the development of society and the nation. Teachers

assist students in acquiring knowledge, providing information, and creating skilled human resources for the country. For the reason that teachers are called the pillars of society and country. So a teacher must need safety, an friendly environment, self-esteem, better wage, recognition, training, and independence. The present study clearly indicates that govt. college teachers are comparatively satisfied than non-govt. college teachers and a positive relationship exist among age, experiences, income, and job satisfaction. In the modern world of competition, we need satisfied teachers to take the obligation of preparing our future generation to compete on a global level. A teacher should be given the freedom to make the decisions most suitable for the all-around improvement of the students. This result also suggests that government or authorities must give essential services and security including financial, social promotional aspects in professional environment to enhance the satisfaction and others factors of their teachers. Job satisfaction makes sound decisions, in both preventing and solving employee problems. It gives benefits to gain better management to acquire satisfaction, safety value as well as emotional release. Considering all aspects of college teaching it is clear that the job satisfaction of teachers both govt. and non-govt. college are extremely displeasing, to develop all the situation is indispensable for acquiring up-dated knowledge, skills, human resources, and values of the students in the education sector in the country. Based on the results of the present research it can be concluded that proper attention should be given to the improvement of the status of job satisfaction of non-government and government college teachers in Bangladesh. Although the present research tried to maintain a sound methodology and analysis of data, it is not free from limitations. First, it is, therefore, suggested to conduct a study on larger representative samples. Second, the findings of the present research have shedded the light on an important area of research in the job satisfaction of college teachers in Bangladesh. Third, information providers have provided information voluntarily. Forth, it is a self-fulfilling prophecy, so it is not impossible to be biased in answering. We recommend that research be conducted using other methods and designs in the future. Although only one psychological scale has been conducted to measure job satisfaction in the present study, other constructs or scales should be conducted in future research. The present study is also conducted in the Rajshahi area, so it can be conducted in other areas of Bangladesh.

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Pattern of Friends and Family Communication through Social Media among the HSC Level Students: A Study on a Selected Government College in Rajshahi City

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Abstract: This quantitative study explores the pattern of higher secondary level students' social media communication with their friends and family members. It was conducted on the students of New Govt. Degree College, Rajshahi. Using convenience sampling method, a total number of 61 students were selected from Science, Humanities and Business Studies groups of sessions 2018-19 and 2019-20. Primary data collected through a structured questionnaire. The findings of this study show that Facebook and Messenger are the most popular social media sites among the respondents. A significant number of the respondents maintain more than 1000 online friends and a good number of them are engaged in more than 5 online groups. Almost all of them have more virtual friends than real life friends. In selecting virtual friends, as perceived most of the respondents, male students are more active than the female ones. This virtual friendship is mainly built with classmates, people familiar in real life and people who are shown in social media as having mutual friends. Friendships are initiated mainly by accepting others' friend requests and by sending friend requests to others. As for the communication, most of the respondents give priority to virtual friends over parents, other family members and relatives. The findings suggest that the respondents' pattern of communication with friends and family members is changing drastically and the communication preference is given to virtual world, not to the real world.

Key words: Patterns, Friend and Family (FnF), Communication, Social media, HSC students

1. Introduction

Social media is an online based informal but very much popular platform for people of all strata around the world. It facilitates the interaction between groups or individuals of virtual communities through which they produce, share and exchange their ideas, feelings, personal information, images, videos and the like over the internet. In Bangladesh, different age groups from illiterate to literate, housewives to workers, and urban people to rural ones use social media for various purposes. People aged **18 to 24** are the largest user group of Facebook, a social networking site, in Bangladesh (NapoleonCat, 2019). Part of Higher Secondary level students belong to this group as this level in Bangladesh normally begins when a student is aged sixteen years and a half and ends when s/he is roughly nineteen.

Along with bringing new opportunities, the rapid expansion of the internet, Wi-Fi facilities and social media sites has also brought new concerns to the students, their teachers and guardians. It is said that the use of internet at home has a strong negative impact on time spent with friends and family as well as time spent on social activities (Nie&Hillygus, 2002). That means it can affect the quality of a person's relationship with their family members and friends. Its extensive use can also make the user withdraw herself/himself from the society s/he lives in, and consequently diminish their social ties and increase their social isolation (Quaglio& Millar, 2020). Considering these facts, Bala (2014) claims that social media is creating a new kind of social order[;] it is strengthening social network but weakening inter-personal relations. He also finds that whenever any new medium arrives on the communication stage it affects the communication patterns of society (Bala, 2014). As students are a part of the society, their communication pattern is supposed to be affected with the arrival of social media. Because the more time the students, the future of a nation, spend on social media, the less time they spend with their families and real life friends, which can make them lonely and depressed (Sanders et al., 2000). So, to keep the students free from loneliness and depression through strengthening ties with friends and family members, it is necessary to know whether and to what extent social media has affected their communication pattern. In other words, it is necessary to investigate what social media sites the students use, how many friends they have, how they select their virtual friends, what strategy they follow for selecting their online friends, what sexual identity of the virtual friends they prefer, how many groups they maintain and who they are mostly connected with. Therefore, the present study seeks to explore the higher secondary level students' pattern of maintaining communication with friends and family members through the use of social media.

2. Research Methodology

Quantitative approach is followed by applying a questionnaire survey in this study. This approach was followed because the queries of the objective of this study were possible to materialize by using a structured questionnaire.

The participants in this study were the higher secondary level students of New Govt. Degree College, Rajshahi. This college was selected purposively because it has the highest number of HSC level students in Rajshahi Division (Sohopathi, 2020). The reason of choosing HSC level students is that students' intermediate life is very crucial time for self-development as well as for career development. This period is also the gateway to higher education in Bangladesh.

Sixty-one students were selected as sample respondents using convenience sampling method. The sample was taken from the first year (session: 2019-2020) and the second year (session: 2018-2019) of Intermediate classes of the aforesaid college. From the first year, 11 from Humanities, 10 from Science and 10 from Business Studies groups and from the second year 10 from each of the three groups were selected conveniently. Necessary data were collected from the primary source through a structured questionnaire having eight close ended

questions. The survey was conducted during February to March, 2020, immediately before the call of lockdown by the government due to Covid-19 outbreak. Initially the sample size was determined as 92 using Andrew Fisher's formula where the size of the known Population was 2400, Confidence Level was 95% and Confidence Interval was 10%. The questionnaire survey was interrupted by Covid-19 outbreak. Before the interruption responses from 61 students could be collected. Collected primary data were verified, reviewed, and scrutinized thoroughly and edited manually to remove inconsistencies. Then the data were analyzed using SPSS version 23.

3. Results and Discussion

The results of the survey data are category-wise presented in frequency table with percentage. Critical remarks on the major findings follow the table concerned.

3.1 Accounts with Different Social Media Sites

Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, Messenger, Imo, WhatsApp, Skype and the other are some of the social networking sites that are used by Bangladeshi users. These sites ask for opening accounts with them to be their users. The result of the query for the sites with which the intermediate-level students of Bangladesh maintain accounts is presented in the Table 1.

Table 1: Accounts with different social media sites

Name of the social network	Responses	
	Frequency	Percentage
Facebook	61	26.0
YouTube	38	16.2
Twitter	4	1.7
Snapchat	6	2.6
Instagram	7	3.0
Google+	4	1.7
Messenger	59	25.0
Imo	33	14.0
WhatsApp	22	9.4
Skype	1	0.4
Total	235	100.0

Source: Survey data, 2020

Note: The respondents had the scope to choose multiple options. While responding, a total of 61 students selected a total of 235 options.

Table 1 shows that the sites that are most popular among the respondents are Facebook and Messenger. It is to be noted that Messenger is also a part of Facebook. Our finding gets support from a statistics related website named NapoleonCat (2019) that states that Facebook with its 42620000 users in Bangladesh (November, 2020) is the single most important social media site used by the people of Bangladesh. Quite naturally the respondents of this study are part of the number stated above. But why Facebook/Messenger, and no other sites, is

so popular among the respondents? The reasons are stated by Sheldon (2008) who indicates that most of the students use Facebook for maintaining relationship; for searching information; for listening music and watching videos and for keeping in touch with others.

3.2 Number of Friends in Social Media

Number of friends in social media is an important factor for the social media users. The more the number of friends is, the more the fun is. Therefore, making the friend list long is one of the primary mandates of the social media users nowadays. Table 2 gives the range of the number of friends the respondents have.

Table 2: Number of friends in social media

Number of friends	Frequency	Percentage
Fewer than 200	9	14.76
201-400	13	21.31
401-600	11	18.03
601-800	8	13.11
801-1000	4	06.56
More than 1000	16	26.23
Total	61	100.0

Source: Survey data, 2020

Table 2 shows that more than 26% of the respondents have more than 1000 online friends in social media. Increased number of friends in social media gives the users a feeling of popularity among others. It appears that making the friend list big has turned out as an ugly competition among the students. A research by Al-Jubayer (2013) states that teenagers having 500 to 1000 friends or more do not personally know their virtual friends and 42% of the respondents of that study feel pleasure in having unknown persons in their friend list. According to Brand (2017), human beings have the capacity for only a limited number of friends because they have neither enough time nor enough emotional space in their hearts to continue friendship simultaneously with unlimited number of people.

3.3 Virtual Friends vs. Real Friends in Social Media

Virtual friendship means the type of friendship that exists on the internet, and seldom or never is combined with real life interaction. On the other hand, real life friendship is the friendship that involves substantial real life interaction. Virtual friends or real friends – who are more useful and efficient? The argument is as old as the initiation of social media. The answer is not always so straight forward but the response given by the students is alarming (See Table 3).

Table 3: Whether the number of virtual friends is more than that of real friends

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	56	91.8
No	5	8.2
Total	61	100.0

Source: Survey data, 2020

Table 3 reveals that about 92% of the respondents have more virtual friends than real friends. This study proves that actual friends of the students of HSC level have decreased after the advent of social media usage. The respondents remain busy with their virtual friends avoiding their real friends. Students’ desire for making virtual friends instead of real ones is also supported by a research article that says that more than half of the respondents have more virtual friends than real ones, and a majority of them think that making more and more virtual friends is the reason for decreasing the number of real friends (Rahman, 2018). It is found in another study that the average user of Facebook in Europe has 139 friends, and it is not uncommon to have two or even three hundred online friends. (Froding& Peterson,2012).

3.4 Whether Males Have More Virtual Friends than Females or Vice Versa

Gender discrimination in having friends in Facebook and other social media sites is also a matter of concern to the students (See Table 4).

Table 4: Perceptions of the respondents about number of males’ virtual friends than females

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	54	88.5
No	7	11.5
Total	61	100.0

Source: Survey data, 2020

Table 4 exposes that a majority (88.5%) of the respondents believe that male students have more virtual friends than the female students. In Bangladesh male students send friend request more than female students and they also accept friend requests more without checking whether those requests are fake. But female students feel scared in making such friendship with unknown persons. Instead of making such friendship they are, as a study by Sultana &Ratul (2018) claims, more inclined towards browsing internet for commercial transaction, shopping or ordering products, acquiring products information, surfing products pages on Facebook etc. In another study it is found that boys are more likely than girls to make online friends or virtual friends; 61% of boys compared to 52% of girls have done so (Lenhart, 2015).

3.5 Criteria of Selecting Friends in Social Media

Social media websites apply different policies to facilitate the increase of friendship among the users. Table 5 shows the basis on which virtual friends are selected and added to the friend list by a particular user from among millions of other users.

Table 5: Basis of selecting friends in social media

Criteria of selecting friends	Responses	
	Frequency	Percentage
Gender/Sex	6	3.4
Familiar	60	34.3
Mutual friend	46	26.3
Person and place	9	5.1
Classmates	46	26.3
Known in online	8	4.6
Total	175	100.0

Source: Survey data, 2020

Note: The respondents had the scope to choose multiple options. While responding, a total of 61 students selected a total of 175 options.

Table 5 reveals that almost all the respondents (98.4%) make friendship with people who are already familiar with them outside the virtual world. Three fourths of the respondents (75.4%) select their friends on the basis of mutual friends. Similar number of the respondents (75.4%) selects friends from among their classmates. The finding of our study is quite different from that of Sarker (2018) who states that 42% of the respondents include only those persons as friends who are suggested by the social media sites and male students try to make friends with opposite sex indiscriminately. That means, the social media sites play a great role in increasing the number of friends in the friend list.

3.6 Strategies for Selecting Friends in Social Media

There are two ways to make friends in Facebook, firstly, adding someone as a friend on the condition of the other one's acceptance; the other one is to respond or confirm to someone's friend request. The strategy varies person to person, situation to situation (See Table 6).

Table 6: Key strategies in choosing friend

Strategies	Responses	
	Frequency	Percentage
Send more and more friend request	18	29.51
Accept more and more others friend requests	23	37.71
Both	16	26.22
None of that	4	6.56
Total	61	100.0

Source: Survey data, 2020

Table 6 shows that about three-tenths (29.51%) of the respondents send more and more friend requests; more than one third of them (37.71%) accept others' friend request and more than one fourth of them apply both strategies for making friendship in social media. Only one sixth of the respondents apply none of those strategies. It is found that students rarely ignore or removed the friend request

and they also check the number of mutual friends at the time of confirming friend request.

3.7 Number of Social Media Groups Maintained by the Respondents

There are many social media groups created on the basis of the users' common interest. These groups may be based on the profession, friend circle, batch, gender, interest in travelling, exam preparation, love for sports, music, movie etc. (See Table 7).

Table 7: Number of social media groups involved

Number of groups	Frequency	Percentage
1-5	34	55.74
6-10	10	16.39
11-15	9	14.75
15+	8	13.12
Total	61	100

Source: Survey data, 2020

Members of a particular social media site can join different virtual groups based on their common interests, hobbies, musical taste and romantic relationship. Table 7 shows that about 56% of the respondents are involved in 1-5 groups; and the rest are involved in more than 5 groups. Most of the respondents are involved in SSC or HSC batch-wise or educational-institute wise groups. Bala (2014) states that the concept of interpersonal communication is fading as people have created many groups on Facebook; earlier a person used to have hardly 15-20 friends with whom s/he interacted regularly, but with the development of social media the number of friends whose update one can have is running into hundreds. With the increase of the quantity of friends, the quality of friendship has decreased drastically.

3.8 Communication Patterns through Social Media

Social media provides the students with a convenient and faster way to communicate with their family and friends. Besides, through social media respondents can communicate with relatives, strangers, foreigners, known persons and online mutual friends and so on. To what degree they maintain the communication with different persons is presented in Table 8.

Table 8 reveals that almost all the respondents (98.36%) communicate with their friends through social media; about 56% of the respondents communicate with their relatives, more than 44% with their family members; and almost 51% with their parents. An insignificant number of the respondents communicate with unknown persons in the country or with unknown foreigners. This finding suggests that students are communicating less with their parents and family members but becoming busy with their virtual friends.

Table 8: People with whom the respondents are mostly connected through social media

Person type	Responses	
	Frequency	Percentage
Parents	31	20
Other family members	27	17.42
Friends	60	38.71
Relatives	34	21.94
Unknown person in the country	1	0.64
Foreign unknown person	2	1.29
Others	0	0
Total	155	100

Source: Survey data, 2020

Note: The respondents had the scope to choose multiple options. While responding, the 61 respondents selected a total of 155 options.

Similar finding is given by Singh & Laxmi (2015) who show that 17% of the respondents keep contact with schoolmates, 18% with relatives, 29% with college-life friends, 21% with colleagues and 15% with unknown person. It is found in another study that 36% respondents communicate with friends through SNSs; 28% respondents seek new friends; 8% respondents contacts acquaintances; 3% of the respondents get in touch with the old friends; 1% respondents communicate with family members (Brandtzaeg et al., 2010). The percentage given in both studies are relatively low because the respondents did not have the option to select more than a single answer.

4. Conclusion

The findings show that Facebook and Messenger are the most popular social networking sites among the respondents. They also show that a considerable number of the respondents have more than 1000 online friends; and they have more virtual friends than real-life friends; male students have more virtual friends than the female students, and male students send more and more friend requests as a strategy for increasing the number of online friends. It is also found that most of the respondents make friendship with their familiar persons, class mates and the friends of their social media friends. Very few of the respondents communicate with unknown persons. With whom the respondents mostly communicate through social media are their virtual friends who may or may not be their real-life friends. These virtual friends get preference over parents, other family members and relatives.

The findings suggest that change has already taken place in the communication pattern of the respondents. The students are not confined to the concept of having limited number of real-life friends, rather they are increasing the number of their virtual friends, not for developing friendship but for getting popularity. The finding related to the persons with whom the respondents communicate suggests

that the so-called virtual ties are increasing while ties with the family and the society are decreasing. This finding is presumably cautionary for the guardians because it has the potential of creating loneliness and depression among the respondents, and thus affects disapprovingly the career of the students and the future of the nation.

This study is an academic endeavor to bring out the pattern of students' use of social media. The sample size of this study is too little to generalize the findings. Yet they can provide the teachers and guardians with some insights needed to deal with the students concerned. Similar study with a representative sample size can be conducted in future so that the findings can be generalized. Researches can also be conducted on the impacts of social media on Bangladeshi students' academic and socio-psychological issues.

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Urbanization Social Change and Cultural Space: a study on the Cities and Towns of Bengal in the 18th Century

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Abstract: This article seeks to analyse the birth, growth and development of the cities and towns of Bengal during the eighteenth century and its consequences on the society, economy and culture of Bengal. The main objectives of this article are (a) to identify and evaluate the economic as well as professional activity of the urbanites; (b) to examine the religion, caste, and class based settlement pattern in the towns and cities; (c) to assess and explore the socio-cultural interactions between the urban and rural dwellers. Some of the important findings are the following: (1) almost all the towns and cities of eighteenth century Bengal had a growing economic activity amidst political instability; (2) the demographic settlement of the city and towns appeared in the form of inter-religious and to some extent inter-caste based; (3) The emerging nature of urban culture and the common religious practices has been substantiated. And finally how the emerging urbanites formed a cosmopolitan culture is a key finding of the present study.

Keywords: *Bengal; eighteenth-century; demographic settlement; inter-religious; inter-caste.*

Introduction

This paper is an attempt to focus on religious and cultural syncretism between the Hindus, the Muslims, the Jains, the Christians, the Armenians, the Sikhs and others who resided in and around the emerging cities and towns of Bengal during the eighteenth century. Generally, in pre-modern times, the size and number of cities and towns offered a reliable index of the extent of trade and commerce within a country. The three major cities in Bengal during the eighteenth century were Dhaka, Murshidabad and Calcutta (Karim, 1964; Ballhatechet & Harrison, 1980; Nair, 1984; Ray, 1986; Ahmed, 2009; Das & Llewellyn-Jones, 2013; Chaudhury, 2018). Moreover there were so many small towns which grew up during the period under review due to center of administration, patronage by the ruling elites, as a center of trade and commerce, religious centre or as a cantonment. In the early part of the eighteenth century, we see under the rule of the Nawabs (c.1704 - 1757), many new urban centers grew up around the administrative points across Bengal. But what is more important is that many

towns developed centering round the residences of the *zamindars* or the principal revenue collectors who were practically the local potentates with wide revenue, police and judicial powers. The first half of the eighteenth century saw the growing power of many of these *zamindars* whose seats of authority and gradually turned into the most important provincial towns of the time (Ahmed, 1992). Such *zamindari* towns were Burdwan, Bishnupur, Birbhum, Dinajpur, Krishnagar, Midnapur, Rajshahi, etcetera (Roy, 2017). In addition a number of small towns namely, Chandernagore, Chinsura, Hooghly, Qashimbazar, Malda, Baranagar, Serampore, Santipur, Chittagong, Lakshmipur, Rangpur, Kumarkhali, Sylhet, Buckergunj, Jiaganj, Azimganj, Kalna, Katwa, etcetera began to develop as a result of European settlement, fortification of military stations or as a centre of religious, commercial and economic activities (Dasgupta, 2001; Roy 2017).

The complex process of urbanization involves basic changes, primarily in economic and demographic structure. However, beyond these basic changes, others of no less importance can be observed. The nature of their significance differs in that they involve the spiritual life of human community. They make up its affective, intellectual, esthetic-artistic and educational sides. The ethnologists' goal is to understand these secondary changes which, either partially or totally, may redefine the composite profile of new social factor. To shaping up the paper, I have studied both the primary and secondary sources with special reference to contemporary Bengali Vernacular literature. Hence the study tries to highlight how with the growth of the cities and small towns social changes came to fore in the socio-cultural life of the people of Bengal during the period under review.

The great transformation which has taken place in Bengal during the eighteenth century can be seen especially clearly in the analysis of two main components of social life: urbanization and the British domination. Of course, significance is also to be found in analyzing all the implications of the diachronic dimension as each town has had its own particular history determined, over the course of time, by the development of its own social surroundings. As we know culture is learnt and depends on being brought up within a framework; a *cultural space*. India is land of many cultures and when we refer to culture it includes arts and architecture, language, poetry, music, paintings, dances, draperies, food habits, customs, traditions and some religious, especially spiritual practices. Hence the study tries to substantiate: how with the birth and growth of the cities and towns, a social change perceived in and around the vicinity? And find out how these emerging cosmopolitan urbanities formed a composite culture within the society.

Continuities or Change - Town Life in Bengal

We have already noted that the towns and cities during the period under review embodied the usual all round character of administrative, commercial, industrial, educational, religious centre to a varying degree; some of them had gradually acquired greater significance in one respect or another. Considering the different

views of eighteenth century India (Ali, 1986; Alavi 2002), Hameeda Khatun Naqvi states,

“The progress of urbanization was as seriously shaken by the 18th century chaos as was the general economy of the region. Trade came to a standstill; artisans had to flee from the affected towns, civilian service personnel sought service in vain and imperial urban administration gradually disappeared. Under these circumstances the urban citizen was left with three alternatives, migration to the towns lying east of the Ganges, enlistment in the armed forces of any of the chieftains enrolling levies or else to turn towards the villages. Perhaps the number of those migrating to villages was considerable as while the urban output of manufactured goods in the western region had apparently declined and the period is marked with no scarcity of agricultural commodities. It is also likely that not all the urban artisans after reaching the villages gave up their crafts, though now much less profitable; they might have preferred continuing it even after the change of place. This feature would, to a certain extent, explain why since about the later part of the 18th century Hindustani crafts have generally been regarded more as a rural rather than urban phenomenon.”

(Naqvi, 1969, 237-238)

But Bengal was a happy exception to the general picture of political decay and economic decadence. Throughout the first half of the eighteenth century, political and economic affairs in Bengal were conducted with vigour and efficiency. Thus even during the period of administrative and political disintegration in general, the provincial administrative system in Bengal appears to have grown stronger (Chaudhury, 1995). As a result of politico-administrative stability, the socio-cultural and economic life in Bengal moved on gradually. Institutional, cultural, religious, political and economic ties had existed between the peasant villages and urban cultures since the beginning of historical times. Eventually we see the urban centers had to depend necessarily on villages for agricultural products and other rural surpluses. Even for the continuance of these primary supplies a stable pattern of rural-urban relationship was a pre-requisite. The bases of this relationship, however, were much wider. The bonds were not only economic but also institutional, political, and cultural (Deva, 1969). Hence the social formation of the towns and cities of Bengal during the period under study take a multi-cultural shape where people from various caste, class, religion, and profession took shelter across the towns and cities, eventually a major section of the town-dwellers formed their profession based settlement which have been reflected in the name of their settled wards or *mohallas*.

Just at the beginning of the eighteenth century the social life of the people of Bengal grew complex and full of ups and downs. This is because of more than five hundred years of continuous Muslim rule in Bengal that created a large Muslim population in the land. Whether this was due mainly to immigration and settlement of foreign Muslims in the country or to conversion of the local population to Islam is a question. Besides, the entry of the European companies in

Bengal was also a turning point in the process of transformation of the social life of the people of Bengal. And finally the existence of a large Muslim population in Bengal was generally lost sight of following their loss of political power and the establishment of British rule in the country in the mid-eighteenth century. Naturally, the political transition had great impact on the society, economy and culture of Bengal. As a result, during the eighteenth century, Bengal became the seat- of various religion, caste and creed. Finally, with the emergence of new cities and towns a cosmopolitan urban society was being formed within the cities or towns (Roy, 2017). Besides, most of the mediaeval town is a direct ancestor of the present day city or town. But for the better understanding of the urban society of Bengal, we have to look into the shaping of different religions, their customs, values, tradition, modes of life and above all the contemporary literature, folk tales, ballads, miniature paintings, etcetera which are in turn, associated with the administration, administrator and the masses.

As the primary purpose of the city and town is to provide adequate living and working accommodations for its population, so the city/town's 'form-order' and 'social order' cannot be separated; they must be developed hand-in-hand, reciprocally inspiring one another, irrespective of caste, creed and religion. And the practice is also encouraged by the ruling elites of the towns, instead of the caste system, which was the pivot of the social organization of Bengali society. Momtazur Rahman Tarafdar (Tarafdar, 1993) shows how technological innovations were responsible for social evolution in medieval Bengal. Moreover during Medieval India Islamic influence was reflected in the dress, food and social manners of upper class Hindu society (not the masses and priestly class). But at the same time the Muslims were also influenced by Indian dress, food and toilet habits. Various political, social and religious causes accounted for the progress of Islam in Bengal. Here the social and religious life of the Muslims, - came to be profoundly influenced by Hinduism and marked by inter-penetration of many local manners and customs of the Hindus, and incorporation of certain beliefs, rites and ceremonies which were inconsistent with the Quran and bearing palpable signs of Hindu influence. If there was no absorption, there was undoubtedly assimilation between the two communities (Sarkar, 1972; Sarkar, 1984). The present study will try to emphasize and re-emphasize how the syncretic tradition of our heritage draws people together.

Human Settlements and Professional Activities of the Towns

The settlement pattern and professional activities of the cities of Dhaka, Murshidabad and Kolkata were inter-mixed in every way of life. Dhaka was made the capital, as an administrative and military headquarter, Dhaka expanded rapidly and its commercial activities increased, foreign and Indian merchants, traders and bankers - Europeans, Mughals, Pathans, Armenians, Turanis, Marwaris and other up country Hindus were attracted to the place. They needed accommodation both for themselves and their goods (Karim, 2009). In the early part of the 18th century, Dhaka's period of glory came to an end with the shifting of provincial capital

from Dhaka to Murshidabad (Karim, 2009; Chowdhury & Faruqui, 1980; Ballhatechet & Harrison, 1980), a Naib Nazim used to administer the city of Dhaka. Although the old pomp and splendor were gone yet the commerce of Dhaka continued, only the expansion stopped. Since 1763 the English officials began to reside at the Lalbagh fort while the Naib Nazim was then residing at the Bara Katra. The English also started constructing some buildings (Ray, 2015; Ahmed, 1986). In this regard the nature of human settlement and the demography of Dhaka take a turn under the Europeans.

The history of Murshidabad city becomes clear from the early years of the eighteenth century when Murshid Quli Khan moved from Dacca to Murshidabad [then Makhsudabad]; but its origin is uncertain (Mohsin, 1980). After his arrival at Makhsudabad he improved the town, raised public offices and other government establishments and changed its name to Murshidabad (Mohsin, 1980). An idea of the extent of the city may be obtained from the accounts of the traveller who visited the city in the eighteenth century and from the records of the East India Company. Most contemporary accounts suggest that the city extended five miles in length and two and a half miles in breadth on both sides of the river (Mohsin, 1980). The numerous *ganjes*, *bazaars* and *ghats* not only suggest that all parts of the city were well furnished with daily requirements but also that they had a regular flow of supplies from their extensive hinterland (Mohsin, 1980). Trade with Europeans and Indians made Murshidabad a lucrative destination for migrants and the hub of economic and administrative activities. A mint was set up in 1705, including the beginning of a banking system which was traditionally handled by mahajans and sarrafs (shroffs) from Rajputana, who travelled with Mughal army. Families like Jagat Seths carried on business on the strength of their own capital with both the Nawabs and the Europeans. The Seths brought Jainism with them and built several temples of this faith in Murshidabad.

The 18th century, especially under the rule of Murshid Quli Khan, was the golden period of Murshidabad. Many grand mosques, tombs, and other buildings were constructed by the Nawabs and their families during this era (Das & Llewellyn-Jones, 2013). Rani Bhabani, Maharaja Rajballav and Kirty Chandra also constructed several temples at Murshidabad. Besides, the Armenian, the Dutch, the English and others also erected their dwelling here (Das & Llewellyn-Jones, 2013). The upheaval in the middle of the 18th century not only made Bengal a colony of the English East India Company but also destroyed a rich urban heritage. The fall of the Nawabi rule signaled the growth of three tiny villages' viz. Calcutta, Sutanuti and Gobindopur in a mighty city. But one should not forget that the growth of Calcutta had its origin in its trade. To flourish their trade and to protect their tiny settlement, Clive and his men destroyed the French settlement at Chandernagore in March 1757 (Sreemani, 2009). By the middle of the eighteenth century Calcutta had advanced quite a distant from a haphazard collection of hamlets towards a traditional type of Indian city. In the transitional stage of the growth of Calcutta the pattern of the Indian village came to be

reflected in it. The English town was a 'fenced city' sharply distinguished from the 'native town', where a large number of castes and professionals had settled. Holwell, the Zamindar (Magistrate Collector) of Calcutta, divided the town into a number of quarters, allotting each quarter to one professional group or caste (Sinha, 1991). Finally we see, the transfer of the Diwani office to Calcutta in 1772 was a blow to the position of Murshidabad as chief city of the province, by then Calcutta had become a city composed of heterogeneous element.

While the frequent transfer of the capital of the province changed the settlement pattern and professional activity of the cities, what happened in the major towns of Bengal in this context? In his description on town and market of Burdwan the poet Ramprasad says that the market of Burdwan abounded in many foreign traders and the shops were filled with jewellery to cheap materials (Gupta, 1954). But the customers were few and sale was scarce. But when Bharat Chandra gave the description of the town of Burdwan in 1752 he said that the town was thickly populated with all kinds of professional people living in different wards (Bandopadhyay & Das, 1350). The poet's description of the town shows that it had a well-guarded gateway. The principal guard was an Abyssinian who was not happy with the administration since the pay was very low. He opened the gate after receiving substantial bribe.

The poet described different wards of the town as *garh* or fort although there was no mention of a separate gate for each ward. Inside the town, the first ward after the gateway was occupied by the foreigners including the English, Dutch, French, Danes and the Armenians. It may be pointed out that the Danes had to leave Bengal in 1717 due to a quarrel over taxes but they came back during the rule of Alivardi Khan, possibly after 1750. These foreigners brought their goods here by ship for sale. This seemed to be a special area for the sale of foreign goods since there is no reference to Indian merchants. Some of them were artillerymen. The second ward had been occupied by all kinds of Muslims including Syeds, Mullicks, Shaikhs, Mughals, Afghans and Turks. They spoke Arabic mixed with Persian and did their prayers in their language. Here the races and professions were mixed. The third ward was occupied by the Khatriyas who were fighters and experts in weapons. The fourth ward was occupied by the Rajputs who were good warriors and they guarded the bedroom of the king. The elephant drivers and couriers sat together in the fifth ward. The sixth ward held the treasury and was heavily guarded. Various kinds of people and sarafs were there in this ward (Ray, 2015; Roy, 2020).

The town Krishnagar was also very famous during the period of our study. Various communities based on their profession surrounded the royal palace and set up multiple wards, for instance, at the eastern side of the royal palace were Sudra para (wards of the lower caste), Sapuriya para (wards of the snake-charmer) and Kalu para (wards of the oil-man). At the northern side of the palace were Sankra para (wards of the goldsmith), Kumartoli (wards of the potters), Kadamgachi, Bagdi para (wards of the tribal) and Moulavi para, at the western

side of Moulavi para were Nolo para and at the northern side of Moulavi para were wards like Peyada para and Beshya para, wards of the prostitutes (Roy, 2020; Sen, 2009). The urban settlement of the town Krishnagar indicates that the demography of the town was very much composite in nature and such a kind of human settlement was also a sign of a progressive society.

The central point of town Dinajpur was Ghoraghata. It was built and flourished around the Ghoraghat fort (Westmacott, 1872; Zakaria, 1948; Karim, 1996). The residential area, guest houses, market place, bathing place, road and bridge, *madrasha*, *maktab*, *saraikhana*, *toran*, *majar dargaha* etcetera all were the symbols of Mughal architecture. In Buchanan's words, at the zenith of its prosperity, the town of Ghoraghat was 10 miles long in its width and 2 miles long in breadth. The town was densely populated and full of stay-houses. The town contained as many as 51 *pattis* (small ward) and 52 *gallies* (narrow lanes).

While walking on the town of Midnapur we see the demographic structure of the town as follows: South-west of the criminal courts is a large open space, enclosed between several roads. The centre is occupied by a large walled building enclosing a quadrangle in the middle. This building is the remains of a Musalman fort, called *Abashgarh*. During the early days of British administration a military force was posted in it. Subsequently it was used as a jail, but it was abandoned on the construction of the Central Jail.

In marked contrast with this western half, which is sometimes called *Kerani-tola*, or clerk's quarters was the town proper spreading to the south and the south-east. It is traversed by numerous small streets and lanes, and thickly crowded with houses and huts, mostly poorly built and badly ventilated. This area was divided into small wards of different professional class. The market namely *Bara bazar* and *Choto bazar* was also there. Both the Hindu and Muslim area there were temples and mosques for religious gathering but the date of its settlement is difficult to trace (Chakraborty, 1962; O'Malley, 1995). Moreover, the towns of religious, commercial and business entrepot like, Hooghly-Chinsurah, Chandernagore, Qasimbazar, Baranagar, Santipur, Nabadwip, Jiaganj, Ajimganj, Kalna, Katwa, Buckergunge, Chittagong, Lakshmipur, Rangpur, Kumarkhali, Sylhet, and the like were also inhabited by Hindu, Muslim and European as well. Hence we may argue that in and around the emerging small towns of Bengal there existed people of various religion, caste and creed. Of course, such a profession based human settlement developed the demographic structure of the town as well as identified the townsmen by their profession.

Religious Existence across the City and Towns

We have already mentioned that the towns of Bengal during the period of our study were the seat of various religions, these are as follows:

Hindus: The Hindus were the premier religious community throughout the eighteenth century. At the opening of the century Alexander Hamilton computed the numerical proportions between Hindus and Muslims in Bengal at 100:1

(Hamilton, 1930). It is difficult to rely on the estimates which he might have formed on the basis of the population of a few towns. Moreover, the foreigner could not distinguish one from the other amongst the masses. But they give us a fair idea of the overwhelming numerical superiority of the Hindus in the scale of total population. Both Edward Ives and Stavorinus, who visited Bengal within the two decades following 1750, almost, corroborate his proportion in the last decade of the 18th century; Charles Grant approximately reckoned their proportion in the company's territories as eight to one (Raghuvanshi, 1969). Needless to say that the Hindus were the majority within the towns, and in the 18th century, caste certainly promoted specialization in economic life on hereditary lines, but in the lower castes alone it is definitely recognizable. The relationship between caste and occupation, too, cannot be held as an infallible criterion of general classification of caste-groups in society (Raghuvanshi, 1969).

Jains: During the period, the Jains are generally mentioned as sects of the Hindus, and they were mostly of *Vaisya* caste, successful businessman, the most abstemious people of society (Raghuvanshi, 1969). Jains were prominent actors in the settlement of Murshidabad and have remained significant in the economic, political, social and cultural life of the area ever since (Das & Llewellyn-Jones, 2013). They were found in the towns of Qasimbazar, Jiaganj, Azimganj and Burdwan. The Seths brought Jainism with them and built several temples of this faith in Murshidabad (Roy, 1982). A number of Jain traders do their business all over the towns of Bengal.

Muslims: Next comes to the Muslims, a conspicuous social element in the life of the country. But as Robert Orme says, numerically they were "dispersed throughout the vast extent of the empire," "and if collected together would form a very populous nation." Their number was far greater in Northern India and in Bengal Islam spread mostly in the villages (Raghuvanshi, 1969; Sarkar, 1972). But from 16th century onward the *ashraf* were the Muslim urban artisans who formed part of Bengal's growing industrial proletariat (Eaton, 1994). Moreover, these groups constituted the earliest-known class of Bengali Muslim. Fully five of them- the weavers, loom makers, tailors, weavers of thick ribbon, and dyers- were linked to the growing textile industry (Eaton, 1994). Both the Hindu castes and the Muslim artisan groups together involved in producing variety of cloths in the towns and suburbs of Malda, Dinajpur, Bishnupur, Birbhum, Santipur, Chittagong, etcetera.

Christians: During this period the Christian community was fast growing in numbers (Taylor, 1840). It was composed of three classes: the European residents, the mixed Christians, and the Indian Christians. In most of the towns of our study, especially the towns which were situated on the bank of river Bhagirathi, large settlements were owned by the French, Dutch, Danes, and Portuguese (Raghuvanshi, 1969). There is a huge number of Christians in Bengal who were previously Hindus and Muslims. Hence, it was the result of racial intermixture between the East and the West and was multiplying rapidly at the settlements

(Datta, 1989). The missionary enterprise which commenced with the advent of the Portuguese was also being pushed up by different European missions. Conversion of Indians was, however, not a heartening and successful experiment. Progress was solely confined to an infinitesimal portion of the lowest strata, the underdogs of society (Datta, 1989). Although the Christians, along with both the mixed and Indian Christians were very few in numbers, but all of them had a great influence in the society. Moreover, we find regarding the Indian Christians in Bengal, Scrafton spoke them as “the most abandoned profligate wretches of human species.” (Raghuvanshi, 1969). For this reason the sensible Europeans were in opinion not to promote such conversion.

Armenians, Sikhs and others: We also find Armenians, Sikhs and others residing within the towns. The Armenians figure as permanent nationals and traders at the European settlements (Raghuvanshi, 1969). At the time of Sirajuddaula, the Armenian merchants, Khojah Petrus, took a leading part in his negotiations with the English and the French (Seth, 1928). Gorgin Khan, the Commander-in-Chief and minister of Nawab Mir Kasim was also from the Armenian community (Seth, 1928a). Besides, the Armenian community was fast growing in numbers at Chandernagore, and they had good relation with Alivardi Khan, the Nawab of Bengal. Moreover the Begum of the Nawab (Alivardi Khan), used to address Khojah Petrus as ‘brother’ (Seth, 1931). At Saidabad near Qasimbazar, there was an Armenian Church (Seth, 1925). Referring to Dhaka James Taylor mentioned that there are about 40 families of Armenians and 12 of Greeks in the city. The former people appear to have settled here about the time the Company acquired the Dewanny. Many of them carried on an extensive trade in cloth, salt and betel nut, and held Zemindaries, some of which are still possessed by their descendants. Their Church was erected in 1781 (Taylor, 1840). The above discussion makes it clear that the Armenians not only played a vital role as traders, but they had a social significance also. The Sikhs were mostly of Jat origin, and even in the period many Hindu leaders in the Punjab were entrenching themselves as Sikh chieftains (Polier, 1947). A very few number of Sikhs were found in the towns of Jiaganj, Azimganj, Qasimbazar and Burdwan as traders, the descendants of the Sikhs are still to be found there.

The above discussion makes it clear that religion not only represents a town’s form order but it also indicates the socio-cultural nature of a town. Moreover, religion is, among others, one of the factors in giving birth to a culture. Culture, in fact, is product of several factors like customs, traditions, whether, locally available materials, geographical conditions and so on. In this way a religion may appear within the frame of pre-existent culture. And then religious teachings may deeply influenced that pre-existent culture and re-fashion it in its own way. Such process of co-existence generates the environment to develop composite culture within the towns.

Professional and Class Identity

The process of urbanization with special attention to the birth and growth of cities and towns already highlighted the settlement pattern of different professional groups. Moreover, during this century peoples of India came in greater contact with various European peoples who began to come in larger numbers as traders and exporters, and as travellers and military and other adventures. Christian missionary endeavour brought in a new opening of the horizon for the Indian mind, not so much in religion as in other matters (Chatterji, 1966). From the point of material classification it is to be said that the Indian society was preponderantly feudal in character. The feudal lords constituted the dominant material group and possession of land was therefore a positive source of status in society (Raghuvanshi, 1969). But the idea was not at all accepted in respect of urban society, because the status of the urban dwellers mainly depended on non-agricultural source. And the life of society in urban area was highly specialized and developed. Hence, we shall now examine the relative strength of its different groups, though precise appreciation is not possible for lack of statistical data for the period. We may conveniently distribute the total population as follows: 1. Nobility, 2. Religious functionaries, 3. Commercial classes, 4. Agricultural classes, 5. Industrial classes, 6. Professional classes, 7. Menial classes, slaves, autochthons and so on (Raghuvanshi, 1969).

It is interesting to observe that during the eighteenth century the emergence of new towns, expanding market demand, in consequence various groups of artisan, traders, money lenders etcetera disperse with their profession. It was in course of their journey from one urban centre to the other that most of the sub-groups of different professional classes had emerged. At the end of the eighteenth century, therefore, we find that the professional class of both Hindu and Muslim communities were divided into a number of sub-groups (Sarkar, 1998). A striking fact about Bengal's social life before the mid-eighteenth century is the relative absence of the joint family. But by the later part of the eighteenth century, the joint family was very much an established fact of upper-caste Bengali society (Raychaudhuri, 1975). During Murshid Quli's reign, three fourth of the *Zamindars* (both big and small) and most of the *Talukdars* were Hindus. The high officers and *Zamindars* during Alivardi's reign – and for that matter during Sirajuddaullah's time too – were Hindus. Besides the Muslim's were also appointed in different posts at the court of the local Hindu zamindars. Moreover, when we compare the large number of works composed by Muslim writers of the age in praise of Hindu gods and goddesses and on Hindu music, we cannot but conclude that Vaishnava and orthodox Hindu notions and thought had deeply influenced the inner strata of the Muslim society in Bengal. In fact, the two communities were living side by side in harmony and mutual attachment in ordinary life (Chaudhury, 2015; Rahman, 2020). Referring to some letters of late eighteenth century Hindu caste-doctrine, Panchanan Mondal wrote that the tradition of Hindu caste system was not a barrier to live together irrespective of

caste and religion (Mondal, 1986). Moreover we see, “about seven-eighths of Brahmins, Bhaides and Khayets, and all the Kamars and Khansarees, among the Sudras, are worshippers of Kali; and the remaining eighth, all the Tantees, one-half of the shell cutters, and three-fourths of the Soundikus, are Busnubs or worshippers of Khrisno. There are three Gossaens in the city, who have numerous disciples in the surrounding country, as far as Assam and Chittagong, and from whom they levy annual contributions” (Taylor, 1840).

The study of social formation in Bengal for the period under discussion has hence to be concerned with diversity of religion, social status, and finally by the institution of caste. The author of *Muzaffar-Nama* tells us that “many kinds of people, high and low, and all classes of artisans and men of skill and letters were assembled in the city of Bengal *i.e.* Murshidabad” (Ali, 1985). According to William Bolts, “A variety of merchants of different nations and religions, such as Cashmeerians, Multanys, Patans, Sheikhs, Sunniasys, Paggayahs, Betteas and many others used to resort to Bengal” (Bolts, 1772). Needless to say, both the privileged and unprivileged section of the society along with most of the said merchant communities were settled within different towns and formed a pluralistic urban society. Hence we may argue that Bengal’s town can be viewed as a sociological laboratory, a Petri dish, where traditional ethos mixed with liberal ideas and practices imported from abroad. Through trial and error, the town households modernized and adduced social conduct that combined both religion and commerce (Basu, 2012). In consequence of the fact we can say that during the eighteenth century Bengal’s town life was more progressive in comparison to rural areas.

Social Mobility and Cultural Synthesis

There is no doubt that the Indian caste system represents a confusion of all manner of distinctions which reflect occupational differences, racial and ethnic differences, cultural differences, etcetera the most striking feature of the complex Hindu society continued to be the institution of caste. Besides the principal castes, there were ramifications of sub-castes varying in number and nature in different localities. The caste rules were rigid, and inter-caste marital connections were not permissible (Datta, 1961). Caste had much influence in determining the vocational professions of men. The plurality of profession was major features of non-agrarian life in eighteenth century Burdwan ((Datta, 1961). “In general, it is remarked”, writes Edward Ives, “that whatever be the trade of the father, the same is that of the son; so that of the families of boatmen, fishermen, etc. are boatmen and fishermen to all generations” (Datta, 1961). Notwithstanding its various drawbacks, the caste system helped specialization in arts and industrials (Datta, 1961). Probably due to the rapid administrative and economic changes in the country since the middle of the eighteenth century, professional arrangements strictly on caste groups were becoming gradually loose within certain limits (Datta, 1961). While moving through Bengal in the 1720s, Robert Orme, the official historian of the English East India Company, found to his wonder that

almost every inhabitant at any village lying beside a large town was engaged in the manufacture of cloth. It should be kept in mind that these villages were not specialized weaving village, but villages which combined agriculture with manufacturing activities (Biswas, 2007). Moreover labour from other activities could be drawn to weaving if and when necessary (Chaudhury, 1995). So we may argue that the urban society became mobilized irrespective of its caste barrier. In a recent study it is being claimed that social mobility in the towns of Bengal became operative in respect of profession and education (Basu, 2012).

The institution of caste divided the entire Hindu population into three broad social groups: the privileged, the unprivileged, and the untouchables (Raghuvanshi, 1969). But the rigidity of such division was more active in rural area in comparison with urban area (Mukherjee, 2012). Because we have already mentioned that due to urbanization and with the establishment of British rule, the urban society of Bengal, during the eighteenth century loosened its caste rigidity. As a result, we find in the writings of Bharatchandra that various *Kayastha* castes like, goldsmith, iron-smith, brass workers and seller, artisan and trader of conch-shell, and various other professional class and lower caste people together settled within the town and performed their professional activities. Bijayram Sen also describes how the different professional class and business community got shelter within the towns. Besides in most of the temple architecture of Bengal during the period under review also represents the scenes of life style, dress habits, and customs of Bengali society in its terracotta panel on the walls of the temples (McCutchion, 2004).

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, while society was too conservative to accept anything like a repudiation of caste, still it is evident that the progressive trends were at work modifying its rigour. These are being found in inter-caste understanding and religious synthesis also. Just as the Hindus bowed low before the shrines and feet of the Muslim saints, so also the Muslim masses made offerings before the idols of the Hindu gods. In Bengal, the religious outlook and practices of the Hindu and Muslims were very much influenced by one another. We learn that Mir Jafar on his death bed was persuaded by Nanda Kumar to sip some drops of water “that had been poured in libation over the idol at Kiriteshwari (a famous temple at Murshidabad)” (Tabatabayi, 2014). It was customary for the Muslims to offer Puja in Hindu temples, and the Hindus *Sinni* at mosques. The Brahmans are mentioned as consulting the Quran, and Muslims seeking the benedictions of the *Sapta-Rishis*, the illustrious seven sages of the Hindus (Sen, 2007). In contemporary Bengal in the writings of Muslim poets, we find Muslims represented as praying to the god Shiva, and we come across the following hymn addressed to Saraswati, the goddess of learning, “Hail O Saraswati, thou art my mother/The helpless child invokes thee; will thou not hear” (Sen, 2007). Karam Ali, a leading poet of Chittagong, sang exquisitely on Radha and Krishna. One of his *padas* runs thus, “Radha wept and said, who amongst you, O my minds will bring Krishna to me?” (Sen, 2007).

This mutual adoption and assimilation of the religious practices led to the worship of the common deity “Satya Pir” which was very popular. Both the Hindus and Muslims sung hymns in Bengali in his praise, and Brahmans and *Sudras* made offerings of sweetmeats. In a poem of Bharatchandra, a contemporary Bengal poet, Sadananda, a Hindu merchant gets a daughter by invoking this popular object of worship. But he incurred its wrath as he forgot to make the promised offering, with the result that his son-in-law met with a premature death. The evaluation of the worship of this common deity was the high watermark of spiritual kinship between Hinduism and Islam in this country of universal toleration (Datta, 1929; Karim, 1963; Sen, 2007; Chaudhuri, 2008).

Even in Bengal, the worship of Kali was popular with the Muslims and even in villages inhabited wholly by them, there were distinct places of worship for this deity. Both the Hindus and the Muslims of Dinajpur resided mutually. Even the tribes also maintained their own culture (Martin, 1976). During Mohurram we find Hooghly became a place of harmony between the Hindus and the Muslims (Dien, 1900). So far as the festival of Holi is concerned, it was almost a national festival celebrated by all classes of people throughout India. By the middle of the eighteenth century, we find that this process of mutual assimilation had reached its culminating point. Nawab Shahamat Jung (Nowagis Mahommad) with Saulat Jung, who came from Purneah at that time, enjoyed the Holi festival for seven days, in the gardens of Motijhil. On the occasion about 200 reservoirs had been filled with coloured water and heaps of *Abir* (red-powder) and saffron had been collected; and more than five hundred charming girls dressed in costly robes and jewels used to appear in groups every morning and evening, mustering from every part of the gardens. After the treaty of Alinagar (9th February, 1757), Nawab Siraj-ud- Daula proceeded to Murshidabad and enjoyed the Holi festival in his palace at Mansurganj. Once, when at Azimabad, Nawab Mir Jafar crossed the Ganges with all the gentry of the town and engaged himself in enjoying the Holi festival (Datta, 1929). The Vaishnabas were more commonly (without any bias) celebrate the Holi festivals in Bengal. Besides, some of the new sects of the period made a bold attempt at a synthesis between Hinduism and Islam and aimed at harmonizing the two great faiths of the country (Datta, 1376; Bhattacharya, 1995). During the period under review the Karta Bhajas, the Pirism and the other. appeared in the scene and promoted joint worshiping between the Hindus and the Muslims (Panikkar, 1981; Rahman, 2001). Thus we see that the period under discussion with the growth of cities and towns in Bengal became the seat of various religion, caste and creed. This is not only the symbol of a cosmopolitan urbanites but it also symbolize socio-economic and cultural arena of a geographical boundary.

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Anthropocentric Approach to the Environment: An Overview

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Abstract: This qualitative study reviews secondary literature on two anthropocentric approaches to the environment, namely traditional and modern, to bring out the similarities and dissimilarities between them, and establishes human beings' need for pursuing the modern anthropocentric approach to the environment. The approaches are similar in that both the approaches consider human beings with all their cognitive faculties and freedom of choice as the center of the universe and the basis of morality and intrinsic worth. Besides, both the approaches give secondary importance to the natural world. On the other hand, the approaches differ from one another in their treatment of and attitude to nature, their recognition of responsibility towards it and their attribution of value to it. The findings show that the modern anthropocentric approach to the environment is superior to the traditional approach so far as the sustainability of the environment and the survival of human beings are concerned. The study suggests that since all entities including human are the components of the ecosystem, the focus of moral consideration should be shifted from the humanistic domain to the biotic whole.

Keywords: Anthropocentrism; non-anthropocentrism; intrinsic value; instrumental value; human-chauvinism.

Introduction

The environment encompasses the interaction of all living species, climate, weather and natural resources that affect human survival and economic activity (Johnson, et al. 1997). Every living and nonliving element function from their respective position out of their purview and constitute an ecosystem which is defined as all the plants and animals that live in a particular area together with the complex relationship that exists between all of them and their environment (Sinclair, 1987). Thus, all the entities of the environment are essential and valuable to maintain its sound state of affairs. Human being is an integral part of nature. The relation between human being and nature is reciprocal, inevitable, and causative. In contrast, prior to the 1970s, in terms of the relevant relationship between humans and nature, man was viewed as the sole agent worthy of moral consideration, and natural objects were only valuable if they served human objectives. Most philosophers in the western tradition believe that only human beings deserve moral standing, while natural objects have none (Desjardins, 2001). Davis (1988, p. 591) says, "We need not adapt ourselves to the natural environment because we can remake it to suit our own needs by means of science and technology. A major function of the state is to assist individuals and corporations in exploiting the environment in order to increase wealth and

power". Philosophers like Davis insist that humans have no direct responsibilities to the nature. The interests of human beings are the basis of morality and they are above all other nonhuman natural objects (Murdy, 1975). According to them, humans can have no duties to rocks, rivers, or ecosystems, and almost none to birds or bears; humans have serious duties only to each other, with nature often instrumental in such duties; the environment is the wrong kind of primary target for an ethic; nature is a means, not an end in itself; nothing there counts morally; and nature has no intrinsic value (Baker & Richardson, 1999). They ascribe intrinsic value merely on human beings, because human beings are explicitly different from other organisms for having vast and diverse potentiality and rationality.

According to contemporary existentialistic perception, human beings are free and responsible agents who determine development through the acts of their own will. With this human effort to develop oneself, the world is getting better (Matin, 1968). The idea of this interdependent development between human beings and the world is called Meliorism. It implies that human beings have the innate desire to develop their socio-economic conditions with the maximum use of the Earth's energy. It also states that humans would transform the world so that they can receive the highest benefit from it. In this context, numerous measures for their well-being have been adopted. Humans started appreciating the economic contribution of industries. As a result, industrialization has expanded by leaps and bounds that brought about industrial revolution. In the twenty-first century, scientific advancements and discoveries have benefited humankind in a variety of ways. They take the natural world under control and establish authority over it.

Both the advancement of science and technology and the industrial revolution have caused environmental degradation and their all-pervasive activities also expedite the volume of its plight. According to white, much of contemporary science and technology developed in a context in which this anthropocentric view of nature held sway. This lies at the root of our current ecological crisis (Desjardins, 2001). Besides, the political and economic systems (both capitalistic and socialist) were indicted because they utilized nature as a means. Science, and technology were criminalized because too much materialists, and reductionists (Pagano, 2015). Furthermore, over population and their urbanized transformation living pattern put pressure on nature and destroys harmony between man and nature. Conversely, rich nations of the world are accustomed to leading extravagant and luxurious life which provokes the depletion of the ozone layer and the increment of global warming. Consequently, sea level rises and low-lying areas of the world get inundated. Nasr uses metaphor to attack the attitude of anthropocentrism. According to him (1968), nature is treated like a prostitute by modern man. He enjoys her without showing any obligation or responsibility towards her. The difficulty is that the condition of prostituted nature is becoming such as to make any further enjoyment of it impossible (p. 18).

To the backdrop of incremental environmental degradation, in 1970s environmental ethics as a subset of philosophy starts its function by extending moral consideration to the non-human natural world. As a disciplined philosophical pursuit, it seeks to re-examine human status in nature. Some proponents of non-anthropocentrism argue for direct human responsibility to the natural world as both are integral parts of the ecosystem. For maintaining a sound ecosystem and a balanced livable natural atmosphere, they advocate for extending moral consideration to the elements of the environment. From this perspective, all things that constitute the environment are interrelated and intertwined. They are all members of a community. They interact with each other as a member of community under an ecosystem. The uninterrupted function of each and every member of the community reflects the equilibrium state of environment that is good for all. Leopold elucidates that, "A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise" (Desjardins, 2001). Every member of the community has assigned function to play for a sound environment. Therefore, Non-anthropocentrism claims that the natural elements are significantly valuable and have right to live or exist.

Reversely, some anthropocentric claim that we do not need any new environmental ethics. Proponents of anthropocentrism especially Passmore believes that the western tradition contains the seeds for an ethically appropriate relationship of nature, though he criticizes western philosophical and religious traditions for encouraging man to think of himself as nature's absolute master for whom everything that exists was designed (Ibid, p. 101). Therefore, the humanistic approach which revises their past attitudinal treatment provides restorative therapy for environmental adversity. The present study aims at exploring the revised approach to anthropocentrism and compares it with the traditional approach to examine whether and to what extent the revised version has revised the attitude to environmental catastrophe. For doing this, this study uses qualitative data from secondary sources like books and journals to make an in-depth analysis of anthropocentrism. It follows comparison and contrast method to bring out the similarities and the dissimilarities between the traditional and the modern anthropocentric approaches to the environment, and evaluates their attitude to and treatment of nature in general and environment in particular.

Anthropocentrism

In terms of defining the moral relationship between man and nature, two different schools of thought are considered in anthropocentric environmental world view. Though both schools place a high value on human welfare, they differ significantly in how they deal with nature. These are known as traditional and Modern views of anthropocentrism.

Traditional Views of Anthropocentrism

Bryan Norton terms this view as a strong version of an anthropocentric attitude (Norton, 1984). This view is also known as an enlightened attitude. This

attitudinal trend is originated and developed by the western philosophical and theological tradition. Some philosophers from different ages, Judo-Christian beliefs, traditional moral theories, scientific and technological advancement, and capitalist and socialist economic systems contribute to developing this attitude.

The existence of natural world was not duly acknowledged to some Greek and modern philosophers. Greek philosophers decided that the world as we experience was not real. Modern philosophers devoted several centuries to doubting its existence. As a result, in both periods of the history of philosophy, the environment was left out (Hargrove, 1989). Greek philosophers held the explicit notion that human beings were free of moral obligation to the non-human beings and other forms of life. They thought that everything in the natural world had a specific purpose for satisfying human needs.

Sophist philosopher Protagoras argues, "Man is the measure of all things" (Russell, 1961). Everything is subject to humans. Values are determined and ascribed exclusively by human beings. They claim human mastery over everything. For their wellbeing, human beings can do whatever they want. Everything is fair to humans. Nature was considered as a means for human interest.

In his teleological view of nature, Aristotle demonstrates that the natural world is created with a specific purpose which is to satisfy human desires. He explains that nature is to be understood as an organic whole, and the things in it are meant to serve a purpose (Leahy, 2005). Human beings bear the highest attributions that empower them as the authoritative agent. Aristotle denotes in his book 'Nicomachean' that only human beings of all living things in nature deserve rational faculty of the soul as additional attribution that provides them supreme authority over others. Aristotle evaluates nature in a hierarchical order based on having the quality of life and reasoning ability.

Plants exist for the sake of animals, and brute beasts for the sake of man - domestic animals for his use and food, wild ones (or at any rate most of them) for food and other accessories of life, such as clothing and various tools. Since nature makes nothing purposeless or in vain, it is undeniably true that she has made all animals for the sake of man (Singer, 2011).

Aristotle illustrates the causes of human supremacy over nature through his systematic explanation. He continues, "Nature has made all things specifically for the sake of man therefore plants and animals were on earth for the instrumental use of man" (Johnson, 1993).

In the medieval period, Saint Augustine contends that only human beings hold cognitive faculty that empower them to rule over nature. He describes that abstaining from killing animals and destroying plants are regarded as the height of superstition. Corresponding to Saint Augustine, Thomas Aquinas follows Aristotle in ranking plants as lower than non-human animals and non-human animals as lower than humans. Human beings were considered perfect among

corporeal beings, for humans have mass life, movement, senses, and reason. Aquinas thinks that since human beings deserve the highest status, they are entitled to hunting and eating meat because “the plants make use of the earth for their nourishment, and animals make use of the plants, and man makes use of both plants and animals (Aquinas, part -1).”

Lynn White Jr. is a leading historian of the medieval age who denotes that the Judeo-Christian worldview encourages human beings to exploit nature through technology. He recommends that only a reformation of worldview can resolve our ecological problems. He demonstrates this review through his seminar paper titled “The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis” (1967). White’s view claims that the values of Judeo-Christian are responsible for the environmental degradation. Christianity, according to White, is the most anthropocentric religion of the globe, because Christianity teaches that God desires humanity to exploit nature in its interest, with indifference to other creatures. These religious traditions are represented symbolically by the passage from Genesis, in which the Judeo-Christian God creates all living creatures and wishes man in His image and likeness to rule the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the cattle, all the wild animals on earth and all the reptiles that crawl upon the earth. So God created them in His own image and blessed them and instructed to them to be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth (Singer, 2011).

In this model, the wilderness is a threat to human survival owing to consider it as cruel, harsh, and perilous. Both the Old and New Testaments describe the wilderness as a barren and desolate place. So, this tradition emphasizes taking nature under control and establishing supremacy over it.

In the history of the modern period, empiricist philosopher Francis Bacon expresses his profound love for humanity. He advocates for precise applications of science and technology for the sake of human materialistic development. To this end, he states that human being should know the world through the inquisition of nature by creating and applying technology (Bacon, 1955). In terms of increasing knowledge through experiments, human beings extend their dominion over inert nature. So, natural environment should be tortured to reveal her secrets. Bacon stresses expanding human knowledge to subdue and overcome the necessities and miseries of humanity. This conception refers to masculine humanity’s absolute knowledge and mastery of nature.

Descartes argues that though animals and plants are alive, he nonetheless denies that they are anything other than machines or thoughtless brutes (Desjardins, 2001). In the Cartesian view, the criterion for moral standing is consciousness. Anything not conscious is a merely physical thing and can be treated without concern for its well-being (Singer, 1981).

Kant shows that our duties towards nature are indirect (Desjardins, 2001). In his view, only humans have moral standing; and only autonomous beings, capable of free and rational action, are moral beings.

Anthropocentric attitude also lies in traditional moral theories that deal with what sorts of things are good, which acts are the right and what the relations are between the right and the good. In this respect, there are three classified forms of normative ethics which are known as utilitarian, deontological, and virtue ethics (Wilkinson, 1999).

Utilitarianism claims that the good course of action is the one that creates the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people. Here utilitarianism focuses on good consequences (Kernohan, 2012).

Another approach to moral judgment examines the means of the act directly, giving no attention to consequences. This approach is called deontology or Kantianism. According to Immanuel Kant, a good action must satisfy, fulfill, or conform to some absolute, universal, and unconditional standard usually expressed as a duty, an obligation, or a prohibition. Kantian ethics stresses legitimate means (Kernohan, 2012).

Unlike utilitarian and Kantian ethics, Virtue ethics focuses on the human character. It emphasizes the importance of developing a good habit of human behavior, like courage, temperance, justice. So, virtue ethics emphasizes human excellence (Kernohan, 2012).

Therefore, normative ethics moves forward patronizing human-centered attitudes. Traditional anthropocentrism cares exclusively for human beings. It claims that the human species is superior to other things in the environment.

Traditional anthropocentrism can be compared with frontier ethics. Frontier ethics assumes that the earth has an unlimited supply of resources. If resources run out in one area, more can be found elsewhere or and human ingenuity will find substitutes (Fisher, 2019). This idea considers human being as master who manages the planet. It represents that there are no laws; every human action toward nature is just. The frontier ethic is entirely anthropocentric as only human needs are considered.

Modern Views of Anthropocentrism

From the perspective of ecological crisis, the modern approach of anthropocentrism appears to remove the limitation of ancient environmental stance. Norton (1984) terms it as a weak version of anthropocentrism. John Passmore, William Frankena, Kristen Shrader-Frechette, Don Marietta, and pragmatists like Ben Minteer, Bryan Norton, Eugene Hargrove, and Andrew are the proponents of this ideology (Nelson, 2012). They believe that the solution to the environmental crisis lies in the traditional anthropocentric approach. However, they suggest that this approach will have to be employed competently. They think that this approach is necessary and sufficient to live in harmony with nature.

Unlike traditional view, modern attitude ascribes values on non-human elements of nature as aesthetic, educative, or restorative. These values are relatively exceptional than the instrumental. They stress the sustainability of the environment.

John Passmore thinks that the natural world is not valued directly for its own sake but indirectly for the sake of humans who find it valuable for the benefits it brings to them (Gudorf & Huchingson, 2010).

According to Norton (1984), human contact with nature could prompt individuals to question their own and others' ecologically irrational commitments and shape normative ideals affirming human harmony with the environment. He stresses that human beings should form a normative standard for ensuring harmony with nature. That is why he focuses on human contact with nature that creates moral responsibility towards the environment. In this perspective, outdoor recreation, environmental education, and ecotourism might have a dominant influence on the growing affinity in the human mind concerning the natural world. Besides, evaluating landscape differently, recognizing its present and future beauty, cultural expressiveness, therapeutic and recreational value, and ability to inspire individuals and communities will compel the human being to care for and protect the environment.

Following Norton, Hargrove acknowledges that environmental value necessarily originates from humans. In effect, Hargrove draws the attention to epistemological anthropocentrism and its logical necessity. Unlike Norton's weak anthropocentrism, however, Hargrove's version included recognition of the intrinsic value of natural objects. Grounding his approach in the naturalistic traditions of nineteenth-century landscape painting and field naturalism, Hargrove demonstrates that people may ascribe intrinsic value to the elements of nature what they judge to be beautiful or scientifically interesting—just as one might ascribe intrinsic value to a priceless work of art such as the Mona Lisa—even though that ascription is made from a distinctly human point of view and is intimately related to a complex suite of human values (Hargrove, 1989). He firmly believes that this value will play a pivotal role in the protection of the natural world.

The pioneer of traditional conservationism Gifford Pinchot contends that nature is a resource to be conserved to meet human welfare. According to conservationists, we seek to protect the natural environment from exploitation and abuse so that humans can receive long-lasting benefits from it (Desjardins, 2001). The principle of conservation states that natural resources have no intrinsic value; they should be used and controlled by all people. They represent this strategy from a utilitarian outlook.

On the other hand, the preservation movement holds an anthropocentric attitude differently. As a human being, he must protect the natural world for his own sake. Human management has a moral duty to play for preserving the natural

environment. Preservationists continue that human management should be for the protection of nature. They tend to oppose greater access to and use of natural resources by human beings (Sandler, 2017).

Comparative study between Two Views

As modern approach to the environment springs out of traditional ideology to dispel its limitation in addressing environmental decay, they contain some similar and dissimilar features. In similar lens both approaches contend that humans are the center of the universe (Callicott & Frdeman, 2009). Human beings have cognitive faculties and freedom of choice, which place them at the highest position of all living and nonliving organisms in the universe. They continue that because human beings are the foundation of morality, they are entitled to inherent worth, whereas nature is regarded as means to their benefit (Kopnina, 2018). They also believe that humans who measure everything are apart from and above all other nonhuman natural objects. The natural world is interpreted in terms of human values and experience. Conversely, both hold explicit different characteristics in ascribing the status of nature and its sustainability.

Proponents of traditional approach argue that humans have no obligation to nature. They deny harmonious relationship between man and nature. They ascribe instrumental value to nature. They consider nature just as resources that exist for human use (Callicott & Frdeman, 2009). Natural resources do not need to be conserved and preserved for their sustainability because of their boundless availability. As the earth's resources are limitless, they should be exploited without restraint. Proponents of this view favor greater human access to and use of natural resources for human socio-economic development (Desjardins, 2001). While they evaluate humans as conqueror of nature, the nature should be tortured and ruled over in order to expose its secrets. In accordance with traditional approach, all contingent problems are solved by manpower, technologies, and the market economy (Callicott & Frdeman, 2009).

Proponents of the modern approach, on the other hand, recognize indirect responsibility for the environment. They impose different types of value on nature such as aesthetic, educative, or restorative unlike instrumental. They recognize harmonious relationship between man and nature (Hargrove, 1989). They think that natural resources are limited. Nature can replenish itself from its moderate use but excessive use cause harm of it permanently. Natural resources need to be conserved and preserved as they are limited. They think that humans should take care of nature to ensure its long-term viability. They consider human as manager of nature. They urge for preservation and conservation plan to protect the natural environment. Since resources take time to regenerate, they should be used wisely and with caution. They hold that humans have responsibility towards the generations to come who have legitimate right to enjoy the natural beauty and bounty. Thus, human management should be for the protection of the environment (Desjardins, 2001).

Evaluation

The environment is a concept where all living and nonliving entities exist and interact with one another constantly by maintaining natural rules and regulations. All elements have their capability to replenish themselves to some extent from being exploited. But when it crosses its capacity, the healthy state of the environment begins to wane. Consequently, the environmental disorder appears that is a concern for the existence of all organisms in this universe.

The anthropocentric approach to the environment is a long-standing and pristine school of thought that started its function when the environmental predicament was alien to all. Traditional anthropocentric approach evidently differentiates humanity from the natural entities in terms of rank and status. They think that humans are the best organisms of all. Because, they have certain goal, reason, self-consciousness, self-control, and the ability to communicate through symbols. Consequently, only humans receive moral treatment and enjoy moral rights. This view considers human beings as conqueror. In this respect, the primary concern of human beings is how to conquer human miseries and necessities. Conversely, the traditional anthropocentric approach considers nature as merely a resource that has no moral consideration. It exclusively contains the instrumental worth. Nature has no right to live of its own life. Nature exists to be used for human purpose. To them, nature is nothing but service provider. With its boundless resources, nature fulfills material gratification of humanity.

Since human beings are apart from and above nature, the harmonious relationship between them is rejected. This ethics states that humans have no responsibility other than their current fellows. Nature is regarded as source of unlimited resources that should be exploited extravagantly for the betterment of humanity. This view encourages humans to greater access to and use of them. They think that all contingent problems should be resolved by manpower, science and technologies and market economy. They place a high value on accumulating knowledge that will enable humans to rule over everything. In terms of increasing knowledge through experiments, human beings extend their dominion over inert nature. In this respect, nature is the fertile field of experiment. Humans have been torturing and exploiting natural environment to expose her secrets through undue and unabated application of science and technology. As a result, technological and scientific application without moral criteria without compassion to other natural entities brings in misfortunes for humanity as well as ecological balance. Various diseases and flues like COVID-19 pandemic that the world experience are the consequences of habitat destruction of wildlife and unethical experiment on them and their close contact.

On the other hand, they think that development means incremental advancement of socioeconomic condition of human being. This attitude makes humans greedy and selfish. These features of human tend to build up consumerist society to get material comfort. Materialistic greed of consumerist society affects the nature enormously that severs the inter relation among the entities of

ecosystem. In accordance with the view that the primary purpose of humanity is to produce and consume material goods. It considers that material wealth is the best measure of success. Matter and energy resources are unlimited because of human ingenuity in making them available. As a result production and consumption of goods increase endlessly with the rise of standard of living. The importance of material goods for human life cannot be categorically denied. However, dependence on material comfort should be moderate. Otherwise, excessive greed on matters brings about ecological destruction that is a grave threat for the existence of humanity. These lead to environmental pollution and resource shortage on a global scale which can be termed as ideological cause of the environmental crisis.

This view provides legal right and complete authority of human beings to exploit natural resources in terms of advancement of the standard of human living and it empowers human beings as the master who manages the planet. Because the traditional approach only advocates for human interests, moral considerations, and development, it eventually leads to the establishment of a profound philosophy of Humanism, human chauvinism, and speciesism, these terms are defined as “a prejudice or attitude of bias in favor of the interests of members of one’s own species and against those of members of other species (Singer, 2002). The traditional approach to the environment has no concern and strategic stance to address environmental crises; instead, faulty evaluation and reckless handling of nature, as well as its widespread use, inevitably result in environmental disaster.

The limitation of this approach ushers a new window in searching for another avenue for the equilibrium state of living and nonliving elements of the ecosystem. In this background, the Modern anthropocentric approach to the environment comes into being for addressing the incremental deterioration of ecology. This approach argues for employing traditional attitude in an expert way for resolving the existing ecological concern. The proponents of this movement acknowledge the indirect responsibility to nature. Unlike instrumental value, they ascribe different values to nature for the protection of the environment. It emphasizes on outdoor recreation, environmental education, and ecotourism so that people come to know the importance of nature. It also ascribes new value to the nonhuman being and things of the environment as a non-instrumental value that is not akin to the intrinsic or final value. They term the value as aesthetic, educative, or restorative other than the instrumental. This value creates in the human mind based on his interest. This human interest inspires individuals and communities to care for and protect nature. Individuals and communities are motivated to take care of and protect the environment because of this human interest. They encourage for the sustainability of the environment. This view advocates for the strategies of conservation and preservation for the protection of healthy environment. They intend to safeguard the natural world from exploitation and abuse so that humanity can benefit from it in the long run. They

are against any harmful human activity in protecting the natural environment. They endeavor to keep the wilderness as it is, in its natural state. These imply that humans should protect the environment, not for its own sake but of its value to them. We should maintain harmonious interaction with nature since the balance of the ecosystem is dependent on how we handle it.

Traditional view of nature is almost unanimously rejected since it ultimately leads to environmental exploitation and the manipulation of nature to meet trivial human demands. It is also rejected by even its fellow modern version of anthropocentrism. Conversely, Modern views ascertain new categories of value unlike instrumental for preserving a mutual and peaceful interaction between humans and nature. They hold that though human beings are apart from and above nature, healthy environment is necessary for the existence of humanity. As a result, they emphasize on maintaining harmonious and peaceful relationship between man and nature. They use these techniques to benefit from the environment though nature has no right to live of its life.

Based on the aforementioned analysis, it can be stated that the modern anthropocentric approach to the environment is superior to the traditional approach in combating environmental problems. The traditional view is not accepted due to its partial, one-sided, prejudiced and extreme speciesism ideology. This approach establishes speciesism which then evolves into greed-driven individuality, resulting in widespread environmental devastation. Conversely, modern view argues that human's consciousness regarding the importance of nature and precise application of conservation and preservation techniques can address the current environmental crisis. Though, this theory is also condemned by non-anthropocentrism. Because the modern view fails to adequately prevent environmental crises in terms of having a felt preference that rewards those who cause irresponsible environmental deterioration and biodiversity loss. Aldo Leopold, an eco-centrist warns about the relationship of human beings with nature that nature is not a commodity but a community of which we are a member. He characterizes the community as countless animate and inanimate entities and their interdependencies. All living things, including humans, must be viewed as members of the ecological community. The harmonious and stable relationship of every community member is a resource for the continuation of the lives of others. The ecological conscience teaches that humans are members of the biotic community, biotic citizens rather than conquerors of nature (Desjardins, 2001).

Conclusion

The anthropocentric approach to the environment emphasizes human mastery and authority over nature in specifying the ethical relationship between human beings and the environment. Anthropocentrism regards the environment as a means to human interest. In its traditional stance, nature holds an endless resource and full of mysterious fields of knowledge. It claims that human beings have no responsibility to the environment other than using it for their development. They

exploit and manipulate natural resources and conquer the natural world with an authoritarian and domineering outlook. Cognitive ability and the ability to reason belong to them alone. But the modern attitude of anthropocentrism takes a somewhat different stance out of its ancestry fellow traditional view. Unlike the traditional one, this new attitude accepts indirect responsibility to nature. It persuades a harmonious relationship with the environment. In this attitude, the role of the human being is to enhance or perfect the world of nature by cooperating with bringing out its potential. This view does not impose intrinsic value on the non-human being but works for their protection in ensuring longstanding use for the generations to come. Both views approach the environment to hold ancient roots and a long history in western culture, and fundamentally human-centered. Of them, especially a traditional approach fails to consider the interest of non-human beings completely. This version of anthropocentric attitude ultimately leads to environmental degradation. So, it needs to be rejected and superseded.

However, the modern version of anthropocentrism contributes to the protection of the environment. Because this approach wanes the rate of environmental degradation to some extent, but it is insufficient to resolve the crisis. This approach advocates attributing different values to the natural entities in order to achieve ecological harmony but denies them the right to live their own lives. However, as an integral entity, nature has its own significance as a whole where humans are mere a part. They are but members of the biotic citizens rather than conquerors of nature. Environmental ethics requires more than a simple concern for individual animals of a certain type. At a minimum, we need to consider questions about the moral status of diversity of plant and animal life, about ecological communities, and about our role in those communities. The focus of moral consideration should be shifted away from individuals to biotic wholes. A shift to such holistic and truly non-anthropocentric ethics from humanistic would require addressing ecological plight.

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Sufi Influence in Medieval Mangalkot: The Land of Eighteen Auliya

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Abstract: Mangalkot does considerably push back the proto history of the Burdwan district and all of Bengal. The city had a lease of life for a long time. The advantageous location of Mangalkot both on the road link and its riverine connection through the Ajay and Ganga hastened its rapid growth and prosperity. The principal purpose of this essay is to assess the legacy of Mangalkot, not a well-known site, where one encounters the vicissitudes of time. There is no doubt that the emergence of site as an important Centre from the so called Maurya period onwards, was caused by the growing urban factors in mid and eastern India. Mangalkot is situated present in the Katwa subdivision of Burdwan district. Burdwan district in general and Mangalkot in particular constitutes one of the few medieval sites in Bengal. After the end of the initial conflict, the composite culture developed here under the influence of the Sufis. The medieval Mangalkot considered as a land of Eighteenth Auliya or Pir but their names remained unknown.

The Muslim sufi saints, immigrating from Arabia, Persia and Central Asia were bound to influence the society of Mangalkot. They brought about a great transformation in lives of the people of Mangalkot, both Muslim and non-Muslim. Several cults with common beliefs and practices emerged as a result of the close social and intellectual contact between the Hindus and the Muslims. Many sufi khanqah in Mangalkot became the learning centre. The Khanqah also serves as an academic centre and also a relief camp where the disappointed and the destitute are looked after. The Sulh-i-Kul was the dominant feature of every sufis in medieval Mangalkot. This message of love preached by the Bhakti saints and Muslim sufis can eliminate or at least diminish the hatred between man and man. It will create an atmosphere of tolerance, love and communal harmony.

Keywords: Mangalkot; Sufi saint; Khanqah; Mysticism.

Introduction

Mangalkot does considerably push back the proto history of the Burdwan district and all of Bengal. The city had a lease of life for a long time. The advantageous location of Mangalkot both on the road link and its riverine connection through the Ajay and Ganga hastened its rapid growth and prosperity. The principal purpose of this essay is to assess the legacy of Mangalkot, not a well-known site, where one encounters the vicissitudes of time. There is no doubt that the

emergence of site as an important Centre from the so called Maurya period onwards, was caused by the growing urban factors in mid and eastern India.

Background

Mangalkot (23'32" N and 87'54" E) is situated near the confluence of the rivers Ajay and Kunur, in the Katwa subdivision of Burdwan district (Peterson, 1910). From ancient period this historical site became popular in the history of Bengal. The Ajay valley in Burdwan district played an important role in the growth and development of protohistoric culture in Bengal. Mangalkot situated on the southern bank of the Ajay River. The river Ajay was navigable at least till the late medieval period is clear from accounts in Mangalkavya literature. In the various accounts of Chandimangal Kavya, we come across the voyage of Dhanapati Sadagar, a merchant who sailed for Singhal from Ujjaninagar (Sen, 1382). There still exists a village called Ujjani in the vicinity of Mangalkot. Burdwan district in general and Mangalkot in particular constitutes one of the few medieval sites in Bengal. After the end of the initial conflict, the composite culture developed here under the influence of the Sufis.

In the history of Muslim mysticism (sufism) in medieval Mangalkot, which has long been recognized as an important component of the evolution of modern Bengali culture but has not yet received exhaustive treatment. Information about some of the early mystics who lived in Mangalkot during the medieval period is based on local traditions and secondary sources, mostly quoted in some modern publication in Bengali, Urdu and English. But these contain much legendary material, so that it is hard to identify historical facts out of the mass of tradition. Sufism as a means to achieving the highest form of obedience to God had a long course of development in the history of Islam. It is stream of intuitive perceptions with emphasis on an emotional attachment to God. It is personal and experiential in character and in apparent contrast to Islamic theology which lays stress on a received knowledge of God, Laws and rituals. Apart from the obligatory forms of prayers the Sufis developed and used certain practices to make their prayer more effective by practicing love, repentance, renunciation of the world, remembrance, meditation, devotion etcetera. (Arberry, 1979).

The Sufi's aspiration to secure the pleasure of God, created a wider scope for the movement. Within a small period a large number of people were trained in this discipline and were designated as Sufis. With the expansion of the mystic ideology, there was growth of *silsilahs* (orders), generally named after a teacher of substantial following. The *silsilah* was later stabilized with an elaborate system of mystic tradition, centered round the *pir*, *murid* and the *khanqah*. In the mystic organization the *pir* holds the central position. He is supposed to be obeyed and respected by his followers as the Prophet is by the *Umma* (Muslim community). Every *salik* or novice as a general rule takes a preceptor (*i.e.* shaikh, *pir* or *murshid*) ripe in experience and equipped with knowledge. According to

the Sufi belief, a *murid* is like a patient to his *pir*. He should not conceal anything from him if he wants success and he must have complete confidence to him. Changing of *pirs* is denounced in the mystic ethics and is considered a serious offence on the part of the *murid* (Alam, n.d.).

Mangalkot in Medieval Period

The medieval Mangalkot considered as a land of Eighteenth Auliya or *Pir* but their names remained unknown (Haque, 1975). The persons whose names we came to know were – 1. Makdum Shah Mohammad 2. Hazi Firoj 3. Golam Panjatan 4. Syed Shah Tajuddin 5. Abdullah Gujrati 6. Khazauddin Chisti 7. Shah Hazi Ali 8. Shah Siraj Uddin 9. Pir Ghora. The graves of the Auliya or *Pirs* till, existing in Mangalkot are – Hamid Daneshmand, Abdullah Gujrati, Shah Jaker Ali. On the occasion of the sad demise of Hamid Daneshmand, Shah Jaker Ali, Makdum Shah and Abdullah Gujrati the great fair is still held in Mangalkot. It proved that Mangalkot was a Muslim cultural hub in medieval period (Ghosh, 1957).

The principal ruins around Mangalkot include several tombs and *dargahs* dedicated to *pirs* or sufi saints such as Pir Panjatan, Rah Pir and Ghaznavi Ghazi. The other monuments worth mentioning are *Nakra Khana* (room of the musical instruments), *Hammam Khana* (Bathroom) and *Khankah* (one type of resting house). The dates of construction of these tombs and monuments cannot be determined with certainty for the lack of recorded documents. But this type of architectural monuments were much similar with the Mughal style. There is a cluster of mosque in dilapidated conditions and numerous *fakir* tombs in the nearby Natunhat village. Among the Islamic structures the Golam Panjatan- the tomb of five gazis, the mosque of Koar Saheb, the tomb and the mosque of Maulana Hamid Danesmand, the mosque of Hussain Shah and others assume significance. An inscription revealing the name of one Chandrasen, is found in the mosque of Hussain Shah, which belonged to 1439-1519 (Gait, 1917).

A number of Muslim religious divines and saints came to Mangalkot from the different countries of the Islamic world during the medieval period and settled here.

1) Shaikh Bahram Saqqa: Shaikh Bahram Saqqa a learned poet, was one of the disciples of Haji Muhammad Khubasham of Nishapur. He gave himself to severe austerities and become a devoted Sufi. He was of Turkish origin and belonged to the tribe of Bayat (Allami, 1873). Perhaps he first came to Agra during the reign of Akbar (Lees & Ali, 1965). During his sojourn at Agra he earned reputation as a mystic and a poet. It is said that at Agra he was seen distributing water to the people walking in the street and hence his poetic name ‘saqqa’. He moved from Agra to Mangalkot and worked there. The people of Burdwan had great reverence for him and had built a mausoleum over his grave to preserve his memory (Lees & Ali, 1965).

2) Makhdum Shah Abdullah Gujarati: According to the tradition, Shaikh Abdullah was a native of Gujrat and had come to Bengal in the reign of Sultan Nusrat Shah (1519-1532). He settled at Mangalkot to propagate the mystic discipline. His tomb is situated at Mangalkot (Haque, 2012).

3) Shah Mahmud: Shah Mahmud was another sufi who rose to eminence at Mangalkot. As tradition has it, he waged war with Bikramjit, the raja of Mangalkot and won victory over him. He was a good scholar in Arabic and it said to have worked for the propagation of Islam. He lies buried at Arwal (Gait, 1917).

4) Shah Sultan Ansari: His father was a Muslim of the Ansar class of Madina. He left Madina in 900 A.D. and came to India. After the staying in Multan and Lukhnow, he started living in Mangalkot of Burdwan district. Among his three sons, Shah Sultan is more famous. He was a famous saint of Mangalkot who died here.

5) Khawza Anowar Shah: There is the tomb of Khawza Anowar Shah in Burdwan. It was built by emperor Faruk Shah. Here he died when he started the Muslim domination. He became died in 1715 A.D.

6) Shah Mir Jakir Al- Qadri: It is known from local folklore that Shah Jakir came to Mangalkot after sometime of Hamid Danishmand. He died and buried here. Till his grave was showing full of respect by the people of all religion.

POLITICS IN MEDIEVAL MANGALKOT

In 1204 Bakhtiyar Khalji captured Bihar, established control over Nabadwip in the District of Nadia (Ray, 1990). Subsequently another Ghori's generals, Muhammad Shiran captured Burdwan. Gradually the greater part of Bengal came under the governors of Bengal. Later Ghiasuddin Iyaz Khalji (1213-1227) captured Gaur and annexed Birbhum in 1214 and his empire extended over Burdwan as well. He created two separate Parganas – Sarifatabad (Birbhum) and Sulaimanabad (Burdwan) and construction of a vital road link from Devkot to Gaur and from Gaur to Rajnagar (Birbhum district). The road is believed to have been later extended to Mangalkot. This crucial road link with Gaur was later extended to Cuttak (Orissa) through Hooghly and Midnapore districts by the Mughal rulers for both strategic and military purposes. This was a vital link road till the end of the 17th century and it clearly notified by Van-Dan Brouke (1660) in his map. He describes the road as a "Badshahi Sarak" and this road closely connected with Mangalkot (Mukherjee, 2003).

Mangalkot again came into the limelight when it was annexed to the kingdom of Hussain Shah and Nusrat Shah. Hussain Shah credited with the construction of a huge mosque at Natunhat near Mangalkot in 1510 A.D./916 Hijra (Gait, 1917). Nusrat Shah constructed the Jami Masjid at Mangalkot in 1523 A.D. (930 Hijri). But all the mosques now in ruins.

Burdwan is mentioned in the *Ain-i-Akbari* as a *mahal* or pargana of sarkar Sarifatabad with an assessment of 1,876,142 dam (Lasker, 2014). It was during the rule of the Mughals that Mangalkot became not only a prosperous township but also a great centre of Muslim learning and culture. The place came into prominence for several causes. Prince Khurram who revolted against Jahangir while absconding at Mangalkot came in contact with Maulana Hamid Daneshmand, a renowned Muslim saint. A mosque built in honour of the saint in 1654 A.D. (1065 Hijri), the name of emperor Shah Jahan is mentioned (Gait, 1917; Ahmed, 1960).

There was a legendary story of Meherunnisha and Jahangir heard often which was related to Mangalkot. Burdwan came under Mughal jurisdiction after the conquest of the region in 1575 by Emperor Akbar. During that time prince Salim, Akbar's son fell in love with Meherunnisha, the beautiful wife of Sher Afghan who had been appointed as a faujder of Burdwan by Akbar. After the death of Akbar his son named as Jahangir became the Mughal emperor. He appointed Man Singh as a Subadar of Bengal but transferred him to Bihar in 1605 then he deployed Qutubuddin Khan Koka, his step brother in Bengal as a Subadar. His intention was to achieve Meherunnisha at any cost. According to the direction of Jahangir Qutubuddin Khan Koka met Sher Afghan and tried to kill him during their friendly conversation. Both of them were killed during their fight. After that Jahangir brought Meherunnisha to Delhi to marry her. During their journey to Delhi Meherunnisha spent one night at Mangalkot (Hossain, 2000).

IMPORTANT HISTORICAL SITES OF MEDIEVAL MANGALKOT

Tomb of Golam Panjatan : The graveyard of Golam Panjatan was an important historical site here. They came to possess Mangalkot but were killed by certain Hindu ruler. A great fair is held in remembrance of the Pir Panjatan every year.

Maulana Hamid Daneshmand Mosque : Hamid Daneshmand mosque which was built by the patronage of Mughal king Shah Jahan in 1665 was another important historical site. There are two mosques the old and the new situated there adjacent to the tomb. The tomb has 22' 2" in length. *Nakara khana* was also noted historical site situated on 18 square feet land and it had close proximity to Hamid Daneshmand mosque. The mosque has undergone subsequent renovations and the present structure, also now in dilapidated condition, was built on its old site by one Maulavi Muhammad Ismail.

Seven Gazies or Pirs : Seven Gazies sacrificed their life to occupy the Mangalkot and brought the place under Muslim control. They were buried in that place and their graveyard were considered as a holy place.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION

The ancient ruins of Mangalkot have been reported from time to time for a long period by different scholars and amateur archaeologists. But the significance of

such antiquities has largely remained unattached to until 1975 when the Department of Archaeology, Calcutta University undertook a systematic exploration in this region. The exploration yielded valuable materials which together have emphasized the importance of the site.

During the first half of the year 1915 Rakhai Das Banerjee visited Mangalkot. During his visit, he observed some religious places and historical elements of the Sultanate period. The main archaeological site was situated at the outer space of the village from the way Natunhat to the Mangalkot. The length of the main archaeological site near about 70 Bighas and width 10 feet to 30 feet But the greater Mangalkot is surrounded by the village- Ujani, Kogram, Natunhat, Boxinagar, Boro Bazar, Padimpur, Debpur and Shripur (Jana, 2002).

According to the sources published in the Statesmen dated 22th April, 1990 the civilization excavated by the Calcutta University Archaeology Department belong to a highly developed civilization during the period from Pre-historic to medieval period. It was during the rules of the Mughals that Mangalkot became not only a prosperous township but also a great centre of Muslim learning and culture. Thus Burdwan district in general and Mangalkot in particular constituted one of the famous historical sites in medieval Bengal. It may have been settled as early as the chalcolithic period because of its advantageous location on both the east-west-north-south trade routes. Directly South is the famous port city Tamralipta which was the most celebrated port of the East by the time of Buddha. Mangalkot was likely replaced by the newer settlement of Burdwan from the Gupta period.

IMPACT OF SUFISM IN MANGALKOT

The Muslim sufi saints, immigrating from Arabia, Persia and Central Asia were bound to influence the society of Mangalkot. They brought about a great transformation in lives of the people of Mangalkot, both Muslim and non-Muslim. Sufi saints influence on houses, food, dress, position of women may be obtained from the following sources. Mukandaram refers to the categories of people/castes among them including those of- Tirakar, Kagchi, Qalandar, Hajjam, Darji (Chakravarti, 1352). The immigrants and converted Muslims mixed together in a social system where both the foreign and the local elements were accommodated. The immigrants who came from the deserted lands had to adopt to the peculiar geography and the climatic condition of Mangalkot. The account of the dress of the immigrants and converted Muslims is available from the sources.

The Chinese account says that the language in universal use was Bangla it may logically be assumed that not only did the local people speak Bangla but also some of the immigrants who had settled in Mangalkot for a long time and had long associations with the local people. While the immigrants learnt the local

language, Arabic and Persian as well. The persianization of the administration gradually ushered in an era of cultural conquest (Rahman, 2001).

Several cults with common beliefs and practices emerged as a result of the close social and intellectual contact between the Hindus and the Muslims. Certain Hindu rites and customs were continued by people newly converted to Islam. They retained many Hindu customs and institutions. The cult of Satyapir reveals the same blending old Hindu and Muslim ideas. God here is called Satyapir (i.e. Truth, the *pir*) by the Muslims and Satyanarayan (i.e. Truth of Narayan) by the Hindus (Sen, 1960). The worship of Panch Pir was popular at various place in Burdwan district, particularly in Mangalkot. It is worshipped even today as a family deity and is represented by a small mound erected on a clay plinth in the north-west corner of the house. Every Wednesday this mound is watered, incense is burnt and offering the flowers is made (Smith, 1919).

Many sufi *khanqah* in Mangalkot became the learning Centre. Where the sufi lives and guided a *Salik*. The *Khanqah* also serves as an academic centre and also a relief camp where the disappointed and the destitute are looked after. Maulana Hamid Danishmand established a Madrasha in Bohar for the development of learning. A lot of students came here from the different part of India (Banerjee, 1321).

Conclusion

The local converts, no doubt, preferred state services but they were engaged primarily in their old professions. The change from a Hindu Bengali way of life to the Islamic system and culture was mostly due to the influence of the sufis who were the torchbearers of Islam and Islamic life in Mangalkot, especially in its early phase (Ismail, 2011). The *Sulh-i-Kul* was the dominant feature of every sufis in medieval Mangalkot. They preached that no sin is greater than to torture someone. Heart is regarded as the abode of God and it is advised not to hurt the feeling of any one, because to break one heart is worse than demolishing thousands of Kaba. Muslim mystics looked upon service of other as a major aim of their spiritual life and made every effort to create love and affection in the hearts of the people. This message of love preached by the *Bhakti* saints and Muslim sufis can eliminate or at least diminish the hatred between man and man. It will create an atmosphere of tolerance, love and communal harmony and help us to achieve national integration.

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Fakir-Sannyasi Movement in Rajshahi: Regional Study of a Pioneer Peasant Resistance in Colonial Bengal

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Abstract: Rajshahi region had many holy places that made it a domicile of the religious devotees, the Muslim fakirs, and the Hindu sannyasis. This area was protected from the company's power centers, Kolkata and Dhaka, by the rivers Padma and Brahmaputra, respectively, and became a safe asylum for the insurgents. It, consequently, formed an eminent ground of the movement and experienced most of the incidents of confrontation between the colonial power and the rebels. There was an immense impact of the Fakir-Sannyasi movement upon the socio-cultural life of this region. This micro-study attempts to analyze the subject using contemporary sources and the existing literature.

Keywords: Fakir-sannyasis; Chiattorer Mannantar; Folklore; Peasant Resistance; Bengali Literature.

Introduction

In 1757, the British East India Company defeated Siraj-ud-Daullah, the Nawab of Bengal at Plassey, and with this, the journey under colonial rule began in South Asia. As a commercial organization, the Company anticipated making more profits at the expense of the interests of the colonized subjects (Chatterjee, 1984). It initiated various exploitative policies and imposed a monopoly over agriculture, industry, trade, and commerce. In addition, it increased the land revenue continually at an unjustifiable rate. The trend continued throughout the colonial age that affected all classes in general and the peasantry in particular. Indeed, the changes made by the colonial rulers led the cultivators to a devastating situation (Choudhury, 2001; Guha, 1983). However, they (cultivators) did not receive the oppression silently but moved against the colonial power. The history of colonial Bengal experienced a series of peasant movements that started with the Fakir-Sannyasi movement in the second half of the eighteenth century, just after the commencement of Company rule (Chakravarti, 1986; Roy, 1996).

The Fakir-Sannyasi movement draws the attention of scholars, and accordingly, styles itself as one of the most favorite areas to research. Many studies and voluminous literatures existed in this field (Ghosh, 1930; Guha, 1983; Chatterjee, 1984; Dasgupta, 1986; Umar, 1992; Chakravarti, 1986, 1993; Roy, 1996; Sarkar, 2017; and Sengupta, 2020). However, in most cases, the researchers do not have a consensus to determine various aspects of the movement and merely provide convincing answers to all questionable issues. Macro-studies deal with a broader

sphere of the problem and explain it within specific format. They, therefore, hardly go to every worthy aspect of the problem (Islam, 1979 and Ahmed, 1999). On the contrary, the micro-study can reach the depth of the problem and explain the issues of the subject worthy of consideration (Karim, 2010).

Studying local history helps to modify and evaluate the historical events and eventually reconstruct the national history by looking at the problems through a micro-magnifying glass. A question arises in the mind of a researcher often that which unit should be considered worthy? During the British period, district administrations conducted all the functionaries within their jurisdiction. They also preserved the reports in the *Mohafezkhana* (the record room), compiled from time to time, on various aspects (Ahmed, 1999). Making research on a district, thus, somehow easy in collecting data and explaining them in which jurisdiction they produced. However, this idea does not help the researcher interpreting the subject like peasant movements. These social phenomena could not be confined arbitrarily within district jurisdictions but generally in geographical boundaries. This article, therefore, attempts to study a peasant movement in a comparatively broader area, the Rajshahi region, a landscape distinct geographically from the other part of Bengal.

The movement spread over the provinces of Bengal and Bihar but concentrated solely within North Bengal (Chakravarti, 1986). It had an immense influence on the life of the inhabitant of this region. Why did the movement become concentrated in North Bengal? How did the people of this region look at the insurgents and became influenced thereof? A micro-study on the Rajshahi estate that includes North Bengal could provide the answers to these questions. This region was within the jurisdiction of Rajshahi district, one of the largest administrative units in colonial Bengal (O'Malley, 1916). The article, using contemporary sources, especially the official correspondences and reports, tries to investigate the Fakir-Sannyasi movement in the Rajshahi region that represents North Bengal indeed. However, for the time constraint, the researcher did not inspect all record rooms containing sources of the movement and failed to use data produced by the insurgents or their supporters which is the major shortcoming of this paper.

Rajshahi Zamindari was one of the largest estates in Bengal. In 1773, it was 13,000 square miles and spread, apart from the modern Rajshahi division, over Murshidabad, Nadia, Jessore, Birbhum, and Burdwan districts (O'Malley, 1916 and Miser, 1965). Mr. Whoal, a contemporary English writer, noted that it would have taken 35 days with horseback to travel the Rajshahi estate. Mr. Grant, another British writer, expressed a similar impression. Rajshahi zamindari is one of the largest estates, not only in Bengal but also in the whole of India, he observed. However, Warren Hastings, the Governor-General, referred to it (Rajshahi Zamindary) as the second-largest estate in Bengal. He wrote in 1786,

“The Zamindari of Rajshahi, the second in rank in Bengal and yielding (sic.) an annual revenue of about twenty-five lakhs of rupees, has risen to its present magnitude during the last eighty years by accumulating the property of a great number of disposed of zamindaries, although the ancestors of the present possessor had not, by inheritance a right to the property of a single village with the whole Zamindari” (Hunter, 1894, 43 and O’Malley, 1916, 38).

Collecting revenue of such a great Zamindari from a single controlling unit was complicated (O’Malley, 1816). The Company, therefore, decided to reduce its volume, and accordingly, divided it into two distinct estates, Bhushana and Bhaturia. Bhushana estate consisted of Jessore district, while the Bhaturia spread over North Bengal. Subsequently, Company established the Rajshahi district that included the Bhaturia estate while the other portion of the zamindari remained in its respective jurisdiction. Our discussion will be confined solely within the premises of Bhaturia Estate, and after the establishment of the district administration, within the jurisdiction of Rajshahi district. However, to make the discussion comprehensible, sometimes we will go beyond this area.

Identity of the Insurgents

Who were the men, raised hands against the occupying power immediately after the commencement of the Company reign in 1757? The question sparks a wide-scale debate among scholars. According to imperial writers, Fakir-Sannyasis were the bandits involved in the illegal actions in the countryside. Colonial rulers looked at them similarly and called the insurgents dacoits or robbers (O’Malley, 1916; Chakravarti, 1986 and Sengupta, 2020). In the name of pilgrimage, they roamed around the country and looted it arbitrarily- a company official wrote in 1773 (O’Malley, 1916). Some native writers are convinced in the conception, follow the line that forms and strengthens a genre, the imperialist school of thought. Jamini Mohan Ghosh, for instance, referred to Fakir-Sannyasis as external bandits. According to him, they are not the residents of Bengal, but from other parts of India raid the country illegally and looted it. Suprakash Roy, on the other hand, portrayed fakir-sannyasis as the permanent inhabitants of Bengal. According to his view, they were the peasants, oppressed by the exploitive measures of the colonial power (Roy, 1996). A class of writers follows him, and a new genre emerged known as Marxists or Nationalists, who made a significant contribution to the histrography of the peasant movement.

Disagreeent among the scholars regarding the issue makes it difficult to determine the identity of the insurgents, whether they were permanent residents or outsiders in this country. However, many sources indicate them as the inhabitants of Bengal. Francis Buchanan Hamilton, a famous British civilian and orientalist, mentions that many *Madari* Sufis (Fakirs) lived in the Rangpur district. Most of them were married and enjoyed the ownership of *Lakheraj*¹ land (Sengupta, 2020). Thomas Broston, a military official, provided similar information. He

writes, Fakir-Sannyasins are the united groups consisting of men and women, both Hindus and Muslims. Glazier also describes them as the permanent residents and the general people of this country. Fakir-Sannyasins lived in the Rajshahi region also (O'Malley, 1916; Strong, 1912). Initially, they started their lives as religious sects or groups and subsequently became permanent citizens. They even had specific professions (Chakravarti, 1993).

Notwithstanding distinctions in beliefs, the fakirs were the devotees of Islam, while the Sannyasis belonged to Hinduism, they had similarities in their dress and lifestyle (Van-Schendel, 1985). Both of them wore saffron clothes and made pilgrimages in groups. Despite some dissimilarity in religious practices and conduct, the Company considered them the same groups and called them the Fakir-Sannyasins. The people also indicated insurgents jointly with great respect so that making a distinction between fakirs and sannyasis was difficult.

William Hunter, a British Civilian, observes that the soldiers deviated from the Mughal army and the landless cultivators joined the fakir-sannyasis. The change of power ruined the destiny of the men engaged in the Nawabi services, and therefore, they resented the new ruler. The mass people also begrudged the exploitive and oppressive measures of the company. All blamed the new authority for their plight and searched for a way to freedom from the distressing situation. They met together in a banner, increased the number of insurgents, and strengthened the movement. According to Hunter, once the number of the fakir-sannyasi reached up to fifty thousand (Roy, 1996).

Being the inhabitants of a neighboring district of the capital (Murshidabad), the people of Rajshahi served the Nawab. However, we can not determine their number for the lack of information in the contemporary sources but assume that the amount is not small. These people lost their jobs after Plassey, and accordingly, smooth life to what they used to. Accusing the company liable, they joined fakir-sannyasis and took an active part in the movement ensuring the insurgents a firm footed position in the district.

*ChiattorerMannantar*² added a new dimension to the movement. The Company government acknowledged that after the famine of 1770, the peasants joined the fakir-sannyasis frequently (O'Malley, 1916 and Dasgupta, 1986). They increased the land revenue continuously and ensured its collection through oppressive measures since 1765 when they got the *Dewani*.³ No natural calamities could prevent them from collecting revenue at an increased rate. After the catastrophe of the great famine (1770), after more than one-third of the total population engraved and half of the landed property became barren, the government continued to increase revenue collection (Roy, 1996 and Dasgupta, 1988). In 1768, they collected Rs. 1,52,04,856 from Bengal as the revenue, which followed a rapid augmentation, reached at Rs. 1,57,26,576 in 1771, the year just after the great

famine (Umar, 1992). Rajshahi zamindary also experienced the rack renting of the Company. Rani Bhavani, the zamindar of Rajshahi, credited Rs. 24,51,000 to the treasury in 1765-1766 (Firminger, 1918 and Mahmood, 1981). The government was not satisfied with the amount and tried to increase it, which materialized in the triennial settlement of 1769-1772. The amount was so big to realize, and accordingly, the government failed to collect it, trying their best. The following table exhibits the increasing trend of revenue collected from Rajshahi.

Table 1: Revenue assessment and collection from Rajshahi, 1769-'70 to 1771-'72.

Year	Revenue assessed (Rs)	Increase/decrease (amount)	Increase/decrease (%)	Revenue collected (Rs)	Increase/decrease (amount)	Increase/decrease (%)
1768-69	--	--	--	26,94,602	--	--
1769-70	26,01,000	--	--	24,38,342	2,56,260 (-)	9.51% (-)
1770-71	26,76,000	75,000 (+)	2.88% (+)	21,46,247	2,92,095 (-)	11.98% (-)
1771-72	27,51,000	75,000 (+)	2.80% (+)	26,12,391	4,66,144 (+)	21.72% (+)

N.B. '--' indicates, data is not available while '+' or '-' represent increase and decrease respectively.

Source: ABM Mahmood, "The Triennial Settlement of Rajshahi Zamindari & The Famine of 1770", in *Studies in Modern Bengal*, ed. by S.A. Akanda (Rajshahi: Institute of Bangladesh Studies, 1981), p. 63 & 78.

The famine-stricken cultivators of Rajshahi were unable to pay their *khazna* (rent of the land) to the landlords (Mohsin, 1983). The zamindars, thus, failed to meet the demand from the government. The company, consequently, was unsuccessful in collecting the expected amount. The decrease in population after the famine also made it impossible. In 1784, the number of inhabitants in Rajshahi was 19,97,763 that decreased repeatedly and came to 1,064,965 in 1834. No contemporary sources show the trend of augmentation in Rajshahi. However, a government report on the survey of some *Tarafs* of the zamindary provides information regarding this issue. The following table exhibits the figures.

Table 2: Population of Rajshahi district before and after the famine, 1770.

Division	1175 B. S.	1176 B. S.			1177 B. S.			1178 B. S.		
	Families	Decrease	Increase	Total	Decrease	increase	Total	Decrease	Increase	Total
Taraf Razedurpur	214	--	--	214	158	--	56	13	7	50
Taraf Panchkatia	114	--	--	114	78	--	36	--	18	54
Taraf Bhorla	364	45	--	319	188	--	131	6	32	157
Taraf Roypur	384	2	4	386	237	1	150	21	69	199
Total	1076	47	4	1033	661	1	373	40	156	460

N.B. To simplify the table, fractions of the figures have been omitted.

Source: Government of Bengal, *Proceedings of the Committee of Circuit at Krishnagar and Kasimbazar*, Vols. I, II & III (Calcutta: Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, 1926), p. 177.

Notwithstanding a detailed description, there is some information in other government sources about the decline of the population in Rajshahi. The Company's Committee of Circuits prepared a survey report in 1772 that depicts a tragic feature of four famine-stricken villages in Rajshahi zamindari. It shows that only 35% of the people in the four villages could survive during the famine. The catastrophe wiped out 660 families. More than five hundred people (507) had died, and 153 families deserted from their dwellings to escape the famine (Govt. of Bengal, 1926).

The Company revised the area of Rajshahi that reduced the population of the district. At its very inception, the volume of Rajshahi was 12,909 square miles, a large territory hard to supervise from a single administrative unit. The unit, thus, followed a serial rearrangement of the boundary to reduce its volume (Hunter, 1974). In 1801, some of its *Parganas*, containing 1.5 million inhabitants, were separated and connected to Murshidabad. Subsequently, some other portions were cut off from Rajshahi and added to Malda, Bogra, and Pabna districts (Hunter, 1974). The measures reduced the volume and decreased the population of Rajshahi, as well. However, death and desertion were the prime cause of this reduction.

The measures adopted by the Company doomed the interest of the artisans, fell them into the trap of the *Dadani* system, and confined them to supply their products to the Company agents at a nominal price. The weavers of the Rajshahi district, who lived at Boalia, Natore, and Sardah, and produced silk clothes, were subjected to inhumane exploitation and oppression (Mohsin, 1983). They cut their thumb to be free from the awful condition but could not set free from the unethical bonding of the Company (Roy, 1996 and Mohsin, 1983). The exploitation and oppression of the Company continued through various abusive ways. The company servants joined the exploitation and tortured the weavers to cheat (Mill, 1990).⁴ The weavers found no way, fled from the locality, and took shelter in the forest (Reginald, 1937 and Roy, 1996).

The price of foodstuffs increased drastically in Rajshahi after the famine. During the time of Rani Bhavani, one can purchase five to six *mounds* of paddy by a rupee. Subsequently, the price raised, and in 1769-1770, the rupee yielded 18 *seers* of paddy only (Long, 1973 and Misher, 1965).⁵ The famine-stricken people failed to collect foods for their survival and thus, took part in dacoity that deteriorated the law and order situation. The Supervisor of Rajshahi wrote in 1771, "...the frequent firing of villages by the people, whose distress drive them to such acts of despair and villainy. Numbers of ryots, who have hitherto borne the first of characters among their neighbors, pursue this last resource to procure themselves subsistence" (O'Malley, 1916). The distraught joined the movement, the last resort of their subsistence, increased the number of fakir-sannyasis, and eventually strengthened the movement.

Pilgrimage and the Roots of Confrontation

Fakirs and sannyasis were distinct in faiths, and thus, there were different holy shrines to where they pilgrim. The sannyasis went to the *Kumbha Mela*, a religious fair, observed three yearly in Allahabad. They took baths in the rivers and attended the Baruni, a religious-cultural festival of the Hindu community, observed in Bogra. The *Holi* of Jagannath in Puri was the occasion at where the Sannyasis met together (Ghosh, 1930). Janakpur, the birthplace of Sita,⁶ was another holy site where they used to go every year. Usually, they went there to celebrate Sita's birthday at the end of March. At this time, they crossed Mahananda and moved northwards to Rangpur. They divided themselves near the city into two groups. One went to Mohasthan to the west to perform holy bathe in the Kartowa while the other soaked themselves in the Brahmaputra at Chilmari (Ghosh, 1930). They performed baths at these places twice a year. The festival commenced at Mahasthan on the day of *Navachandra*, on Sunday in December or in January. The Sannyasis also took a holy bath at the Baruni festival, held on Chaitra Ashtami in March or April (Ghosh, 1930).

Makhanpur, a village 40 miles northwest of Kanpur, was an important site where the fakirs celebrated *Madar Utsab*, a religious fair of the followers of *Madar pir* (Ghosh, 1930). They also visited various shrines of the *pirs*, like the tombs of Makhdum Shah Jalal Tabrizi in Maldah, *pir* Badr Uddin's in Dinajpur, Mollah Alauddin near Damdama, Mahishawar at Mahasthan, and Shah Kamal in Garo Hills (Lambourn, 1918 and Ghosh, 1930). Adina Mosque in Pandua was another holy place where the fakirs used to go (Ghosh, 1930). After the *Madar Utsab*, they came to the Mohasthan in April, entered the Rajshahi zamindary from the west, and crossed it to the east (Ghosh, 1930). The location of many sanctuaries to pilgrims became the region a traveling territory of the insurgents and styled it a ground experienced the events of the movement staged therein.

Van Den Brook, the Dutch Governor at Chinsura, sketches the first map of Bengal in 1660, showing a great highway that connected Rajshahi with Pabna, Bogra, and Rangpur. A big north-facing road passes through North Bengal to Assam on the map, probably used by the fakir-sannyasis (Samad, 1999). The great rivers, Padma and Brahmaputra, protected the region from the power centers of the Company; Kolkata to the south-west and Dhaka to the east. It was hard to take immediate action towards the insurgents in this area that led Fakir-Sannyasins to choose the territory as a safe adobe. The area consequently became a sanctuary of the agitators and was infested heavily by the movement.

Fakir-Sannyasis walked together and pilgrimed in groups that produced a doubt in the mind of the Company government. These men, who helped to regain Meer Qasim in 1764, the defeated Nawab of Bengal, made some unsuccessful attacks in various factories of Bihar. The government, therefore, was committed to redress them and prohibited them from staying and moving in groups (Lorenzen, 1978).

The local administration impeded them from group pilgrimage. Majnu Shah,⁷ the prominent leader of the fakirs, alleged that the Company was obstructing their traditional rights of pilgrimage (Chakravarti, 1993).

Bhiksha (begging), an optional contribution of the villagers, was the principal source on which the fakir-sannyasis earned their living. The cultivators were the sole contributors who experienced severe exploitation of the Company that made them incapable. The Fakir-Sannyasins, consequently, failed to collect *Bhiksha*, the source of their subsistence that led them to plunder the Company's factories and revenue collecting centers. The zamindars, the beneficiaries of colonial rule, extended hands to their master. They tried to subdue the movement by pressure and accordingly created resentment and hostility to the agitating force. The fakir-sannyasis turned their sights to the landed aristocrats, attacked them, and plunder their *Kacharis* (Chakravarti, 1993).

Events of the Movement

The Fakir-Sannyasis began to demonstrate opposition to the Company rule immediately after the Battle of Plassey. The troops fought with a group of soldiers consisted of Misher Khan, the Raja of Burdwan, Durar Sinha, the Fakirs, and other groups from Birbhum - Captain Martin, a military officer of the Company states (Ghosh, 1930). This piece of information evidences the existence of fakirs in the early stages of the Company rule. Mir Qasim, the Nawab of Bengal, was defeated in 1764 at Boxar and tried to regain his power by committing attacks on various factories of the Company in Bihar. Bandal Khan, the faujdar of Hooghly, informed the Governor that the Nawab of Oudh, Suja-Ud-Daulah, Raja Beni Bahadur, Samru Himmatgir, and others attacked Major Carneck's troops at Panchapahar. He noted that the company soldiers tackled the enemy from 8 am to 5 pm. and defeated them on the battle field, he claims (Arafat, 2014 and Ghosh, 1930). *Siyar-i-Mutakakhirin*, a contemporary work, mentions Himmatgir as a Gosai, the leader of the Fakirs. It also indicates 5,000 *Gentus* who participated in the attacks were the Fakirs (Tabatabai, 1832 and Ghosh, 1930). The fakirs, therefore, existed as an organized fighting group even during the Nawabi period and made unsuccessful attempts to overthrow the new colonial rule immediately after the battle of Plassey. They subsequently attacked and plundered the factories of the Company, the centers of exploitation and oppression of the colonial power.

In 1763, the Fakirs attacked the Bakerganj factory of the Company and captured Mr. Kelly, the agent of the Company was perhaps the first instance of the movement (Allen, 1912 and Ghosh, 1930). In the same year, they attacked the Dhaka factory, defeated Mr. Liester, Superintendent of the factory, and expelled him from there (Dasgupta, 1986). The fakirs plundered the factory and left it destroyed and exhausted, the superintendent alleged (Ghosh, 1930). Other sources provide no information regarding the issue so that we conclude whether the allegation was the truth.

The fakir-sannyasi movement infiltrated North Bengal by attacking the Rampur-Boalia factory in Rajshahi (Dasgupta, 1986). The fakirs seized the factory in 1763 and captured Mr. Bennett, the superintendent of the factory. They took him to Patna in confinement and killed him there (Long, 1973 and Roy, 1996). According to the official correspondences, they killed him in October 1763, a month before Mr. Thwet, the new supervisor, came to Rajshahi and took over the charge. The agitators attacked the Rampur-Boalia factory before few months, when Mr. Thwet joined, ascertains it the first incident in North Bengal. It was one of the initial incidents of Bengal in which the insurgents committed the attack on a factory of the colonial ruler (Chakravarti, 1986).

The Fakirs did not leave immediately after attacking the factory but establish their base in the Rajshahi region, only four miles from Rampur-Boalia, one of the power centers of the Company government (Ghosh, 1930). The Company authority tried to expel them from Rajshahi but failed continually until 1770 (Ghosh, 1930). It was simply tough for the strategic situation of the region that was separated and protected from the capital (Kolkata) by the Padma, a great stream, and from Dhaka by another, the Brahmaputra. The Company authority was unable to take prompt action to suppress the movement in this region. It was, indeed, a safe asylum for the agitators who stayed here for a long time and attacked serially many factories, Chowkies, and *Kacharies* (revenue collecting centers); the Company, on the other hand, tried its best to suppress them. The agitators performed many occurrences of attacking and plundering the establishments of the Company, and its aids, confronted with their troops, and, accordingly, the region experienced several instances of the movement (Ghosh, 1930).

Several sanctuaries to pilgrimage located in Rajshahi attracted the insurgents, the Muslim fakirs, and the Hindu Sannyasis. The tombs of *pirs* like Mahishawar in Bogra and Badar Uddin in Dinajpur attracted the Fakirs, while the holy streams of Karotoa and the Teesta led the sannnyasis to come here. The area was more affected by the famine of 1770 than the riverine districts of South Bengal that led the inhabitants to join the Fakir-Sannyasis (O'Malley, 1908 and Mitra, 1329). Many people of this region worked in the Nawabi government and faced the change of power that doomed their fortunes, attracted to the movement. They extended hands to the agitators, joined them, and strengthened the movement (Roy, 1996).

The religious beliefs and mindset of the people led the movement to intensify in this region. The inhabitants respected the Muslim fakirs and Hindu monks irrespective of their faiths, extend hands to them in need. For example, the Company soldiers defeated Majnu Shah and his followers in a surprise attack at Kazipara near Govindganj. The leader (Majnu Shah) was injured and fled towards Mohasthan, while his followers mingled with the people, and the soldiers, despite many attempts, could not arrest anyone. There are many such examples in

government correspondence that indicate the sympathy of the people towards the rebels. 'The people of Rajshahi were helping the rebels', a commander of the Company alleged in a letter (Chakravarti, 1986).

Fakir-Sannyasins sought help from influential zamindars. Majnu Shah wrote a letter in 1772 to Rani Bhavani seeking her help against the tyrannical authority, the Company government (Ghosh, 1930 and Roy, 1996).⁸ Unfortunately, the zamindars were not sympathetic to the insurgents and played a vital role as an accomplice of the colonizers. Doyaram Roy, the zamindar of Dighapotya, for example, employed paramilitary forces against the insurgents. They patrolled in the rivers with gunboats (O'Malley, 1916). The fakirs, consequently, extended their antagonism to the zamindars and attacked their *Kacharies*. An officer of the Khatta *Pargana* in Rajshahi informed that about two thousand fakirs, along with their leader Majnu Shah entered the zamindary and plundered thereof (Ghosh, 1930). According to his word, "Shew Mudjenoo, the Burranna Fakeer being arrived with a numerous body in the Pargana plundered all the goods and effects and carried away one of the principal men in the district under confinement" (Ghosh, 1930). The contemporary sources have not borne any information to identify the victim. He, presumably, was a rich and influential man among the inhabitants, amicable to the company and antagonist to the fakirs. However, the rebels entered and established a firm footed possession in the Pargana as the officer acknowledges, "at present, some of these Fakirs have taken up their residence here (Ghosh, 1930)." They came from the village of Gheejen, nearby the Pargana, who had been staying there for quite some time. The officer anxiously wrote to the supervisor, "there is some treasure, and what will be the result I know not" (Ghosh, 1930).

Tumbling the Movement

The company addressed the insurgents as 'muggers and robbers' and tried to suppress them by force (Chakravarti, 1986). The *Mufasil* officers played a significant role in this regard, giving information of the movement of the rebels to the higher authority and taking part in attacking them with their forces to arrest or expel (Roy, 1996). Boughton Rous, the supervisor (of Rajshahi) claimed that the fakirs, being informed of the news of his arrival, fled away from the territory (Govt. of Bengal, 1925 and Ghosh, 1930).⁹ The fakirs, making the boasting futile, appeared immediately in the nearest place of his headquarter. James Rennel, a foremost British officer involved in the revenue survey at Belkuchi in Sirajgonj, informed the authority that the fakirs had been 'plundering' there (Ghosh, 1930).¹⁰ The authority sent two companies of military police to Rennel to demolish the fakirs. Lieutenant Taylor was the leader of this troop, while Lieutenant Feltham joined in the mission from Ghoraghat with a folk of soldiers (Chakravarti, 1986). The company troops attacked fakirs and defeated Mojnu Shah at Kazipara near Gobindagonj with the help of the zamindars (Ghosh, 1930). The fakirs' leader

(Majnu Shah) was injured and fled quickly with 150 followers to Mohasthan. The company soldiers followed but failed to capture him. The rest of the followers of Majnu Shah, about 2,500 in number, had been mixed with the local inhabitants, and the soldiers could not detect them. The local people articulated sympathy and extended their help to the insurgents (Sarkar, 2017). They were also oppressed and exploited by the colonizers that led them to hostile the Company (Chakravarti, 1986). Moreover, they considered the fakirs as religious preachers and helped them for saving from the catastrophe.

After a successful operation at Gobindagonj company established a permanent army camp at Mohasthan to prevent further upheaval of the fakirs in this region and circulated orders to the local authorities to suppress the fakirs (Roy, 1996). The Company thought that the fakirs would not be able to enter this region. However, Majnu came to Rajshahi back in 1772 with many of his followers, sought sympathy from Rani Bhobani but failed again, turned to Mesidah Pargana, a territory lied both sides of Atrai, started from the west bank of the river at Mahisantosh in Dinajpur and reached to the Jungeepur (Blochmann, 1875 and Ghosh, 1930). Majnu stayed here for some days, evidence of his strengthened possession in this area and frightened the supervisor who sought assistance from the authority (Govt. of Bengal, 1925). Mr. Alexander, the commanding officer at Murshidabad, sent a company of soldiers to Rajshahi and ordered the supervisor of Dinajpur to send another two companies. It was, however, not easy to drive the insurgents out of the territory. The fakirs attacked the *Jaysin Pargana* of Doyaram Roy took some 1,690 Rupees from the *Kachari* and another five hundred Rupees from Nurpur, a village in his zamindary (Roy, 1996). The officer of the *Pargana* informed the authority that about 300 fakirs, armed with swords, spears, matchlocks, and rockets, took part in the operation. He predicted that the fakirs would turn to Natore, headquarter of Rajshahi division (Ghosh, 1930). However, they went another way to Kuigonj and established their camp at Silbery, a village in Bogra. According to the supervisor's letter written on 25 January 1772, the fakirs left this place after some days and went northward (Ghosh, 1930). They collected some 500 Rupees, at this time, from Nurnagar, a village of Doyaram Roy. Meanwhile, a *pargana* officer, to appropriate the money, charged false blame that fakirs plundered the government *Kachary* under him and took Rs 1,690 from there (O'Malley, 1916).

The official correspondences evidence the strength of the fakirs involved in this movement. The supervisor states that about a thousand fakirs along with 400 matchlock men participated in the action. Besides this, they had 40 rockets, some swivels, and two camels. Majnu Shah used a fine horse, while many of his followers ride tattoos (O'Malley, 1916). The fakirs, meanwhile, left Kuigonj and arrived at Kusambi *pargana* in Bogra and collected *Bhikshas* (contributions) from the villagers. The inhabitants of this *pargana*, like other parts of the country,

contributed them voluntarily. Subsequently, the fakirs went to the Barobazar pargana, lying down both sides of the Yamuna extended over the modern districts of Bogra, Pabna, and Mymensingh (O'Malley, 1916).

In 1773, Majnu came to the Mesidah pargana and claimed from the zamindar some 1500 rupees as an arrear and detained him for being unable to collect the money (Ghosh, 1930). He brought the zamindar thirty miles distant from his *Kachery* at Limbuberia. The fakirs stuck his treasury up and mugged Rs 1057 and another Rs 1500 from the villagers (Ghosh, 1930). The sannyasis, along with the fakirs, took part in the operation that styled it a joint venture of the agitator and evidenced the collaboration of the two groups (Ghosh, 1930). The Company sent Lieutenant William, who attacked and defeated Majnu Shah and his followers (Ghosh, 1930). A rumor spread over the country that Majnu died in the battle whereas Majnu appeared in Kutch Behar and entered Rangpur only after few days in the same year (1773), left Rangpur, and advanced southward by seeing a large troop waiting to be faced (Ghosh, 1930).

Majnu no longer appeared active, died in 1786 (Ghosh, 1930; Chakravarti, 1986 and Roy, 1996). The relatives and followers of the leader tried to maintain the movement but failed to take it to the fruitful finishing (Roy, 1996). They, unlike Majnu Shah, were not able to control the followers, splited into several groups, and weakened gradually (Roy, 1996). Nevertheless, the movement continued for quite some time, the last decade of the eighteenth century.

Aftermaths of the Movement

Fakir-sannyasis attacked government revenue collection centers and the *Kacharies* of the zamindars, plundered them to a great extent, eventually affected the fiscal management, and reduced the amount of collection of revenue (Roy, 1996). The government reports anxiously exhibit the shrinking trend of revenue yielded from Rajshahi and acknowledge the effectiveness of the measures adopted by the insurgents from the very initial stage of the movement. The following figures in the table represent the declining trend of revenue collected from Rajshahi.

Table 4: The collection of revenue from Rajshahi, 1175-1178 B.S.

Year	Amount of revenue				Increase/decreas (approximate)	Increase/decrease (%)
	Rupees	Ana	Pai	Gonda		
1175 (1768-69)	8,880	9	14	3	--	--
1176 (1769-70)	8,944	5	16	1	Rs 64 (+)	0.72% (+)
1177 (1770-71)	3,928	3	1	--	Rs5016 (-)	56.08% (-)
1178 (1771-72)	4,843	14	5	2	Rs916 (+)	18.91% (+)

Note: The numbers within the bracket represent Gregorian (Christian) years, while outside them are the Bengali *Sals* (years).

Although the rate and percentage show an increase in the table, they are still plummeting as started from Rs. 8,880 in 1175 and reached at Rs. 4,843, near the half in 1178.

Source: *Proceedings of the Committee of Circuit at Krishnagar and Kasimbazar*, Vols. I, II & III (Calcutta: Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, 1926), p. 177.

The ventures, what the fakir-sannyasis adopted, broke the law and orders up in the countryside and threatened the company's interest by reducing the revenue collection followed by the tumbling of the inland trade and making the commodity collection uncertain for the foreign market (Roy, 1996). The situation led the government to reduce the jurisdiction of the existing administrative units and set up new subdivisions and police stations in various parts of the country, especially in the places infested by the movement (Bhowmik, 1979). This measure contributed to the urbanization in the *mufasils* of North Bengal, and the new cities and towns emerged thereof.

Many tales and fables based on the movement that prevailed in North Bengal enrich Bengali literature. The bards compose various lyrics on the subject. Ratiram Roy, a rural poet, writes songs on the legendary characters of the movement (Das, 2018). Even though, the movement influences modern writers to compose works on the subject. Akhtaruzzaman Ilias, for example, writes *Khoabnama*, a classic novel on the character of a descendant of the fakir who resided at Akkelpur in Jaipurhat district and belonged to the tradition of his ancestors, the insurgents (Ilias, 1997). In addition, the people nomenclature their locality and the holy places like temples, marts etcetera. after the insurgents or the events of the movement. The Raktodaha *Beel* (Vomra *Beel*) in Bogra, for example, derives from the existence of Fakirs-Sannyasis in the locality who resisted the company army in the marshy land (Ali, 2021). Similarly, Chawdhurani in Rangpur district and Fakirganj and Sannyasikata in Jalpaiguri named after Devi Chowdhurani, an eminent Sannyasi leader, and the insurgents respectively, who confronted the colonial power in North Bengal (Das, 2018). The Sashan Kali Mondir nearby Goshala, and Bhabani Pathak and Devi Cowdhurani Mondirs at Shikarpur tea garden in Jalpaiguri, evidence insurgents' influence in this region. These temples bear the idol of these leaders to whom the inhabitants worship (Das, 2018).

Conclusion

Rajshahi region had many shrines of the Muslim Fakirs and the Hindu Sannyasins at where they pilgrimed. The people in this region respect the insurgents equally who came to perform the holy festivity. In addition, the area was geographically safe to agitate against the colonial power and accordingly became the principal ground of the movement and observed most of its scenes staged. The rebellion had an immense impact on the socio-economic and cultural lives of the people. It impacted the literature and folklore in this region, and therefore, several lyrics and poems existed in the locality. The people even named their locality after the events of the confrontation and the persons involved therein.

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Notes

¹. *Lakheraz* is a Persian word, means free of land revenue.

². The famine of 1770.

³. Revenue collecting power of Bengal.

⁴. James Mill, the British historian, states that "The great corruption, which they represented as prevailing in the government, and tainting to a prodigious degree the conduct of the Company's servants, was the foundation on which they placed the necessity for the establishment of the committee. The picture which they drew of these corruptions exhibited, it is true, the most hideous and the most disgusting features."

⁵. One could purchase a mound and 32 seers and one mound and 16 seers of paddy by a Ruppe in 1751 and 1752, respectively. However, the sources provide no information about the period of famine.

⁶. According to the mythological stories of the Hindus, Sita was the wife of Rama, one of the incarnations of God.

⁷. Majnu Shah was a resident of Makhanpur, a village bordering Bihar and Oudh. He moved subsequently to Bengal and settled in Mahasthangarh in Bogra.

⁸. Majnu wrote in the letter, "We have for a long time begged and been entertained in Bengal and we have long continued to worship god at the several shrines and altars without ever once abusing or oppressing anyone. Nevertheless last year 150 Fakirs were without cause put to death. They have begged in defferent countries and the cloaths and victuals which they had with them were lost. The merit which is derived and the reputation which is procure from the murder of the helpless and indigent need not be declared. Formarely the Fakir begged in separate and detached parties but now we are all collected and beg together. Displeased at this method they (the English) obstruct us in visiting the shrines and other places- this is unreasonable. You are the ruler of the country. We are Fakirs who pray always for your welfare. We are full of hopes."

⁹. C.W. Boughton Rous, the newly appointed supervisor of Rajshahi wrote in 1769, "The reinforcement of the sepoys will be sufficient force to deter the Sonassees from moving this way. I have advice that a party had lately advanced as far as nine *coss* on this site of Sheebgunge; but upon hearing of my arrival at Natore, desisted from plundering the villages and separated into different bodies one of which went toward the *Barampooter* and the other consisting of about 1500 took the Rangpur route.... I have dispatched letters to all the officers in the parganahs directing them to send immediate advice of every intelligence they receive and have dispersed my own Hircarrahs for the same purpose. I will not fail to transmit you the most early information concerning the motions of these pernicious tribes. I have examined the state of the Rajas house here which is surrounded by two wet ditches and should my advices give me reason to apprehend that the Sonasses will make a second attempt to penetrate into this quarter; I will publish an order to the inhabitant to secure their persons and effects within the enclosure."

¹⁰. James Rennel wrote, "There is now in this part of the country a large body of fakirs who are laying all the principal towns under contribution. They were yesterday at Luthinupur 4 *coss* from this place and after receiving two hundred rupees from the Gunge Daroga marched northward to Pucharya district (Pakhuria parganah of present Mymensing district) They about a thousand in number and tolerable well armed.... I have met several of their detached parties which are indeed scattered over the whole provinces of Radshy (Rajshahi) and Ghoraghat (Dinajpur)."