

**JOURNAL
OF
THE ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BANGLADESH
(HUMANITIES)**

Vol. 65

No. 2

December 2020

**Editor
Akmal Hussain**

**Associate Editor
Md. Abdul Mannan**



ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BANGLADESH

EDITORIAL BOARD

Chairperson	Professor Ahmed Abdullah Jamal
Editor	Professor Akmal Hussain
Associate Editor	Professor Md. Abdul Mannan
Members:	Professor Fakrul Alam
	Professor Asha Islam Nayeem
	Professor Md. Siddiqur Rahman Khan

Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh (Humanities) is published by the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh in June and December every year. Scholarly articles relating to *Peoples and Nature of Asia* are considered for publication in the Journal. It also receives books for reviewing.

Correspondence : All correspondence may be addressed to: Editor, Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh (Humanities), 5 Old Secretariat Road, Nimtali, Ramna, Dhaka 1000, Bangladesh.

Telephone : (880+2) 9513783

E-mail : asbpublication@gmail.com

Website : www.asiaticsociety.org.bd

Published by The Asiatic Society of Bangladesh

Price Tk. 200.00 (Two hundred taka)

ISSN 1015-6836

Guidelines for Contributors

The *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh* is a peer-reviewed journal. Manuscripts submitted for publication in the journal should be printed, double-spaced on one side of A4 size paper with generous margins, and should not normally exceed 10,000 words using British spelling. In addition, a soft copy of the manuscript should be submitted. A *quotation* that will run more than fifty words should be set off as a single-spaced, double-indented paragraph. **Notes and references should be numbered consecutively throughout and be placed at the foot of the page.** *Tables* should be given separate numbers in the manuscript, such as Table 1, Table 2, etc. with running headings.

Notes and References should be cited as follows:

1. P.J. Marshall, *Bengal: The British Bridgehead, The Cambridge History of India*, (Cambridge 1987), p. 77.
2. Willem Van Schendel, 'Economy of the Working Classes'. Sirajul Islam (ed.), *History of Bangladesh 1704-1971*, Vol. II, (Economic History), (Asiatic Society of Bangladesh 1992), pp. 542-99.
3. W.H. Morris-Jones, "Pakistan Post-Mortem and the Roots of Bangladesh", *Political Quarterly*, Vol. 18 (April-June), 1972, pp. 187-200.

DECLARATION

A manuscript which is concurrently under consideration by another journal or press or which has been published elsewhere will not be considered for publication in the Journal.

The author of a paper will sign a declaration to the effect that (i) the work submitted has been written by her/him; s/he takes public responsibility for the content of the paper; (iii) the content of the paper has not been published before in any referred journal or has not been submitted to such journal for publication; and (iv) s/he accords consent to the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh to publish the paper.

BOOK REVIEW

Books sent to the journal for review should be given in duplicate.

CONTENTS

<u>AWQAF PROPERTIES IN BENGAL SINCE THE PERIOD OF MUSLIM RULE</u>	
Khoundkar Alamgir	103
<u>EVOLUTION OF ACADEMIC DISCIPLINES IN BENGAL, 1857-1921: NATURE AND DRIVING FACTORS</u>	
Md. Mahmud Alam	123
<u>THE POLYMATH VERSUS TRADITION ISWAR CHANDRA VIDYASAGAR AND HIS TRYST WITH HUMANISM</u>	
Anjashi Sarkar	151
<u>BENGALI NOVEL <i>PURBA-PASCHIM</i>: HUMAN SUFFERING AND TRAUMA CAUSED BY THE PARTITION OF BENGAL IN 1947</u>	
Taskia Haq Lyric	179
<u>IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE-INDUCED THREATS ON HUMAN SECURITY IN BANGLADESH: A STUDY INTO THE TANGUAR HAOR OF SUNAMGANJ DISTRICT</u>	
Maruf Mia	201

THE ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BANGLADESH
Council 2020 & 2021

President :	Professor Mahfuza Khanam
Vice-Presidents :	Professor Mesbah-us-Saleheen Professor Khondoker Bazlul Hoque Professor Ahmed Abdullah Jamal
Treasurer :	Professor S. M. Mahfuzur Rahman
General Secretary:	Professor Sabbir Ahmed
Secretary :	Professor Md. Abdul Karim
Members :	Professor Sirajul Islam FRHS (Fellow) Professor Rehman Sobhan (Fellow) Professor Najma Khan Majlis Professor Syed Anwar Hussain Professor Harun-or-Rashid Professor Biswajit Ghosh Dr. Muhammad Abdul Mazid Professor Yearul Kabir Professor Md. Siddiqur Rahman Khan Professor Eshani Chakraborty Dr. Nusrat Fatema Mrs. Suraiya Akhter

AWQAF PROPERTIES IN BENGAL SINCE THE PERIOD OF MUSLIM RULE

Khoundkar Alamgir*

Abstract

Giving immovable properties to charity began in Bengal from the very beginning of Muslim rule in 1204 and mosques, *Madrasahs* and *Khanqahs* were established to create a Muslim community. Henceforth, *awqaf* (plural of *waqf*) were created in Bengal by the state, noblemen of the community and wealthy individuals. There are various references of *Awqaf* in archaeological and literary sources. Sian inscription, Birbhum, West Bengal (1221); Sitalmat inscription, Naogaon, Bangladesh (1254); Nayabari inscription, Manikganj (1595); Bara Katra inscription, Dhaka (1642) are incontrovertible evidences of *awqaf* in Bengal. Sultan Nasiruddin Nusrat Shah (1519-1532) son of Sultan Alauddin Husain Shah (1494-1519) of Bengal established Bagha mosque (1523) of Rajshahi and Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan (1640-1646) donated lands for the maintenance of the *madrasah* attached to it. It was a pre-Mughal establishment. Food, lodging and other necessities of the students were fulfilled out of the income of the *Waqf* property. According to another land grant a mosque, a *madrasah* and other religious institutions were maintained out of the income of 2,750 *bighas* of land at Mahi Santosh, Naogaon district, Bangladesh even in the 19th century (in the decaying period). According to sources Lalbagh (at present known as a fort) was originally a *waqf* property of Nawab Shaista Khan, a Mughal Subadar who ruled Bengal for long 24 years (1664-1688 with a break for one year). Haji Muhammad Mohsin of Hooghly, West Bengal established a large endowment in the Colonial period. After the advent of the British, many *awqaf* properties were resumed by the government because the holders of the endowments failed to produce proper documents or deeds. This paper has been prepared on the basis of archaeological, epigraphic, literary and historical sources.

Introduction

Awqaf is the plural of *waqf* (Arabic: **وقف**). According to Arabic-English Dictionary, *waqf* means “An entailed, or unalienable, legacy or gift; a mortmain”¹; and according to Oxford Dictionary, the word *waqf* means “an endowment made by a Muslim to a

* An Archaeologist, writer and researcher, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

The author is grateful to Saiyid Zaheer Husain Jafri, Muhammad Ibrahim, Muhammad Yusuf Siddiq, Muhammad Monzur-e-Elahi, and Syed Hadiuzzaman for their help with information in writing this article.

1 Edward William Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, (Asian Educational Services: New Delhi, 1985). See also, J. M. Cowan (ed.), *Arabic-English Dictionary the Hans Wehr Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, 1976

religious, educational, or charitable cause.”² There is no direct injunction in the Qur’an regarding *Waqf*; it is derived from a number of *hadiths* (traditions of the Prophet). But *sadaqah* has been enjoined in the Qur’an and *Waqf* is one kind of *sadaqah*.³

Giving property to charity has been encouraged in the Sunnah.⁴ One third of the total property of one person may be given to charity and it should be done during one’s lifetime. Rest two-thirds of the property should be distributed among one’s heirs following the guidance laid down in the Holy Qur’an. It is *faraiz*.⁵ *Waqf* has been classified into some categories: religious, philanthropic, and posterity or family *Awqaf*.⁶

There is difference of opinion among jurists about different types of *awqaf* and their administration. Family *waqf* is controversial. Gazi Shamsur Rahman’s opinion is: “A *wakf* (alal Aulad) may be created in favour of only some members of the family to the exclusion of the others. It is necessary that the provisions of the *wakf* should be in accordance with Islamic law of inheritance.”⁷ He further observes, “A *wakf* may be made by a Muslim or a non-Muslim. ... The dedication of land as a graveyard by a Hindu has been held to be valid. But a dedication for the purpose of mosque would be invalid.”⁸

Property, business or wealth (cash) may be given in *waqf*.⁹ The person who makes such an endowment is called a *waqif*. In the Christian world it is known as bequest or bequeath and the Hindus call it *debottar*. The Prophet of Islam left no personal property. Two orphans dedicated their land to the Holy mosque of the Prophet in Medina and *waqf* came into existence. *Waqf* in the present connotation started in the 9th century in the Muslim world.

2 <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/waqf> (accessed on 25 April 2018).

3 The word *Sadaqah* appears 9 times in 9 verses in the Qur’an. 2: 196, 2: 263, 2: 264, 2: 270, 4: 114, 9: 75, 9: 76, 9: 103, 63: 10. See: <https://www.searchtruth.com/search.php?keyword=Sadaqah&translator=5&search=1> (accessed on 25 April 2018). According to Gazi Shamsur Rahman “The distinction between ‘wakf’ and ‘sadaqa’ is that in the case of former the income only can be spent while in the case of latter the corpus of the property may be consumed.” See: Gazi Shamsur Rahman, *Islamic Law (as administered in Bangladesh)*, (Islamic Foundation Bangladesh: Dhaka 1981), p. 415

4 *Sahih al Bukhari*: 33-34.

5 *The Holy Qur’an*, Surah An-Nisa: 11-14

6 John L. Esposito (ed.), *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, (Oxford University Press: Oxford 2003), p. 334. See also, Thomas Patric Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, (Cosmo Publications: New Delhi 2004)

7 Gazi Shamsur Rahman, *Islamic Law (as administered in Bangladesh)*, (Islamic Foundation Bangladesh: Dhaka 1981), p. 423

8 Gazi Shamsur Rahman, *Islamic Law*, p. 417

9 <http://www.irwaqf.org/home-2/waqf-types-in-islam/> (accessed on 01/05/2018). There is difference of opinion among jurists about giving cash in *Waqf*.

The objective of this article is to present a picture of *awqaf* properties in Bengal – their history, maintenance, resumption and later condition. The article has three sections. The first section discusses waqf properties in Bengal during the period of Muslim rule. This section is followed by the second section that discusses *waqf* properties in Bengal during the period of colonial rule. Finally, the third section presents a discussion on *waqf* properties in Bengal during the Pakistan period (1947-1971) and the period since the emergence of Bangladesh as an independent state in 1971.

***Waqf* in Bengal: Muslim Period**

Any discussion on the history of *waqf* property in Bengal since the period of Muslim rule needs to be connected with a brief discussion on *waqf* property in the subcontinent. The Sultans of Delhi created many *awqaf*. It has been learnt that Sultan Mu'izzuddin Muhammad Sam Ghori (1149-1206) donated two villages for the Jama Masjid of Multan and handed its maintenance to the *Shaikhul Islam* (highest ecclesiastical officer of the Empire).¹⁰ Another *waqf* was made by Sultan Jalaluddin Khilji, during his reign from 1290 to 1296, for the mosque of Talbina. Mention of *waqf* is found in *Tarikh-i-Firojshahi*. The Sufis played an important role to establish *awqaf* in India. After the Khiljis, Sultans of the later dynasties also donated properties as *waqf*. The Lodi Sultans were exceptionally charitable. During their rule, the Lodi Sultans were cautious about the rights of the administrators or grantees of these lands.¹¹ "...Sultan Mohammed bin Tughlaq appointed ibn Battuta as the Mutawalli of the *wakfs* for the tomb of Sultan Qutb-ud-Din."¹²

The Mughals in India also made grants to the learned and the pious for benevolent purposes. These were made in cash (*wazifah*) or in the form of rent-free (*la-kheraj*) lands (*suyurghal*), also known as *milk* or *madad-i-ma'ash*.¹³ If the heirs of the administrators were learned and pious, these lands became hereditary. These lands were different from *jagir*. Irfan Habib observes, "The beneficiaries of these [*auqaf*] were not directly individuals but institutions. The revenues of certain lands were

10 <https://www.quora.com/Could-you-explain-Waqf-history-in-detail> (accessed on 01/05/2018)

11 Abdul Halim, *History of the Lodi Sultans of Delhi and Agra*, (Dhaka University: Dacca 1961), pp. 114, 220

12 http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/140879/6/06_chapter%201.pdf, p. 53 (accessed on 01 May, 2018).

13 Ishtiaq Husain Qureshi, *The Administration of the Mughal Empire*, (Low Price Publications: Delhi-110052, 2002), pp. 157, 211. See ,S. Z. H. Jafri, "The Mughal-Nawabi Legacy under 'siege' in the Age of Empire (1860s-1880s): Familial Grants and the Waqf of Khanqah-e Karimia, Salon, India", published from Toko Bunko, Tokyo, Japan, p. 201 fn. See also: Shireen Moosvi, "Charity, Objectives and Mechanism in Mughal India (16th and 17th Centuries)", in *Proceedings of Indian History Congress*, Mumbai Session, (Delhi 2012), pp. 335-346

assigned permanently in trust (*waqf*) for the maintenance of religious shrines, tombs and madrasas – for their repair as also for the subsistence of their staff and for charities disbursed through them.”¹⁴ It has been observed that to place *madad-i ma’ash* under charity is inappropriate. Richard M. Eaton observes about some rent-free lands of Chittagong, Bangladesh as under:

These grants exhibit elements of both the Islamic *waqf* and personal grants. The former were in principle institutional and permanent in nature, whereas grants such as *in’am* or *madad-i ma’ash* grants were personal and revocable... Thus the grants we are considering resembled *waqf* grants inasmuch as they were institutional and permanent in nature, and *in’am* or *madad-i ma’ash* grants inasmuch as they were personal and inheritable by the grantee’s descendants.¹⁵

Fuzli Rubbee observes that during the Muslim rule:

... [T]he practice was that high and responsible officers and persons of distinction were granted *Jagirs*, *Al-tamgha*, *Aima* and *madadi-ma’ash* by the state, in lieu of the payment of their salaries and stipends in cash. As a rule, *Jagirs* and *Al-tamgha* used to be granted to civil and military officers, and *Aimas* and *madadi-ma’ash* to learned men, spiritual leaders, and persons of noble descent. ... *Aimas* and *Madadi ma’ash* were granted in perpetuity chiefly to persons of noble birth and to holy men. Besides these grants, rent-free tenements used to be assigned by government for the maintenance of holy shrines, mosques, and other religious establishments.¹⁶

Emperor Akbar (1556-1605) donated 18 villages as *waqf* for the Shrine of Khwaja Mu’inuddin Chishti at Ajmer. In 1577, he made another grant as *waqf* for the maintenance of the shrine of Mahmud Burraqi in Kanauj. Also, Akbar donated two villages as *waqf* for meeting the allowances of teachers of a *madrasah*. Revenues from thirty villages, shops attached to it and inns built near it were made *Waqf* for the *Taj Mahal* at the time of Shah Jahan.¹⁷

Many ancient epigraphs from pre-Muslim Bengal depicting endowment of lands have been found.¹⁸ These were called *Debottar*, that is, property endowed to the service of Deva or god/goddesses. One such inscription communicates that if anyone misuses or

14 Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India 1556-1707*, (Oxford University Press: New Delhi 2000), p. 359

15 Richard M. Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier (1204-1760)*, (Oxford University Press: New Delhi 2003), p. 238. See also, Gregory Kozlowski, *Muslim Endowments and Society in British India*, (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 1985), pp. 24-25

16 Khondkar Fuzli Rubbi, *The Origin of the Muslims of Bengal Being a Translation of “Haqiqate Musalman-i-Bangalah”*, (Thacker, Spink and Co.: Calcutta 1895), p. 66

17 Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India 1556-1707*, p. 359 fn.

18 A. R. Mallick observes, “From time immemorial, the rulers of India had been accustomed to set apart grants of lands for the education of the people and for services of gods.” See: A. R. Mallick, *British Policy and the Muslims of Bengal (1757-1856)*, (Asiatic Society of Pakistan: Dacca 1961), p. 35

defalcates the donated land, he will be an offspring of an ass in the afterlife.¹⁹ In another inscription known as Belava copper-plate of Bhojvarman, the following sentence has been inscribed (verse 6): “He who takes away land either given by himself or by others, rots with his ancestors as a worm in dirt.”²⁰

Having discussed these background information on *waqf* properties in the subcontinent, and *waqf* properties in Bengal during pre-Muslim period, we can now move on to the discussion on *waqf* properties in Bengal during the period of Muslim rule. Indeed, many religious institutions such as mosques, *madrasahs* and *khanqahs* maintained by *awaqf* properties were established from the very beginning of Muslim rule in Bengal. Land grants were awarded by the rulers to religious persons partly for their subsistence, and partly for the maintenance of educational and charitable institutions. The first (or second) inscription of Bengal is the Sian inscription, Birbhum, West Bengal (1221) of Sultan Ghiyas Uddin Iwad Khilji (1212-1227), and it belonged to a *khanqah* for *ahl-al-suffa* or people belonging to the Sufi order (Figure 1).²¹ Z. A. Desai is of opinion that only Sian inscription of Birbhum refers to a *khanqah*, but Karim thinks it incorrect and opines that Sitalmat inscription, Naogaon, Bangladesh of Sultan Mughisuddin Yuzbak (1250-1257) also refers to a sacred building (*khanqah*) (Figure 2).²² A verse of the Holy Qur’an has been quoted in this inscription: “And whoso changeth (the will) after he hath heard it - the sin thereof is only upon those who change it. Lo! Allah is Hearer, Knower.”²³ Anyone who alters the foundation of this structure and damages it has also been cursed in this inscription.²⁴ Yusuf Siddiq observes, “The same verse appears in another mosque

-
- 19 Md. Shariful Islam, “Unpublished Stone Inscription of the Seventh Regnal year of Bhojvarman”, *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh*, (Hum.), Vol. 55, No 1, (June), 2010, p. 117
- 20 Nani Gopal Majumdar, *Inscriptions of Bengal*, vol. III, (The Varendra Research Society: Rajshahi 1929), p. 24
- 21 Abdul Karim thinks that it is the earliest mural record of the Muslim rulers of India. Its language is Arabic. See: Abdul Karim, *Corpus of the Arabic and Persian Inscriptions of Bengal*, (Asiatic Society of Bangladesh: Dhaka 1992), pp. 17-18. See also: Abdul Karim, *History and Heritage of Muslim Bengal* (in Bengali), (Bangla Academy: Dhaka 1994), pp. 218-219. Yusuf Siddiq thinks that an inscription of Ali Mardan Khilji is the first Islamic epigraph in Bengal. See: Mohammad Yusuf Siddiq, *Historical and Cultural Aspects of the Islamic Inscriptions of Bengal: A Reflective Study of Some New Epigraphic Discoveries*, (ICSBA: Dhaka 2009), p. 15
- 22 A. B. M. Habibullah, “An Unpublished Inscription from Sitalmat”, *Bangladesh Lalitkala*, Journal of the Dacca Museum, vol. I, number 2, (July, 1975), pp. 89-94. Abdul Karim, *Corpus of the Arabic and Persian Inscriptions of Bengal*, (Asiatic Society of Bangladesh: Dhaka 1992), pp. 20-21
- 23 *The Holy Qur’an*, Surah al-Baqara: 181. (<http://tanzil.net/#trans/en.pickthall/2:181>)
- 24 Abdul Karim, *Corpus of the Arabic and Persian Inscriptions of Bengal*, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, p. 34

inscription in Gaur (dated 1487), now in the British Museum, and a number of other endowment inscriptions elsewhere.”²⁵

Madrasahs of Bengal generally had *madad-i-ma'ash* lands. But nothing is known about such lands belonging to the *madrasahs* of Moulana Taqiuddin Arabi of the thirteenth century, at Mahisun, Rajshahi and Moulana Sharafuddin Abu Tawwama (1300) at Sonargaon near Dhaka. Abdul Karim thinks that they also probably had *madad-i-ma'ash* lands.²⁶ *Khanqahs* had attached *madrasahs*, hospitals and alms houses (*langar*) for the poor and travellers. In the nineteenth century, Adam found an endowed institution of several hundred years old at Bagha, Rajshahi, Bangladesh.²⁷ Sheikh Jalaluddin Tabrizi (d.1226/1244)²⁸ of Pandua became a rich person in Bengal and he had much wealth. He gave his property in *waqf*, and it is known as *Bais Hajari*. S. Z. H. Jafri observes, “The *Baees Hazari* and *Shash Hazari* trusts at Pandua in the Malda division provide an idea of some of the vast *auqaf/trusts* that existed during the pre-colonial times.”²⁹ He further observes that “the *Baees Hazari Dargah* was of an area of 16 and a half square miles, or approximately 1 lakh *bighas* of land. On the other hand, the estate of the *Shash Hazari* consisted of 47 villages in *pargana* Bhansari.”³⁰ M.O. Carter has reproduced a translated version of these grants. Jafri thinks that these extensive grants were confirmed and continued by the later authorities – the Mughal rulers and the Nazims of Bengal.³¹

Khan Jahan Ali Mosque and Tomb, also known as Shait Gunbad Mosque, in the district of Bagerhat has been inscribed in the World Heritage List of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in 1985. Till early 1980's, this mosque was a *waqf alal aulad* under the *waqf* Administrator,

-
- 25 Mohammad Yusuf Siddiq, *Arabic and Persian Inscriptions*, (Bangladesh National Museum: Dhaka 2016), p. 25
- 26 Abdul Karim, *History and Heritage of Muslim Bengal* (in Bengali), (Bangla Academy: Dhaka 1994), p. 234
- 27 Syed Hadiuzzaman, *Educational Development in Colonial Bengal, 1857-1947*, unpublished PhD. thesis submitted to National University of Bangladesh, (Gazipur 2012), p. 40; Ashiara Khatun, “History of Mahi Santosh”, in Editorial Board (ed.), *History of Varendra Region, Rajshahi Division: History-Heritage*, (in Bangla), (Rajshahi 1998), pp. 385-386
- 28 Abdul Karim gives this date. See: [http://en.banglapedia.org/index.php?title=Shaikh_Jalaluddin_Tabrizi_\(R\)](http://en.banglapedia.org/index.php?title=Shaikh_Jalaluddin_Tabrizi_(R)) (accessed on 29/05/2018)
- 29 Saiyid Zaheer Husain Jafri, “*Ma'afidars* and the Institutions of Learning in Colonial Bengal”, *Vidyasagar University Journal of History* (ISSN 2321-0834), volume V, (Midnapur 2016-2017), pp. 59-70
- 30 Saiyid Zaheer Husain Jafri, “*Ma'afidars* and the Institutions of Learning in Colonial Bengal”, pp. 59-70
- 31 Saiyid Zaheer Husain Jafri, “*Ma'afidars* and the Institutions of Learning in Colonial Bengal”, pp. 59-70

Dhaka. Afterwards it was acquired by the government and its possession was handed over to the Department of Archaeology in 1986. According to the official records of the Department of Archaeology, the owners of this mosque – Munshi Muminuddin and others – transferred its ownership with two bighas, eight cuttas, six chitaks of land to the government by an agreement (agreement no. 11) in May, 1916. The Gazette notification of the protection of this mosque was discovered but the original agreement could not be detected.³² It is learnt that still some portions of the adjoining areas of this mosque is under the *waqf* Administrator of Dhaka district, and Bagerhat Sadar Upazila is working as its *mutawalli*. It is further to be mentioned that Shait Gunbad Mosque stands under the mauza of Sundarghona Bajeapti, Shait Gunbad Union Parishad, and Bagerhat Sadar Upazila.

About the tomb of Khan Jahan (1459), the present author observes in another place that the owners of this tomb (Ahadali Faqir *et. al.*) transferred the ownership of this building to the government by an agreement (agreement no. 12) with three bighas, four cuttas and twelve chitaks of land on June 15, 1916. According to this agreement, government took the responsibility of maintaining the building. Though the gazette notification is available, the original agreement could not be traced anywhere.³³ It is further to be mentioned that there is still a building adjacent to the tomb of Khan Jahan which is known as *langarkhana* (alms house). It indicates that people were fed in this *dargah* like other *khanqahs* elsewhere. Thus, it can also be traced whether this tomb complex was a *waqf* property or *khanqah*.

According to an inscription of the time of Sultan Shamsuddin Yousuf Shah (reigned from 1474 to 1481) found at village Tilapara under Mokhtarapur Pargana, Sylhet, Bangladesh, a mosque was established by his minister Malik Sikanderon in 1479. This mosque had *waqf* land. It has been cursed in the inscription that anyone who grabs or embezzles *waqf* of this mosque will be a *mardud* (Arabic **مردود**), meaning refused, abject, despised or repugnant.³⁴ According to another dictionary, it means a reprobate, an apostate, a scoundrel.³⁵ It has also been inscribed in the same

32 Khoundkar Alamgir, *Sultanate Architecture of Bengal: An Analysis of Architectural and Decorative Elements*, (Kaveri Books: New Delhi 2011), p. 80

33 Khoundkar Alamgir, *Sultanate Architecture of Bengal: An Analysis of Architectural and Decorative Elements*, p. 108

34 F. Steingass, *Arabic English Dictionary*.

35 *Popular Oxford Dictionary Urdu-English*, Oriental Book Society, Lahore; see also: Duncan Forbes, *Dictionary Hindustani & English*, (London 1886); F. Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary*, (New Delhi 1981). This word is originally Arabic, but used in the same meaning in Persian and Urdu languages.

inscription that anyone who grabs or embezzles this *waqf* will be cursed as an offspring of an ass in the afterlife.³⁶

Sultan Alauddin Husain Shah, during his reign (1493-1519), allotted many rent-free lands to religious leaders.³⁷ He probably donated 47 villages as *la-kheraj* lands for the maintenance of the *dargah* of Hazrat Nur Qutbul Alam. The document of this *waqf* became decayed and Shah Shuja gave another document validating the former one. The date of the deed of Shah Shuja is the 22nd regnal year of Shah Jahan (1648). Bagha endowment was bestowed by two separate Royal *sanads* or grants bearing the autograph of Emperor Shah Jahan. These *sanads* are dated back to 1640-1646. Conditions laid down in the *sanads* indicate that Bagha endowment was intended for the mosque, the *madrasah* and other charitable purposes. According to another land grant, a mosque, a *madrasah* and other religious institutions were maintained out of the income of 2,750 bighas of land at Mahi Santosh, Naogaon district, Bangladesh even in the 19th century.³⁸ At Navagram, Sirajganj, Bangladesh, there was an endowment from the time of Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud Shah (1435-1459). This *waqf* of Navagram has been described in an inscription bearing accession no. 3,171 at present preserved in the Varendra Research Museum, Rajshahi. The builder of this mosque, Ulugh Rahim Khan, paid stipends to the teachers and students.³⁹

Muslims from all over the Muslim world, even from Delhi, used to come to Bengal for various reasons. The rulers of Bengal enrolled some of them in the government service or granted them rent-free lands.⁴⁰ The policy of giving property in charity to the Muslims of noble origin, religious leaders and men of piety in the Sultanate period continued in the Mughal period.⁴¹ According to Khondkar Fuzli Rubbi, “freehold tenements bestowed by the kings of Gaur on holy persons, learned men and religious guides, were designated *Aimas*; while similar grants made by the Mughal Emperors were termed *Madadi ma’ash*.”⁴²

36 Syed Murtaza Ali, *History of Hazrat Shah Jalal and Sylhet* (in Bangla), (A. B. Book Stores: Dacca 1970), p. 262

37 Khondkar Fuzli Rubbi, *The Origin of the Muslims of Bengal Being a Translation of “Haqiqate Musalman-i-Bangalah”*, (Thacker, Spink and Co.: Calcutta 1895), p. 31

38 Syed Hadiuzzaman, *Educational Development in Colonial Bengal, 1857-1947*, unpublished Ph. D. thesis submitted to National University of Bangladesh, (Gazipur 2012), p. 41

39 Abdul Karim, *Corpus of the Arabic and Persian Inscriptions of Bengal*, (Asiatic Society of Bangladesh: Dhaka 1992), p. 128.

40 Khondkar Fuzli Rubbi, *The Origin of the Muslims of Bengal Being a Translation of “Haqiqate Musalman-i-Bangalah”*, p. 46

41 Khondkar Fuzli Rubbi, *The Origin of the Muslims of Bengal Being a Translation of “Haqiqate Musalman-i-Bangalah”*, pp. 37, 49

42 Khondkar Fuzli Rubbi, *The Origin of the Muslims of Bengal Being a Translation of “Haqiqate Musalman-i-Bangalah”*, p. 66

Some words may be said about the shrine of Pir Bahram Saqqa of Burdwan, West Bengal. Emperor Jahangir donated the village of Faqirpur *madad-i-ma'ash* to the shrine of Pir Bahram Saqqa, and Shaikh Bakhtyar was appointed *mutawalli* in 1606. The British resumed the endowed property, and it was included in the Zamindari of the Maharaja of Burdwan. The Maharaja paid Rs. 41, two annas and 4 pices to the *mutawalli* of the *Dargah* of Pir Bahram.

In addition, one can refer to *Itihas*,⁴³ a study by Muhammad Mahmudur Rahman (Bahlul) on the endowment inscription of the tomb of Bahram Saqqa. In his article Mahmud quotes a portion of a verse from the Holy Qur'an used in the inscription of Pir Bahram Saqqa: "...and giveth wealth, for love of Him, to kinsfolk and to orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and to those who ask, and to set slaves free."⁴⁴ Mahmud erroneously opines that it is a verse about *Zakat*. But it is actually a verse for all sorts of charity. It enjoins Muslims for any kind of charitable work. The first two categories of expenditure here are not included in the heads of *Zakat*.⁴⁵ If necessary, establishment of mosques, *maktabs* and *madrasahs* becomes obligatory (*Farz*) for Muslims.⁴⁶ Mahmud has also opined that tombs are maintained and run by public donations and for this reason people of Burdwan were encouraged to give their wealth in charity by this verse. It may be stated that the Emperor himself donated land towards charity for the maintenance of this tomb as a religious duty and this verse is supporting the religiosity of the endowment or *waqf*.

At the time of Emperor Jahangir in the early seventeenth century, a *madrasah* was established in Sylhet town by Moulana Ziauddin. The Mughal Emperors donated rent-free lands for it; and according to government records, Mufti Azim was the grantee of this land. Students of both Hindu and Muslim communities studied here. It has been mentioned in *Foster's Memoirs* that this *madrasah* existed in 1827. In 1836, Persian language was replaced by English in courts; and as a result, this *madrasah*

43 Mohammad Mahmudur Rahman, "Use of Qur'an in the Mughal inscriptions of Bengal", (in Bangla) *Itihas* (Journal of Bangladesh History Congress), 45th year, (December), 2011, p. 74

44 *The Holy Qur'an*, Surah al-Baqara: 177 (<http://tanzil.net/#trans/en.pickthall/2:177>). See also: Abdul Karim, *Corpus of the Arabic and Persian Inscriptions of Bengal*, (Asiatic Society of Bangladesh: Dhaka 1992), pp. 25-27

45 There are eight categories of recipients of Zakat: *Fuqaraa* - 'the needy or poor', the *Masakeen* - 'the destitute', *Amil' Zakah* - 'the alms, collectors', *Fi sabi 'Lillah* - 'in the path of God', *Gharimun* - 'people burdened with debt', *Ibn as Sabil* - 'the wayfarers', *Riqab* - 'people in bondage or slavery' and *Mu'Allaf* - 'those who have inclined towards Islam'.

46 Mufti Muhammad Shafi, *Holy Qur'amul Karim (Tafsir Ma'areful Qur'an)*, (in Bangla) Saudi Arabia. pp. 88-89

was closed in 1837.⁴⁷ Furthermore, Muhammad Mohor Ali observes that at the time of the advent of the Mughals in Bengal:

[T]here were many undeserving persons enjoying pensions and *madad-i-ma'ash* lands (livelihood grants in lands). Mir Jumla confirmed in their *jagirs* the virtuous '*aimadars* and stipend-holders and others who had received farmans from the emperor; but with regard to the others he cancelled, on the advice of Qazi Rizwi, the Sadr, their pensions and *madad-i-ma'ash* in the crown-lands and *jagirs*.⁴⁸

The grantees took their case to Shaista Khan, the next governor of Bengal, with the latter making some arrangements favourable and sympathetic to the former.⁴⁹ This fact has been corroborated by Jagadish Narayan Sarkar.⁵⁰

It has been mentioned that Lalbagh of Dhaka, presently known as the Lalbagh Fort, was originally a *waqf* property of Mughal subadar Shaista Khan,⁵¹ who ruled Bengal for long 24 years, from 1664 to 1668 with a break for one year. "Even in 1810, the descendants of Shaista Khan were still proprietors of the Lalbagh."⁵² By a deed signed on November 2, 1844, the heirs and representatives of Shaista Khan transferred this property on a permanent lease to a local committee. After scrutinizing the Persian text and the English translation, Moulvi Hakim Habibur Rahman observes that the last alleged Will of Amirul Umara Nawab Shaista Khan claimed to be existed in Dhaka during his time is of spurious nature and "a deliberate fabrication forged by designing persons to serve their own ulterior purposes."⁵³ But Hakim's statement does not validate or nullify the deed of 1844 mentioned above. Hakim also urges further research about the alleged last Will of Shaista Khan.

The Bara Katra in Dhaka was also a *Waqf* property of Sultan Shah Shuja whose rule existed from 1616 to 1661. Abdul Karim observes, "The wordings of the inscription show that it was a *Waqfnamah* or endowment deed."⁵⁴ A Persian inscription informs

47 Syed Murtaza Ali, *History of Hazrat Shah Jalal and Sylhet* (in Bangla), (A. B. Book Stores: Dacca 1970), p. 203

48 Muhammad Mohor Ali, *History of the Muslims of Bengal*, vol. 1A, Muslim Rule in Bengal (600-1170/1203-1757), (Imam Muhammad ibne Saud Islamic University: Riyadh 1985), p. 383

49 Muhammad Mohor Ali, *History of the Muslims of Bengal*, vol. 1A, p. 428

50 Jagadish Narayan Sarkar, *The Life of Mir Jumla*, (Rajesh Publications: New Delhi 1979), pp. 272-73

51 Syed Muhammad Taifoor, *Glimpses of Old Dhaka*, published by Lulu Bilquis Banu *et.al.*, (Dacca 1956), pp. 157-58

52 Sir Jadunath Sarkar (ed.), *The History of Bengal, vol. II (1200 A. D. 1757 A.D.)*, (B. R. Publishing Corporation: Delhi 2017), p. 390

53 Moulvi Hakim Habibur Rahman, *Question of the Genuineness of Shaista Khan's alleged Will*, (the paper was read in the Nagpur Session of the Historical Record Commission held in 1928), Dhaka, p.13

54 Abdul Karim, *Corpus of the Arabic and Persian Inscriptions of Bengal*, (Asiatic Society of Bangladesh: Dhaka 1992), p. 444.

that “this building of auspicious structure, together with 22 shops adjoining subject to the condition that the administrators of the *waqf*, should spend the income arising from their rent in repairs and in relief of the poor. If a poor man alights here, no rent should be charged from him for his lodging.”⁵⁵ Figure 3 in this article is to be noted in this regard.

Qadam Rasul building at Narayanganj near Dhaka is a pre-Mughal one. It has been learnt from records preserved in the Dhaka Collectorate that Shah Shuja assigned 80 bighas of land for the upkeep of this shrine.⁵⁶ Taifoor observes that the mosque of Khwaja Amber of Dhaka was maintained out of the income of the *waqf* Estate grant of Sir Khwaja Ahsanullah Bahadur (1846 -1901).⁵⁷ Taifoor further observes that Nawab Sir Abdul Ghani (1813-1896) of Dhaka gave a huge sum of money for the construction of the roof of the mosque of Farrukhsiyar (August 20, 1685-April 19, 1719), adjacent to the southern gate of the Lalbagh Fort.⁵⁸

Muhammad Yusuf Siddiq’s observation is worth noting: “The District Collectorate Record Rooms of Bengal, particularly in Noakhali, Sylhet and Chittagong still preserve a number of Mughal land deeds (sanad), mostly Persian, that refer to the establishment of such mosques with endowment lands granted by local administrative authorities”.⁵⁹ He is also of the opinion that an inscription belonging to a religious edifice from Sylhet dated 1588 is a *waqf* inscription (the exact provenance of this inscription is not known) and the builder Fath Khan Masnad Ali was a Mughal ally.⁶⁰ It is also worth noting that Isa Khan, in 1599,⁶¹ took the title of *Masnad-i-Ala* after the battle of 1584. The title *Masnad-i-Ali* (or *Ala*) was mainly a title of the Afghan allies. The author thinks that Fath Khan *Masnad Ali* might have been an Afghan ally, rather than a Mughal ally.

It has been learnt from Nayabari mosque inscription (1595), somewhere near the village of Nayabari at Aurangabad Bazar, Manikganj that Haji Bhagal Khan donated (1591) five hundred *bighas* (1 bigha = 1,600 square yards) of land for Dohar mosque, Dhaka and 500 *bighas* of land for the mosque of Burarchar, Sylhet. The total land

55 Sir Jadunath Sarkar (ed.), *The History of Bengal, vol. II (1200 A. D. 1757 A.D.)*, pp. 389-390

56 Syed Muhammad Taifoor, *Glimpses of Old Dhaka*, p. 47

57 Syed Muhammad Taifoor, *Glimpses of Old Dhaka*, p. 168

58 Syed Muhammad Taifoor, *Glimpses of Old Dhaka*, p. 179

59 Mohammad Yusuf Siddiq, *Historical and Cultural Aspects of the Islamic Inscriptions of Bengal: A Reflective Study of Some New Epigraphic Discoveries*, (ICSBA: Dhaka 2009), p. 62

60 Mohammad Yusuf Siddiq, *Arabic and Persian Inscriptions*, (Bangladesh National Museum: Dacca 2016), pp. 49-51

61 Gazi Md. Mizanur Rahman, “Bhati Region”, *Banglapedia*, (accessed on 14/06/2018)

given in *waqf* for the two mosques was 1,000 *bighas* (32,000 square yards).⁶² Anyone who would embezzle land of these mosques had been cursed. Yusuf Siddiq considers this inscription as the earliest one about *Madad-i-Ma'ash* land granted in Bengal during the Mughal period.⁶³ But it has been mentioned before that Emperor Jahangir donated the village of Faqirpur as *madad-i-ma'ash* to the shrine of Pir Bahram Saqqa in 1562.

Beginning from the early days, misuse of *waqf* properties is a common phenomenon worldwide. As one scholar notes, “the inscriptions are also eloquent about abuses, embezzlements, and exploitation of the wakfs [*waqf*].”⁶⁴ Bengal was no exception to this. It has been mentioned above that some imprecatory sentences have been found in some *awqaf* inscriptions of Bengal. Though these have been used with pious intention, use of indecent, filthy and offensive words as well as unauthentic *Hadiths* (traditions of the Prophet) is not the proper way to safeguard property (especially religious) from embezzlement.⁶⁵ An author of *Encyclopaedia of Islam* observes that “all this could not permanently prevent embezzlement and frittering away of the wakf estates”.⁶⁶

***Waqf* in Bengal: Colonial Period**

During the early British period, the former system of maintaining free education from primary to the highest level was continued. Educational institutions possessed private and rent-free land-grants as before. Three *madrasahs* of Pandua had *la-kheraj* lands from the Muslim period, and during the Company rule they existed only in name. Bohar and Changariya *madrasahs* of Burdwan district, West Bengal had also *la-kheraj* lands. Many teachers of Birbhum, West Bengal had *la-kheraj* lands. Bagha mosque and *madrasah*, Rajshahi, Bangladesh have been described before. Most of the property had become personal property of the heirs of the founder at the time of Adam in the nineteenth century. At the time of Adam a *madrasah* of Chittagong and one *madrasah* attached to the shrine of Shah Jalal, Sylhet possessed *la-kheraj* lands.⁶⁷

62 Mohammad Yusuf Siddiq, *Arabic and Persian Inscriptions*, (Bangladesh National Museum: Dacca 2016), pp. 55-64

63 Mohammad Yusuf Siddiq, *Arabic and Persian Inscriptions*, p. 60

64 See “Wakf” in M. TH. HOUTSMA *et. al.* (ed.), *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Vol. IV, (London and Leyden 1934).

65 Md. Abdur Rob, “Some Imprecatory and Benedictory Verses in Muslim *Waqf* (endowment) Inscriptions of Bengal”, in Enamul Haque (ed.), *Journal of Bengal Art*, vol. 20, (Dhaka 2015), pp. 343-348

66 See “Wakf” in M. TH. HOUTSMA *et. al.* (ed.), *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Vol. IV.

67 Muhammad Abdur Rahim, *History of the Muslims of Bengal, 1757-1947* (Bangla), (Ahmed Publishing House: Dhaka 1994), p. 100

Syed Muhammad Taifoor observes that Sir George Campbell, the then Lt. Governor of Bengal, established one Arabic-Persian *Madrasah* in Dhaka in 1874. Moulana Obeidullah-el-Obeidy Bahrul-Ulum (1832-1885) was the first Superintendent and he continued there till his death.⁶⁸ The government liberally contributed towards the maintenance of this institution and allotted quite a large sum of money towards its building from the endowment of Haji Muhammad Mohsin. The then Lt. Governor Sir Ashley Eden laid its foundation on July, 29, 1877. After 1956, this institution came to be known as Government Muslim High School.⁶⁹ In the late nineteenth century, Syed Bakhth Majumdar established Syediya *madrasah* at Majumdari in Sylhet, and its expenditure was borne by the Majumdari *waqf* Estate.⁷⁰

The Company rulers confiscated *la-kheraj* lands attached to various institutions. Adam criticized this policy. Before the British occupation of the country, about one fourth of the total land of Bengal was *la-kheraj* or *waqf*. Income from these lands was dedicated for education and other pious works. There were various types of rent-free lands. Muslims depended mainly on oral words and they were not careful about written documents or *sanads* regarding their proprietary right. The British government doubted authenticity of many of the rent-free lands. Therefore, Warren Hastings, the first de facto Governor-General of India from 1773 to 1785) attempted to scrutinize their validity but his attempts failed.⁷¹ Between 1764 and 1768, some *la-kheraj* lands were resumed in Chittagong, though some were confirmed. Some forgery about *Sanads* was also detected.⁷² Lord Cornwallis, Governor-General of India from 1786 to 1793, ordered that all deeds of rent-free lands should be registered in the collector's office within a year. But many *la-kherajdars* living in the rural areas were unaware of the government decision, and as a result they failed to comply. "Their holdings were resumed, although they had valid titles for many generations".⁷³ Some documents were lost, some worm-eaten or stolen.

From 1793 to 1818, a series of laws was enacted about these *la-kheraj* lands. Some of them are: Bengal Revenue-Free Lands (Non-Badshahi Grants) Regulation, 1793;

68 Wakil Ahmed, "Suhrawardy, Ubaidullah al Ubaidi", *Banglapedia*, Dhaka: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh.

69 Syed Muhammad Taifoor, *Glimpses of Old Dhaka*, published by Lulu Bilquis Banu *et.al.*, (Dacca 1956), p. 26

70 Syed Murtaza Ali, *History of Hazrat Shah Jalal and Sylhet* (in Bangla), (A. B. Book Stores: Dacca 1970), p. 206

71 Muhammad Abdur Rahim, *The Muslim Society and Politics in Bengal A. D. 1757-1947*, (Dacca 1978), p. 38

72 Alamgir Muhammad Sirajuddin, *The Revenue Administration of the East India Company in Chittagong 1761-1785*, (University of Chittagong: Chittagong 1971), pp. 40-42

73 Muhammad Abdur Rahim, *The Muslim Society and Politics in Bengal A. D. 1757-1947*, p. 41

Regulations XIX of 1793 (“A Regulation re-enacting rules passed on 1 December 1790 for trying the validity of the titles of persons holding or claiming to hold a right to lands exempted from the payment of revenue to government”);⁷⁴ and the Bengal Revenue-Free Lands (Badshahi Grants) Regulation, XXXVII of 1793 (“A Regulation for trying the validity of titles of persons holding or claiming a right to hold Altamgha, Jagir and other lands exempt from the payment of public revenue”)⁷⁵; Regulation VIII of 1811, Regulation XI and XIII of 1817; Bengal Land-Revenue Assessment (Resumed Lands) Regulations, 1819; the Bengal Revenue-Free Lands Regulation, 1825 (Bengal Regulation 14 of 1825); and Resumption Laws of 1828 (Regulation III of 1828).⁷⁶

The impact of these regulations needs to be noted. As W. W. Hunter observes, “Hundreds of ancient families were ruined, and the educational system of the Musalmans, which was almost entirely maintained by rent-free grants; received its death-blow”.⁷⁷ “Because of the unrest and apprehension among the people, the proceedings were however closed by the Government of Bengal in 1852.”⁷⁸ Azizur Rahman Mallick observes that the “resumption proceedings, however, enriched some. The pleaders who conducted the proceedings, the witnesses who gave false testimony, the informers who carried tales to resumption officers were all enriched but the Muslim upper and middle classes were impoverished and ‘Ruined’.”⁷⁹

It is also important to refer to Haji Muhammad Mohsin’s *waqf* Estate. Zaynab, a lady of Hooghly, West Bengal inherited much property from her first husband, Agha Motahar Husain. Agha Motahar came to Delhi from Persia. During the time of Nawab Murshid Quli Khan (c. 1660-1727), he got a *jagir* and came to Hooghly. Agha Motahar and Zaynab had a daughter named Monnujan. After the death of Agha Motahar, Zaynab was re-married to Haji Faizullah and they had a son named Mohsin (1732-1812). Hence Monnujan is the step sister of Mohsin. Zaynab inherited much property in Hooghly, Jessore, Murshidabad and Nadia from her first husband, Agha Motahar; and Monnujan inherited the same from her mother, Zaynab. Mirza Salahuddin was the husband of Monnujan. As Monnujan was a widow, Mohsin got

74 A. Aspinall, *Cornwallis in Bengal*, (Uppal Publishing House: New Delhi 1987), p. 96

75 A. Aspinall, *Cornwallis in Bengal*, p. 97

76 Syed Hadiuzzaman, *Educational Development in Colonial Bengal, 1857-1947*, unpublished Ph. D. thesis submitted to National University, Bangladesh, (Gazipur, 2012), pp. 76-78. A. R. Mallick, *British Policy and the Muslims of Bengal (1757-1856)*, second edition, (Bangla Academy: Dacca 1977), pp. 41-43

77 W. W. Hunter, *The Indian Musalmans*, (Indological Book House: Delhi 1969), p. 177

78 Muhammad Abdur Rahim, *The Muslim Society and Politics in Bengal A. D. 1757-1947*, p. 42

79 A. R. Mallick, *British Policy and the Muslims of Bengal (1757 – 1856)*, second edition, (Bangla Academy: Dacca 1977), p. 53

all the property of Monnujan after her death in 1803. He was a great philanthropist and donated his inherited property by a trust in 1806.

Having learnt from government sources that the *mutawallis* (trustees) were “entirely devoid of any principle of justice and integrity”, the government considered that the abuses in the management of the Trust Funds were “unauthorized, unwarrantable and profligate”. The government removed the *mutawallis* from office in 1817 and their relatives and connections were declared disqualified to hold the office. The Government then took the responsibility of the Estate of Haji Muhammad Mohsin. The displaced *Mutawalli*, Wasik Ali, appealed to the *Sadar Diwani Adalat* but ultimately the government won. Necessary allotment was made for the *Imambara*, a *mutawalli* was appointed by the government and a Trust Fund was constituted with the remainder.⁸⁰ Subsequently income from the *waqf* property of Haji Muhammad Mohsin was utilised in a way not mentioned in his *waqf* deed. Non-Muslims, instead of Muslims were benefitted from this *waqf*. W. W. Hunter mentioned it as pitiful and pathetic.⁸¹

An observation about Syed Ameer Ali suggests that he tried his best to persuade the government to utilize the *waqf* properties for the education of the Muslims, but his efforts failed. The Waqf Bill of 1913 credited to Mr. M. A. Jinnah, owes its inception to Syed Ameer Ali.⁸²

Also, one can take note of the *waqf* properties of the Nawabs of Dhaka. Khwaja Alimullah (?-1854) made a *waqf* of the property of the Khwaja family of Dhaka. He gave it a collective and indivisible family concern and Nawab Abdul Ghani became the first *mutawalli* of this estate on May 8, 1846 by a *waqfnama* (*Waqf alal aulad*). Afterwards, it came to be known as *Dhanbibī Waqf Property* (Four Properties of Ancestors). Nawab Khwaja Ahsanullah (1846-1901) was the next *mutawalli* of the property of the Khwaja family,⁸³ and he used to spend money for philanthropic grounds.⁸⁴

80 A. R. Mallick, *British Policy and the Muslims of Bengal (1757 – 1856)*, second edition, pp. 293-295

81 Muhammad Abdur Rahim, *History of the Muslims of Bengal, 1757-1947* (Bangla), (Ahmed Publishing House: Dhaka 1994), p. 109

82 Muhammad Abdur Rahim, *The Muslim Society and Politics in Bengal 1757-1947*, (the University of Dacca: Dacca, 1978), p. 182; *The Dawn*, September 26, 2009. See: <https://www.dawn.com/news/843477> (accessed on 01/06/2018). See also: S. M. Ikram, *Indian Muslims and Partition of India*, (Atlantic Publishers and Distributors: New Delhi 1992), p. 357

83 Md. Alamgir, *Unpublished History of Muslim Bengal: Contribution of Dhaka Nawab Family* (in Bangla), (Khoshroz Kitab Mahal: Dhaka 2014), pp. 11-13.

84 Md. Alamgir, *Unpublished History of Muslim Bengal: Contribution of Dhaka Nawab Family* (in Bangla), p. 19

Furthermore, *Waqf* Estate of Karatia, Tangail, Bangladesh deserves attention. It is learnt from *Banlapedia* that:

[O]n 9 Poush 1227 BS Sadat Ali Khan and his wife Jamrudunnesa Khanam jointly executed a deed wherein the entire property was divided into two halves, the first half being preserved for maintenance of the family expenditure and the other half being donated as waqf property meant for religious and charitable purposes. In the deed, provision was made for appointment of a mutawalli for the maintenance of the waqf property. After the death of Sadat Ali Khan Panni, his son Hafez Mahmud Ali Khan Panni was the mutawalli of the waqf property. After the death of Hafez Mahmud Ali Khan Panni (1896), conflict and litigation ensued between his son Wajed Ali Khan Panni (Chand Mia) and Wajed's grandmother Jamrudunnesa Khanam as two claimants to the post of mutawalli. Wajed Ali Khan Panni won over to administer the estate as mutawalli."⁸⁵

***Waqf* in Bengal: Pakistan and Bangladesh Period**

After the partition of India in 1947, many *waqf* properties in Bangladesh (the then East Pakistan) were acquired by the government or taken illegally by land grabbers. The grantees of these estates were not in a position to safeguard their rights and interest because they could not produce the *waqf* deeds. These deeds were in Calcutta.

The *Daily Independent* reports that that the *Ainuddin Haidar and Faizunnesa Waqf Estate (Waqf lillah)* authority had 12,500 acres of land and other properties.⁸⁶ Ainuddin Haidar endowed about 8,000 acres of land; and after a few years of his death, his wife donated rest of the property (total 12,500 acres of land). After the partition of India in 1947, this massive *waqf* estate became completely dispossessed.⁸⁷

Also, Shahzadi Begum Waqf Estate is worth noting. This *Waqf* Estate "is comprised of vast swathes of land in Gazipur, Narayanganj and Munshiganj districts. This 72,000-acre estate is the biggest endowed estate in Bangladesh. The entire estate, however, is now under illegal occupation."⁸⁸ After the death of Aga Muhammad Hossain of Bagdessa under the then Sadar thana of Dhaka, his widow Shahzadi Begum contributed this land for *Shahzadi Begum Waqf Estate* on September 6, 1895.⁸⁹

85 http://en.banlapedia.org/index.php?title=Karatia_Zamindari (Accessed on 12/06/2018)

86 Md Shahnawaz Khan Chandan, *Waqf – a Forgotten Legacy*, <https://www.thedailystar.net/star-weekend/waqf-forgotten-legacy-1538539> (accessed on 15/05/18)

87 Md Shahnawaz Khan Chandan, *Waqf – a Forgotten Legacy*.

88 Md Shahnawaz Khan Chandan, *Waqf – a Forgotten Legacy*.

89 Anisur Rahman Khan, "Waqf property in capital 85,000 acres of land grabbed", *The Independent*, (Dhaka, 2 March, 2016): <http://www.theindependentbd.com/printversion/details/35829> (accessed on 7 June, 2018)

Waqf office sources report that the following offices are now on *Awqaf* lands: Bangabhaban to Chankharpul in Dhaka, Mirpur and Savar areas, which are now under government possession. Many government offices such as the Bangladesh Secretariat, the Railway Bhaban, the Police Headquarters, the Usmani Memorial Auditorium, the Nagar Bhaban (Dhaka South City Corporation), and the Savar Cantonment. Many land developers, successors to the *Waqifs* and individuals, have also grabbed portions of these lands.⁹⁰

The Waqf Ordinance, 1962, an exhaustive law regulating *waqf*, is now in practice in Bangladesh. There is a department established under this Ordinance. The Head of the Department is known as *Waqf* Administrator and the name of the Department is *Office of the Waqf Administrator* under the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

Conclusion

From the very beginning of Muslim rule in Bengal, the rulers realized that they could not rely on sheer arms. Therefore, they built mosques, *madrasahs* and *khanqahs* to create a Muslim society, and *waqf* is very much associated with these institutions. These institutions possessed rent-free or *Awqaf* lands. The *mutawallis* or *waqifs* (grantees/administrators) of these properties were responsible for the maintenance of these institutions. Indeed, these institutions were managed and conducted by *sufis* and *ulamas* (religious scholars) who had much influence in the society. The article has exposed how the society was influenced by these institutions. Teachers and students of *madrasahs* were supported by these *awqaf* lands, and *khanqahs* had alms houses attached to them. Income from *awqaf* lands and sectors of its expenditure was a major factor working as a bond in the society. Pious men of noble birth, men of piety and religious scholars were supported and honoured in this way. As they were benefited by the Crown, they were helpful to them and they played a positive role towards maintaining social stability, equilibrium and consolidation. Even non-Muslims were given *Madad-i-Ma'ash* lands with a view to attaining their allegiance to the Crown and consolidation of the imperial rule. The poor and helpless persons were fed and treated by the charity of these institutions. After the resumption of *awqaf* lands by the British, conditions of the Bengali Muslims became pitiable and pathetic. Hence, the history of *awqaf* properties may be considered as an important source of socio-cultural, economic and religious history of Bengal.

90 Mohosinul Karim, "No trace of 85,000 acres of two waqf estates in city", *The Daily Observer*, (Dhaka, 2 March, 2016): <http://www.observerbd.com/2016/03/02/139376.php> (accessed on 7 June, 2018)

Illustrations

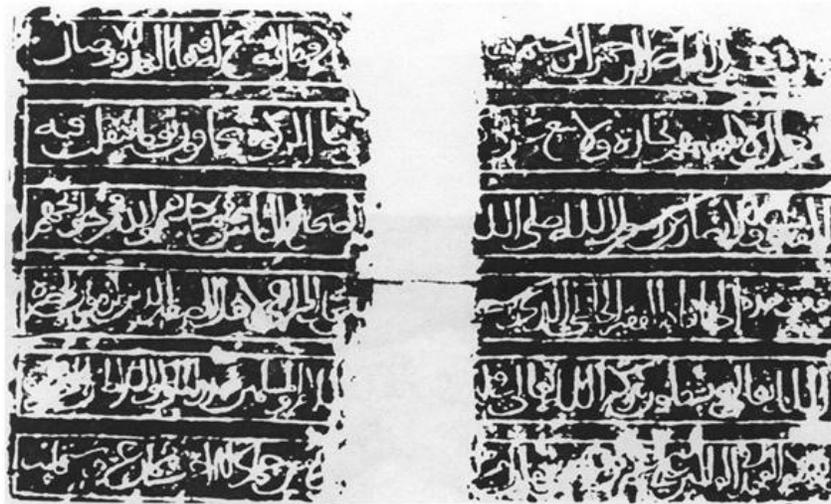


Figure 1: Sian inscription, Birbhum, West Bengal 1221) of Sultan Ghiyas uddin Iwad Khilji (1212-1227) and it belonged to a *Khanqah* for *ahl-al-suffa* or people belonging to the Sufi order. (Courtesy: Muhammad Yusuf Siddiq)

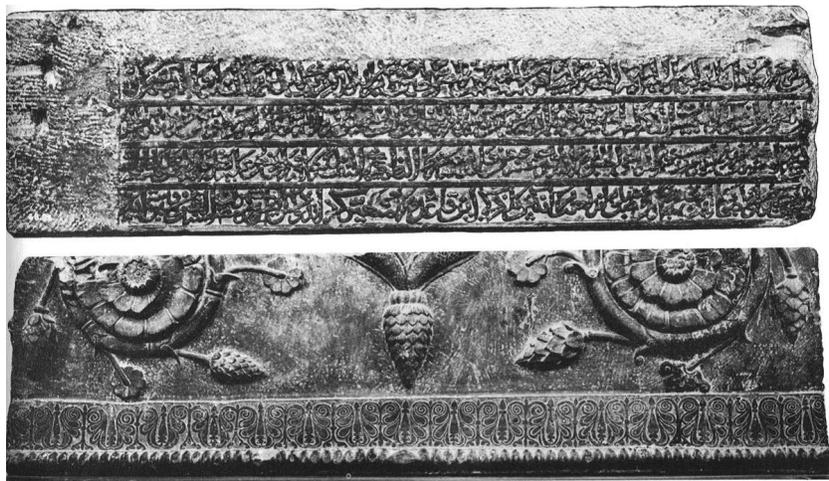


Figure 2: Sitalmat inscription, Naogaon, Bangladesh of Sultan Mughisuddin Yuzbak (1250-1257) refers to a sacred building (*khanqah*). (Courtesy: Muhammad Yusuf Siddiq)



Figure 3: Inscription of Bara Katra, Dhaka. It was a *waqf* property of Sultan Shah Shuja (1616-1661). (Courtesy: Muhammad Yusuf Siddiq)

EVOLUTION OF ACADEMIC DISCIPLINES IN BENGAL, 1857-1921: NATURE AND DRIVING FACTORS

Md. Mahmud Alam*

Abstract

Traditional education prevailing in India, especially in Bengal, was gradually replaced by Western education. It took a long time when the University of Calcutta took the lead. In this study, the author exposes the historical perspective, the nature and driving forces behind the evolution of academic disciplines in Bengal from 1857 to 1921. The author employs qualitative and quantitative research approaches. The paper is informative, descriptive, and also based on historical mode of analysis. The analysis also has been done by using statistical software, namely, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). It is found that subjects under four faculties of the university were mostly of theoretical nature. From 1857 to 1921, considering the productivity and practicability, slight development occurred with the line of imperial power's imposition. But the people of Bengal wanted that the university would be a popular institution instead of an aristocratic one. The time mentioned, 'productive' and 'practical' disciplines lack behind the demand mainly due to inadequate local pressure and imperial strain implementation. Moreover, components of a discipline were not apparent in all the existing ones. So the dreams of Bengal people for higher education with vibrant academic disciplines were not fulfilled till 1921 though it saw a positive turn after 1921.

Key words: Evolution, academic discipline, higher education, dynamic phenomenon, University of Calcutta, nature, driving factor.

Introduction

After the Battle of Palashi, changes became inexorable in every sphere of Indian life, especially in Bengal. The middle class of Bengal, intellectually vigilant, socially progressive and politically ambitious, could feel the next course of initiatives planned and materialized by the English East India Company, the winning side of the battle. Having felt Bengali elites' pulse, the Company tried to shape the Indian mind to take full advantage of running the administration. In a set stage, people of the liberal mind gradually took part in Western educational initiatives. The Muslims were indifferent to the Company's initiatives due to bigotry and prejudice. During the Muslim rule in India, education interplayed with belief. The then education system was good enough for them but not to the standard of University level. At first, the Company and later

* Lecturer, History and Civilization Discipline, Khulna University, Khulna.

the British ruler took the responsibility of disseminating modern western type of education in Bengal and India. After some scrutiny and experiments, the British imperial government decided to establish three universities in India – one at Calcutta in Bengal, and the two in Bombay and Madras. All the three universities were ‘affiliating universities’; they were to teach no students; all teaching was to be done through the affiliated colleges. The models of the three universities were based on that of the University of London. Though the University of London became a teaching university in 1858, the University of Calcutta remained an affiliating university. Ultimately the university could not satisfy the people of Bengal, because the specialised academic disciplines did not evolve as per peoples’ expectation till 1921.

This article seeks to explore the following issues: first, the phenomena that lead to the establishment of the University of Calcutta; second, the evolutionary process of academic disciplines from a historical perspective; third, the driving factors those were associated with the evolution of academic disciplines in that university; fourth and finally, the nature of the change of academic disciplines.

This study is anchored mainly on a qualitative and partly quantitative method. It has collected data both from primary and secondary sources. The primary sources are comprised of “Classified Replies to the Commissioners” Question 7’, Minutes of the Syndicate, and University Calendar. The secondary sources are comprised of books and articles. Data analysis has been done based on informative and descriptive technique, and historical mode of analysis.¹ “Classified Replies to the Commissioners” Question 7’² has been analyzed to explore the driving factors

-
- 1 Historical method is an approach in the research study to the past history or to recount some aspect of past life. Among the two (perspective and retrospective), perspective approach has been chosen here. It is the study of the events from the past towards present. In analysis and interpretation, three steps (Identification and definition of the problem; Collection of data and Criticism of data) have been followed respectively. Then findings have been presented according to the research objectives, either topically or chronologically. Source: Yogesh Kumar Singh, *Fundamental of Research Methodology and Statistics* (New Delhi: New Age International (P) Ltd, 2006), pp. 112-119. It needs to mention that, due to the nature of data and research objectives, significant parts of qualitative data has been quantified, then it has been analysed statistically.
 - 2 Twenty three open ended questions had been thrown by the Calcutta University Commission, 1917-19 for grabbing the diverse opinions of the respondents about several specific issues. Question no 7 was about ‘University Courses.’ In response to that question 197 individuals and 10 institutions responded spontaneously in a scholarly way. Source: Classified replies to the commissioners’ question no. 7, *Calcutta University Commission, 1917-19 Report* (In the subsequent entries it will be cited as CUC Report), Vol. IX, pp. 411-499.

associated with the evolution of academic disciplines in the University of Calcutta. Analysis has been done by using statistical software, namely, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Before analyzing, coding and classification have been done carefully. Some descriptive statistics measurements – frequency distributions and cross-tabulation – have been done in analyzing the data.

The article is divided into five sections. The first section looks into the definition of academic discipline. The second section makes the classification of academic discipline. The third section digs into the creation of the opportunity of higher education in Bengal. The fourth section inquires into the establishment of the University of Calcutta and the evolution of its academic discipline. The fifth section delves into the driving factors behind the evolution of academic disciplines at the University of Calcutta alongside the nature of its evolution.

Defining Academic Discipline

The term *discipline* first was used in the thirteenth century to refer to chastisement of a religious nature, such as self-flagellation. A more specific use of the term in relation to areas of teaching and scientific inquiry occurs in English from mid 17th century and onwards.³ Therefore, the concept of a *discipline* in education is not a simple one. Given the diversity of the nature of disciplines, it is not easy to come up with a precise definition of it. The term *discipline* may be used for many things at the same time and it is necessary to examine the various meanings of the word.⁴ For a convenient understanding of the concept, we can look into the etymological meaning of the term *discipline*.

Etymological meaning: The term *discipline* comes from *discipulus*, the Latin word for *pupil*, which also provided the source of the word *disciple* (albeit by way of a Late Latin sense-shift to “a follower of Jesus Christ in his lifetime”). From the several meanings of *discipline* deal with study, governing one’s behavior, and instruction, one might assume that the word’s first meaning in English had to do with education. In fact, the earliest known use of *discipline* appears to be punishment-related.⁵

3 Björn Hammarfelt, “*Discipline*”, <https://www.isko.org/cyclo/discipline>, accessed on 24th January 2020.

4 Armin Krishnan, “What are Academic Disciplines? Some observations on the Disciplinarity vs. Interdisciplinarity debate,” *NCRM Working Paper Series 03/09* (Southampton: University of Southampton, 2009), p. 7.

5 Merriam-Webster Dictionary, “*The Root and Meanings of discipline*,” <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/discipline>, accessed on 12th October 2017.

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary provides the under mentioned definition of discipline as noun and verb. As noun, *discipline* means: i) the practice of training people to obey rules or a code of behaviour, using punishment to correct disobedience; ii) the controlled behaviour resulting from such training; iii) activity that provides mental or physical training; iii) a system of rules of conduct; and iv) a branch of knowledge, typically one studied in higher education. As verb, *discipline* means: i) training (someone) to obey rules or a code of behaviour, using punishment to correct disobedience; ii) punishing or rebuking formally for an offence; and iii) train oneself to do something in a controlled and habitual way.⁶

Cambridge Dictionary defines the word *discipline* both as a noun and a verb in the following ways.⁷ As noun, its meaning involves: i) training that makes people more willing to obey or more able to control themselves, often in the form of rules, and punishments if these are broken, or the behaviour produced by this training; ii) the ability to control yourself or other people, even in difficult situations; and iii) a particular area of study, especially a subject studied at a college or university. As verb, it is meant: i) to punish someone; and ii) to teach someone to behave in a controlled way.

Definitions in different dictionaries provide a whole range of fairly diverse meanings of the term. But in this article, the term *discipline* has been used particularly as a noun to refer a branch of knowledge studied at a college or university in higher education. The Calcutta University Senate decided to use the term "branch" while making decisions on the "subjects" to be taught as specialized areas of knowledge.⁸

At this point, it is pertinent to move on scholarly definition of discipline. Scholars of different backgrounds offer different definitions of *discipline*. Some of the definitions of the term are discussed below: For Peter Gordon and Denis Lawton, "Academic disciplines is an area of human knowledge, e.g. history, geography, physics or geology, which has been developed, often in universities, as a separate subject area for purposes of teaching and research. A discipline would be associated with learned journals, professional associations and perhaps written or unwritten codes of practice."⁹ On a similar tone, for Dogan, discipline is inherited from the

6 *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, 8th edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), s. v. "Discipline."

7 *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, 4th edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), s. v. "Discipline."

8 University of Calcutta, *Minutes for the Year 1857*, (Calcutta: The Calcutta University, The Baptist Mission Press, 1860), p. 30.

9 Peter Gordon and Denis Lawton, *Dictionary of British Education*, First published (London: WOBURN PRESS, 2003), p. 6.

vocabulary of nineteenth century and is understood as a branch of instruction for the transmission of knowledge and as a convenient mapping of academic administration.¹⁰

Janice M. Beyer and Thomas M. Lodahl claim that academic discipline is an arena of knowledge in which faculty members are fully trained and socialized; carry out tasks of teaching, research, and administration; and produce research and educational output. Disciplinary fields are considered separate and distinctive cultures that exert varying influence on scholarly behaviors as well as on the structure of higher education. Disciplines have conscious goals, which are often synonymous with the goals of the departments and schools that comprise an institutional operating unit.¹¹ For M. S. Yadav and T.K.S Lakshmi, discipline is a specific area of study – a branch of knowledge recognized by a certain distinctness it reveals in its substance and methodology. A discipline is a deliberate differentiation of the knowledge base with a specific perspective in order to gain better understanding of the phenomenon under focus. According to them, the knowledge base represents the sum total of the human understanding of environment. Disciplines are derived from the knowledge base but get formulated in recognizable differentiated forms of both substance and methodology due to further specialization, diversification and differentiation.¹²

Based on the aforementioned scholarly definitions, it can be said that disciplines are often identified with taught subjects, but not every subject taught at university can be called a discipline. A discipline is more than a subject taught in an academic setting. In fact, there is a whole list of yardstick and features which indicate whether a subject is indeed a distinct discipline. A general list of characteristics would include: i) disciplines have a particular object of research; ii) disciplines have a body of accumulated professional knowledge referring to their objective of research; iii) disciplines have theories and concepts that can organize the accumulated specialist knowledge effectively; iv) disciplines use specific terminologies or a specific technical language adjusted to their research object; v) disciplines have developed specific research methods according to their specific research requirements; and vi)

10 M. Dogan, "Specialization and Recombination of Specialties in the social sciences," in Neil. J. Smelser & Paul B. Baltes, ed., *International Encyclopedia of Social and Behavioral Science* (London: Pergamon-Elsevier Science, 2000), pp. 14851-14855.

11 Janice M. Beyer and Thomas M. Lodahl, "A Comparative Study of Patterns of Influence in United States and English Universities," *Administrative Science Quarterly*. Vol. 21, No. 1, 1976, pp. 104-129.

12 M.S. Yadav and T.K.S Lakshmi, "Education: its disciplinary identity," *Journal of Indian Education*, 1995, pp. 2-5.

disciplines must have some institutional manifestation in the form of subjects taught at universities or colleges.

Not all disciplines have all of the aforementioned six characteristics. Generally, it can be said that the more these characteristics a discipline holds, the more likely it becomes that a certain field of academic enquiry is a recognized discipline capable of reproducing itself and building upon a growing body of own scholarship. If a discipline is called 'studies', it typically indicates that the discipline is a relatively new origin (after World War II) and may not have one or more of the above characteristics. This is usually a lack of theorization or a lack of specific methodology, which typically weakens the status of the research field. These 'studies' disciplines can aim to remain "undisciplined" as in women's studies in the 1970s, or they can engage in the process of their disciplinarization and institutionalization.¹³

Classification of Academic Disciplines

Classification is a common phenomenon in bringing order to a chaotic knowledge world. Different scholars classify disciplines from diverse standpoints. Some judge theoretical base, some consider technical needs and some mull over both. So there is no consensus on how academic disciplines should be classified. More generally, the proper criteria for organizing knowledge into disciplines are also open to argument. The following outline is provided as an overview of and contemporary point to academic disciplines.¹⁴

Arts: It hinges on two core areas – Performing Arts, and Visual Arts. Performing Arts covers Music, Dance, Television, Theatre and Film. The performing arts is a course of human impression that is generally predisposed by culture and which in turn helps to modify culture. The performing arts are a substantial expression of the inner human artistic desire. Visual Arts contains Fine Arts and Applied Arts. Visual art includes all the fine arts as well as new media and contemporary forms of expression such as Assemblage, Collage, Conceptual, Installation and Performance art, as well as Photography and film-based forms like Video Art and Animation, or any combination thereof.

Humanities: “The humanities—together with the study of languages, literature, history, jurisprudence, philosophy, comparative religion, ethics, and the arts—are

13 Armin Krishnan, *Op. cit.*, p. 10.

14 *Outline of Academic Disciplines*, <http://www.basicknowledge101.com/pdf/academic-discipline-soutline.pdf>, accessed on 15th October 2017.

disciplines of reminiscence and thoughts, telling us where we have been and helping us envision where we are going.”¹⁵

Social science: Any discipline or branch of science that deals with human behavior in its social and cultural aspects. The social sciences include cultural or social anthropology, sociology, social psychology, political science, and economics. The study of comparative law may also be regarded as a part of the social sciences, although it is ordinarily studied in schools of law rather than in departments or schools containing most of the other social sciences.¹⁶

Natural Science: It is a major branch of science that endeavours to make obvious, and forecast, nature’s phenomena based on empirical evidence. In natural science, hypothesis must be verified scientifically to be regarded as scientific conjecture. Validity, accuracy, and collective and social mechanisms ensuring quality control – such as peer review and reiteration of results – are amongst the criteria and techniques used for this purpose. Natural Science can be divided into 6 main branches: Astronomy and Space Science, Biological and Life Sciences, Chemistry, Earth Sciences, Marine Science and Oceanography Meteorology, Physics and Mathematics.

Applied Science: It is a process of knowledge and enquiry in which scientific values and theories are applied in realistic and practical ways. Applied science can be divided into four main branches: Agriculture and Agricultural Science, Computer Science, Engineering and Technology, and Medical and Health Science.

Ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle classifies the disciplines in a very simple and easy way that can meet the chaotic of disciplinarity. He divides discipline into following three classes – theoretical, productive, and practical – based on its purpose:¹⁷

Theoretical: The purpose of a theoretical discipline is the pursuit of truth through contemplation; its purpose is the attainment of knowledge for its own sake.¹⁸

15 *The Heart of the Matter* (Report of the American Academy of Arts & Science’s Commission on the Humanities and Social Sciences to the U. S. Congress in June 2013), <http://4humanities.org/2014/12/what-are-the-humanities/>, accessed on 11th October 2017.

16 Robert A. Nisbet, “Social Science,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/social-science>, Accessed on 7th October 2017.

17 M. K. Smith, ‘Aristotle on knowledge’, *The Encyclopaedia of Informal Education*. <http://infed.org/mobi/aristotle-on-knowledge/>, accessed on 14th October 2017.

18 Wilfred Carr and Stephen Kemmis, *Becoming Critical: Education, Knowledge, and Action Research*, First published (Melbourne: Deakin University Press, 1986), p. 32.

Theoretical disciplines – such as mathematics and the natural sciences – entails investigators who are able to reason logically, to deal with abstractions, to construct comprehensive theories; and the matter of study must possess at least relative intransience and homogeneity.¹⁹

Productive: The purpose of the productive sciences is to produce something; their function is the making of some object. If the form of thinking associated with theoretical activities was contemplative, the kind of knowledge and enquiry involved in productive disciplines was “making” action. Thus, the making action is not simply seen as mechanical, but also as concerning some originality in an artistic sagacity. This making action is dependent upon the exercising of skill and it always results from the idea, reflection or model of what the artisan wants to make.²⁰ The productive disciplines – such as engineering, fine arts, and applied arts – require material that is even more malleable and skills that are more specialized and distinctive.

Practical: The practical disciplines are those sciences which deal with ethical and political life; their purpose is to create practical wisdom and knowledge. They involve the making of judgments and human interaction. The form of reasoning associated with the practical sciences is praxis or informed, committed and dedicated action. The main practical disciplines for Aristotle were ethics, politics, and education.²¹

Creation of the Opportunity of Higher Education in Bengal

The introduction of English as a commercial medium began in Bengal in the 1630s when the British East India Company established its trading stations in Hooghly and Bassore. As a language, English got a strong foundation when Shah Shuja granted the company a firman, i.e. royal decree or patent, in 1651 as it was issued in Persian accompanied by its English translation.²² Over the next two hundred years, the Indian education was shaped mainly by the company. For their commercial need and promoting Christian knowledge, they initiated English education infrequently based on personal endeavor and circumstances. The wide-ranging effort was taken by setting English school near to the company’s trading centres for the European settlers and their intermediaries. The first English institution was established in Kolkata in

19 *Ibid.*, pp. 32-37.

20 Smith, M. K. (1999). ‘Aristotle on knowledge’, *The Encyclopaedia of Informal Education*, <http://infed.org/mobi/aristotle-on-knowledge/>, accessed on 3rd October 2017.

21 Wilfred Carr and Stephen Kemmis, *Op. cit.*, pp. 32-38.

22 Niaz Zaman, “English,” *Banglapedia*, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, <http://en.banglapedia.org/index.php?title=English>, accessed on 7th November 2017.

1731 by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. The missionary agents and devoted missionary individuals were very eager to establish English schools round the company's commanding areas all over the Bengal. Two distinct schools of thoughts were obviously seen in Indian education between 1765-1813 – one was Hastings-Duncan thoughts, and the other was Grant-Wilberforce and Missionary thought. In the field of religion and education, the first group advocated the company's "Benevolent Neutrality". On the other hand, the second group believed that the best education for the Indians was to teach them English and the principles of the Christian religion, and argued that the work should be left entirely to the missionaries.²³ Regarding renewal of the East India Company's Charter in 1813, British parliament passed East India Company Act 1813 (also known as the Charter Act 1813) on 21st July 1813 in which definition and objects of the Indian educational policy got state attention but in a quite obscure way. Section 13 and 43 of the Act directed some points but some misunderstanding were prevalent regarding the medium of instructions and related terminology about it. Debate between two the groups was continuing both in India and in Britain.

Meanwhile, a group of "moderately secular people"²⁴ – who desired that Indian people should benefit from the cultivation of western science – established Hindu College in Calcutta where they offered higher education in European subjects and Indian subjects.²⁵ There were all arrangements for teaching "natural and experimental philosophy, chemistry, mathematics, algebra, Tytler's Elements of General History, Russell's Modern Europe, with Milton and Shakespeare." But after six years, due to financial difficulties, David Hare and some others sought help from the government. The latter responded positively and proffered its aid upon specific reasonable terms and conditions. This was the first official participation of the British in providing

23 Syed Nurullah and J. P. Naik, *History of Education in India during the British Period* (Bombay: Macmillan & Company Limited, 1943), pp. 57-62.

24 In answer to the question of the origin of the Hindu College, Sir Charles Trevelyan informed the House of Lords that the Hindoo College was established by "The Hindoo gentlemen of Calcutta," "assisted by Mr. David Hare, and Sir Edward Hyde East, cited in Rajesh Kochhar, "Hindoo College Calcutta Revisited: Its Pre-History and The Role of Rammohun Roy," *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 2011, Vol. 72, Part-I, 2011, pp. 841-862. But Trevelyan did not clarify who were "The Hindoo gentlemen of Calcutta." They were affluent, prominent, unorthodox in the religious field, and moderately liberal. Among them, Rammohun Roy, Buddibath Mookerjee, Radhakanta Deb, Rasamay Dutt and Rajaguru are well-known. On the other hand, except Hare and East, Dr. Horace Hayman Wilson, Rev. Thomas Truebody Thomason, Henry Louis Vivian Derozio, and Robert May are prominent among the Europeans.

25 Walter Ruegg ed., *A History of the University in Europe*, Vol. III, Universities in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries (1800-1945), First published (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 198-199.

western-style higher education in India.²⁶ That was an epoch-making event not only in Bengal but also in India. Following the Hindu college, some other institutions were established throughout India, but none of them offered degrees.²⁷ In the middle of the century, there were about 25 colleges or seminaries in India. It was manifested that people of all corners of India have great demand for higher education, including modern scientific and European subjects. Indian mercantile and professional classes with a moderately secular mind were ready to form a distinctive modern class in Indian society. The British parliament discussed the types of education the government of India and the provincial government should have patronized. Indian public opinion in the modern sector was warmly in favor of instruction in contemporary European subjects.²⁸ Among the British, “Orientalists” were challenged by the “Anglicists” due to some reasons: the traditional educational system was losing its appeal to the people gradually. The elite of the British administration supported English education. Defending the “Orientalists”, T. B. Macaulay wrote, “I have never found one among them who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia.”²⁹ It had far-reaching vibration and thenceforth, colonial policy in India became the promotion of European science and literature through the English language medium. Shortly afterward, Lord Bentinck’s Resolution of March 7, 1835 appeared to close the controversy. It was decided that the language of the government business would be English instead of Persian. That decision changed the whole scenario; thirst for higher education in European flavor became stronger among the Indians irrespective of class and religions. On October 10, 1844, Sir H. Hardinge

26 Syed Mahmood, *A History of English Education in India 1781-1893* (Aligarh: M.A.-O. College, 1895), p. 26.

27 Before establishing Calcutta University (along with two other universities in Madras and Bombay), no institution in India possessed the degree-giving power. Institutions like Hindu College taught learners but did not offer specific degrees, which they can use to enter into the learned professions and to occupy the higher offices of government. In 1827 the founders ‘Serampore College’ obtained from the King of Denmark a Royal Charter empowering the College to confer Degrees of rank and honour; and the continuance of this power was guaranteed to the College by the Treaty of Purchase in 1845 when Serampore was transferred to the British. As a matter of fact, the privilege was never exercised till 1915, when several Degrees of Bachelor of Divinity was conferred. For ordinary studies, Serampore is affiliated to the Calcutta University and will probably confine itself to the conferment of theological Degrees. Source: Henry Sharp, “The Development of Indian Universities,” *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, APRIL 17, 1925, Vol. 73, No. 3778 (April 17, 1925), pp. 517-18.

28 Walter Ruegg ed., *A History of the University in Europe*, Vol. III, p. 199.

29 Thomas Babington Macaulay, *Minutes on Indian Education*, 2nd February 1835 (London: Victoria Institutions, 1835), p. 6, https://archive.org/details/Minutes_201311, accessed on 2nd January 2019.

issued a resolution to throw the public service to the qualified young men from various educational institutions.³⁰ This encouragement has been received by the people of the liberal mind with the most tremendous gratitude. This paved the way for the British to disseminate English education with a triumphant march.

Meanwhile, the Council of Education started public services examination, and the missionary institutions objected to this manner of selection.³¹ In order to avoid the criticism of the missionary institutions and to strengthen the government policy of encouraging western education, the first proposal to establish a university at Calcutta was made in 1845 by the Council of Education but the Court of Directors rejected it on the ground that it was premature.³² However, this setback was temporary because Sir Charles Wood, issued a dispatch on educational policy that declared,

...the time is now arrived for the establishment of universities in India, which may encourage a regular and liberal course of education by conferring academical degrees as evidences of attainments in the different branches of art and science, and by adding marks of honour for those who may desire to complete for honorary distinction.³³

Establishment of the University of Calcutta and the Evolution of its Academic Disciplines

Charles Wood's dispatch has been described as 'the Magna Charta of English Education in India' or as 'the Intellectual Charter of India'.³⁴ Following the instant

-
- 30 J. A. Richey, *Selections from Educational Records, Part II, 1840-1859* (Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, 1922), p. 67; H. M. Queen Victoria, Arthur Christopher Benson and Viscount Esher eds., *The Letters of Queen Victoria*, Vol. II, No. 1844-1853 (London: John Murray, 1908), pp. 28-29.
- 31 This proceeding (by Hardinge) gave rise to a considerable and warm controversy at the time, as it was contended that it was impossible of attainment by any of the advanced students of private institutions (including Missionary Institutions), for various reasons, and virtually gave a monopoly of the higher appointments to the State colleges. Probably, the Missionary would fear regarding the future of their pupils. Source: Frederic J. Mouat, T. H. Thornton, John Yeats and J. F. D. Donnelly, "The Origin, Progress, and Influence of Universities in India," *The Journal of the Society of Arts*, March 23, 1888, Vol. 36, No. 1844 (March 23, 1888), pp. 487-89.
- 32 M. Sridhar and Sunita Mishra eds., *Language Policy and Education in India: Documents, contexts and debates*, First published (London: Routledge, 2017), p. 45; *General Report on Public Instruction In the Lower Provinces of the Bengal Presidency for 1844-45* (Calcutta: The Council of Education, 1845), pp. 9-11; *General Report on Public Instruction In the Lower Provinces of the Bengal Presidency for 1845-46* (Calcutta: The Council of Education, 1846), pp. 10-13.
- 33 Despatch from the Court of Directors of the East India Company, to the Governor General of India in Council, -- (No. 49, fated the 19th July 1854), section 24 in J. A. Richey, *Selections from Educational Records, Part II, 1840-1859* (Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, India, 1922), p. 371.
- 34 R. J. Moore, "The Composition of Wood's Education Despatch," *The English Historical Review*, Jan., 1965, Vol. 80, No. 314 (Jan., 1965), p. 70.

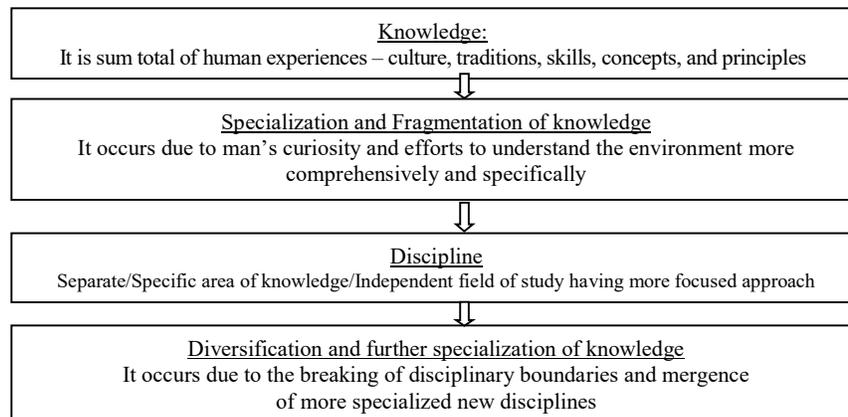
outcome of this dispatch, an act to establish and incorporate a university at Calcutta was passed by the Legislative Council and received the Governor-General's assent on January 24, 1857.³⁵ Thus, the Calcutta University started its journey with four faculties. They were the Faculty of Arts, the Faculty of Law, the Faculty of Medicine, and the Faculty of Civil Engineering.³⁶ Generally, the Faculty of Arts gave Bachelor of Arts, popularly known as B.A. pass degree. But in terms of academic discipline, that is, the area in which "Honors" degree was given, the Faculty of Arts was comprised five departments. They were Honors in Languages, Honors in History, Honors in Mathematics and Natural Philosophy, Honors in Natural History and the Physical Sciences, and Honors in the Mental and Moral Sciences. The degree of Master of Arts was also given in the above mentioned five branches. The Faculty of law offered Licentiate in Law (LL), and Bachelor of Law (BL). Licentiate in Medicine and Surgery (L Mand S), Licentiate in Medicine and Surgery Honor (LMS Honor), and Doctor of Medicine (MD) degrees were offered by the Faculty of Medicine. The Faculty of Civil Engineering offered the degree of Licentiate in Civil Engineering. After several years, Master of Arts, Honors in Law, Doctor of Law, Bachelor in Medicine, Honors in Medicine, Bachelor in Civil Engineering, Honors in Civil Engineering, Masters in Civil Engineering degrees were added to the existing degrees.³⁷

-
- 35 In its preamble the purpose of the university has been mentioned clearly, ... "in the pursuit of a regular and liberal course of education, it has been determined to establish an University at Calcutta for the purpose of ascertaining, by means of examination, the persons who have acquired proficiency in different branches of Literature, Science, and Arts, and of rewarding them by Academical Degrees as evidence of their respective attainments, and marks the honor proportioned thereunto; and whereas, for effectuating the purposes aforesaid, it is expedient that such University should be incorporated." *ACT OF INCORPORATION, ACT NO. II OF 1857*, Passed on the 24th January, 1857, AN ACT TO ESTABLISH AND INCORPORATE AN UNIVERSITY AT CALCUTTA, *The Calcutta University Calendar, 1858-59* (Calcutta: The Calcutta University, Bishop's College Press, 1858), p. 17; Cited in Md. Mahmud Alam, "Restructuring the University Curriculum after 1920s in Bengal: Nexus between Peoples' Desire and Socio-economic Condition," *Research Journal, Islamier Ithash o Sanskriti Bibhag*, Rajshahi Bishwa Biddaloy, Dwitiyo Sonkha (October 2020), p. 41.
- 36 *University of Calcutta, Minutes for the Year 1857, Minutes of the Faculty of Arts, Appendix, Regulations in Arts*, The 1st of August, 1857 (Calcutta: The Calcutta University, The Baptist Mission Press, 1860), p. 95. Acts for two other universities also passed at the same time, The Bombay and the Madras University. It is mentioned that academic examinations were held for the first time under Calcutta University in 1858. Bachelor of Arts (Pass Examination), Bachelor of Laws (Pass Examination), Bachelor of Laws (Honor Examination), Licentiate in Medicine and Surgery (First Examination) and Entrance examination were held in that first occasion. *The Calcutta University Calendar, 1858-59* (Calcutta: Bishop's College Press, 1858), pp. 90-222; Cited in Alam, "Restructuring the University Curriculum after 1920s in Bengal," p. 41.
- 37 *The Calcutta University Calendar, 1867-68* (Calcutta: Thacker, Spink and Co., Publishers to the Calcutta University, 1867), pp. 35-74.

It is very difficult to map out the evolutionary history of different disciplines. Specification, specialization, compartmentalization of knowledge is as old as evolution of human being itself. Human know-how and its characteristics generally depend on time, needs, environment and political situation. Yadav and Lakshmi note that the development of disciplines is a needed aspect of social evolution. Disciplines evolve and distinguish continuously just as the human effort continues to comprehend the environment in an increasingly insightful and inclusive manner. The evolution of a discipline begins with knowledge which develops through social understanding or dealings between human minds and the environment in the form of a personalized experience of a particular cultural setting which might have typical connotations and gets translated into universally applicable terms.³⁸

Stichweh observe that the “nineteenth century established real disciplinary communication systems. Since then the discipline has functioned as a unit of structure formation in the social system of science, in systems of higher education, as a subject domain for teaching and learning in schools, and finally as the designation of occupational and professional roles.”³⁹ If a linear progression toward today’s academic disciplines can be found, it would begin with the specialized attention of scholars, focusing upon a fragment of human experience. Arti tries to explain the evolutionary history of disciplines in the following way:⁴⁰

Figure 1: Arti’s evolutionary history of disciplines



38 M.S. Yadav and T.K.S Lakshmi, “Education: its disciplinary identity,” *Op. cit.*, p. 3.

39 R. Stichweh, “History of Scientific Disciplines,” in Neil. J. Smelser and Paul B. Baltes, ed., *International Encyclopedia of Social and Behavioral Science* (London: Pergamon-Elsevier Science, 2000), pp. 13727-13731; Cited in Alam, “Restructuring the University Curriculum after 1920s in Bengal,” p. 42.

40 Arti, “*Development of Education as A Discipline-An Analytical Study*” (Ph.D diss., Institute of Advanced Studies in Education, University of Lucknow, 2014), pp. 82-83.

If we consider academic know-how endeavor from knowledge learning canvass, we should discuss academic disciplinarity from various paradigmatic angles. The perspectives on disciplines can be divided into six categories: i) the philosophical perspective (unity and plurality; ii) the anthropological perspective (culture and tribes; iii) the sociological perspective (professionalization and division of labour); iv) the historical perspective (evolution and discontinuity; v) the management perspective (market and organization; and vi) the educational perspective (teaching and learning).⁴¹ Considering aspects and backdrop of initializing western education in Bengal, especially in higher education, evolution of academic discipline in Bengal should be analyzed from historical perspective that will cover the educational reforms endeavor as well as many other things that had shaded light on the then knowledge learning process and innovation.

It is found that, three years after the establishment of the university, name of the Faculty of Civil Engineering was changed into the name of “The Faculty of Engineering”.⁴² Since then, the university performed related things under the name of the Faculty of Engineering. Since the inception, the university had four Faculties; but in 1906, it opened one more faculty – “The Faculty of Science”. It is important that in Charles Wood’s despatch emphasize was given on dissemination of the knowledge of science but Calcutta University had no separate faculty in the name of Science. Though subjects related to science were taught in the affiliated colleges, the University had to do everything for their development. Hence one may wonder why the Faculty of Science was not established at the Calcutta University from the very beginning of the University. The answer may lie here: the aim of the British policy of colonial education was to cut off Indian education from the heart of national life. They actually wanted to create a group of real intermediaries.⁴³ In the subsequent years, Macaulay’s policy was followed but in a refined way so that people could be made satisfied.

41 Armin Krishnan, *Op. cit.*, pp. 12-46.

42 *University of Calcutta, Minutes for the Year 1861-62*, Minutes of the Syndicate for the Year 1861, No.4, The 13th April (Calcutta: The Calcutta University, The Baptist Mission Press, 1862), p. 48.

43 In his minute, Macaulay wrote, “We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population.” Thomas Babington Macaulay, *Minutes on Indian Education*, 2nd February 1835, p. 12.

Till the establishment of the University of Dhaka, the Calcutta University opened no other faculty except for very few departments – such as Vernacular Language, and Ancient Indian History. All the traditional subjects were taught in the affiliated colleges. The expectations and demands among the Indian educationists, thinkers, and political leaders were changing rapidly but could not be manifested due to colonial administration.

The Calcutta University Commission was appointed by the Government of India in 1917 to enquire into the condition and prospects of the University of Calcutta and to consider the question of a constructive policy in relation to the question it presented. In order to discern the response and reactions of general people, and also to know the attitude, analysis and suggestions from educational community of India, the Commission disclosed the questions which they needed. Among the twenty three questions, there was a question related to academic disciplines. That was questions no. 7. If we analyze the classified replies to the commissioners' questions, we can detect that the respondents were not satisfied with the condition of the University. Question 7 was about the "University courses" which had three parts. General introduction of the respondents were as follows:

Table 1: Respondent types and their religious affiliation

Respondent types	Religion	Frequency	Cumulative percent
Non- Individual	Institutions	10	4.8
Individual	Muslim	17	13.0
	Hindu	145	83.1
	Christian	35	100.0
Total		207	

Source: *CUC, Report*, Vol. IX, Classified replies to the commissioners' question no. 7, pp. 411-499.

As many as 207 persons and institutions replied to the aforementioned question. Among them, 10 were institutions and 197 were individuals. Among the individuals, 17 were Muslims, 145 were Hindus, and 35 were Christians. Interestingly, there was only one female among the respondents. The respondents were all over from India although a large number of them were from Bengal. They were educated, socially established and fully enthusiastic with educational reforms for the Indian people. Some of them were the members of the Imperial Legislative Council; members of different Provincial Legislative Council; vakils (lawyers) of different level of courts, university professors, college principals, lecturers of colleges and universities, Indian Civil Officers (ICS), university fellows, Schools or College inspectors, pleaders,

members of social, cultural and political organizations, engineers, and school head masters. They had some kind of relation with educational management. The question was open-ended, and the respondents answered in the text (written) format. In this article, the researcher has tried to analyze through coding in SPSS.

The First part of the question was: Should the University provide or recognize approved courses of instruction in applied science and technology – including departments such as engineering, agriculture and commercial science, – as requirements for degrees or diplomas, or both? Should the University also provide facilities for research in these branches of knowledge? In reply to the first portion of this question, 186 of the total respondents said that the University should provide or recognize approved courses of instruction in applied science and technology; 16 answered negatively, and only 6 did not give any answer. But in giving explanation, respondents expressed their opinion in a quite different ways. It can be presented in the following way.

Table 2: Opinion about providing or recognizing approved courses of instruction in applied science and technology by respondent types and religion

Respondent types	Religion	Only provide approved courses	Only recognize approved courses	Provide and recognize approved courses	Answer not given	Total
Non-Individual	Institutions	1	2	6	1	10
Individual	Muslim	1	1	14	1	17
	Hindu	35	20	79	11	145
	Christian	6	3	18	9	35
	Total	43 (20.8%)	26 (12.5%)	117 (56.5%)	22 (10.6%)	207 (100%)

[N.B. Percentages and totals are based on respondents. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1]

Table 2 shows that 117 respondents opined for both providing and recognizing, 43 opined for only providing, and 26 for only recognizing the above mentioned courses. Generally, only 6 did not give exact answer. No replies were received from 22 respondents who went on explaining details. During the period of responses, most of the respondents did not consider the difference between “provide” and “recognize”. On the other hand, respondents who extricated between “provide” and “recognize” perhaps took a side of providing or recognizing. To provide degrees or diploma is more difficult than to recognize approved courses of instruction. But providing or

recognizing has somewhat relation to research, which is important element of academic disciplines. Expressing views on this matter, respondents tried to clarify the meaning of applied science and technology. A respondent wrote, "I think the University should provide and recognize approved courses of instruction in applied science and chemistry and technology (including such departments as engineering, agriculture and commercial science) as qualifying both for degrees and diplomas."⁴⁴ Another respondent replied, "I think that the University should open some branches of applied science and technology which will in time help to tap the economic resources of the country and which will provide many people with suitable professions."⁴⁵

In reply to the second portion of this question, 28 respondents did not give any answer and rest of the respondents expressed their opinion in support of giving degrees or diplomas, or both. It can be depicted in the following way.

Table 3: Opinion about providing or recognizing approved courses of instruction in applied science and technology as qualifying for degrees or diplomas, or both

Respondent types	Religion	Qualifying for only degrees	Qualifying for only diplomas	Qualifying for both degrees & diplomas	Degrees or Diplomas	Answer not given	Total
Non-Individual	Institutions	0	1	8	0	1	10
Individual	Muslim	0	0	15	1	1	17
	Hindu	9	2	116	2	17	145
	Christian	2	1	22	0	10	35
	Total	11 (53%)	4 (19%)	161 (778%)	3 (15%)	28 (135%)	207 (100%)

[N.B. Percentages and totals are based on respondents. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1]

Table 3 displays that 161 respondents wanted the University of Calcutta should had provided or recognized approved courses of instruction in applied science and technology as qualifying for both degrees and diplomas, 11 of them were of the opinion of qualifying only for degrees, only 4 supported qualifying for only diplomas and 3 supported for degrees or diplomas. It is clear that most of the respondents wanted the opportunity in both forms which any of could be availed by the students. Very few people of advanced class thought that it should had been through degrees only, and an ignorable number of respondents supported for only diplomas. Because they thought that university has a limited scope of research. On the other hand, a few

44 Maulvi Khairuddin Ahmed, *CUC 1917-19 Report*, Vol. IX, p. 411.

45 Manmathanath Banerji, *Ibid.*, p. 418.

respondents argued for providing or recognizing degrees, because university has to spend a lot of resources for research. In-fact knowledge learning canvass is a factor here, because it is not expected that a university gives only diplomas. Actually most of the respondents heard the pulsing rhythm of Indian people who had thirst for knowledge in applied science and technology.

In response to the third portion of this question, most of the respondents told the University should also provide facilities for research in these branches of knowledge in applied science and technology (including such departments as engineering, agriculture and commercial science).

Table 4: Opinion about providing facilities for research in these branches of knowledge in applied science and technology

Respondent types	Religion	Yes	No	Answer not given	Total
Non-Individual	Institutions	9	0	1	10
Individual	Muslim	12	1	4	17
	Hindu	107	6	32	145
	Christian	17	2	16	35
	Total	145 (70.0%)	9 (4.3%)	53 (25.6%)	207 (100%)

[N.B. Percentages and totals are based on respondents]

In reference to Table 4, it is important to notice that almost half (45.7%) of the respondents from Christian religion did not give answer to this question and less than half (48.6%) of them said in the affirmative to this matter. On the other hand, 90% institutions showed support for providing research facilities in this regard. It means institutions were ready for conducting research in applied science and technology but opportunity was very scarce at that time. But without research, it is not possible to add substantial knowledge to the existing one. Only Indian people wholeheartedly wanted the University to be a centre of learning and advancement of knowledge. Asutosh Mookerjee, the first Indian Vice-Chancellor asserted that, "...No University can rightly be regarded as fulfilling the purpose of its existence, unless it affords to be the best of its students, adequate encouragement to carry on research, and unless it enables intellectual power whenever detected, to exercise its highest functions."⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Convocation Addresses of Asutosh Mookerjee, March 2, 1904, *University of Calcutta: Convocation Addresses*, Vol. IV, 1917-1914 (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1914), p. 1080.

After that, research works had been undertaken by the University in different formats. If we scrutinize the initiative, we can see University Professorship, University Lectureship, University Readership, University Fellowship, Research Studentships, Scholarships, Prizes, and Medals had been initiated to somewhat large scale before the year of 1921.⁴⁷

Provision of adopting a University Professorship had been granted by the University Senate on July 10, 1969, and Herbert Cowel was elected the first Tagore Law professor on the same date. But before 1921, only eleven departments got those facilities. First University Lectureship had been granted by the Senate on November 23, 1918 that was named as Adharchandra Mookerjee Lectureship, and only seven lectureships had been materialized before 1921. Chapter X of the University Regulations enjoyed the provision of special courses of lectures on particular subjects, mainly intended for the benefit of graduates engaged in research work or of those who wish to prosecute special studies. The lecturers on such courses are called University Readers. From 1908, the provision had been enacted but in a very limited scale. The travelling fellowship had been allocated successively to the all the faculty from 1914. The fellows had to investigate educational methods abroad, preferably in Great Britain and in the Continental European seats of learning, in their special branches of study. All the initiatives had been taken for the benefit of doing research though initiatives had not been extended to a large scale.

The second part of this question was: “Do you think that higher technological training should, or should not, be segregated from other branches of higher education?” In answer to this question a significant number of respondents did not give answer in this regard. Respondents’ thinking about it has been analyzed below:

Table 5: Thinking about higher technological training

Respondent types	Religion	Yes	No	Answer not given	Total
Non-Individual	Institutions	1	6	3	10
Individual	Muslim	8	6	3	17
	Hindu	59	50	36	145
	Christian	9	11	15	35
	Total	77 (37.2%)	73 (35.3%)	57 (27.5%)	207 (100%)

[Percentages and totals are based on respondents]

47 For details, *University of Calcutta, The Calendar for the Years 1920 & 1921* (Calcutta: The University of Calcutta, 1921).

As table 5 shows, 37.2% of the total respondents thought that higher technological training should had been segregated from other branches of higher education where 35.3% opined that it should had not been segregated from other branches of higher education. Thinking among the respondents irrespective of religion was not significant to this matter. But 6 among 10 institutions cogitated that it should have not been segregated. As regards, opinion against or in favor, they had distinct arguments and reasons. Supporting the segregation, R. C. Bose replied, "It seems almost inevitable that, even in the highest stages, technological training should remain apart from other branches of education in so far as their aims are different, the former being concerned more with the practical application of and the latter with the theoretical investigation into, the various departments of human knowledge."⁴⁸ Wali Mohammad suggested that,

Higher technical training should not be segregated from other branches of learning. Scientific training in the laboratory and the lecture-room can safely replace the conventional literary training and yield better results. The humanizing effect of the various branches of true knowledge is ultimately the same. Let the University be in harmony with its surroundings and be a miniature of its real world around world.⁴⁹

The same opinion was expressed by another respondent: "Higher technological training need not be segregated from other branches of higher education. Teaching in these subjects should not be of a narrow utilitarian type, but imparted in a true university spirit."⁵⁰ However, this point is very important in origin and development of a distinct discipline. Actually the education setup of Indian higher education did not reach up to the mark. For this reason, it was very difficult to materialize the segregation. In some cases, such attitude made a bit impediment to the way of developing a discipline.

The first segment of third part of this question was: "If, in your judgment various branches of applied science and technology should be recognized as departments of university teaching and research, what safeguards would you suggest in order to secure that every university student of applied science and technology should also receive adequate training in pure science?" In answer to this part of this question, respondents suggested various safeguards that would ensure receiving adequate training in pure science. The safeguards have been analyzed in the following way:

48 *CUC 1917-19 Report*, Vol. IX, p. 427.

49 *Ibid.*, p. 463.

50 Rai Kumudini Kanta Banarjee, *Ibid.*, p. 415.

Table 6: Suggesting safeguards in order to secure that every university student of applied science and technology should also receive adequate training in pure science

Respondent types	Religion	After a certain stage- ISc or BSc	Good grounding in science	Matriculation with elementary science	Answer not given	Total
Non-Individual	Institutions	1	7	1	3	10
Individual	Muslim	3	12	0	2	17
	Hindu	28	72	3	45	145
	Christian	2	14	0	19	35
	Total	35 (16.4%)	105 (50.7%)	4 (2.0%)	69 (33.3%)	207 (100%)

[Percentages and totals are based on respondents. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1]

The above table displays that a significant number of respondents were totally indifferent to recoil this question and rest of them were divided into four sections. But a good number of respondents thought that after a certain stage – i.e. after ISc, or BSc – if students would choose a subject of applied science and technology, he/she would have received adequate training in pure science. P. S. Sivaswamy Aiyer suggested that “Candidate for admission to a technological course i.e. required to have passed the intermediate examination in a science group.”⁵¹ Another respondent said, “To secure that every student of applied science should have adequate training in pure science examination in pure science should form part of the examinations for degrees and diploma or licenses in applied sciences.”⁵² Here good grounding means a lot of things. A respondent wrote, “The first academic year of the technological student should be utilized for the teaching of the theoretical science. This would secure the “pure science” part of the training necessary.”⁵³ Referring this Rai Dinanath Bisvas wrote, “The safeguards of every student of applied science and technology receive adequate training in pure science should be a university examination in pure science necessary for the special branches of applied science and technology.”⁵⁴ Haranath Bose mentioned,

To ensure this some sort of admission test may be devised. As higher technological training requires an advanced knowledge of pure science arrangements for higher training in pure science should be made in a technological university itself, or the students may be allowed facilities for attending lectures and laboratories in some colleges of pure science.⁵⁵

51 *Ibid.*, p. 411.

52 Gooroo Dass Banerjee, *Ibid.*, p. 414.

53 Ali Imam, *Ibid.*, p. 451.

54 *Ibid.*, p. 425.

55 *Ibid.*, p. 427.

The second segment of third part of this question was: “What relations should be established between the University and technological institutions including those which have at present no connection with the University organization?” In reply to this question, a good number of respondents did not give answer. But most of the respondents suggested some sort of relation should have remained between the University and technological institutions. This can be analyzed in the following way:

Table 7: Pattern of relations should be established between the University and technological institutions

Respondent types & religion	Same as affiliated college	Required to confirm regulations	Entire control but not affiliated	Only supervision	Separate Department, Faculty or Institute	Separate Technological University	Answer not given	Total
Institutions	1	1	3	2	1	0	3	10
Muslim	5	0	2	1	4	1	5	17
Hindu	39	7	21	14	23	8	46	145
Christian	5	0	3	0	9	4	15	35
Total	50 (24.2%)	8 (3.9%)	29 (14.0%)	17 (8.2%)	37 (17.9%)	13 (6.3%)	69 (33.3%)	207 (100%)

[N.B. Percentages and totals are based on respondents. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1]

The table indicates that all technological institutions should be affiliated with the university. Supporting the point Manindra Chandra Nandi wrote:

A technological institution should have the same relation with the university as now exists between the science and law colleges of the University. All existing institutions which at present have no connection with the University should be affiliated thereto after raising the standard, if necessary, and satisfying the necessary conditions as may be laid down by the University for their affiliation.⁵⁶

Only eight respondents thought that technological institutions must have been required to confirm the regulations of the university so that they could be run through proper manner. Twenty nine respondents were of the view that all technological institutions should have been under the direct control of the university but should have not been affiliated. Supporting this view Ravaneswar wrote, “These must be brought under its control; at the same time, a large amount of freedom should be allowed to the teachers and managers in keeping with the nature of the work and with regard to the method of instruction.”⁵⁷ Only seventeen respondents thought that technological institutions should have been under the proper supervision of the

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 469.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 417.

Calcutta University. Of note, thirty seven respondents were of the opinion that technological subjects should have been separate departments of the university or separate ‘Faculty of Technology’; or that “Institute of Technology” should have been opened at the University of Calcutta. Regarding this, Z. R. Zahid Suhrawardy wrote, “Various branches of applied science and technology should be recognized as departments of the University, which would absorb the existing technological institutions.”⁵⁸ Only thirteen respondents argued for a separate technological university in Calcutta. Regarding this, A. C. Datta opined that

Calcutta affords a good opportunity for processing a university of the modern type for the study of higher applied sciences and technology; and, for that reason, a university is necessary for Calcutta alone, which ought to be separated from the classical university of the purely idealistic kind.⁵⁹

Driving factors behind the Evolution of Academic Disciplines at the University of Calcutta

The word *evolution* first arrived in English, and in several other European languages, from an influential treatise on military tactics and drill, written in Greek by the second-century writer Aelianus Tacticus. In translations of his work, the Latin word *evolution* and its offspring, the French word *évolution*, was used to refer to a military maneuver or change of formation, and hence the earliest known English example of *evolution* traced by the *OED* comes from a translation of Aelian, published in 1616. In classical Latin, though, *evolution* had first denoted the unrolling of a scroll, and by the early 17th century, the English word *evolution* was often applied to “the process of unrolling, opening out, or revealing.”⁶⁰ In this research, evolution means the process of accumulating change and a progression of change, often branching and diversifying in the process which occurred in opening or rearranging academic disciplines at the University of Calcutta from 1857 to 1921.

Comprehending the matter in-depth or not, respondents answered in line with the commissioners’ question to understand the circumstances and driving factors associated with the evolution of academic disciplines. The points might have worked as driving factors as discussed below:

Meeting the growing aspirations of the people

A relevant question may arise as to why the University of Calcutta Commission threw the question about “University Courses”. The first reason was that within ‘less than

58 *Ibid.*, p. 484.

59 *Ibid.*, p. 434.

60 S.V. “*Evolution*,” <https://blog.oup.com/2015/05/word-evolution-etymology/>, accessed on 5th October 2019.

fifty years of its foundation it had taken root in the Indian soil and identified itself with the Indian mind and its 'growing aspirations'.⁶¹ As early as 1866, the fourth Vice-Chancellor of the University, Henry Sumner Maine, realized the importance of this transformation of the University. He said, "The fact is, that the founders of the University of Calcutta thought to create an aristocratic Institution; and, in spite of themselves, they have created a popular Institution."⁶² The middle class of Bengal, intellectually aware, socially progressive, politically striving, converted "an aristocratic Institution" into "a popular Institution" by a steady process of penetration. When, by the beginning of the present century, it was prepared to take charge of the "popular institution" it found Curzon obstructing the way. For the time being, its protest was unavailing; the Bill became an Act. But the mere letter of the law could not dominate the spirit or crush the enthusiasm of a restless class.

Considering as 'Living Vehicle'

As regards the second factor, people were expecting that education would be a living vehicle for their children. Meanwhile "the middle class had already produced great educational statesmen who were capable of molding the law into a new shape in university education. For an example, it can be mentioned that Ashutosh Mookerjee⁶³ was ready to bring higher education to the door-step of the humblest citizen and also to make it a living vehicle to national culture."⁶⁴ From a sociological perspective, the University of Calcutta was brought into being to canalize the urge of leading Bengali intellectuals in an academically disciplined manner and give it a broader base. Socially, it was destined to help the growth and expansion of the new middle class.

61 *Hundred Years of the University Of Calcutta: A History of the University Issued in Commemoration of the Centenary Celebrations* (Calcutta: University Of Calcutta, 1957), p.176. People of Bengal were really eager to provide their children such kind of education which has practical value. Practicality oriented subjects became very popular in that time not only in Bengal but also all over the India. So people expected that a large number of subjects of applied science and technology would be taught in Calcutta University.

62 *Ibid.*, p. 177.

63 Asutosh Mookerjee was the second Indian Vice Chancellor of the University of Calcutta who served for 31 March, 1906 - 30 March, 1914, and 4 April, 1921 - 3 April, 1923. Before him Gooroodass Banerjee served as the First Indian Vice Chancellor for 1 January, 1890-31 Dec., 1892. Without being involved in politics Asutosh Mookerjee implemented favorable agenda within the framework of the university though could not able to change its character totally. Source: *CUC, Report, Vol. IX*, Classified replies to the commissioners' question no. 7, pp. 411-499. Here 'Living Vehicle' means education provided by Calcutta University started working as conveyance that transports people to true life. People expected for subjects that would be taught under engineering, agriculture and commercial science.

64 *Hundred Years of the University of Calcutta: A History of the University Issued in Commemoration of the Centenary Celebrations*, p. 177.

Seeking economic salvation

The third factor was looking for economic salvation. Quite early in the history of the University the problem of employment assumed serious importance in the eyes of administrators and student alike. "The Bengali middle class, shut out from industry and trade, had to seek economic salvation in the Government offices, in a few mercantile firms and in the Bar."⁶⁵ Such "salvation" was however, not at all easy to find. "It is melancholy," wrote Richard Temple, "to see men who once appeared to receive Honours in the University Convocation, now applying for some lowly paid appointments, almost begging from office to office, from department to department, or struggling for the practice of a petty practitioner and after all these returning baffled and disappointed to a poverty-stricken home."⁶⁶ Observing the situation J. Johnston uttered, "The present system is raising up a number of discontented and disloyal subjects."⁶⁷ Hence conscious people demanded subjects that had implication in practical life and could be used for economic salvation.

Pacifying discontent and disloyal subjects

The fourth reason was that the socio-political situation in the country had changed, and the "discontented B.A." had become a political force which could neither be crushed nor conciliated by benevolent despotism of the Curzonian type.⁶⁸ Politics is directly related to people. So the authority usually tries to do something in line with the political forces. Therefore, in order to pacify discontenting and disloyal subjects, the University of Calcutta came to supply the increasing demands of an alien government for more and more hands to run the machinery of a ruling system that was growing complex and complicated every day.⁶⁹

Determining the territorial limits

The fifth reason was that as an affiliated university, it had to do a lot of things related to conducting examinations and giving degrees. Till 1921, its jurisdiction was extensive which impeded the evolution of academic disciplines at the University of Calcutta. There was no territorial limit fixed for the University of Calcutta in the Act

65 *Ibid.*, p. 149. For more information, please see: Richard Temple, *Men and Events of My Time in India* (London: John Murray, 1881), pp. 432-433.

66 Richard Temple, *India in 1880*, Third edition (London: John Murray, 1881), p. 135; quoted in *Hundred Years of the University of Calcutta*, p.149.

67 Rev. James Johnston, *Our Educational Policy in India: A Vital Question for the Government and the Church* (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1879), p. 45.

68 *Hundred Years of the University of Calcutta*, p. 152.

69 *Ibid.*, pp. 126-127.

of Incorporation in 1857. Under the Indian University Act of 1904, the Governor-General-in-Council determined the territorial limits of the University of Calcutta on August 20, 1904. The boundaries were confined to Bengal, Bihar and Orissa; Assam; and Burma. But a significant change took place after the establishment of the University of Rangoon and the University of Dacca. So, it can be easily told that due to extensive jurisdiction, from 1857 to 1921, expected evolution could not occur in Calcutta University.

Nature of evolution

If we examine the nature of evolution until the year of 1921, it may be observed that there have been introduced several subjects. But almost all the new subjects had been theoretical in nature. Only the Faculty of Science was added newly and the name of the 'Faculty of Civil Engineering had been changed to the 'Faculty of Engineering'. Several subjects were opened in the Faculty of Science though some of them were under the Faculty of Arts before. Pure Mathematics, Mixed Mathematics, Botany, Zoology, Experimental Psychology, Physics, Physiology and Geology were taught under the Faculty of Science. These subjects can also be considered under the discipline of Natural Science. Subjects taught under the Faculty of Arts were totally theoretical in nature. Actually these subjects can be also considered under the discipline of Humanities. More than one subjects under the Faculty of Arts – such as Mental and Moral Philosophy, Political Economy and Political Philosophy – can be considered as the subjects under the discipline of Social Science. Bachelor of Teaching and Licentiates in Teaching were taught under the Faculty of Arts. Licentiate in Law, Bachelor of Law, Masters of Law, and Doctor of Law were taught under the Faculty of Law. According to Aristotle, the subject 'Law' can be considered as "Practical" discipline. Medicine related degrees – such as Licentiate in Medicine and Surgery, Bachelor of Medicine and Doctor of Medicine – were offered by the Faculty of Medicine though it can be considered as Life Science discipline under Natural Science. Licentiate in Civil Engineering, Bachelor of Civil Engineering and Bachelor of Engineering degree were offered by the Faculty of Engineering, though it can be considered as "Productive" discipline or discipline of "Applied Science," according to Aristotle. Subjects taught in Matriculation, IA and ISc level are not considered in this study, because these degrees do not belong to higher education. If we take into account the courses taught at the University of Calcutta in 1921, it helps us understand the changes in academic disciplines made from 1857 to 1921.

Table 8: Academic Discipline in Calcutta University in 1921 A.D. at a glance

Name of Faculty	No. of subjects or branches taught	Classification of academic discipline (according to Aristotle)
Faculty of Arts	There were 15 ⁷⁰ (fifteen) subjects or branches including Teaching (Licentiate, Honors and Master of Arts)	Mostly Theoretical and Practical (Partially) Discipline
Faculty of Science	There were seven ⁷¹ subjects or branches (Honors and Master of Science)	Mainly Theoretical and partly Discipline
Faculty of Law	Law (Licentiate, Honors and Master)	Practical Discipline
Faculty of Medicine	Medicine and Surgery (Licentiate, Honors and Doctor)	Applied Science or Practical Discipline (according to Aristotle)
Faculty of Engineering	Civil Engineering, Engineering (Licentiate, Honors and Master)	Productive and Practical Discipline

Source: *University of Calcutta, The Calendar for the Years 1922 & 1923* (Calcutta: The University of Calcutta, 1923).

Conclusion

From the above discussion, it is revealing that the establishment of the University of Calcutta was inevitable. From the very beginning, subjects taught at the University of Calcutta were mostly theoretical. Disciplinary tribes and territories were not appropriately determined at the University. Disciplinary chaos was not the concern of the university authority or Bengal people. But the Indian people, mostly people of Bengal, were very much conscious about the educational output. When they felt that Western education imparting through the University of Calcutta was not fulfilling their thirst for knowledge and practical needs, they began to search the reasons. They wanted the university education would be their living vehicle that would work for economic salvation. But the British policy to pacify the disloyal subjects of Bengal and jurisdiction of the university became thorns of the expected evolution of

70 Languages [Five: English, Sanskrit, Pali, Arabic and Persian, Indian Vernaculars (Its composition was, Bengali, Hindi, Urdu, Uria, Assamese, Burmese and Nepalese)], Comparative Philology, Mental and Moral Philosophy, Experimental Psychology, History, Ancient Indian History and Culture, Anthropology, Political Economy and Political Philosophy, Commerce and Pure Mathematics. Moreover Licentiate of Teaching and Bachelor of Teaching were taught under Faculty of Arts. N.B: Subjects were taught for the pass courses are not counted as a separate branch. Source: *University of Calcutta, The Calendar for the Years 1922 & 1923* (Calcutta: The University of Calcutta, 1923).

71 Applied Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Botany, Physiology, Geology and Zoology were taught under Faculty of Science. Source: *University of Calcutta, The Calendar for the Years 1922 & 1923*.

disciplines. The number of subjects, a particular area of study, increased but almost all were theoretical. Productive and practical types of subjects were very few that could not meet the demand of the people of Bengal. Moreover, due to some reasons, a discipline's characteristics were not fully manifested in the existing ones. Subjects of Applied Science and Technology mean the demand of "productive" and "Practical" discipline gradually increased. Therefore, the evolution of academic disciplines at the University of Calcutta was very passive till 1921 A.D.

**THE POLYMATH VERSUS TRADITION
ISWAR CHANDRA VIDYASAGAR AND
HIS TRYST WITH HUMANISM****

Anjashi Sarkar*

Abstract

Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar as a philanthropist and humanist has evoked interest in various research fields and conversations across generations. When it comes to the pathos of the Indian society during the nineteenth century it is inclusive of the efforts undertaken to deal or fight the same. In this context, a polymath stands as a primary factor and an exemplary figure for the much-needed awakening of young and new generations. Vidyasagar not only as a humanist but also as a human being has been at the forefront of the renaissance we are acquainted with as far as the Bengal chapter in the nineteenth century is concerned. His academic and philosophical endeavours have gathered attention of scholars, officer-administrators, etc. time and again. His adventures and experiences may be evaluated in various ways; in one aspect as a coming of age game changer in the Indian society, and, in the other as a humanist who brought in shades of life in every undertaking he was associated with or displayed immense passion about. This paper is meant to highlight the exceptionality of Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, based on primary and secondary sources, and how his endeavours have left an impression in the minds of potential radicals.

Introduction

Whenever we have come across thinkers and scholars from all eras, we tend to analyze what made them unforgettable personalities. In addition to this, we attach various events that shaped up their notions and understandings about the immediate environment. The question, however, is not why, but how. It is remarkably easier these days to sum up contributions by social reformers and pen down an essay, thereby shrugging off the responsibility of adding anything substantial to the arena of literature produced concerning the same. These literatures are exhaustive and unimaginably repetitive, which also reflect the sheer disinterest of scholars to situate these figures in a time period that required to be understood in the first place. To make sure such figures are studied appropriately we must draw attention to the eras such personalities have been associated with. It is saddening that despite the plethora of knowledge we have at our disposal, somewhere the tone falls flat when we are to

* PhD Scholar in History, Department of History and Culture, Jamia Millia Islamia University, India

** In memory of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar's 200th birth anniversary (1820- 2020).

list down contributions and participations of social reformers juxtaposed with the context, ambience and moral backdrops. It is far easier at present to club basic points regarding an individual who had massive support and garnered attention from those contemporary to his time period as well as generations after him because it is as easy as a bed time story. However, one must take into account the social, political, economic and cultural backgrounds when dealing with subject matters as such. It is a fact that there are few personalities recorded in the pages of world history who have fascinated the posterity by dint of their pursuit of truth, relentless spirit, breadth of mind as well as life's vision and of course unbounded love for humanity. However, these personalities have been able to transmit a new sense of identity to the people and consequently stimulated a growing consciousness that burst forth in the later generation.

The concept of 'Polymath' and Epitomizing Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar

The idea of a 'polymath' was used for greatest thinkers of all times; those who were linked to the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. In the Italian Renaissance, the 'polymath' was attached to the statement, "a man can do all things if he will", an expression credited to Leon Battista Alberti (1404- 1472). Battista Alberti was known for his architecture, linguistics and poetry.¹ Some of his notable works, however, comprise *Tempio Malatestians*, *Palazzo Rucellai* and *Santa Maria Novella*. In no way this essay aims to compare a figure like Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar (originally named as Iswar Chandra Bandopadhyay, 1820-1891 (henceforth Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar or simply Vidyasagar) and Leon Battista Alberti but the term 'polymath' encapsulates everything we may wish to convey as far as a social reformer and visionary like Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar is concerned. A 'polymath' in actuality stands for 'universal man'. Rabindranath Tagore had once commented, "A study of Vidyasagar's life repeatedly reminds us that he is not to be assessed as an eminent Bengali or an impeccable Hindu for he was far greater than all that- he was a man in the real sense of the term. The greatest glory of his life was the extraordinary abundance of this humanity."² The contemporary Bengali poet, Michael Madhusudan

1 Leon Battista Alberti (February 14, 1404- April 25, 1472) was an Italian author, poet, architect, philosopher and a general Renaissance polymath. In Italy his first name is popularly spelled as Leon. Alberti studied Canon Law at the University of Bologna and wrote the first general treatise on the laws of perspective, *de picture* (on painting), ten books on architecture and so on. Alberti regarded mathematics as the common ground of arts and the sciences.

2 'Life of Vidyasagar', an article by Rabindranath Tagore published in *The Golden Book of Vidyasagar-A Commemorative Volume*, Chief editor Manik Mukhopadhyay, Calcutta, 1993, p.341.

Dutt was impressed by his rare talent and wisdom equivalent to an ancient sage coupled with many rare qualities of heart. He had been labeled as a 'non-spiritual secular' and resorted to 'materialistic humanism'. These opinions make him a 'polymath'.

Two Dimensions of Humanism- The Nineteenth Century Ambience

In the nineteenth century, there were two surfaces of humanism – one was idealistic or spiritual and the other was materialistic or secular. The followers of the first group were Rammohun Roy, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, Swami Vivekananda and Rabindranath Tagore and so on who had made attempts at redirecting the Hindu religion and called out on the inhuman practices rooted in superstitions and ignorance. The secular- materialistic humanists of the Young Bengal group comprised Derozio, Akshay Kumar Dutta as well as Vidyasagar, were relatively less attached to the spiritual angle. Humanism to them stood for the higher purpose of 'man' in entirety which develops into a bigger meaning about breaking away from social exploitation and defying the priestly class. In simpler words, it changes man into being self-respectful and introspective along with adopting an all-round propaganda but without any specified legal system the objectives were futile. Vidyasagar got involved in every kind of movement to consolidate the idea of 'recognition of man' in the society.

His Childhood and Response to Prevailing Pathos

Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar was born on 26th September, 1820, at Birsingha village of Midnapore district, but he functioned mainly from Calcutta at a time when orthodoxy and tradition commanded the day along with prejudices obstructing the roads to any progression one may think of. There were no affiliations towards orthodoxy from his end and he went on to become the flag- bearer of most of the radical movements. It is said about him, 'far advanced than his age in every respect, he carried on 'an unending one-man struggle with his undaunted will and determination as his main weapon'. His agenda further more suggests another general definition of a 'renaissance' In this respect it has been observed by a scholar that,"—it accepts academic and pedagogic programmes as a potent instrument for radical socio-political change. This was emphatically the case with the humanist programme of education in Renaissance Europe. The obvious precedent lies in the seminal importance of education in fashioning citizens in the ancient Athenian polity. What distinguishes the renaissance model of education, for both good and bad, is the focus on language and textuality. Textuality is seen as the mother of element of social

existence.”³ On the other hand as has uniquely been observed and quoted by a scholar- “His historic acts of charity and benevolence throughout his life impelled his contemporaries as well as posterity to hail him as the ocean of compassion (*Dayar Sagar*). In the words of Michael Madhusudan Dutt,(who we have referred above), “The man to whom I have appealed, has the genius and wisdom of an ancient sage , the energy of an Englishman, and the heart of a Bengali mother--I hope that I shall like to go back to India and tell my countrymen that you are not only Vidyasagar but *Karuna Sagar* also. His multi-dimensional life and works cannot put him in a straight jacket.”⁴

Temperament of Vidyasagar and Portrayal in Literature

Apart from making his childhood and education causative factors for his bearings in life, the title of *Vidyasagar* was conferred upon him owing to the vast ocean of knowledge he was known for soon after he mastered subjects in depth. To put things into perspective, one finds that the publication of the Bengali magazine, *Somprakash*, in 1858, which discussed modern politics, economics, international affairs, etc. happened to be under the editorship of Dwarakanath Vidyabhushan, a faculty member from Sanskrit College. The editor had expressed that Vidyasagar had a prominent role in the printing and circulation of the magazine⁵. This incident became one of the pre-requisites for the development of the mindset of Vidyasagar that implicated in his secular and materialistic and humanistic trait.

The Philanthropist and the Representation of a Lineage of Compassion

It is a safe stand when one attaches the reason for benevolence in Vidyasagar to his family background. He was born in a learned but poverty-stricken Brahmin family in a remote village of Bengal. His father, Thakurdas Bandopadhyaya, had a humble way of living and earning. Vidyasagar was admitted to the Sanskrit College in 1829 at the age of nine. He borrowed books from his classmates due to his lack of privilege and used them for his purpose at night. His mother, Bhagabati Devi, had a positive influence on him and was one of the most noteworthy women of Bengal. She was charitable and selfless as is evident from an event where she had advised Iswar

3 See an article by Sukanta Chaudhuri titled, ‘Humanism and Orientalism–Life After Rebirth’ in Sukanta Chaudhuri (ed.), *Renaissance Reborn-In Search of a Historical Paradigm*, New Delhi, 2010, p.88.

4 Cited in *Unpublished Letters of Vidyasagar*, edited by Arabinda Guha, revised edition, Biswanath Maji, Kolkata, 2013, p.10)

5 For details see Binay Ghosh, *Vidyasagar O Bangalee Samaj (Vidyasagar and Bengali society)*, reprint, Kolkata, 1999, pp. 167-169;also Indra Mitra, *Karunasagar Vidyasagar*, Calcutta, 1971, pp. 624-62)

Chandra to arrange for feeding the poor people of her village instead of spending the money on rituals of the *Durga Puja* (worship of the mother goddess Durga). The mind of the Indians during that time was engulfed with religious fear and bigotry. Vidyasagar could learn from his mother that the feeding of the poor people was supposed to be a positive religion than worshipping the Goddess.⁶ Vidyasagar had earlier sought the opinion of his mother regarding the Durga puja festivities; if spending money was futile and feeding the village people was a much nobler act. Romesh C. Dutt recognises that "... the field of Vidyasagar's labours and of his benevolent charities was widened after he retired from service as a philanthropist and a benevolent helper of the poor and the needy, Vidyasagar stands in the highest rank achieved by any man in any age or country. The princely income derived from his books was devoted to the relief of suffering and distress; hundreds of poor widows owed him their maintenance; hundreds of helpless orphans owed him their education. His name became a household word in Bengal; the rich and the poor loved him alike; those who opposed him respected him as much as his colleagues"⁷.

His Materialistic Outlook

When we speak of metaphysics, idealism and materialism are diametrically opposite to one another. Vidyasagar's materialistic outlook was reflected in his interest areas and he had introduced subjects like history, geography, economics, mathematics, astronomy, natural science, physiology and biographies of famous scientists in the course to be thought in the schools founded by him. He regarded most of the teachings of the ancient Hindu scriptures as incongruous in the context of the modern age. To rise up against what had always been the norm showed that his thought process was entirely directed by his own rationale, never for a moment acknowledging tradition, rather deemed it as obscure and irrelevant.

Formative Years and Subsequent Realization of God

In his early life he had been amongst the members of the Young Bengal group. His participation in the *Tattwabodhini* circle (Society for the Propagation of Truth) and in this respect the Brahmas displayed the arenas he was absorbed in. It is unfair that figures like Raja Rammohun Roy and Vidyasagar are showed in opposition since each of them had a logical standpoint regarding their philosophical tastes. However, if we are to understand their individual preferences, we find that the belief in God

6 Safiuddin Ahmed, *Manus O Shilpi Vidyasagar*, (in Bengali- *Vidyasagar as a Man and Artist*), Dhaka, 1389 (B.S.), p. 33.

7 Subal Chandra Mitra, *Iswarchandra Vidyasagar-A Story of His Life and Work*, New Delhi, 2018 (2nd impression), Introduction by R. C. Dutt, p. xv.

was singularly Rammohun's point but Vidyasagar felt that the realization of God was outside the cognition of any supreme power.⁸ The latter was influenced by the spirit of *Tattwabodhini* (Society for the Propagation of Truth) while the *Brahma* faith (propagated by Raja Rammohun Roy) had managed to formulate some of his ideas in his formative years

Influence of utilitarian philosophy on Vidyasagar and development of his intellectual insight

To confront any undesirable branch of tradition one must understand the roots of it in the first place and then begin the process of striking them out, one by one. Vidyasagar was influenced by the utilitarian philosophy, especially by ideas of Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), or idea of humanism propounded by James Mill (1773-1836), John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) or realism of Auguste Comte (1798-1857). The otherwise popular belief in God or spiritualism is not the pivotal idea of this philosophy rather man and the sensible rational world are to be taken into consideration. Vidyasagar had realized the contemporary society with his sensitive mind and intellectual insight. He observed the superstitions and so called traditional *deshachar* (local usages) resembling a specifically static society. He believed that if India was to be survived there was a need to revitalize the society keeping pace with the spirit of the West. He had already rejected the *Vedanta*⁹ (*Vedanta* system of philosophy) or *Sankhya* philosophy (*Sankhya* system of philosophy). He is said to have associated with the ideas of John Stuart Mill thereby aiding to refresh the youth by infusing them with rational ideas replete with a set of beliefs or to follow certain social customs.

His Thought Process and Rationale

Vidyasagar's intellect and thought processes were subsequent outcomes of his metaphysical speculations but he was adept enough to use them rationally in subtle ways. His acquaintances, Mr. Drikwater Bethune (1801-1851) and Chandramukhi Basu (1860-1944), the first Master of Arts scholar of Calcutta University, display his taste in people and the company he preferred to be in. This in turn also reflects how his preferences shaped up his inclinations towards the society, people, the immediate environment and everything else he encountered. The background of such temperament may be as viewed by a scholar in the following words- "He, as an intellectual, found in practical action the sole validity and utility for acquired truths, and thus embraced newer ideals of life, newer values and spiritual understanding. Or,

⁸ Radharaman Mitra, *Kalikatay Vidyasagar* (in Bengali- *Vidyasagar in Calcutta*), Calcutta, 1977., p. 33.

conversely, it could also be suggested that because he discovered through intellection new values of life, he could plunge into heroic deeds calculated to revolutionize Bengali social life.”⁹

The Cause of the Female Child

In the light of above perception, we may recall the story of a village girl named Raimani. Vidyasagar idolized Raimani from whom he enjoyed other than his mother Prabhavati Devi’s affection, kindness and all sort of her benign qualities in his childhood. Incidentally, the unforgettable personality of Raimoni, the widowed daughter of Jagaddurlabh Sinha impressed Vidyasagar at a time when in their residence Vidyasagar had to stay for a long time after he had first come to Calcutta at the age of eight years only. Vidyasagar is said to have got a rude shock at the early widowhood of a girl who had been an intimate play-mate in his (Vidyasagar’s) childhood.¹⁰

Experiences with Raimani and the Recognition of Female Spirit

There is a beautiful sketch about Raimani in the Autobiographical note by Vidyasagar himself. He has written- “I always felt at home in that family. Everybody loved me enough. But I can never forget the extraordinary affection and care bestowed on me by his (Jagaddurlabh Sinha) youngest sister Raimani. I am yet to see a woman who can equal Raimani in qualities like affection, compassion, courtesy, amiability and fair judgment. The solemnly serene image of this merciful woman, like that of a goddess, occupies the temple of my heart in all its splendor. Whenever anybody refers to her in passing I cannot help shedding tears while recounting her unparalleled virtues. A lot of people dub me partial to women and I think they are right. He, who has personally experienced and derived benefits from Raimani’s virtues like love, kindness and good manners and does not become partial to womankind, is to be regarded as the most ungrateful wretch in this world.”¹¹ These controversial writings bring to us Vidyasagar’s extraordinariness ‘and powers of intellect’. He arranged his arguments in logical sequence with a conclusion that” (although with reference to *Vidhata Vivaha*) --- all the teachings of the *Shastras* are not uniformly admissible, but he finds himself helpless in the face of custom masquerading as scriptural imperative. All these customs of the country had been

9 Arabinda Poddar, *Renaissance in Bengal, Quests and Confrontations-1800-1860*, Institute of Advanced Study, Simla, 1970, pp.185f)

10 Biharilal Sarkar, *Vidyasagar* (in Bengali), Calcutta, 1892, p. 203. (Note in the References)

11 Iswar Chandra Sarma (i.e. Vidyasagar- *My Life* i.e. *Atmcharit* incorporated in *The Golden Book of Vidyasagar* edited by Manik Mukhopadhyay et. al Calcutta, 1993, pp. 33f.)

continuing for long as enjoined by the *Shastras*; later, when new *Shastras* or new interpretations of the *Shastras* were introduced new practices were set up in their place.”¹²

Encounter with a child widow in the Memoirs of Shivanth Sastri

The above mentioned Raimani episode was a common trend in the Hindu society in the nineteenth century. Such a similar story that was to be experienced by Vidyasagar can be seen as stated by Shivanth Sastri in his book titled, *Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar*. He writes, “One day the Pandit called and found a little girl of seven or eight seated on my lap and calling me her *dada* (elder brother). He had never seen that girl in our house. She was a neighbour’s daughter, belonging to the barber caste. That little girl was a widow and we were trying to persuade her widowed mother to consent to her remarriage --- When appraised of her history and of her condition , he was greatly moved.—big tear-drops began to trickle down his cheeks , he took her on his lap, clasped her in his arms.”¹³ There may be several episodes like these which had directly or indirectly moved Vidyasagar to think about the child marriages, child widows, condition of women and so on during his life time and his benevolent mind put him into many difficulties to rescue the victimized women.¹⁴

Reflections on the condition of Indian women and His attempts for remedies

From such a background it may be clear that Vidyasagar’s range of perception and empathy about women developed and gradually had led him to repudiate customs oppressive to women. He thought that women should not be deprived of the facilities which are easily available to men. To put this idea in the context of defying tradition sounds like a challenge especially if we are to look at the tone of the time- period he was operating in. If men could get the literary education why must not that be given

12 Translated from Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar’s *Vidhava Vivaha Prachalita Haoya Uchit Kina*– Book 2 in *Vidyasagar Rachana Sangraha*, Collected Essays of Vidyasagar) Vol. 2, ed. by Ranjan Chakraborty et.al, Vidyasagar Viswabidyalaya Publication Division, Midnapore, 1919, p.22, Calcutta, 1972, p.22)

13 Shivanth Sastri, *Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar*, Kolkata, 2019, p.21.

14 It was due to the social laws which “had become cruel and savage over the women and centered round the protection of chastity of the women. It had already become a custom to get a girl married at the age of 5 or even earlier. But parents found it difficult, sometimes impossible, to find a husband from a family having equal social status according to the rulings of the law. ----Parents were found throughout India to murder their own infant daughters. ---Those who could not put their infant daughters to death, were anxious to get them married as soon as a husband was found. Sometimes girls were betrothed only when a few months old and made widows if the proposed bride-groom died even before the consummation of such marriage.” See Santosh Kumar Adhikari, *Vidyasagar and the Rejuvenation of Bengal*, Calcutta, 1980, pp. 2f).

to the women in general? The ideology as stated above made him a crusader for the cause of women's education. This subsequently led him to protest against the oppression perpetrated against Hindu women and it was especially done by the *kulin* Brahmins, who, while condemning young widows to perpetual abstinence would normalize the act of males taking one wife after another and at a situation when the wives would live in their respective paternal homes they would periodically visit and meet the wives whom they had obliged by ending their maidenhood.¹⁵ Vidyasagar's first attempt on the issue of child marriage came up through an essay titled, 'Evils of Child Marriage' ('*Balyavivaher Dos*') in which he wrote, "Unfortunately bound by the constraints of customs and the *Shastras*, we are forever suffering from the endless misery and irredeemable predicament of child marriage".¹⁶ He had also argued in favor of health and education of the future mothers. Again, he laid emphasis on the danger of early widowhood and all the more the need for a mature mind and body to fulfill the conditions of true marital life. Vidyasagar, however, vehemently opposed child marriage without invoking the so-called authority of the *Shastras*: and side by side he held responsible senseless customs and outmoded Shastric (of religious texts) sanctions for the ongoing social evil of child marriage.¹⁷ In this light we may recall that Vidyasagar's greatest and most amazing quality was his immense generosity. The compassion that he felt for the distressed was so strong that he could not but 'shed copious tears at the sight of a living being's misfortune'.

Opinion on the 'Age of Consent Bill'

Fortunately, in 1891, only a few months before his death, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar expressed his opinion on the Age of Consent Bill in these terms- "Such a law would not only serve the interest of humanity by giving reasonable protection to child wives, but would so far from interfering with religious usage, enforce a rule laid down in the *Sastras*. The punishment, which the *Sastras* prescribe for violation of the

15 For all these in detail, see 'Vidyasagar: An Appraisal', an article by Subodh Chandra Sengupta) in *The Golden Book of Vidyasagar- A Commemorative Volume*, Chief editor Manik Mukhopadhyay, Calcutta, 1993, pp. 136f.

16 Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, 'Balyavivaher Dos' (in Bengali- *Evils of Child Marriage*) published in *Vidyasagar Rachana Samgraha. (Collected Essays of Vidyasagar)*, Vol. 11, ed. By Ranjan Chakraborty *et.al*, Kolkata, 11, Kolkata, 2019, p.3)

17 As to the characteristic feature of the essay captioned 'Balyavivaher Dos' by Vidyasagar, Anisuzzaman, a renowned scholar of this sub-continent, comments that Vidyasagar seems to have written this essay being inspired by a complete secular human values. Its appeal was not to the *Shastricpandits* (expert in *Shastras*) but to the human 'intellect' and to those with 'power of introspection'. This human sense and impartial attitude debouched from the *Shastras* has given Vidyasagar the honour of a 'humanist' (See Anisuzzaman, *Vidyasagar O Anyera*, i.e., Vidyasagar and Others) Dhaka, 2020, p.16)

rule, is of a spiritual character and is liable to be disregarded. The religious prohibition would be made effective, if it was embodied in a penal law. I may be permitted to press the consideration most earnestly on the attention of the Government".¹⁸

Efforts to instill confidence in women through education

Being guided by human values and scientific temperament and at the same time practical experiences, it is likely that Vidyasagar devised many plans and means to develop self- strength and 'inner voices' among the Indian women and for this cause the remedy could be found nowhere other than educating the women. May be that, Vidyasagar's efforts and endeavors for the growth of women education was something revolutionary to change the misfortune of this section of this Indian society and that his constant moves did not fail eventually. Incidentally, as a conscious educationist, he was also equally concerned about the text books and numerous teaching methods as per the curriculum introduced at that point of time. His contributions in this field are not only innumerable and praiseworthy but also bear its academic value till date. There is, however, no need to present here a complete list of his works but it may be noted here that amongst all, a few titles namely *Vetal Pancha Vingshati* (A collection of tales based on a famous Hindi book named *Betal Paccisi*), *Jiban Chari* (lives of eminent men), *Bodhodaya* (A collection of edifying tales in simple Bengali for children), *Sanskrita Bhasa O Sanskrita Sahitya Visayak Prastab* (Opinions about Sanskrit Language and Sanskrit Grammar Literature), *Byakaran Kaumudi* (A competent and comprehensive book with detailed treatment of Sanskrit grammar), *Varna Parichay* (The First Step to reading for Bengali children with graded lessons beginning from the alphabet), *Sitar Banabas* (An account of Sita's days in the forest based partly on the *Ramayana* and partly on a play by Bhababhuti), *Akhyan Manjari* (a popular story book), *Bhranti Vilasa* (Narrative version of Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors*), etc. will be appreciated by the academics all the time to come. Some of the works have been mentioned in course of our study and their references have been quoted in course of discussions.

His preference of a mother tongue as medium of instruction

In fact, a deep thought as well as ideas of education of Vidyasagar seem to have originated in his genuine inspiration to popularize education through the medium of mother tongue. So, in order to teach Sanskrit to the Bengali speaking students, he composed *Sanskrita Byakaraner Upakramanika* (Guide for beginners of Sanskrit

18 Subal Chandra Mitra, *Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar*, New Delhi, 2008, p.519)

containing the basic grammatical rules), *Byakaran Kaumudi* (A competent and comprehensive book with detailed treatment of Sanskrit grammar) and *Rijupath* (Composed of some tales from the Panchatantra, a Sanskrit text and also from other Sanskrit prose and poetical works). which were expected to be essential for learning Sanskrit for the beginners irrespective of boys and girls coming from Bengali society. His *Barna Parichay* has been considered to be the outcome of an experiment related to study of 'science of language'.¹⁹

His non-sectarian ideologies reflected in the *Varna Parichaya*

As to *Varna Parichay*, as a special case, modern scholars are inclined to trace idealism that Vidyasagar formulated consciously and it was how he brought to references many characters in this book. Notably personalities like Gopal, Madhab, Rakhal, Girish, Surendra or Nabin and so on whom he did not insert any caste title namely 'Banerjee', 'Chatterjee', 'Sen' or 'Das' in order as to identify them with the greatness of any specific caste they might have been affiliated with. It is really a surprise, Vidyasagar did not bother about that matter while he wrote this book in a cast-ridden society.²⁰ Again a special attention may be given to Vidyasagar's style of translation of a number of original works written either in Sanskrit or English. Thus, he brought out *Sakuntala* (1854, containing the story element from the original *Abhignana Sakuntalam* by Kalidasa, *Sitar Banabas* (1860, an account of Sita's days in the forest based partly on the Ramayana and partly in the light of Bhababhuti's novel, *Uttar Ramacharita*) and *Bhrantibilasa* (1869, narrative version of Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors*).²¹ These were done in order to facilitate the Bengali speaking boys and girls who could be inspired to read these works from their childhood.

Initial stages of the women education

Fact remains that the education of Indian women did not form an essential and recognized part of the then Government's policy and duties before 1850. However, a beginning was there made by some respectable educated Indians particularly Rajah Radhakanta Deb and a few Christian missionaries. In 1849, there was a commendable attempt made by Drikwater Bethune who founded the 'Hindu Female

19 For a detailed study on this aspect, see an article titled 'Bangle Bhasha Parikalpanay Vidyasagarer Bhumika', (*The Role of Vidyasagar in the Planning of Bengali Language*) by Jahangir Alam Zahid, published in the 'Dhaka Biswabidyalaya Patrika', issue 95, ed. by Biswajit Ghosh, 2017, pp. 105-12)

20 *Barna Parichay- Dersho Bachhare Phire Dekha* (In Bengali - *Barna Parichay After One Hundred and Fifty Years*) by Siddhartha Saha, Kolkata, 2000, p. 36)

21 Jahangir Alam Zahid, *op. cit.*, p.110.

School' later renamed as 'Bethune Female School'. When Bethune passed away on the 12th of August, 1851, and from October Lord Dalhousie had borne entire expenses till March, 1856 (date of his departure from India) and it became a recognized Government Institution, supported by the State. Afterwards it was placed by the Lieutenant- Governor under the superintendence of Cecil Beadon.²²

Initial success in the cause of women education

However, the well- calculated mechanism and sincere efforts of Vidyasagar for the cause of education did not go in vain, brought positive results at the end. It is said that in a letter dated 12th August, 1856, Beadon submitted a scheme to the Bengal Government and proposed to appoint a committee so as to bring the notice of the higher classes of the Hindu Community who could be induced to educate their daughters in this institution.²³ Beadon is said to have been anxious to secure the services and co-operation of Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar as secretary to supervise the affairs and activities of the Bethune School. He wrote a letter to the Lieut. Governor and stated- "It may be thought by His Honour no less than justly due to the past services and distinguished position of Pandit Ishwarchandra Sharma to appoint him Secretary to the Committee" (Ref. Letter from C. Beadon to W. Grey, Secretary to the Government of Bengal, dated 12th August, 1856- see Education Department Consultation, 4th September, 1856, No. 166). No matter the Bengal Govt. gave its assent to the said proposal. After this Beadon was elected President and Vidyasagar became the Secretary of the Committee.²⁴

Support from Home authorities for the establishment of female schools

The Home authorities in the famous Education Dispatch of 1854 and elsewhere, gave a cordial support to female education and early in 1857 F.J. Halliday, the Governor of Bengal, found himself in a position to take up the issue of establishing more female schools in Bengal. He sent for Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, the then Principal of the Sanskrit College, Calcutta and an Assistant Inspector of Schools, South Bengal and had a free discussion with him on the subject. and ultimately realized the difficulties to be faced to establish female schools in Bengal. However, Vidyasagar

22 See an article by Brajendranath Banerji, titled 'Iswarchandra Vidyasagar as a Promoter of Female Education in Bengal', published in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Article No. 31, pp. 381f)

23 Ibid. p.382.

24 The confirmation letter of the Bengal Government to Cecil Beadon and Vidyasagar was sent on 30th August, 1856, 'Education Department Consultation', 4th September, 1856, Nos.168& 170.

seized the opportunity and started to open girl's schools in different districts of Bengal.²⁵ All these actions were, however, immediately approved by Halliday.²⁶

Drive regarding abolition of polygamy and mechanisms in favour of women

To take into account Vidyasagar's tremendous efforts at social reform and philanthropic activities as well as initiatives of widow remarriage and also encouragement for the abolition of polygamy, he took up various unique lines of action in the highest level and ultimately he found out the solution and remedy through women's education. His extraordinary contribution to Sanskrit College, his ideas on the medium of instruction and the running of schools and colleges reflect how his determination and courage laid the path for more changes. His literary contributions earned him a central position in the history of Bengali literature. His campaign for widow remarriage broke the code of Hindu custom and he tried to testify that the authors of the *Dharmashastras* (Religious Texts) allowed it. Tanika Sarkar writes: "Whatever Vidyasagar's intentions, the law itself had not stipulated that only *akshatayoni* or virgin child widows would be covered by it. The act enabled a situation where adult widows, having experienced a full-fledged sexual relationship with their husbands, could still remarry and still count as good women--- legally, if not under secret norms."²⁷ A widowed minor girl witnessing a second time in marriage was a way to ease the guilt that Vidyasagar himself had condemned. It was a salvation of the distressed and victimized womenfolk, but with a greater purpose that would serve mankind in the long run.

Support towards remarriages in other sections of the Hindu communities

A recent research has produced that "Vidyasagar also wanted that the possibility of remarriage be given to Brahmans, as well as to *Kayasthas* and *Vaidyas*, who are both *Sudras* of high status. The lower caste, writes Shambhuchandra, had no objection to the remarriage of their widows."²⁸ It is commented that "as for Vidyasagar, he underlined the fear of dishonor and degradation felt by the families in which young widows went astray, killed a foetus or became prostitutes. Particularly, he was keen

25 Between November 1867 and May 1858 Vidyasagar could establish 35 female schools with an average total attendance of 1,300 girls. We come to know that the first girls' school was opened at Jaugram in Burdwan, and the next two at Doarhata and Gopalpur in Hooghly.

26 Brajendranath Banerji, *op. cit.*, p.384 and Santosh Kumar Adhikari, *Vidyasagar and the Regeneration of Bengal*, Calcutta, 1980, p.44.

27 Tanika Sarkar, *Hindu Wife, Hindu Nation, Community, Religion and Cultural Nationalism*, Permanent Black, 2001, pp.83f.

28 France Bhattacharya, *Pandit Iswarchandra Vidyasagar*, Kolkata, 2019, pp. 211f.

to draw peoples' attention to the measurable fate of these child- wives who, unwillingly had to leave an austere life."²⁹ Incidentally in 1841, the *Tattwabodhini Sabha* published a small volume titled, *Sabhyadiger Vaktrita* or Discourses by Members, containing twenty discourses and short essays. In one of the lectures, he added, "God has not given us so much power that we can once and for all destroy lust, anger, and the rest. (Besides,) if all the passions were destroyed once and for all, we would be prevented from carrying out the duties of life."³⁰

Vidyasagar as a human being

Generations have had access to the knowledge that Vidyasagar portrayed complex virtues and made his presence felt in different walks of life having terms from the great and the common people alike. He sought permission from his father for widow remarriage which depicts his priorities that were set from the beginning of his social reformation journey. His ideologies ranged from personal reformation to the transformation of his immediate environment, beginning from his choice of clothing. His insistence on appearing in his favorite native dress namely *dhuti* (long piece of cloth) and *chaddar* (wrapper) and a pair of slippers is a superb example of the same. A simple man with great ideas does not need several ammunitions to bring about a transformation in whichever space he wishes to focus on. He may do it over a period of time, does not need to raise a hue and cry about it, yet make changes profound enough that the future may look at those developments as revolutionary. Vidyasagar's honesty and superlative conduct granted him the honor that came along with the ideas he projected into the reality. In pursuance of Wood's Despatch, W. Gordon Young was appointed as a DPI in 1854. In 1855, at the recommendation of F.J. Halliday, Vidyasagar was employed as a special inspector of schools. Vidyasagar and Young did not get along too well and their clash of opinions led to a rather disgruntled self of the former. Thus, on 31st August, 1857, he wrote a letter to Governor Halliday as to the retirement from the public service. Halliday had requested him to resolve his differences with Young.³¹ This tells us a lot about how

29 Ibid, p. 212.

30 See *Sabhyadiger Vaktrita- Tattwabodhini Sabha*, pt.1 (Calcutta: 'Tattwabodhini Sabha', 1763 Sak).

(*Lectures of the Members of Tattwabodhini Patrika, part 1*) A copy is preserved in the British Library, pp. 16-17.

31 Santosh Kumar Adhikary, *Vidyasagar and the Regeneration of Bengal*, Calcutta, 1980, p.19. There was also another serious issue that directly interfered the independence of Vidyasagar and it was such that" ----consequent on the effects of Sepoy Mutiny, the Ministry in England decided to curtail expenditure on education. Gordon Young, Director of Public Institution, who was much jealous of Vidyasagar's overwhelming personality, now availed himself of the opportunity, created by the changed situation and refused to

Vidyasagar was treated as an indispensable individual of an institution, often being hailed for his qualities as a man of knowledge and sensibilities.

Vidyasagar's negative opinion about Normal Class in the Bethune School

On the question of female education Vidyasagar had always proved his independent stand and this can be seen in a situation when a decision was taken by the Bengal Government. and one Mary Carpenter, a social worker who visited India in the year 1866, to form a Normal Class in the Bethune School to train up female teachers Vidyasagar opined that there was a prejudice of attendance of schools by any grown up females and so it could not be taken for granted. He held that, "There is a little or no chance of securing such females to enter the proposed normal class. It is presumed that the females must be grown up when they become candidates for admission, but according to the custom of the country , it can hardly be expected that a respectable woman who has passed the age of twelve can be prevailed upon to attend a school for instruction."³²

Vidyasagar the Seeker

To serve the state is considered a noble service especially if there is a crisis emerging from any corner of the world. To put things into perspective, it is also important to realise the cost of human lives and humanitarian values in times of man- made disasters. Vidyasagar had to make way for the accommodation to soldiers in the rooms of Hindu College and Sanskrit College. These soldiers were brought to Calcutta in view of the Sepoy Uprising in 1857. At this juncture, as it is written by Santosh Kumar Adhikary, that Vidyasagar was considerably annoyed and "...that he had lost his independent status and freedom of his action. It has been on 5th August, 1858, he submitted his letter of resignation. He did not care to lose a handsome salary of rupees five hundred per month, nor did he hesitate to step down from a high official position. The bare reality of life, the fact that he would have to confront poverty again, could not deter him from taking the decision."³³ Vidyasagar's generosity was popular but to be laid down in terms of power and state- backed action, it only seemed logical to move away from what didn't serve his purpose. Since he had been a polymath all along in his own right, a 'seeker of truth and lover

approve of the expenditure. Vidyasagar, who had an indomitable spirit, decided to shoulder the liability for running those schools by raising donations." Ibid., p.44.

32 Indra Mitra, *Karunasagar Vidyasagar (Vidyasagar, Ocean of Kindness)*, 11th reprint, Kolkata, 2019, p. 226; also see Asok Sen, *Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar and his Elusive Milestones*, Calcutta, 1977, p.32)

33 Ibid.

of mankind' he was termed as a humanist just by the word of mouth. Santosh Kumar Adhikary, a reputed biographer of Vidyasagar in this regard commented,

"...the traditional India was fully manifested in him and yet he was by character an Englishman, with the most modern outlook. He could or did never make any compromise with anything which appeared to be untrue or inhuman."³⁴ Mahatma Gandhi once wrote - "Beginning with Rammohun Roy, one heroic figure after another has raised Bengal to a position higher than that of the other provinces."³⁵ It is apparent that, "Iswarchandra Vidyasagar was the greatest among them. 'Vidyasagar', which means an 'ocean of learning', was an honorific of Iswarchandra, conferred on him by the Pandits of Calcutta for his profound Sanskrit learning. But Iswarchandra was not an ocean of learning only; he was an ocean of compassion, of generosity, as well as of many other virtues. He was a Hindu, and a *Brahman* too. But to him, *Brahman* and *Sudra*, Hindu and Muslim, were all alike."³⁶

Stand on truth and ideal of moral responsibility

Brian A. Hatcher writes that, "...the passions can play a positive role in the moral order and in Vidyasagar's case stands as his ideal of moral responsibility. Because a little laugh leads us to care for others; a little selfishness allows for friendship and desire to help others. On the other hand, a passionless and self-infatuated existence likes that of the wondering ascetic ranks even lower that of the beast.while Vidyasagar embraces the Brahmanical ideal of restraint, his exposition is not aimed at attaining the other-worldly goal of freedom from the bondage of an illusory world. Rather, Vidyasagar harnesses restraint to the inner worldly pursuit of human fulfillment within a divinely – ordained cosmos. God is no impersonal absolute (Brahman), but the creator (*Sristikarta*) and moral ruler of the universe."³⁷ "Vidyasagar", according to Brian A. Hatcher, "makes uses of the argument from Divine design in order to arrive at two related conclusions: first, that the power to restrain our passion is a gift from God: second, that both this power and the passions themselves reveal a moral creation."³⁸

His Realistic approach about marriages of Hindu widows

Apart from this there was a realistic approach of Vidyasagar himself which he clearly elaborated in his book titled, *Marriage of Hindu Widows*. What he tried to establish in favor of widow remarriage against his critics is that, "Other parties have again

34 Ibid, p.23.

35 'Iswarchandra Vidyasagar', an article by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, in Manik Mukhopadhyay et.al, *op. cit.*, p. 359.

36 Manik Mukhopadhyay(ed.), et. al, *op. cit.*, p.359, p. 359.

37 Brian A. Hatcher, *Idioms of Improvement- Vidyasagar and Cultural Encounter in Bengal*, OUP, New Delhi, 1996, p.246.

38 Ibid.

gone so far as to assert that in my treatment of the subject, I have been influenced more by compassion towards the unfortunate widows of my country than by a firm belief in their remarriage being consonant to the *Sastras*. They have also said that to prove such consonances an impossibility. It is true that I do feel compassion for our miserable widows but at the same time I may be permitted to state that I did not take up my pen before I was fully convinced that the *Sastras* explicitly sanction their remarriage. This conviction I have come to, after a diligent, dispassionate and careful examination of the subject and I can now safely affirm that in the whole range of our original *Smritis* there is not one single Text which can establish anything to the contrary.”³⁹ He also composed another essay with a title ‘*Vidhaba Vivaha Prachalita Haoya Uchit Kina Etatvisayak Prastav (Resolution on the propriety of introduction of widow remarriage)*’ and there he cited the maxim of *Parashara Samhita* (codes of religious laws written by Parashara, a sage of Ancient India) to bear out scriptural support for remarriage of Hindu widows. The citation was “*Nashtemriteprabrajiteklibe chapaitepatau/ panchaswapatsunarinangpatiranyobidhiyate*//i.e. If the husband happens to be missing or untraceable, dies, becomes impotent or leaves the family or turns outcaste, the wives are allowed to go for remarriage as per the rules of the *Shastra*.”⁴⁰

Popularity of the movement for widow remarriage

The movement for widow remarriage, polygamy etc. gathered momentum in the area round about Calcutta solely due to the initiative of Vidyasagar. His pursuits found him an admirer in the form of an initiative by Rasbihari Mukhopadhyay from Dhaka who was known to have taken up a similar drive in East Bengal. The success which followed validating of widow remarriage shows that the common man’s mind was progressive and ready to lend support to movements for removal of supposed disabilities of women folk in the society.⁴¹ In fact, Rashbihari Mukhopadhyay had also written a short sketch of his life (an Autobiography) titled *Sangkshipta Jiban Brittantanta* (Short Sketch of Life, i.e., Autobiography)^{41a} and he has given a detailed account of his movement in Eastern Bengal. The ‘Amrit Bazar Patrika’ dated 1283

39 Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, *Marriage of Hindu Widows*, originally written in 1855, reprinted with introduction by Dr. Arabinda Poddar in 1976, Calcutta, pp. if.

40 See *Vidhaba Vivaha Prachalitahaoya Uchit Kina* in *Vidyasagar Rachana Sangraha (Writings of Vidyasagar)*, edited by Ranjan Chakraborty, et.al., vol.11, under the title *Parashara Bachana*, passages of Parasara: also in the same title ed. by Gopal Haldar., Vol.2, Calcutta, 1972, pp.25f)

41 France Bhattacharya, *Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar*, Kolkata, 2019, p. 196; also see, *Bharatsanskarak Patrika* 1283 (B.S), issue no. 12.

41 Published in Calcutta, 1881.

(B.S.) in 20th issue referred the news and that the movement against the polygamy system amongst the Kulin Brahmins undoubtedly got an overall support in that part of India bears no doubt.⁴²

Action plan in response to ongoing inhuman social customs

It is quite clear that Vidyasagar had the caliber as an enlightened man to expose and concretize his action plan how to denounce the utter inhumanity of the existing social customs and vices as opposed to the true teaching of the *Shastras* (religious texts). There is an important document published in the Proceedings of the Hindu Widow Remarriage Act XV of 1856 where it is written—"A total disregard of the Shastras (religious texts) and a careful observance of mere usages and external forms is the source of the irreversible stream of vice which overflows the country---Open your eyes for once and see , this India , once the land of virtue , is being overflowed with the stream of adultery and foeticide."⁴³ It is perhaps clear to assume that through this Act the legitimacy of remarriage to save widows from their sufferings and social vices against which so long Vidyasagar had been fighting for found a positive side of its action. Thus, "All through his life" as mentioned by some "Vidyasagar maintained his spirit of humanism. His boundless sympathy and continuous fight for the rights of women, helped the women of India to liberate themselves from the abyss of social molestation."⁴⁴ On this issue it may be relevant to look at a rational attitude of Vidyasagar and it has been highlighted in a recent research by a scholar and it has been suggested that "there were many similarities in plans and objectives of both Rammohun and Vidyasagar but the exceptionality of Vidyasagar lies in the fact that he was not simply a social reformer like Rammohun, his ideas and activities were

42 The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* of that date wrote- *Brahmader Kaulinya Sambandhe Vikrampureektimahaandolanhaitechhe. Babu Rasbihari Mukhopadhyay namakekjanbhangakulinandolanerneta. Rabiharibabuke amra dekhiachhi. Tini prachin sampradayer loke bang engreji janenna. Sutarange iandolanti kono hindudharme abishvasi engreji bhasha bhijnayubakerdwarautpattihail- ejemanhindusamajeagrahyahaibarsambhabanahaita, tahaarhaibenai.* There is a great movement against kulinism of the Brahmins in Vikrampur. A Brahmin devoid of social obligations named Babu Rasbihari Mukhopadhyay is the leader of this movement. We have seen Rasbihari Babu. He is a man of old tradition and does not know English language. So, if this movement would have started by an unbeliever of Hinduism obviously an English man, there was a chance to be rejected and there is no scope as such here.

43 Pandit Narayan Keshav Vaidya (compiled and edited)- A Collection of the 'Proceedings which led to the passing of Act XV, 1856', Bombay, 1885, Appendix IX, Collection of Proceedings).

44 Santosh Kumar Adhikari, *Vidyasagar and the Regeneration of Bengal*, Calcutta, 1980, p. 57.

just like a revolutionary. He did never try to break the structure of the society as a whole, as he knew it well that such efforts would neither be suitable nor be a reality at that point of time.”⁴⁵

Government standpoints regarding widow remarriage

Vidyasagar’s fight and movement for the cause of women did not go in vain. Its positive results could be seen without delay. A bill was very soon moved in the Legislative Council obviously in response to the numerous memorials received by the Council it was sound safe and easier for the British lawmakers to take a neutral stand in the scriptural controversy. Vidyasagar’s endeavor to establish the legitimacy of ‘widow-marriage’ might have influenced the lawmakers and the stage became fit for a new direction. The Act ultimately legalized the marriage of Hindu widows and it received the Governor – General’s assent on July 26, 1856.⁴⁶

Vidyasagar and the cause of women empowerment

From the present study, it has become clear to us that there was a ‘complete intellectual stagnation’ resulting in ‘blind adherence to age-old customs’, ‘religious dogmas’ and of course social injustices to women during the life time of Vidyasagar. Vidyasagar was fully aware of the situation and that he devoted his whole life for this cause, spent whatever he earned in life and above all, fought almost single handed ‘against the swelling waves of opposition’. Among all steps and measures he took up another strong course of action directed to a movement for female education.

His contributions in the arena of general education

Vidyasagar had equally emphasized on the medium of English or culture of English language but at the same time he vouched for the usage of one’s mother tongue to understand western values for the future of the nation. John Stuart Mill, in 1837, wrote in 1837, “...it is through the Vernacular languages only that instruction can be defused among the people.”⁴⁷ Vidyasagar then gave much importance to the translation of many Sanskrit and English book in Bengali to make knowledge available to the public. We may refer here his extra-ordinary efforts in the Sanskrit College, Calcutta. In this college there was a tradition that, “pupils had to begin their study of Sanskrit grammar with *Mugdhabodha*, a text written in Sanskrit and had to

45 An article captioned, ‘Vidyasagar-Manas’ (in Bengali- *Temperament of Vidyasagar*) by Ghulam Murshid in *Vidyasagar*, edited by Ghulam Murshid, Dhaka, 2011, p.163f)

46 Subal Chandra Mitra, *Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar- A Story of His Life and Work* with an Introduction by R.C. Dutt, (reprint), New Delhi, 2008, p. 229.

47 A.M. Laird, *Missionaries and Education in Bengal, 1793-1807*, OUP, Oxford, 1972, p.230.

spend four or five years upon it. He discontinued the study of *Mugdhabodha* and in its stead introduced outlines of Sanskrit grammar in Bengali and three Sanskrit Readers, consisting of easy selections in Prose and Verse.⁴⁸

Benevolent mind of Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar

Vidyasagar has been characterized as an exemplary in many stances, through writings of noted people as well as spoken of in good taste, his philanthropy often reaching ears just through the word of mouth. According to a scholar, “the sight of human distress moved him so much that he wept like a child A rationalist to the core of being, he was in this respect irrational, in discriminate; he would give and help thoughtlessly, even without considering whether the beneficiary was a fake or a genuine one. There were many instances where he was cheated by dishonest persons. But he would rather be duped than not give at all. His was instinctive philanthropy.”⁴⁹ Similarly, Santosh Kumar Adhikary in his book, *Vidyasagar and the Regeneration of Bengal* has explained the word philanthropist which he seems to “have used to describe the benevolence of Vidyasagar and the title, ‘*Dayarsagar*’ carries the loving gratitude of his countrymen”.⁵⁰ It is said that Vidyasagar made charities even taking loans from others and at Midnapore opened some relief centers for the victims when in 1843 cholera broke out in Calcutta and a fierce famine ravaged parts of Bengal and Orissa in 1866-1867.⁵¹ Likewise, in 1869 malaria broke out in Burdwan. But Vidyasagar in his ailing state opened a charitable dispensary for the poor and distributed medicine and food to the patients.⁵² A popular and famous episode pertaining to Michael Madhusudan Dutt’s plea for monetary help has to be the best example of Vidyasagar’s nobility. Madhusudan belonged to a well to do family and was converted to Christianity. Despite his stay in the United Kingdom he turned bankrupt and was threatened with legal action in consequence by the local authorities. He had appealed to Vidyasagar for an immediate remittance of a substantial amount of money. Vidyasagar responded to it, thereby giving us another example of benevolence shown by Vidyasagar.⁵³

48 See an article titled Vidyasagar as an Educationist by Shri S.N. Sen in *Shatabarsa Swaranika (Memoirs of Hundred Years)*, Vidyasagar College (1872-1972), published by Vidyasagar College, Kalikata, 1972, p. 227f)

49 S.K. Bose, *Iswarchandra Vidyasagar*, New Delhi, 1969, p. 72.

50 Santosh Kumar Adhikary, *Vidyasagar and the Regeneration of Bengal*, Calcutta, 1980, p.66.

51 Ibid., p.68.

52 Ibid., p. 69.

53 For details see, Hiranmay Banerjee, *Iswarchandra Vidyasagar*, New Delhi, 1978, p. 72f.

A homeopathic practitioner

From the life of Vidyasagar we come to know that he had a keen desire to relieve human sufferings and this motive might have taken him to be a homeopathic practitioner amongst other philanthropic activities. Without a regular course of study or utilizing a chief method of treatment, he went on to practice it as a social work and without any heavy financial burden.⁵⁴ In this respect we come across an interesting reference to his practice of homoeopathy and it has been informed through an article written by one Samar Bhowmik published in *The Golden Book of Vidyasagar*. He writes,—"a ninety six page diary became available through the courtesy of late Manjusri Chattopadhyay, a wife of late Ksitis Prasad Chattopadhyay, a late successor of Iswarchandra. The diary covered the period between 19.9.80 and 13.9.83, approximately three consecutive years. The place or places where it was written could not be ascertained. It might have been completed at Karmatar---Our findings give us an idea of his constitutional studies along with investigation of diseases evolved out of local environment. From these we could assert that Vidyasagar tried to become conversant with Hahnemann's homeo-philosophy and practice."⁵⁵

His affiliations with rural life

Vidyasagar's life with the Santhals is a rather interestingly produced in a graphic account by Haraprasad Sastri.⁵⁶ From the study it appears to be an unconventional trait of Vidyasagar. Haraprasad Sastri found a room fitted on all sides with some fixed empty racks. Initially he could not understand why but a long story summarized by Hiranmay Banerjee in his book, *Iswarchandra Vidyasagar*, lays out the reason as, "When it was day light Santhals started coming to batches and offer to sell Vidyasagar the maize they had grown in their fields. He accepted every offer at prices quoted and placed the maize on the racks of that particular room. It was now understood that the large number of racks was meant to store the produce of the Santhal community."⁵⁷ But another question that needed to be answered: What would Vidyasagar do with this huge stock of maize? He could not have consumed it all by himself. Haraprasad Sastri decided to see what happened. As the day advanced towards noon, another batch of Santhals started coming to the house. Their appearance showed that they were worse than the first batch. They carried no

54 See for details Hiranmay Banerjee, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

55 An article captioned as 'Homoeopath Vidyasagar' by Samar Bhowmik in *The Golden Book of Vidyasagar* edited by Manik Mukhopadhyay et.al Calcutta, 1993, p. 250).

56 'Vidyasagar in Karmatar', an article by Haraprasad Sastri published in Manik Mukhopadhyay, *op. cit.*, pp. 330-333.

57 Hiranmay Banerjee, *op. cit.*, p.750.

produce to sell, but came empty-handed, and asked for food. Vidyasagar then brought out the maize purchased earlier in the morning and distributed it among them. The Santhals collected dry leaves and twigs to make a fire in which they roasted the maize and then ate it to satisfy hunger and after that they dispersed.”⁵⁸ The question about surplus maize thus stood answered.

An experience of Haraprasad Sastri about Vidyasagar ‘service to the village people’

Hiranmay Banerjee writes again, “Shortly after, Sastri missed the presence of his host and could not find him anywhere in the house. Evidently, Vidyasagar had slipped out of the house quietly without being noticed. As Sastri was looking across the empty fields in the front of him speculating about the whereabouts of his host, he happened to discover Vidyasagar walking back towards the house along the aisles which mark the boundaries of the lands of different farmers. In his hand he was carrying a small box. Having returned home Vidyasagar apologized for his absence and explained that he had been sent for a Santhal mother to treat her child who was suffering from severe bleeding of the nose and so he had to hurry there and the homeopathic treatment had stopped bleeding. On further enquiry Sastri learnt that the cottage of the patient was situated at a distance of a mile and a half from the garden house of his host. That happened in 1878 and Vidyasagar was 58 years old.”⁵⁹ Age did not deter him from doing what he wanted.

Vidyasagar’s Rationale as a Humanist

Vidyasagar’s tryst with new humanism, his rational approach towards life and society as stated above, however, gave way to a plethora of newer questions about his spiritual preferences. It is nothing new that humanism strives to solve problems with the logic of reason. There is man as the central focus and it promotes wellbeing of man and above all freedom of thought and work at the same time expresses tolerance, sympathy and equality. Vidyasagar may well be regarded as a humanist. This quality of his temperament seems to have made him a humanist. Again, humanism made him dependent on knowledge and reason and freed him from superstitions.

An atheist or agnostic?

A pertinent question that arose-- ‘was Vidyasagar an atheist?’ If not, what was his conception of God? It is a fact that his adversaries indeed did never hesitate to call him an atheist. But arguments may prove otherwise or lead us to a gray area that

⁵⁸ Hiranmay Banerjee, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

⁵⁹ Quoted from Hiranmay Banerjee, *op. cit.*, p.75.

might not require a whole level of polarization this query or doubt has become more serious when one can experience the issue raised by some of his contemporary personalities. One of such personalities was Krishnakamal Bhattacharya, “---a junior contemporary of Vidyasagar, (opined) that he was an atheist. This has been put on record in the reminiscences of Bipin Behari Gupta.⁶⁰ The same author records the opinion of Dwijendranath Tagore, eldest son of Debendranath Tagore, another contemporary of Vidyasagar, in the same book. To the author’s question, ‘Was Vidyasagar an atheist?’ Dwijendranath’s reply was, ‘Yes in the sense that he was an agnostic’.⁶¹ But modern scholars do not subscribe this view and reaction is such that, “There is, however, a world of difference between atheism and agnosticism. While the former implies a positive view which denies the existence of God altogether, the latter is unable to draw a conclusion on the issue, so that it can neither confirm that there is God nor assert that there is none.”⁶²

Rendezvous with Ramakrishna Paramhamsadeva

On this question or doubt we may pay attention to the famous dialogues that had once taken place between Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar and Ramakrishna Paramhamsadeva.

The acquaintance built between Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, the saint of Dakshineswar and Vidyasagar is of interest since the former was already a figure who resided at the center of attraction, Dakshineswar. Most distinguished persons of that time including a few religious leaders, used to pay visit to him. But Vidyasagar seems to have never felt any mental urge to pay visit to this great sage. On the other hand, this great saint having heard the reputation of Vidyasagar, desired to meet him at his own residence (Badurbagan, Central Calcutta). It was Saturday, 5th August 1882, about 5 P.M. :the seventh lunar day in the dark fortnight of the month of *Sravana*⁶³, a disciple of the sage, published from Sri Ramkrishna Math, Madras, 1911, p.57) It is interesting that Vidyasagar received him with his characteristic humility and respect. Their meetings and exchanges of views are quoted here: The conversation between the two was very long but interesting and was attended by a good number of followers. of Sri Ramakrishna. Let us quote here the relevant portions only. Ramakrishna looked at Vidyasagar and approached with a smile “*aj sagare ese millam. etodinkhal, beel, hadda, nadi dekhechhi, eibarsagardekhchhi*”

60 Bipin Behari Gupta, *Puratan Prasanga* (Old Treaties, First Series, Calcutta, B.S. 1320, p. 15.)

61 *Ibid*, Second Series, p.14.

62 Hiranmay Banerjee, *op. cit* p. 67.

63 *The Condensed Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*- ‘M’ (original name was Mahendranath Gupta.

sakaler hasya)". Vidyasagar replied, "*tobenonajalkhaniktaniyejan*" (*hasya*). Ramakrishna instantly replied – "*Keno? Nona jal keno? Tumi to abidyarsagarnao, tumi je bidyarsagar! Tumi kshir- samudra.*" (*sakalerhasya*). Vidyasagar replied – "*tabalte, paren bate*"⁶⁴ –i.e. Master: "Ah! Today, at last I have come to the ocean. Up till now I have seen only canals, marshes, or a river at the most. But today I am face to face with the *sagar*, the ocean (All laugh). Vidyasagar-(smiling):" Then please take home some salt water." Master: "Oh, no! Why salt water? You are not the ocean of ignorance. You are the ocean of *vidya*, (knowledge). You are the ocean of condensed milk." (Laughter) Vidyasagar: "Well, you may put it that way."⁶⁵ Ramakrishna continued to convey to Vidyasagar something more about knowledge of *Brahma*, 'Good and Evil' in men 'Knowledge and Vision of *Brahma*' and so on. Incidentally, he wanted to emphasise that numerous people used to come to him but they were not like Vidyasagar and the essence of the conversation can only be realized when Vidyasagar was compared with 'ocean of learning'.

Vidyasagar's reticence and Ramakrishna's inquiry of the former's concealed 'selfless spirit'

However, we may present here some other significant parts of the talks which very much sound to be the scanning of 'person Vidyasagar' but most of the time Vidyasagar remained silent being just a listener. After this we can see in the *Kathamrita* (i.e. *Gospel*) some serious matters were raised and talked about. But surprisingly, he (Vidyasagar) did not give any straight answer rather was reluctant for some unknown reason. Because he preferred to be a person of reticence. And probably, finding no way out, Ramakrishna took up a method which can be called 'manifestation through one's introspection'. This can be seen in the following courses of conversations. Thus, at a moment Ramakrishna said, "Your activities are inspired by *sattva*. Though they are *rajasic*, they are influenced by *sattva*. Compassion spring from *sattva*. Through work for the good of others belongs to *rajas* yet this *rajas* has *sattva* for its basis and is not harmful. Suka and other sages cherished compassion in their minds to give people religious instruction, to teach them about God. You are distributing food and learning. That is good too. If these activities are done in a selfless spirit they lead to God. But most people work for fame or to acquire merit. Their activities are not selfless. Besides, you are already a *siddha*." Ramakrishna's definition of *Jnana*(knowledge) was *parabidya* and *aparabidya*.

64 *Sri 'M' kathita Sri Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita, Mul Path (Sayings, e Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna narrated by' Moriginal name Mahendranath Gupta', Saksharata Prakashan (Calcutta, 1983, p.191, (henceforth Kathamrita)*

65 *Gospel*, Vol. 1, p. 101.

Here Vidyasagar had not to say anything about what he cherished or thought about God. And surprisingly Ramakrishna revealed the 'secret truth' of his thought process while explaining his mode of activities and mind set. He (Ramakrishna) extended talks about the same and then explained some epistemological sides of *jnana* or 'knowledge' which a man should take note of. He said, 'According to the *Shastras*, there are two types of learning- *parabidya* (highest level of knowledge) and *aparabidya* (lowest level of knowledge). It is said that the knowledge or *jnana* (wisdom) which promotes realization of God is called *parabidya* and likewise the knowledge which brings forth meaningless knowledge is to be treated as *aparabidya*. This *aparabidya* to Ramakrishna is *abidya*.⁶⁶ The knowledge which infatuates a man for worldly substance and turns him to be self-centered, it would be meaningless for the development of humanity'.⁶⁷

Ramakrishna's perception of knowledge— *vidya* and *abidya*

What Ramakrishna spontaneously expressed and addressed to Vidyasagar is significant and has been put up the matter more convincingly by a scholar in the following way- "Reality is beyond *vidya*, or knowledge, no less than it is beyond *avidya*, or ignorance. Reality is beyond *maya* beyond any appearance of duality or multiplicity. What conventional consciousness habitually regards as real-including both the complex social world and the religious world of creeds and visionary experiences – is simply the surface play of knowledge and ignorance."⁶⁸ This is no doubt a brilliant exposition of Ramakrishna and he seems to have crossed the boundary of the terrestrial world perhaps to knock at Vidyasagar, if the latter could comment about his perception of God, or belief in any 'Divine Power'. However, in course of these dialogues suddenly Ramakrishna asked Vidyasagar- "*Tomar ki bhab?*" i.e., may I know your 'thought process' or 'emotion'). Vidyasagar laughed softly and replied, "*Achchha se katha apnake ekla ekdin balba.*" ('well, I will tell you one day when you will be alone.').⁶⁹

Ramakrishna's explanation of selfless service of Vidyasagar and its outcome

Ramakrishna explained the importance of 'selfless service' of Vidyasagar with a suggestion that "*Tumi jesab karma karchha, etoto marnijerupakar. nishkambhabekarma karteparlechittashuddhihabe, Ishwarer upar tomar bhalobasa asbe. Bhalobasa elei tanke labh karte parbe.*"-, i.e., "The activities that you are

66 *Kathamrita*, 3rd part, p.192.

67 Cited in Dr. Subodh Choudhuri's book, *Sri Ramakrishna O Vidyasagar (Sri Ramakrishna and Vidyasagar)*, Calcutta, 1982, p. 15

68 *Great Swan- Meetings with Ramakrishna* by Lex Hixon, Boston, 1992, p.26

69 *Sri Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita* Chapter 111, V part, p. 194; also Nikhilananda, *op. cit.*, Vol.1, p.106.

engaged in are good It is very good if you can perform them in a selfless spirit, renouncing egotism, giving up the idea that you are the doer. Through such action one develops love and devotion to God, and ultimately realizes Him.”⁷⁰

Inference regarding theism

We have already mentioned that Vidyasagar did not respond or confess at anytime whatever the serious matter came over in the talks between the two. Anyway. Ramakrishna in one occasion addressed to M (Mahendranath), “Ar du-ekbar Iswar Vidyasagar ke dekhaar prayajan.-----Iswar ChandraVidyasagarer sab prastutkebalchaparayeachhe ...Katakulisatkajkarchhe-kintuantarekiachhe ta. janena, antaresonachaparayechhe. Antare Iswarachhen-janteparle sab kaj chhere byakul haye tanke dakte ichchha hay.” i.e., I should like to visit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar a few times more. Vidyasagar is fully ready, but his inner stuff is covered with a thin layer. He is now engaged in doing good works, but he does not know what is within himself. Gold is hidden within him. God dwells within us. If one knows that, one feels like giving up all activities and praying to God with a yearning soul”⁷¹ We do not know if this assessment can lead us to the spiritual affiliations of Vidyasagar but it definitely gives us an inference about the religious fervor of those times and yet Vidyasagar did not know what was expected from anyone as to convention or tradition. Whatever may be the fact; there was no second meeting between the two but it was perhaps enough for the reply to those critics who questioned about whether Vidyasagar was an atheist or agnostic!

Vidyasagar’s passive standpoints on the existence of God

We may conclude the issue from the reference of the writings of Vidyasagar himself and it is his book titled, *Bodhodaya* (A collection of edifying tales in simple Bengali for children). Vidyasagar was reportedly free from social and religious constraints and he was neither an atheist nor an agnostic which has been stated above. In this respect, one may come across a short paragraph in the *Bodhodaya*, related to God which can be conveniently quoted in English as “God has created animate objects, inanimate objects, plants and all kind of things. That is why God is called the creator. He has no incarnate form and is of the nature of intelligence. Nobody can see Him; but He is present always everywhere. He can see whatever we do; He can know whatever we think; He provides food for all creatures and protects them.”⁷²

70 *Kathamrita*, Cha. 111, part vi, p. 195; also *Gospel*, Vol.1, p. 108; also Safiuddin Ahmed, *Manush O Shilpi Vidyasagar (Man and Artist Vidyasagar)*, Dhaka, 1389 (B.S.), p.40.

71 *Kathamrita*, p.196, also *Gospel*, Vol 1, 3rd Chap., p. 112.

72 Indra Mitra, *Karunasagar Vidyasagar*, Kolkata, 2019, p. 521, also Hiranmay Banerjee, *op. cit.* p.69.

A free man with a free mind

No matter, what Vidyasagar's personal take on religion might have been, it is assured that he came out as a 'free man' having been free from the shackles of tradition to set a new standard for humanity! This also evokes us to reframe our notions of God, religion, humanity, service to mankind and compassion altogether. Do we become good humans because we believe in God, or is our humanity measured by the number of times we have done an act of charity? Even if we haven't practiced mainstream religion, does philanthropy make you as significant as someone who professes love for religion and God? If religion and tradition dictate the time one lives in, how difficult could it be to extend a hand of help to someone who is an outcaste? Vidyasagar stands as a pillar of strength and hope in the historical representations of noteworthy humanist. He observed and experienced by heart the extreme poverty of his family in one sideband on the other hand to lament for the religious surroundings replete with thousand times perversion that prevailed in the contemporary society of Bengal nay India.⁷³ In fact, as viewed by a researcher, "Vidyasagar grew up in this stirring period of transition. The seeds of greatness already in him developed an inner urge which shaped his career to suit him for the part he was destined to play in the future history of his land. He was to play a significant role giving shape to the new culture that was being born under the force of the impact."⁷⁴

Conclusion

However, at the end it may be concluded that Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar was out and out an enlightened man and his personal recourse to the *Shastras* for a scriptural affirmation of reforms was essentially guided by the need of a social consensus and not by an attitude of mingling up the objective of social progress with questions of religious faith and predilections His personal journey could have been anything but his never-ending love for human beings and corresponding services made him the polymath we have all looked up to in literature from everywhere around the world. He, in particular, embodied in himself the spirit of new humanism which had 'pervaded the mind of Europe in the later part of 18th century. Tradition probably would not fade out, but one cannot deny the fact that compassion and humanity have a unique way of professing greatness on their own accord.

73 An article titled 'Vidyasagar Manas' (Temperament of Vidyasagar) by Ghulam Murshid, in *Vidyasagar*, ed. by Ghulam Murshid, Dhaka, 2011, p. 157.

74 Hiranmay Banerjee, *op. cit.*, p.16t.

BENGALI NOVEL *PURBA-PASCHIM*: HUMAN SUFFERING AND TRAUMA CAUSED BY THE PARTITION OF BENGAL IN 1947

Taskia Haq Lyric*

Abstract

This paper attempts to create an understanding of the socio-economic impact of the partition of Bengal in 1947 and the consequent suffering and trauma it generated on common people from both parts of this land evident in the leading Bengali novel on partition- '*Purba-Paschim*' by Sunil Gangopadhyay. Since novels are reflections of different circumstances from various perspectives, it is easier to visualize the real picture from numerous angles of day to day life experiences from them. Moreover, this novel is mostly portrayed from the standpoint of the novelist where he observed or in some cases actively participated in reality. Like his previous historical novels in Bengali literature *Sei Somoy* and *Prothom Alo*, *Purba-Pashim* can also be considered a landmark classic. However, this event and consequences of it left noteworthy memories in the minds of the Diaspora of both parts of Bengal—on one side death, massacre, devastation, and uncountable losses of lives, properties, and traumatic experiences; on the other, birth of two new countries, new dreams and aspirations associated with it and finally the pain of disillusionment. It drew a line between the people who shared same language and similar culture for thousands of years. The impact of partition was enormous and is still evident in every strata of society in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Therefore, it is necessary to revisit that phase to make a clear understanding of the texture, identity and crises of the societies of Bengal—both East and West. This paper concentrates on the historical analysis of the traumatic impact upon the socio-economic fabric of Bengal due to this tragic divide exposed in this novel.

Key words: Bengali, Migration, Nostalgia, Partition, Purba-Paschim, Refugee, Trauma.

Introduction

The partition of Bengal in 1947, as a part of the division of Indian subcontinent, turned this land into two nation states, followed by one of the deadliest human exodus of history. Under the Indian Independence Act of 1947, Pakistan and India got independence on 14 and 15 August respectively¹. As a part of this historic event, Bengal and Punjab, the two largest Muslim majority provinces of British India were

* Lecturer at the Department of History, University of Dhaka.

1 Harun-or-Rashid, "*Partition of Bengal 1947*", in: "*Banglapedia*", Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, Online version: [http://en.banglapedia.org/index.php?title= Partition_of_Bengal,_1947](http://en.banglapedia.org/index.php?title=Partition_of_Bengal,_1947) (2015).

also partitioned between the descendant states of India and Pakistan. East Bengal, constituted approximately two-thirds of the territory of entire Bengal and became a part of Pakistan separated by more than a thousand miles from the rest of the country which later on emerged as a sovereign nation—Bangladesh, through a Liberation War. The state of West Bengal covers the remaining one-third of the Bengal as it was inside India². This political decision divided the region which had been together from the time immemorial sharing common culture and common language. Therefore, it set in one of the biggest ever human migration causing the most terrible refugee crises of 20th century. It ultimately left a deep impact on the lives of people who had been compelled to leave their own land. They were uprooted from their home and left for an unknown destination to seek refuge in a new, but not welcoming ‘homeland’. The history of partition is embedded with emotions, sentiments and ordeals of the people of two newly created nations. It was something more than just separation of territories accompanied by communal upheavals, violence, forced migration and evictions. This event also deeply affected the writers of Bengal. According to Sukeshi Kamra, “The very first attempt to engage this nightmarish moment, outside of journalism of course, was made by literary culture.”³ These literary works function as primary sources in reconstructing history. Bidyut Chakrabarty observes that, “There is no doubt that the literary representation of the events in the wake of partition provides an alternative discourse supplementing the stories based on archival research.”⁴

Sunil Gangopadhyay, born in Faridpur district of erstwhile East Bengal (present day Bangladesh), migrated to the province of West Bengal in India. Sunil himself said in an interview that, “The division of Bengal gives me enormous pain even now. I went to Germany after it was reunified and I wondered if both Bengals could be united. But I realized there was no possibility of that. Then I thought I should write something at least for the next generation.”⁵

Nevertheless, *Purba-Paschim* has always been a great work in Bengali historical fictions. It is also translated in English by Enakshi Chatterjee as *East-West*. The novel portrays a broader spectrum of partition involving simultaneously the events

2 Joya Chatterji, *The Spoils of Partition: Bengal and India, 1947-1967*, Cambridge University Press, 2007, p. 01

3 Sukeshi Kamra, "Partition and Post-Partition Acts of Fiction: Narrating Painful Histories", *Partitioned Lives: Narratives of Home, Displacement, and Resettlement*, Dorling Kindersley, 2007, p.99

4 Bidyut Chakrabarty, *The Partition of Bengal and Assam 1932-1947: Contour of Freedom*, Routledge, 2004, p.249

5 Ashok Bery, Sunil Gangopadhyay and K Satchidanandan, *Wasqfiri*, 25:1, 2010, p.54, DOI: [10.1080/02690050903425433](https://doi.org/10.1080/02690050903425433); retrieved on September 29, 2020 at 2:40pm.

from both parts of Bengal. It is a living document of how the socio-economic and political changes took place in both sides of the Radcliffe Line from partition till eighties of the twentieth century. At the same time many central characters, no particular one in this novel can be identified as the protagonist. Some of these characters in the novel had left Bengal and moved to Europe and America. So not only of East and West Bengal but also the larger background of Bengali diaspora of the Eastern and Western hemisphere is included in this novel. This narrative passes through ordinary real-life situations with well-sketched individualized characters, but in the depth of simplicities there is a wide array of newly divided contemporary Bengali society. Sunil Gangopadhyay, in this novel, depicts families from both East and West Bengal and creates a well and elaborate relation amongst them. It is a subtle portrayal of the partition and its after effects through the eyes of three generations of Bengalis in West Bengal, East Bengal (later on Bangladesh) and elsewhere.

Regarding the authenticity of the historical facts Sunil acknowledges in *Purba-Paschim*⁶ that—contemporary history is the background of this novel; several events of political turmoil and some international personalities have also been presented directly in the context of history. The novelist has collected most of his information from various newspapers, different books, autobiographies, memoirs etc. He provides a short bibliography at the end of the novel. (*Purba-Paschim*, 987)

In this paper ‘East Bengal’ and ‘East Pakistan’ has been used synonymously.⁷ How this tragic division affected the socio-economic fabric of Bengal on both parts and played havoc with the lives of innumerable people are discussed here by analysing the incidents dealt with in this historical fiction—*Purba-Paschim*.

Partition and mass exodus

The partition witnessed perhaps the largest example of voluntary and involuntary mass population shift in modern history and this process continued over the years even after 1947 involving millions of people.⁸ The biggest outcome of this exodus is

6 Sunil Gangopadhyay, *Purba-Paschim*, Ananda Publishers Private Limited, 2018(2012)

7 In 1956 the Constitution of Pakistan declared ‘East Bengal’ as ‘East Pakistan’. Later on this land has become an independent country, Bangladesh in 1971 through the Liberation War.

8 “Estimates of migrants between 1947 and 1951 as a result of Partition range from 10 to 17 million, while estimates of deaths associated with Partition range from 200,000 to over 1 million. The magnitude of the Partition refugee crisis can be appreciated in comparison to the 20.5 million persons world-wide currently under the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees’ mandate of concern.” In Hill, K.; Seltzer, W.; Leaning, J.; Malik, S. J.; Russell, S. S., *The Demographic Impact of Partition: Bengal in 1947 (PDF)*,

that a large number of people were forced to become refugees in another land. Sunil Gangopadhyay details different dimensions of refugee crisis in *Purba-Paschim*. The incessant coming of refugees crippled the socio-economic rubric of West Bengal. Unlike Punjab, refugee influx continued in West Bengal that overwhelmed the policy makers of India. Kolkata became overburdened with these ‘unwanted visitors’. According to the Census of 1951, two-thirds or 1,387,000 of a total 2,099,000 refugees from East Bengal were found in three districts of West Bengal—Kolkata, Nadia and the 24 Parganas. Ten years later, the Census of 1961 exposed that refugees in West Bengal were over 3 million. In 1973 their number had doubled and it was more than 6 million.⁹ Sunil describes the influx of refugees were entering like locusts and forcibly occupying fallow land or houses. The platform at Shealdah railway station and footpaths were so full by the refugees that it was very tough not to step over them. Twenty to fifty thousands were entering every month in 1950s. According to government statistics more than 28 lakh East Bengali refugees entered West Bengal within 1955. (*Purba-Paschim*,20,129) The novel shows two classes of refugees, the erstwhile wealthy Majumders and the lower class squatters leading to a variety of different fates. Quite naturally this large number of refugees were not welcomed in the already overburdened city of Kolkata. Troubles were increasing when the refugees started to attack people having abandoned properties and lavish houses as they were seeking for shelter. Many of the refugees used to grab any free land they could find to squat upon it. From 1948 onwards, clusters of refugees poured on to unoccupied plots in and around Kolkata. Some of these lands were privately owned and some belonged to the government.¹⁰ The novel details the troubles that refugees had been facing as well as creating in West Bengal. In Kashipur a garden house was taken over by a horde of refugees who got a leader Harit Mondol. This incident set a plot for a riot between Bengali refugees and non-Bengali workers. One of the owners of that house Asitbaran died in this scuffle. To tackle this situation police opened fire and three of the refugees including a seven year old child were killed. (*Purba-Paschim*,49) Police was often seen to arrest refugees and open fire. However, that garden house had become an occupied refugee colony. Hundreds of forcibly occupied refugee colonies sprang up in the North and South of Kolkata. Joya Chatterji said that, “It is this unplanned, unassisted and unregulated growth of

International Union for the Scientific Study of Population XXV International Population Conference, 2005, p.03

9 Joya Chatterji, *op. ct.*, pp.119-20

10 *Ibid.*, 141

overcrowded refugee colonies which has cemented Calcutta's reputation as 'a cliché of hell', a city of 'multitude, misery, dilapidation [and] violence'." ¹¹

One of the most tenacious troubles refugee squatters faced was the constant threat of eviction from occupied private properties. Anti-eviction demonstrations, regular rallies and meetings used to take place in Kolkata to pressurize the legislature.¹² There are some descriptions of such protests in this novel. During an anti-eviction demonstration Harit got beaten severely by police. The squatters had been living a very miserable life even government's own Review Committee described them as 'sub-human'.¹³ Whereas the West Bengal government had been struggling to manage expenditures for rehabilitation of these refugees.

Settlements of refugees

Government attempts for refugee resettlement and its devastating effects on them are meticulously described in this novel. As Debjani Sengupta said, "Rehabilitation created a different experiential reality for a large number of refugees, and issues of home, settlement, livelihood, and work created a new body of literature that relooked at Partition in important ways."¹⁴ However, government initiatives were not sufficient to rehabilitate refugees into a normal life and to deal with their crisis. *Amrita Bazar Patrika* reported on 13 August 1957, "about slow progress of rehabilitation of East Bengal displaced persons....delays in execution of schemes, [and the] lack of proper planning" by the Rehabilitation Ministry.¹⁵ Sunil portrays the reluctance of government in dealing refugee issues. In occupied colonies many displaced individuals did not get their documents as legitimate refugees. For refugee children government announced some scholarships which involved a lot of hassles like, writing applications etc. The refugees were deprived of basic needs. Many refugee women and children faced pitiful fate. Young boys from refugee colonies got involved in criminal activities. After partition the number of female lunatics had increased in West Bengal. Most likely they were all raped refugee women. (*Purba-Paschim*, 72,151) It is found in the novel that girls from refugee colonies were often abducted and forced to involve in prostitution. (*Purba-Paschim* 128) However, it was

11 Joya Chatterji, *op. cit.*, p.144

12 Anindita Ghosal, "Acquisition of Rehabilitation Rights by East Bengal Refugees, Post-1947" In *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Vol. 70, Indian History Congress, 2009, p.1215

13 Joya Chatterji, *op. cit.*, p.144

14 Debjani Sengupta, "From Dandakaranya to Marichjhapi: Rehabilitation, Representation and the Partition of Bengal (1947)", *Social Semiotics* 21, no. 1, Routledge, 2011, pp.101-123.

15 *Ibid.*, p.104

estimated that at least 70,000 women were abducted during partition.¹⁶ Refugee colonies had become a good source of domestic help. The novel mentions that a large number of refugees especially women had been working as domestic help. Harit's wife Parulbala whom Sunil describes a women with self-esteem, got to work as an *ayah* in a well-off family. Once they had been free people, engaged in various professions and trades. After leaving their homeland they were obliged to beg or to work as maids and servants. Initially it hurt their ego. Gradually they had to discard their respectability. They were paid very poorly. Joya Chatterji also denotes that "Most (refugee women) had to find work as domestic servants or *jhis* in well-to-do households, where they washed, cleaned and cooked for pitifully small wages."¹⁷ The leading newspapers of West Bengal used to carry about advertisements seeking female domestic workers where the refugee women are seen to give preferences. A Bengali daily from Kolkata, *Jugantar*, published an advertisement in 1956—"Wanted a middle aged female in an elite family for household chores. Food, shelter along with a monthly salary of Rs. 15/- offered. Refugees will be preferred."¹⁸

Sunil traces eradication of caste among refugees. All of them were refugees at that time. In the words of Sunil, "The son of a priest started to carry loads in the market, the wife of a farmer began to wash utensils in hotels. Young girl went out from the colony apparently to work as nurses and returned late at night." (*Purba-Paschim*, 116) Hardly did it matter what class or caste they belong to. Hunger is the greatest leveler. The refugee colonies also lacked hygiene and sanitation facilities. The novel mentions about epidemics in refugee colonies.

Dispersal of Refugees

Government of India had undertaken scheme of dispersing Bengali refugees in other areas mainly outside West Bengal. But they failed to rehabilitate the refugees due to severe mismanagements and lack of cooperation. Instead they sparked off resentment and hostility, not only among the refugees but among the people empathized to their plight.¹⁹ We see in the novel that the issue of refugee resettlement created a new dimension in the politics of West Bengal. As these millions of displaced people could be future voters the leftist leaders did not support government's policy of driven them away from West Bengal. (*Purba-Paschim*, 21)

16 Andrew Whitehead, "Women at the Borders", *History Workshop Journal*, no. 47, Oxford University Press, 1999, p.308

17 Joya Chatterji, op. cit., p. 149

18 Ishita Chakravarty and Deepita Chakravarty, "For Bed and Board Only: Women and Girl Children Domestic Workers in Post-Partition Calcutta (1951—1981)", *Modern Asian Studies*, Cambridge University Press, 2013, pp. 591,603

19 Joya Chatterji, op. cit., p. 128

Nevertheless, West Bengal government compelled the squatters to move outside Bengal. Dr. Roy government began with a modest scheme in 1948 to settle a few hundred refugee families across the Black Water of the Bay of Bengal in the Andaman Islands which was British India's most notorious penal colony.²⁰ A batch of refugees were sent to Andaman Island crossing the *kalapaani* by a ship named *Maharaja*. (*Purba-Paschim*,130) Harit came to know about government's plan of utilizing the professional expertise of refugees in the new settlements. His profession was sculpting idols—Durga, Smarsmati, Kali. He smiled on this irony. What was the use of his expertise in the Andamans or in the forests of Madhya Pradesh! (*Purba-Paschim*, 132) The novel reveals the hurdles of refugees in government settlements. Cooper's camp near Ranaghat in Nadia used to be military warehouses during Second World War. After partition 26000 refugees were settled there. The refugee families had been living a very inhuman life in those warehouses. Two-three people used to die every week. The medication system was very poor. A doctor was found to provide same medicine to all the patients. When Harit caught it the doctor said that government did not want to spend more for them. (*Purba-Paschim*, 204-05) The total grant received for relief and rehabilitation purpose from central government in two years 1948-49 and 1949-50 was a little over 3 crores. This sum was quite 'insignificant' compared to what had been spent for the refugees from West Pakistan. The grant was given for 16 lakh displaced people working out at about Rs. 20/- per capita spread out over two years.²¹ The novel also indicates that girls from women's camp adjacent to Cooper's camp were trafficked to Kolkata and forced to enter prostitution. This women's camp were attacked by intruders several times in broad day light. (*Purba-Paschim*, 208)

Amongst all the government projects on refugees the Dandakaranya project was most ambitious and controversial. Dandakaranya is a low plateau in Koraput and Kalahandi districts of Orissa and Bihar and the Bastar district of Madhya Pradesh, where the soil was arid and infertile. The inhabitants were nomads, mainly Gond forest people.²² The novel recorded the administrative mismanagements and subsequent miseries of refugee rehabilitees in Dandakaranya. Due to extreme heat and scarcity of rain, the soil was very rough there. There are descriptions of Kurud camp and Subhash colony of Dandakaranya settlement in this novel. Government did

20 Joya Chatterji, "'Dispersal'and the Failure of Rehabilitation: Refugee Camp-Dwellers and Squatters in West Bengal" *Modern Asian Studies*, vol.41, no. 5 , Cambridge University Press, 2007,pp.1006

21 Nehru to Dr. B. C. Roy, 1st December 1949, in Saroj Chakrabarty, "With Dr. B. C. Roy and other chief ministers: A record upto 1962", Benson's, 1974, p. 140

22 Joya Chatterji, *The Spoils of Partition: Bengal and India, 1947-1967*, Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp.136-138

not bother about the constructions of the camps. In Kurud camp after a hailstorm the refugee settlements reduced to shambles. Seven thousands refugees had been living under the open sky. No relief had reached. Two of the three officers in charge fled expecting an outburst. The settlers broke into camp office and looted whatever they found. The camp dwellers were intensely depressed.

In Dandakaranya settlements the local tribals often attacked the residents. Several incident of clashes took place between them. This tension was one of the many reasons the refugees tried to escape back to West Bengal. Infestation of insects and snakes at night was a regular issue there. Saibal Gupta, the chairman of Dandakaranya Development Authority pointed out that less than 10 percent of the soil which had been given to refugees was in fact arable. Medical facilities were literally non-existent.²³ The camp dwellers were found running out of food and necessary commodities. An officer in charge told Harit that there was no future of this camp. Dandakaranya project severely lacked of coordination. There was no more sanction of money. (*Purba-Paschim*, 310-315, 440-443)

The soil of Bengal had always been the center of attraction for Bengali refugees. From Dandakaranya thousands of refugees attempted to move to the Sunderbans. They did not want to take support and doles from government anymore. The leftists were in government at that time. Once they had opposed the government attempt to send refugees outside Bengal. Now this leftist government had decided not to accept this stand of the refugees. Initially government tried to make them understand, then stooped their rations. All the attempts were taken by government with the intention of not letting them to earn a single penny or to get any support from the locals. Thousands died of starvation and disease. Some went back to Dandakaranya. A group of twenty-five to thirty thousand did not agree to leave the Sunderbans. They better chose to die on the soil of Bengal. These refugees settled in Marichjhanpi Island. Within months they had become self-dependent. But at one midnight government patronized invaders attacked the settlement. They burnt the houses, killed many of them and cleared Marichjhanpi within one night. (*Purba-Paschim*, 951-953) The Left Front Chief Minister Jyoti Basu announced an economic blockade of the island in 1979 to force the settlers to go back. Thirty police launches were deployed around the island, the refugees were tear-gassed, and their huts, fisheries and tube-wells were destroyed. Those who attempted to cross the river were shot at. An estimation shows the dead as several hundred people who died either out of starvation or who were shot at and their bodies thrown into the river.²⁴ Sunil Gangopadhyay ends the traumatic saga of these unfortunate people with the

23 Ibid., p. 137

24 Debjani Sengupta, op. cit., pp.116-17

Marichjhanpi massacre. These apolitical refugees did not even know for what reason they had to leave their own place to fall victim of this irony. Again in 1971 during the Liberation War of Bangladesh another ten million people fled to India. When the War ended many were able to return home.²⁵ The *bhodrolok* refugees from Bangladesh had somehow got accommodations in Kolkata. The rest was sheltered in the refugee camps. (*Purba-Paschim*, 775)

Sketchy account of Refugees in East Bengal

In *Purba-Paschim* there are very little remarks of the refugees in East Bengal. As Rahman and Van Schendel have rightly observed, “There is a fairly large and varied literature on refugees who came into Eastern India, but there is an almost complete absence of writings on the large reverse flow of refugees into East Pakistan.”²⁶ Sunil Gangopadhyay too ignores this issue in the novel. Though according to contemporary press reports Dhaka was ‘overflowing with refugees’. About a dozen refugee camps and some colonies were established near Mirpur at the beginning. Affluent refugees somehow managed private dwellings. Daily 1000 arrivals unexpectedly overcrowded Dhaka. There was a total of over 8,22,000 refugees arrived in East Pakistan by 1950.²⁷ According to the Pakistan Census of 1951 there were 700,000 Muslim refugees in East Bengal. Two thirds of them or 486,000 were refugees from West Bengal. In the two decades after partition 1.5 million Muslims migrated from West Bengal to eastern Pakistan.²⁸

However, the novel mentions about Bihari Muhajirs or refugees to some extent. In East Bengal Bihari refugees created troubles including causing riots. Local Bengalis could not accept them as their own people. These Muslim Bihari refugees were sympathized to the West Pakistanis. They supported Urdu language and thought that Bengali Muslims are not enough Muslim. (*Purba-Paschim*, 260) In the novel Sunil mainly showed the mental and cultural differences and increasing distance between Bengalis and Biharis in East Bengal. The central government of Pakistan considered the Bihari migrants ‘loyal agents of the West Pakistanis’ and offered good jobs to

25 Joya Chatterji, "Dispositions and Destinations: Refugee Agency and 'Mobility Capital' in the Bengal Diaspora, 1947-2007", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 55, No.2, Cambridge University Press, 2013, p.273

26 Mahbubara Rahman and Willem Van Schendel, "'I am not a refugee': Rethinking partition migration", *Modern Asian Studies* 37, no. 3, Cambridge University Press, 2003, p.555

27 Anindita Ghoshal, "The Invisible Refugees: Muslim 'Returnees'. In East Pakistan (1947-71)", *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh* (Hum.), Vol. 63(1), 2018, p.69

28 Joya Chatterji, *The Spoils of Partition: Bengal and India, 1947-1967*, Cambridge University Press, 2007, p.166

them with high salaries in jute and garment mills. This discriminatory policies against locals had created tensions between the Bengalis and non - Bengalis.²⁹

Violence accompanying Partition

Violence was the worst outcome of the partition. It had been estimated that between 200,000 and 600,000 or even higher were killed in partition riots and massacres or died during the adversities of migration.³⁰ The novel sporadically records several riots that took place in both parts of Bengal. There is a description of the deadliest riots in Kolkata. Babul Siddiqui who was a happy family person with a settled business in Kolkata lost everything in the riot of 1950. Devastated and injured Babul somehow escaped back to East Bengal. A large number of Muslim families were ruined in this riot. Many of them opted for Pakistan. (*Purba-Paschim*, 69) In 1950 terrible riots took place in Kolkata, Dhaka and Barishal. Many innocent Muslims were killed in Kolkata and Hindus in Dhaka and Barishal.³¹

In East Pakistan violence had become a regular feature after partition. A huge number of Hindus, around 2 million, left for West Bengal when the riots in Noakhali and Tripura in 1946 and in Khulna in 1950 broke out.³² During the 1950 communal riots in Barishal and Khulna 15.75 lakhs Hindus left East Bengal.³³ Sunil illustrates some scenario of terrible riots in Barishal in 1950. A steamer full of Hindu passengers was fleeing towards India leaving their own land forever and most of them had lost their loved ones. They were screaming and mourning. The Hindus were almost wiped out during those riots in Barishal. (*Purba-Paschim*, 69) Newspapers in Kolkata reported widespread looting and burning in Chittagong and Barishal. Steamers and trains carrying fleeing people were raided and looted by Ansars.³⁴

The novel narrates brutal riots of Narayanganj and Dhaka caused for the theft of holy Muslim relics from the Hazratbal shrine in Kashmir. (*Purba-Paschim*, 177, 246, 259). It is also a testimony of the 1964 riot that was induced by Adamjee Group General Manager Karim. He declared a holiday in Adamjee Jute Mills and spread a rumour that his brother had been killed in Kolkata. In January thousands of non-

29 Anindita Ghoshal, op. cit., 2018, pp.59-89

30 Andrew Whitehead, op. cit., p. 308

31 Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, *Asamapta Atmajiboni* (Unfinished Memoire), University Press Limited, 2013, p. 170

32 Joya Chatterji, *The Spoils of Partition: Bengal and India, 1947-1967*, Cambridge University Press, 2007, p.111

33 Ibid, p. 112

34 Debjani Sengupta, op. cit., p.102

Bangali workers of jute mills started massacre of the Hindus. They attacked Dhakeshwari Cotton Mills and Lakshminarayan Cotton Mills and killed Hindu workers. In Golakandail village they brutally massacred the Hindus including child and women. In Dhaka there were 25 camps of displaced Hindus. Almost 10000 Hindus took shelter at Jagannath College. (*Purba-Paschim*, 299) A million Hindus left East Bengal when violence between the communities broke out in 1964.³⁵ And at least 800,000 Indian Muslims, mainly from West Bengal, entered East Pakistan in the wake of the 1964 riots.³⁶ Tapan, a young man from Comilla fled to Kolkata after his father was killed and his house was burnt. (*Purba-Paschim*, 288) This novel also mentions about Bengali-Bihari riots. During the Liberation War in 1971 these Biharis aided Pakistani aggressors and massacred the Bengalis. (*Purba-Paschim*, 645, 585). Nevertheless, Sunil Gangopadhyay does not portray any massive scale violence in *Purba-Paschim*. He has not extensively described the violence against women and children that took place in the wake of partition. According to Niaz Zaman, “In Sunil Gangopadhyay’s two-volume *Purba-Paschim* there will be only one death, that of a man killed by refugees whom he is trying to evict from the house they are forcibly occupying. In these novels there are no rapes, no descriptions of children torn to pieces, no abductions, no looting, no large-scale fires....Despite this detailed account of the period, Gangopadhyay omits description of the riots that took place during Direct Action Day.”³⁷

Hatred among two communities

The novel is a testimony of misunderstanding and hatred that were transmitted amongst the people of both parts of Bengal. Harit in a heated argument with a Muslim gentleman, Shahjahan said that, the educated Muslims like him were responsible for the partition as they wanted Pakistan. Shahjahan sank into intense frustration thinking that two nation theory had sunk deep into the skin. “Indian Hindus will never trust Indian Muslims.” (*Purba-Paschim*, 104)

Supriti once had been affectionate to her brother’s Muslim friend later on did not even want to see his face. After partition she had perceived that they lost everything for the Muslims. (*Purba-Paschim*, 535) In East Bengal hatred also grew against the Hindus. The Muslims who could escape riots in West Bengal kept blaming Hindus who they called ‘*Malaun* (accursed).’ There is a scene in this novel that on a steamer

35 Joya Chatterji, *The Spoils of Partition: Bengal and India, 1947-1967*, Cambridge University Press, 2007, p.111

36 A. F. M. Kamaluddin, “Refugee problems in Bangladesh”, *Population redistribution and development in South Asia*. Springer, 1985, p.222.

37 Niaz Zaman, “*A divided legacy: The partition in selected novels of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh*”, The University Press Limited, 1999, pp.128,319

two Muslim passengers were pointing a village saying that only three Hindu families had left and there would be peace after they would leave this land. (*Purba-Paschim*, 69)

Sunil depicts the miseries of the minorities from both parts of Bengal. The new state of West Bengal contained a population of 21 million, of whom approximately 25 percent, or 5.3 million, were Muslims. These Muslims in West Bengal from being part of a ruling majority reduced to a much vulnerable minority.³⁸ An affluent Muslim, Shahjahan's family had been residing in Kolkata for seven or eight generations. He had never been a supporter of Muslim League. But during the Indo-Pak conflict Shahjahan was detained on suspicion of spying for Pakistan. Then he tried to settle in East Pakistan but only because an Indian citizen he was also viewed with suspicion there. Later on devastated and frustrated Shahjahan left for Europe. (*Purba-Paschim*, 399) Though it was assured that the Congress government would continue to protect 'to the best of its ability their citizen rights against aggression'. The Congress high command warned that 'it would not tolerate the existence within its borders of disloyal elements,' challenging them either to prove their loyalty to the new republic or to get out.³⁹ Shahjahan was found to say, "I have no country. I'm neither an Indian nor a Pakistani! I'm not refugee but rootless." (*Purba-Paschim*, 481) A Muslim businessman was seen to be threatened by some Hindu goons. Later on he sold his business and opted for East Pakistan. (*Purba-Paschim*, 310) A lot of Muslims left Kolkata because of intimidation after partition. According to West Bengal government by 1951, 15,000 Muslims had migrated from Kolkata to East Bengal 'through fear of disturbances'.⁴⁰

In East Bengal's population of 39 million, 11 million were Hindus. Overnight, they became subjects of a Muslim dominated state of Pakistan.⁴¹ The Hindus who had decided to live in East Bengal suffered from same troubles as the Muslims did in West Bengal. Monilal, an educated Hindu gentleman from East Bengal, had a narrow escape from a riot but did not leave his homeland. Later he was imprisoned during the Indo-Pak War in 1965. He sank into deep frustration when was ignored by his friends. Monilal had never felt so scared in his own village. It made him angry and hurt. (*Purba-Paschim*, 414) In 1950 Dr. P.C. Ghosh, a member of Congress Working Committee, after visiting Dhaka made a statement at *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, "There

38 Joya Chatterji, *The Spoils of Partition: Bengal and India, 1947-1967*, Cambridge University Press, 2007, p.110

39 Ibid., p.172

40 Ibid., p.167

41 Ibid., p.110

is no sense of security in the minds of the Hindus. The greatest scare has been caused by attacks resulting in deaths in the railway trains’⁴²

The distance between the people of two wings of Bengal widened whenever Indo-Pak conflicts broke out. Sunil describes it as— “Bengal had been partitioned before, this time the Bengalis are truly divided because of the Indo-Pak war over Kashmir. Commuting between the citizens on both sides has completely stopped. In East Pakistan the abandoned houses and lands of Hindus are declared enemy property. A large number of respected Hindus have been arrested there. Rabindra Sangeet has been banned. In the name of patriotism, a kind of fierce story begin to be propagated. The situation is similar in West Bengal....as if Muslims mean Pakistan’s spy. Lok Sabha member Syed Badrudduja and 350 others have been detained under the Defence of India Act.” (*Purba-Paschim*, 356) Only in West Bengal 3853 were imprisoned. Their only ‘crime’ was that they had been Pakistani. In East Pakistan the number of detainees was almost five thousand. They had been citizens of same country only eighteen years ago. (*Purba-Paschim*, 409) India and Pakistan fought war in 1965 and in 1968 both enacted Enemy Property Ordinances which empowered the state with the authority to seize property owned by an ‘enemy’. “India defined ‘an enemy’ as any Muslim who had migrated from India to Pakistan in the wake of partition, and Pakistan, for its part, as any Hindu or Sikh who had migrated to India.....They also made it hazardous for people to maintain contact with relatives on the other side, since fraternizing with ‘the enemy’ across the border could render their property liable to seizure.”⁴³ As Bidyut Chakrabarty has rightly observed that, “Partition was also a merger of religions with national identity. In many parts of the new dominions of India and Pakistan, being a Hindu (on the one side) or a Muslim (on the other) ‘had become virtually synonymous with being a refugee and a foreign national’. One’s religious label – be it Hindu or Sikh or Muslim – had suddenly become crucial in one’s identity in the new nation states.”⁴⁴ During those days if a letter was to be sent from Dhaka to Kolkata, it had to be sent to London first, then it had to be sent to Kolkata in another envelop from London. Sunil describes this as, “The greatest joke of history in this century.” (*Purba-Paschim*, 481)

Identity Crisis

Sunil Gangopadhyay projects very meticulously in *Purba-Paschim* the identity crisis that had created among the people of Bengal in both parts, especially among the

42 Debjani Sengupta, “op. cit., p.102

43 Joya Chatterji, "South Asian Histories of Citizenship, 1946—1970", *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 55, Cambridge University Press, 2012, pp.1067-68.

44 Bidyut Chakrabarty, op. cit., p.250

migrants. In West Bengal the migrants from East Bengal were considered ‘people from the other side of *Padma*’ and were called ‘*Bangals*’. The West Bengalis feared an erosion of their cultural space since they thought that *Bangals* had disturbed the status quo in their region, polluted the cities and contaminated their languages (*Purba-Paschim*, 302). After the death of Asitbaran his wife was compelled to leave her in-laws as she was from East Bengal and belonged to refugees. Asitbaran’s elder brother was seen shouting— “All the bastard refugees are same....I will kick your ass and send you across the Padma.” (*Purba-Paschim*, 50) Pratap Majumder whose origin had been in East Bengal burst out into anger when one of his friends Bimanbihari said that the banker was his ‘countryman’. Pratap replied “Wasn’t the whole Bengal your country as well before Partition?” (*Purba-Paschim*,166)

Though Pratap had been living in Kolkata since much earlier of Partition and became a government officer, he also considered himself ‘a homeless refugee’ living somehow in a rented house leaving his own hearth and home. Pratap told his son, “We are refugees, still we are not accepted as West Bengali. We have to fight for each and every step.” (*Purba-Paschim*, 283)

This crisis affected the next generations as well. One of Atin’s (Pratap’s son) friends told him that, since Atin’s family had been living in Kolkata before 1947 they were not refugees but *Bangal* definitely. Atin felt bad when people used to spread hatred against the East Bengalis publicly though he grew up in Kolkata and could speak exactly like them. Kanu, Pratap’s brother, wanted to marry a West Bengali to get entrance in ‘*Ghoti*’ society to eradicate his ‘*Bangal*’ identity. (*Purba-Paschim*, 187) Sucharit, son of Harit Mondol, at the beginning was a very meritorious student who desperately wanted to study. Later on he got involved in crimes. He could not tolerate the hatred of his classmates who continuously humiliated him because of his refugee identity.

The consequences of partition have not only been limited in communal division. In west Bengal clear ‘regional division’ had emerged due to refugee influx. This ‘divisional psyche’ amongst the same religious community could be observed in West Bengal. In one hand they were ‘*Bangals*’ and on the other they were refugees. That is why the inferiority complex due to the negligence from the same religious community gave birth to their rebellious sentiment which ultimately reached to the political spectrum. The association of the refugees with the leftist politics had been taken critically in West Bengal. The utter negligence with the term ‘refugee’ had been labelled with them. Though history and literature had accommodated them to some extent, the host society had not.⁴⁵ The Naxalite movement took by storm the

45 Ahmad Rafique, *Deshbhabag Fire Dekha*, Anindya Prokash, 2015, p.439.

youth of Kolkata, especially those from deprived refugee background.⁴⁶ Pratap's son, Atin got involved in this movement. Tapan, a refugee, was also a dedicated activist of Naxalite movement.

Identity crisis can also be seen in East Pakistan since they were treated as second class citizen. Some people like Hossain wanted to remove Bengali identity to present themselves as a true Pakistanis.

Partition has not merely been a national or political issue. Personal prices were also paid by the individuals who had been through permanent traumas. The memory of lost homeland has always been vivid in the minds of the diaspora. Themes of loss, exile and nostalgia recur strongly in *Purba-Paschim*. Niaz Zaman observes that, "This nostalgia for one's birthplace, for the place left behind in East Bengal, projected so sharply in Gangopadhyay's novel..."⁴⁷ Sunil reconstructs the courses of history through the memories of the characters. In the novel we see that how the regular lifestyle of an affluent family went down day by day which gradually affected their interrelationship and broke confidence. Pratap, was an egoist person, belonged to a very well-to-do family of East Bengal, was getting hurt constantly because of his inability to provide with that comfort to his family what his father had provided him with. He spent his whole life since Partition in nostalgia. His father Bhabadeb Majumder was almost like a Zamindar with his landed property in Malkhanagar at Bikrampur. He did not pay attention to the idea of Hindustan and Pakistan. He wondered, "How could people he had known for so long turn into enemies overnight? Does anyone ever leave his ancestral land?" (*Purba-Paschim*, 18) Though after the death of his father, Pratap lost everything there. Later on, he came to know that their house was taken over by government. Sunil describes as "it was like a growing tree was yanked off its roots from soil." (*Purba-Paschim*, 10) He got traumatised when the house at Malkhanagar was robbed by the locals. Even police did not help rather mocked at him saying—"Do you want to say there are no robberies in your India? Why don't you leave and settle there?" (*Purba-Paschim*, 62) Pakistan government indirectly encouraged the process of driving away Hindus. Pratap and his family had been driven by the memory of their lost home for the rest of their lives. Their family reunion during puja holidays, the white puffs of clouds, the fresh feel of the gentle breeze, the aroma of ripen paddies, the laughter—all are gone now. While dying, Pratap's mother Suhasini urged to leave her last breath beside the Tulsi altar in their home. After the independence of Bangladesh when

46 Manas Roy, "Growing up Refugee", *Partitioned Lives: Narratives of Home, Displacement, and Resettlement*, Dorling Kindersley, 2007, p.117

47 Niaz Zaman, op. cit., p.325

Pratap had the chance to visit his very own home it filled his heart with acute pain. He always wanted to remember the beautiful picture of his home as it used to be before partition and could not agree to visit his birthplace with a visa. On the occasion of Independence Day in 1957, Jagatpati invited Pratap and proudly told him that everything comes from his own land. Pratap felt like weeping, “The price of independence is different for each person.” (*Purba-Paschim*, 203) When the people of Kolkata became sick of refugees, Pratap empathized with them. He had been a refugee too. At the end of the novel while Pratap Majumder was counting his last breath, imagined that he was back in his village home. This Pratap Majumder and his family are the symbol of educated middle class Hindu *Bhadralok* migrants who were not called refugee in general but also were not completely out of this identity. Joya Chatterji called them very accurately as ‘émigrés’.⁴⁸

An educated young refugee Tapan once said in the Novel that, to him country means his home in Sarail at Comilla. Though he had been in India at that time, still he dreamt of Sarail. (*Purba-Paschim*, 289)

The landed gentry lost the most important source of their earning—land. Those who could exchange their property somehow could save themselves, but those who did not or could not, suffered constantly. Biswanath Guha had a nice life but soon after independence came to know that his home in Barishal district had gone to a different country. In the novel Biwanath was found to tell Pratap that they had been landed gentry and within moment they became declassed. They had their own houses, estates, arable land and income from those upon which they depended. After losing everything, there was no other way open except to lose the battle of life. Some people like them would be destroyed. That is destiny! (*Purba-Paschim*, 148)

Harit Mondol had to shift his residence for five times since partition. Once in a conversation he had been seen to have said with acute convulsion, “I had a house of my own, three rooms, corrugated iron roof, kitchen, and cow-sheds, a small tank and shares in a jointly owned big tank, thirteen bighas of good firm land, enough to feed us with rice and fish throughout the year. Why was I forced to leave all these for no fault of mine?” (*Purba-Paschim*, 103) The migrants from East Bengal had been so nostalgic about their homeland that they used to mention their addresses from East Bengal in marriage invitation cards as if that had been still their place. (*Purba-Paschim*, 301, 490) They could never come out of this trauma and lived in nostalgia for the rest of their lives.

48 Joya Chatterji, *The Spoils of Partition: Bengal and India, 1947-1967*, Cambridge University Press, 2007, p.114

Alienation and despair

The crisis in the aftermath of the partition accompanied with the breakdown of familial ties and moral values in society. Bishwanath Guha was a conscientious and honest man, shuns money and materiality at the beginning, later turned to a man who could do anything for day-to-day survival. The trauma in East Bengal came in a different way. Sunil subtly depicts the continuous alienation of East Bengalis from Pakistan. The East Bengalis who strongly supported for Pakistan started to feel alienated after the creation of Pakistan. The intellectual persons like Mamun, an East Bengali Muslim writer, editor and political activist, and once a very close friend of Pratap, became traumatized thinking about the irony of Bengalis. When they fought for Pakistan had not imagined the division of Bengal even in their wildest dream. “96% of the Bengali Muslims voted for Pakistan while the Punjabi votes had been only 49%. But what Pakistan they had voted for? ... the Bengali Muslims would have no claims over Kolkata, the center of literature and culture! They would be deprived of the granary of Burdwan, Tagore’s Santiniketan at Birbhum, Furfura sharif of the 24 Parganas, the Nawabi culture of Murshidabad? Didn’t they try their utmost to keep Bengal integrated?” (*Purba-Paschim*, 70) He felt pain thinking that was Pakistan formed to draw dividing line between Bengal and to make them enemies! Had not the Muslims who also wanted Pakistan stayed on in India felt betrayed! Even Jinnah said with agony— “What am I going to do with this moth-eaten Pakistan?” (*Purba-Paschim*, 70)

After so many sacrifices Pakistan was achieved with the expense of divided Bengal. But since then East Bengalis had been being treated as second class citizens. The leaders of West Pakistan started to propagate that Bengali is the language of Hindus. After many years, the trauma which Mamun got from one of his friends’ mother when she said him— ‘oh, that boy is a Muslim, I thought he is a Bengali!’—came back.

The rice eater Bengali could never accept Urdu culture. Finally, Mamun’s illusion broke on 21st February, 1952 when police opened fire on a procession claiming of their language in Dhaka. He realized religion alone cannot unite people. Muslims exploit Muslims, Muslims too kill Muslims. There is no religion of tyrants and exploiters, they are same everywhere. The colonial masters had gone, the Hindu dominance was over, but the newly formed state emerged as an exploiter. (*Purba-Paschim*, 70-71) Mamun had thought that Pakistan would bring back self-esteem to the poor Muslim people and the relations between Hindus and Muslim would improve. But his dreams started to be shattered. When he was arrested in 1965 and tortured in prison he thought about the irony. He had fought for Pakistan. Where had been Ayub Khan and Monem Khan at that time?

Mamun with his eyes full of tears thought while attending *Janaza* prayer of Babul Siddique— “Did the advocates of Pakistan think of the hundreds of Babul Siddiques or the streamer full of weeping Hindu refugees from Barishal? What were the Indian leaders doing? Could any good ever happen to these cursed nations—Bharat and Pakistan—which emerged playing havoc with the land, lives and honor of millions of the innocent people?” (*Purba-Paschim*, 71)

In East Bengal there was very little space for nostalgia. If people talk much about Kolkata they were suspected of being the agents of India. Sunil reveals the suspicion that followed the people in East Bengal. When Bangladesh achieved independence Mamun was very happy on one side and felt pain on the other. Finally, they had become free after the bloody struggle but the Pakistan they had achieved after so many sacrifices could not be kept integrated. Sunil portrayed the thoughts of progressive East Bengali towards the Partition through Mamun’s thought.

The novel portrays an increasingly deteriorating condition in every sphere of life, especially in Kolkata. The entire city of Kolkata was in anarchy and the government totally failed to control this. Everyday there were news of 5-7 murders in newspapers. Strikes, anti-government movement, fight with police, skirmishes, bombing, curfew, assassinations, destruction of statues, attacks on police, looting arms, etc. were regular incidents in Kolkata. The Naxalite movement had shaken the entire West Bengal in late sixties and early seventies. The movement was brutally suppressed by government. Without any reason West Bengal lost lots of talented youths. Kolkata witnessed more than fifty political murders on an average day. Indira Gandhi proclaimed Emergency in 1975 and wiped out the extreme Left from Kolkata. Its cadres were either eliminated or jailed.⁴⁹

When the political situation goes wrong, every aspects of national life gets affected. We see in the novel that how the economic scenario was constantly deteriorating after partition. The coming of incessant refugees had overburdened the already broken economy of West Bengal. By 1973 almost 15 percent of West Bengal’s entire population, and one in four of those who lived in its towns were refugees which left profound impact on the province.⁵⁰ Influx of middle class refugees increased the price of land. The refugees also became competitors in every job sector as they agreed to work at lower wages.

Poverty, famine and scarcity of food and consumer goods were very common during those days. Dr. B. C. Roy, the Chief Minister of West Bengal, had written to

49 Manas Roy, op. cit., p.117

50 Joya Chatterji, *The Spoils of Partition: Bengal and India, 1947-1967*, Cambridge University Press, 2007, p.151

Jawaharlal Nehru in December 1949, "...the main trouble with the people of Bengal has been—(a) Want of food; (b) Want of employment; (c) Want of land on which they, particularly the refugees, could settle them."⁵¹

In India, 12 crores got to eat every after one day and 2 crores and 40 lakhs people hardly could manage one meal every day. (*Purba-Paschim*, 490) Thousands of people are seen to march towards Kolkata from the Sunderbans to survive as devastating famine broke out there. Black market, bribery, price hike, market speculation, corruption etc. were all around. Pratap's brother Kanu got involved in black marketing. He was seen to collect saris and coal from government controlled shops allotted for poor people and sell in market. Those days essential commodities used to disappear from market suddenly. Government tried to sell them in controlled rates. But most of the time people like Kanu were the beneficiaries of that. Later on he became a rich businessmen at Barabajar. That is how a new rich class can be seen to have emerged in West Bengal. On the contrary, Pratap is found going through severe pressure in minimizing household budgets constantly. The price of rice increased to 32 taka per mound. Rice was brought to Kolkata from nearby areas denying the cordoning. The government had fixed 300 grams of rice per capita. Still people hardly could find rice to buy. All had gone to black market where the price of rice had been increased by 2 taka per kg. (*Purba-Paschim*, 307, 452, 489) In 1965 Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri said that in that situation the real patriotism was to eat less. He advised the people to fast on Mondays. (*Purba-Paschim*, 372) Many people in the villages didn't get a square mill in a day for more than two or three weeks. Sugar was also a scare item even after government implemented prohibition on sweetmeats. After independence, collapse in the small banks had become very common in West Bengal. Many people lost their jobs and savings. There were literally no control of government over those banks.

Relative poverty in both parts of Bengal had been acute. Only the poor were suffering. The rich were getting richer. A new rich class had been emerging under the patron of politics. (*Purba-Paschim*, 201) Two newly born countries were spending money in wars and manufacturing arms.

Unemployment can be seen in this novel as a terrible problem in the post partition era in West Bengal. The fall in landed aristocratic families increased the number of unemployed youths. They were getting involved with mischief and illegal activities. (*Purba-Paschim*, 161) Kanu's friends suggested him to go and wait at the burning *ghat* to keep an eye on the people who are dying before retirement and then to rush to those offices. The refugees who entered in millions had also been jobless. Tapan, a

51 Saroj Chakrabarty, op. cit., p.150

refugee did not get any job after completing graduation. Though there was quota for refugees, there was huge abuse too. (*Purba-Paschim*, 288) Joya Chatterji describes the situation as “...and by July 1950 West Bengal faced an annual ‘food gap’ of 200,000 tons of food grains, with the result that the price of rice and other essential foods began to spiral out of control. Each year this ‘food gap’ grew wider as West Bengal’s population continued to grow larger. This caused food prices to shoot upwards, seriously undermining the little stability of the society and polity of West Bengal had managed to retain. These shortages, whether of food, land or cloth, exacerbated already acute inflationary trends in prices. As one observer noted, the ‘social overload’ and ‘the needs of the refugees let loose an inflationary spiral resulting in a sharp rise in general prices of commodities, land and materials. In a period of 5–7 years, the price of land and other commodities shot up by five times... The record levels of inflation after 1947 undoubtedly profited ‘a really big class of the new rich’, but it caused enormous hardship to the poor...the salaried middle classes were also being squeezed and they found themselves chronically undernourished.”⁵²

In 1955 the editor of *The Statesman* warned Nehru that Kolkata could explode at any moment. He told that this terribly over-crowded city, with its crowds of unemployed, lived apparently on the brink of trouble and the crowds which gathered at the slightest provocation and did what they like.⁵³

In the novel the crises depicted in East Bengal was different from West, as Niaz Zaman said, “Political problems, rather than problems of daily life, take centre-stage in East Pakistan.”⁵⁴ Immediately after partition crises started to exacerbate in East Bengal when the Bengalis were getting socio-economically and culturally deprived by West Pakistani rulers. The discriminatory and colonial behaviour of West Pakistani elites highly disappointed the people of East Bengal. The novel traces the cracks that formed between West and East Pakistan from the very beginning. Sunil describes these crises through Mamun. For a single rupee spent in East, they spent ten in the West. The ratio of employment was one to ten between East and West. Though the goods were exported from East Bengal, all imports went to the West. They did not even hesitate to shoot at the Bengali Muslims. (*Purba-Paschim*, 71) The novel denotes the economic disparities between the two wings of Pakistan. During natural disasters, East Bengal got very little support from government. Once in a cyclone in East Pakistan 16000 people died officially whereas unofficial documents

52 Joya Chatterji, *The Spoils of Partition: Bengal and India, 1947-1967*, Cambridge University Press, 2007, p.156

53 Saroj Chakrabarty, op. cit., pp.226-27

54 Niaz Zaman, op. cit., p.322

showed it exceeded 25000-50000. But there was almost no aid initiative from government despite this huge disaster. When the news was published in most the newspapers, President Ayub Khan came to Dhaka seven days after the incident had taken place. During Indo-Pak war in 1965, East Pakistan was left defenseless. (*Purba-Paschim*, 357) Moreover, one thousand crore rupees was allocated for the construction of the new capital of Pakistan in Islamabad while twenty crore rupees was given for Dhaka. (*Purba-Paschim*, 481)

Unemployment also can be seen in East Bengal. Though the colonial masters and Hindu dominants left the country, there had been very little job opportunity for the East Bengali people as most of those were taken by the West Pakistanis. (*Purba-Paschim*, 68) In the novel, Sunil mentions a figure from 1951, shows that the central Pakistan Secretariat did not have any single person from East and all the 42 posts were taken by West Pakistanis. Amongst the 22 joint secretaries only 8 and amongst 325 section officers only 50 were from East Pakistan. There were hardly any Bengali in army. (*Purba-Paschim*, 68) All the big businesses and administrative positions of East Pakistan had been occupied by non-Bengali Muslims. (*Purba-Paschim*, 309) According to Rounaq Jahan, “Thus the power structure that Pakistan inherited had little effective Bengali participation and the policy pursued by the ‘national elite’ in the early years—a policy of one state, one government, one economy, one language, one culture—tended to perpetuate this imbalance; and was a significant factor in the growth of Bengali alienation in the first decade of Pakistan’s existence.”⁵⁵

Relative poverty in East Pakistan is also portrayed in the novel. In the villages, people hardly could earn daily livelihood whereas in cities like Dhaka, rich people were seen enjoying imported biscuits with tea, coca cola etc. (*Purba-Paschim*, 139) A new rich class emerged by getting government shelter like Badru Sheikh and *hotelwala* Hossain. After partition, food crisis reached to the extreme in Fridpur, Comilla and Dhaka. Cordoning was also enforced in East Bengal.⁵⁶

However, political non-accommodation, economic subjugation and cultural suppression eventually led the Bengalis of East Bengal to fight a bloody war—The War of Liberation which ultimately turned East Pakistan into Bangladesh, a new sovereign country in 1971. The Subcontinent thus partitioned into three states.

Sunil details political changes in both sides of the border—India-Pakistan conflicts, the Naxalite movement, the events of seventies, military crackdown of 25th march, the Liberation War of Bangladesh, involvement of India at the war, birth of

55 Rounaq Jahan, *Pakistan: Failure in National Integration*, The University Press Limited, 2015, p.28

56 Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, *op. cit.*, p. 103

Bangladesh and its aftermath. The novel also reflects the changing situation in both sides with the younger generation opted for UK and USA.

However, gradually the tragic divide adversely affected Bengali culture and language. The immediate impact was the crisis created by the displacement of the Bengalis from both parts. Central Government of India did nothing for the East Bengali migrants. Their aim was to weaken the Bengali nationalistic spirit. Central Government of Pakistan had the same objective as well—suppressing Bengali nationalism.⁵⁷ *Purba-Paschim* projects this repression on the both parts of Bengal.

Concluding remarks

The impact of partition in 1947 had been so pervasive that it still determines, to a great extent, the socio-economic, demographic even political structure and strata of this region. The mere stroke of a cartographer had dramatically changed the lives of millions. Sunil Gangopadhyay in two volume of *Purba-Paschim* tells the traumatic saga of those individuals from both parts of Bengal. In the panorama of *Purba-Paschim*, nostalgia for lost home, trauma of displacement and violence were shown vividly. Consequently, the falling condition everywhere in West and East Bengal shows that the struggle is not yet over. He successfully juxtaposes impersonal government accounts with individual stories of trauma. It is observed that the newly independent states couldn't meet the expectations of the citizens. After some years, the spirit of independence withered away. The country was then merely a place to earn a living instead of being a motherland. The boundaries of the new nation-states, therefore, became unreal and it encompassed what had not been 'home'. The refugee crisis it gave birth still remains a bone of contention for the divided states. The displaced and declassed persons have not been assimilated yet in the host society. Sunil shows not only how partition separates this region but also how its consequences affected the land through the eyes of three generations of different classes. In the end, the novel reveals the futility of partition on the basis of religion. And he tries to weld both Bengalis in one through Pratap's dream who was dying in West Bengal imagining the home he left behind in East Bengal. Sunil has left this epoch as an authentic document to look back at the history of partition—an incident that showed dream of silky horizon, but led to the never-ending misery and trauma for the divided people.

57 Ahmad Rafique, *op. cit.*, p.438

IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE-INDUCED THREATS ON HUMAN SECURITY IN BANGLADESH: A STUDY INTO THE TANGUAR HAOR OF SUNAMGANJ DISTRICT

Maruf Mia*

Abstract

Bangladesh is one of the most climate change vulnerable countries in the world and the impact of climate change may be even worse than anticipated. The forthcoming challenges in the context of climate change and variability are a major concern for the human security and sustainable development of the *haor* area. Environmental hazards affect the different aspects of human security in the Tanguar Haor area more severely than in other haor areas. Against this backdrop, the current study seeks to explore the existing state of the four components of human security—economic, food, health, and environmental, of purposively selected villages of the Tanguar Haor of Sunamganj District. As well, this paper has identified and analysed the major causes of the human insecurity of poor households in the area. Subsequently, the author empirically inquired into the selected localities to find out what sorts of and how climate change-induced threats and environmental hazards create obstacles to ensure human security in Tanguar Haor. Findings of the research reveal that the human security of the people of Tanguar Haor is at high risk due to climate change-induced threats and environmental hazards that generate other major problems.

Key Words: Human Security, Environmental Hazards, Climate Change, Flash Flood, Poverty, Unemployment.

1. Introduction

For too long, the notion of security has been designed considering the conflict between states. In the post-Cold War era, there has been considerable debate on what constitutes ‘security’, including the question of whom or what is to be secured as well as the sources of insecurity.¹ Contemporary security studies experts have been

* Assistant Professor (Political Science) at the School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Languages, Bangladesh Open University, Gazipur

1 J. Ann Tickner, “Re-visioning Security” in Ken Booth and Steve Smith (eds.) *International Relations Theory Today*, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995, pp. 175-97; David A. Baldwin, “The Concept of Security”, *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 1, 1997, pp. 5-26. Available at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20097464?seq=1>, (accessed on 21 December, 2019); Barry Buzan, Ole Waever and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner, 1998.

working to widen the security agenda to include non-military sources of threats, for example, poverty, environmental hazards, infectious and lethal diseases, and economic recessions, or to focus on the security anxieties of persons rather than those of states.² Nowadays the majority of people feel insecure about their daily lives. Scarcity of jobs, the uncertainty of basic income, poor health facilities, environmental hazards, insecurity from crime and violence—these are the emerging concerns of human security all over the world.³

The concept of human security is potentially very important in Bangladesh because the primary threats to the security of the people are non-traditional.⁴ Bangladesh has achieved considerable economic growth in the last three decades. It has successfully met the targets of MDG and is now working towards achieving the SDG goals. Nevertheless, the performance of the country has not improved as expected over this period in terms of good governance and aspects of wellbeing related to human security. Moreover, some aspects of human security are even deteriorating. It is observed that various components of human security are at high risk in rural and remote areas of the country.

There are about 373 haors located in the districts of Sunamganj, Habiganj, Netrakona, Kishoreganj, Sylhet, Maulvibazaar, and Brahmanbaria.⁵ Tanguar Haor, a large bowl-shaped floodplain depression located in the North-Eastern region of Bangladesh, is more vulnerable than the other haors of the country. The Government of Bangladesh declared Tanguar Haor as an Ecologically Critical Area in 1999 considering its critical condition as a result of overexploitation of its natural resources. In 2000, this wetland was declared as one of the Ramsar sites—a wetland of international importance. This Haor consists of two *Upazilas*—Tahirpur and Dharmapasha. Tahirpur Upazila covers the major area of Tanguar Haor. It covers

-
- 2 Stephen M. Walt, “The Renaissance of Security Studies”, *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 35, No. 2, 1991, pp. 211-39. Available at <https://academic.oup.com/isq/article-abstract/35/2/211/1792023?redirectedFrom=fulltext>, (accessed on 17 November, 2019).
 - 3 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Human Development Report (HDR) 1994*, New York: UNDP, 1994, p. 3. Available at http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/255/hdr_1994_en_complete_nostats.pdf, (accessed on 13 December, 2019).
 - 4 Saferworld, *Human Security in Bangladesh*, a report published on May, 2008. Available at https://www.nipsa.in/uploads/country_resources_file/1021_Human_security_in_Bangladesh_May_2008.pdf, (accessed on 22 April, 2020).
 - 5 Center for Environmental and Geographic Information Services (CEGIS), *Master Plan of the Haor Area*, Bangladesh Haor and Wetland Development Board, Ministry of Water Resources, Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, V. 2, 2012, pp. 1-35. Available at https://dbhwd.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/dbhwd.portal.gov.bd/publications/298d5166_988c_4589_96cb_36e143deba4f/Haor%20Master%20Plan%20Volume%202.pdf (accessed on 12 September 2019).

four unions from these two Upazila—Uttar Sreepur, Dakshin Sreepur, Uttar Bangshikunda and Dakshin Bangshikunda. Eight villages of the aforesaid four unions with a high incidence of violation of human security due to climate change-induced threats and environmental hazards are purposively selected to collect data. This area is overwhelmed with a lot of problems such as flash flood, siltation and sedimentation of major rivers, riverbank erosion and wave action, illiteracy, poverty, inadequate health facilities, lack of proper sanitation, scarcity of pure drinking water, fragile and inadequate road network, overexploitation of fisheries resources and swamp forest, weakness in leasing system for fisheries and indiscriminate harvest of natural resources which create serious hindrance in ensuring human security of the individuals.⁶ In this study, the current state of four components of human security - economic, food, health and environmental- of the people of Tanguar Haor has been examined from the perspective of the effects of climate change and natural disasters.

Both qualitative and quantitative methods have been incorporated in this study for inclusively assessing the existing scenario of human security. A total of sixty (60) respondents purposively selected from different professions were involved in the research. Data from important persons of different professions have been collected through Key Informant Interview (KII) method to make the research elaborative and more pragmatic. The researcher has collected data in compliance with all ethical aspects of research.

2. Statement of the Research Problem

Tanguar Haor is a hot spot for biodiversity and one of the richest areas in Bangladesh.⁷ Despite being rich in natural resources and diversity, the standard of living of the people in this area is very low. People living in and around Tanguar Haor are mostly poor and lack basic amenities of energy, pure potable water, sanitation, education, communication infrastructures, and thriving markets. Most of the villages remain disconnected from the mainland for at least six months in a year, basically in the monsoon season.⁸

6 Center for Environmental and Geographic Information Services (CEGIS), *Master Plan of the Haor Area*, Bangladesh Haor and Wetland Development Board, Ministry of Water Resources, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, V. 1, 2012, pp. 10-43. Available at https://dbhwd.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/dbhwd.portal.gov.bd/publications/baf5341d_f248_4e19_8e6d_e7ab44f7ab65/Haor%20Master%20Plan%20Volume%201.pdf (accessed on 12 September 2019)

7 W. Giesen, and S.M.A. Rashid, *Management Plan for Tanguar Haor, Bangladesh* (Final Draft), Restoring local community participation in wetland resource management. National Conservation Strategy Implementation Project-1, Ministry of Environment and Forests and IUCN, Bangladesh, 1997, p. 218.

8 A.K. Enamul Haque and Mizanul Hoque Kazal, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), *Rich Resources, Poor People: The Paradox of Living in Tanguar Haor*,

The population in this haor area is subject to the threat of human security due to climate change and the pressure of locally dominant class interest. All components of human security are severely violated in the Tanguar Haor. As a result, the people of this area remain marginalized in terms of human security compared to other vulnerable groups in the country. The individuals of Tanguar Haor are usually dependent on the wetland resources of the haor. Farming, fishing, daily wage labour, duck and cattle rearing are the main sources of livelihood for the people of Tanguar Haor. Occupations in the Tanguar Haor change with the change in seasons. In the dry season, agriculture (46%) and agriculture labourer (26%) constitute the major group, followed by wage labourer (7%) and small-scale traders (8%). Fishing constitutes only 3% of local occupation. In the monsoon, the scenario changes and 41.7% of households are identified as engaged in fishing and they are fully dependent on the haor resources for managing their livelihood.⁹ The people unfortunately have to depend on informal, customary agreements with the local elites for getting access to the resources (especially for fishing) in the haor area because they (local elites) control the maximum resources of the haor area.¹⁰ However, this trend is shifting towards more fishing households for their recent fishing rights under the community organization's membership.¹¹

The vast extent of water bodies, prolong submergence and frequent disasters make the lives of the people of Tanguar Haor even harder affecting settlements, livelihood, mobility, and health. They, thereby, either forced to migrate or console themselves as disasters are their ultimate fate.¹² Climate change-induced threats and environmental hazards are closely linked to the vulnerability of the livelihoods of haor people. It has been observed during the literature review that several NGOs, government

an IUCN Survey Report, 2008. Available at http://acdonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/dr_enam_s_socio_economic_report_on_th.pdf (accessed on 25 January, 2020).

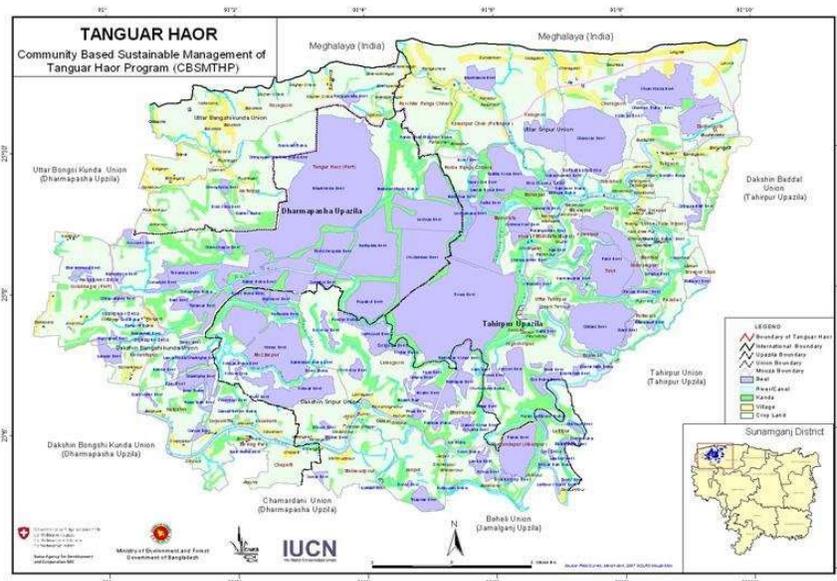
9 International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), *Tanguar Haor Management Plan Framework and Guidelines*, Dhaka: Bangladesh Country Office, 2015. Available at <https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/2015-052.pdf>, (accessed on 17 February, 2020).

10 R. Matthew, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), *Sustainable Livelihoods, Environmental Security and Conflict Mitigation: Four Cases in South Asia*, 2005, a working paper on poverty, equity and rights in Conversation. Available at https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/import/downloads/iuedcasestudysouthasia_en.pdf, (accessed on 18 February, 2020).

11 A.K.E. Haque, M. K. Shahzia and M.A.A. Diyan, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), *Economic Values and Ecosystem Services of Tanguar Haor*, Community Based Sustainable Management of Tanguar Haor Project, Bangladesh: Dhaka, IUCN, 2012, p. 42.

12 IUCN, *op. cit.*

departments, and academicians have done many worthy types of researches on the poverty and socio-economic problems of Tanguar Haor but no in-depth research has been found on the effects of climate change and natural disasters on human security. Therefore, a comprehensive research has been conducted on how climate change-induced threats and natural disasters adversely influence the different aspects of human security. The current state of human security has been analysed to find out the basic challenges to ensuring the human security of the people of the area. The findings of the research will help disseminate knowledge about this population. To empower them the findings of the study will offer the policymakers to take appropriate measures for the upliftment of the people in the haor region.



Map 1.1.1: Full Map of Tanguar Haor area; Source: IUCN Bangladesh office.
Website: <https://www.iucn.org/asia/countries/bangladesh>

3. Conceptual Framework

3.1 Human Security—Background

The notion of human security has become a central element of present-day security studies since its inception in United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Human Development Report 1994. The term apparently had its origins in policy statements originating from the United Nations in the mid-1990s and in particular the UNDP's Human Development Report 1994. In this report, 'human security' is described as a condition where people are given relief from the traumas that besiege

human development.¹³ Despite the concept's recent introduction to security studies, the idea that people ought to be secure in the conduct of their daily lives is not new, which should not be surprising. Considering the essentiality of individuals' security, the founders of the United Nations had always given equal importance to people's security and territorial security. As per back as June 1945, the US secretary of state reported the inevitability of security of men and women in their homes and jobs to his government on the results of the San Francisco Conference.

3.2 Human Security—Definition

Human security means, 'first, safety from such chronic threats as hunger, diseases and repression. And second, it means protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life—whether in homes, in jobs or in communities'.¹⁴

The narrow school: Mack, a proponent of the narrow school, argues that the threat of political violence to people, by the state or any other organized political actor, is the proper focus for the concept of human security. The definition that Mack supports is that human security is 'the protection of individuals and communities from war and other forms of violence'.¹⁵ This narrow definition has been simplified as 'freedom from fear' of the threat or use of political violence and is distinguished from the broad definition below, which is labelled 'freedom from want'.

The broad schools: The broad schools argue that human security means more than a concern with the threat of violence. Human security is not only freedom from fear but also freedom from want, which is the focus of human development in the UNDP report of 1994. Moreover, according to some, human security goes beyond freedom from want in underdevelopment and involves other human freedoms and values. For instance, Thakur¹⁶ opines that 'human security is concerned with the protection of people from critical life-threatening dangers, regardless of whether the threat is rooted in anthropogenic activities or natural events, whether they lie within or outside

13 Pauline Kerr, "Human Security" in Alan Collins (ed.) *Contemporary Security Studies*, USA: New York, Oxford University Press Inc., 2010, p. 122.

14 HDR, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

15 A. Mack, "A signifier of Shared Values", *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 35, No. 3, 2004, pp. 366-67. Available at <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/096701060403500323>, (accessed on 23 December, 2019).

16 R. Thakur, "A political worldview", *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 35, No. 3, 2004, p. 347. Available at <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/096701060403500307>, (accessed on 23 January, 2020).

states, and whether they are direct or structural'. Alkiri,¹⁷ who was a member of the 2003 Commission on Human Security, co-chaired by Amartya Sen and Sadako Ogata, argues that the objective of human security is 'to protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that advance human freedoms and human fulfilment'.

3.3 Components of Human Security

Human security now emphasizes more on two core greater areas—people's security and sustainable human development. The threats to human security can be considered under seven major categories: 1. Economic security 2. Food security 3. Health security 4. Environmental security 5. Personal security 6. Community security 7. Political security.¹⁸ These seven components of human security are closely connected and overlapped. A threat to one element of human security is more likely to affect all components of it like an angry cyclone.

Economic Security: Concerning human security, economic security for the people means the security of jobs, income and a given level of consumption. The economic security of people for a standard of living includes probable continued financial solvency, the certainty of cash flow in the future of a person and employment or job security. In this connection, the economic security of individuals depends on their secured basic income. How this basic income is generated? The basic income is mainly generated from productive and remunerative work. Sometimes, it may also be fulfilled from some publicly financed safety net as the last resort. The people of developing countries are facing serious economic insecurity as compared to the individuals of industrial countries due to the lack of available jobs and corruption which eventually influences the other components of human security. The economic insecurity in rural livelihoods of Bangladesh is more acute than in the people of urban areas. Poverty and homelessness are the two major effects of economic insecurity in rural Bangladesh.

Food Security: Food security means that all people at all times have both physical and economic access to adequate, hygienic and nutritious food to fulfil their dietary demands and food preferences for a sound and healthy life.¹⁹ This does not only

17 S. Alkiri, "A vital core that must be treated with the same gravitas as traditional security threats", *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 35, No. 3, 2004, pp. 359-60. Available at <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/096701060403500317>, (accessed on 22.3.2020).

18 HDR, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-25.

19 Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), "Rome Declaration on Food Security and World Food Summit Plan of Action", 1996. Available at <http://www.fao.org/3/w3613e/w3613e00.htm#:~:text=1..national%2C%20regional%20and%20global%20levels,> (accessed on 13 December, 2019).

indicate the availability of food rather it focuses on the easy access to food of all people. Because it is happening in many families where individuals go hungry even when enough food is available. People starve not because of the unavailability of food—but because they cannot afford it. It indicates that individuals should have easy access by producing food for themselves, by purchasing it, or by receiving the advantage of the public food distribution system.²⁰

Health Security: Health security promises a minimum level of safety from diseases and an unhealthy way of life for people. Most of the people in developing nations suffer from infections and parasitic diseases. New diseases, like COVID-19, are emerging at unprecedented rates muddling people's health security and causing social and economic impacts. The UNDP Human Development Report 1994 illustrates that threats to health security arise in both developing and developed nations because the poorer people in rural areas are affected due to malnutrition and unsafe environment. Deficiency of nutritious food, inadequate supply of medicine, shortage of pure drinking water, unhealthy sanitary system or absence of other necessary factors that are favourable to sound health accelerate the health insecurity.

Environmental Security: Environmental security protects individuals from short and long-term adverse effects of nature. It examines the environmental hazards induced threats to individuals, communities and nations. Human beings depend on a sound physical environment. They assume that whatever destruction they impose on the earth, it will gradually recuperate. But this is the wrong assumption of people because when we repeatedly damage the environmental balance, it does not forget to take revenge. Environmental insecurity may cause serious threats to both human security as well as national security. It ponders over the capabilities of individuals, communities or nations to cope with environmental jeopardies, changes or conflicts, or limited natural resources. For instance, climate change can be considered a serious threat to environmental security. Reckless human activity adversely affects the emissions of CO₂ which brings rapid climatic and environmental changes at the regional and global levels, and eventually, it hits crop production. Consequently, it can accelerate the deficiency of food which will then cause of political tensions, ethnic conflict, and civil unrest.²¹

20 HDR, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

21 Elizabeth Chalecki, *Environmental security: A case study of climate change*, Oakland, California: Pacific Institute for Studies of Development, Environment and Security, August 2002. Available at <https://pacinst.org/publication/military-faces-serious-challenges-from-climate-change/> (accessed on 21 December, 2019).

Personal Security: Human life is increasingly threatened by sudden and unpredictable violence in both developed and developing nations. The threats take several forms: a. threats from the state (physical torture); b. threats from other states (war); c. threats from other groups of people (ethnic tension); d. threats from individuals or gangs (crime, street violence); e. threats directed against women (rape, domestic violence); f. threats directed at children based on their vulnerability and dependence (child abuse); g. threats to self (suicide, drug use).²² At present human lives face greater risks than ever before in many societies. For many people, the greatest source of anxiety is a crime, particularly violent crime. Crime and violence are also facts of life in developing countries.²³

Community Security: The present-day notion of community security includes both group and personal security. It focuses on confirming that communities and their members are “free from fear”. The definition of community security also includes action on a wider range of social issues to ensure “freedom from want”. Community security defends individuals from the loss of traditional relationships and values. The aim is to protect people from sectarian and ethnic violence. Traditional communities, particularly minority ethnic groups, are often threatened.²⁴

Political Security: One of the most important aspects of human security is that people should be able to live in a society that honours their basic human rights. Political security is often connected to people’s basic human rights. Amnesty International in a recent study illustrated that political and government repression, systematic torture, ill-treatment or disappearance are still practised in many countries.²⁵ Human rights violations most frequently happen when political unrest takes place in a country. Political security protects people from these repressions and violence.

4. Literature Review

Every state should focus on people-centric security rather than state-centric or military security to confirm individuals’ safety and ensure sustainable human development.²⁶ People are the focal point of the security concept and, the definition of security will remain incomplete without the incorporation of individuals’ interests.²⁷

22 HDR, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

23 HDR, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-31.

24 Pratap Raghendra Singh, “Theoretical perspective of human security”, *International Journal of Academic Research and Development*, Vol. 2, No. 5, 2017, pp. 396-398.

25 *Ibid*

26 HDR, *op. cit.*

27 Iftekhharuzzaman, “Challenges to the security of Bangladesh: Primacy of the political and socio-economic”, *Arms Control* (Currently known as *Contemporary Security Policy*),

Health, poverty and human security are closely interconnected in taking into consideration different influential factors of human security.²⁸ In developing countries like Bangladesh, poverty and food and health insecurity are major hindrances towards ensuring the human security of the people. Alam and Hossain,²⁹ have linked two more issues—entrepreneurship and utilization of resources to poverty, food security and health security and examined the interdependence of these issues in Haor areas of Bangladesh. In this connection, P. K. Sarma³⁰ explains in his study on the Nikli Upazila of Kishoreganj district, a remote haor area that a significant number of households of this area are suffered from economic, food, and health insecurity because of mainly landlessness, mono-crop cultivation, seasonal unemployment, and natural disasters, and the extreme dependency on natural resources of the haor further prolong the insecurity of their lives. As Hartwig de Haen and Gunter Hemrich³¹ argue the food security of a country can be violated for both short and long time by environmental hazards and natural disasters as both affect the poor extremely. Kamal, et al.,³² identify the flash flood as one of the core causes of food insecurity of the poor households of Tanguar Haor after examining the

Vol. 13, No. 3, 1992, pp. 518-530. Available at <https://doi.org/10.1080/01440389208404011>, (accessed on 13 December, 2019).

- 28 I. Fischer and M.M. Salehin, “Health and Poverty as Challenges for Human Security: Two Case Studies on Northern Vietnam and Bangladesh” in Brauch H.G. et al. (eds) *Facing Global Environmental Change. Hexagon Series on Human and Environmental Security and Peace*, Vol. 4. Springer, Berlin, Heidelberg, 2009. Available at https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-540-68488-6_40, (accessed on 23 May 2020).
- 29 M. Masud Alam and Md. Kabir Hossain, “Policy options on sustainable resource utilization and food security in Haor areas of Bangladesh: A theoretical approach”, *International Journal of Social, Political and Economic Research*, Vol. 5, No. 1, 2018, pp. 11-28. Available at <http://ijosper.uk/index.php/i/article/view/20/20>, (accessed on 11 February, 2020).
- 30 P. K. Sarma, (2010). “Scenario of haor vulnerabilities and other obstacles for sustainable livelihood development in Nikli upazila”, *Journal of Bangladesh Agricultural University*, Vol. 8, No. 2, pp. 283-290. Available at <https://www.banglajol.info/index.php/JBAU/article/view/7939> (accessed on 19 December, 2019).
- 31 Hartwig de Haen and Gunter Hemrich, “The economics of natural disasters: implications and challenges for food security”, *Agricultural Economics*, Vol. 37, No. 1, 2007, pp. 31-45. Available at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/4987490_The_economics_of_natural_disasters_Implications_and_challenges_for_food_security (accessed on 12 January 2020).
- 32 A.S.M Maksud Kamal, Mohammad Shamsudduha, Bayes Ahmed, S.M. Kamrul Hassan, Md. Shahidul Islam, Ilan Kelman and Maureen Fordham, “Resilience to flash floods in wetland communities of northeastern Bangladesh”, *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, Vol. 31, 2018, pp. 478-488. Available at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326015348_Resilience_to_Flash_Floods_in_Wetland_Communities_of_Northeastern_Bangladesh, (accessed on 19 December, 2019).

devastating effects of the flash flood of 2017 that extensively hit the Sunamganj district of Bangladesh.

Climate change and environmental disasters are directly and indirectly influencing these issues and further endangering the human-centric security of haor and coastal inhabitants though Bangladesh has less contribution to worldwide global warming.³³ In this case, Jasminka Oliveric Young³⁴ has thoroughly analyzed how climate change and environmental hazards are adversely affecting the major components of human security—economic, food, environmental and health security of the individuals of Bangladesh. Young examines the threats to human security raising two important questions—to what extent climate change represents a human security risk in Bangladesh and why climate change is considered a threat to human security in Bangladesh?

5. Methodology of the Study

The research conducted on human security in the Tanguar Haor has been completed in both qualitative and quantitative methods. Data and information used in this research have been collected and gathered both from primary and secondary sources. The primary data have been collected from the research area through the survey, the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and the Key Informant Interview (KII) method while secondary data from different books, relevant publications, dissertations, journal articles, reports, government publications, rules and regulations, different acts and websites. A semi-structured questionnaire has been designed for taking in-depth interviews focusing on the issues that severely affect the human security of the people. Collected data both from primary and secondary sources have been transliterated precisely for the qualitative analysis. Since the sample size is small, the researcher has used MS-excel to prepare tables, charts and diagrams and analyse all quantitative data.

-
- 33 Md. Ashrafuzzaman and Luis Gustavo Furini, “Climate change and human health linkages in the context of globalization: An overview from global from southwestern coastal region of Bangladesh”, *Environmental International*, Vol. 127, 2019, pp. 402-411. Available at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envint.2019.03.020>, (accessed on 19 May 2020); Mahbuba Nasreen, Khondoker Mokaddem Hossain and Md. Abul Kalam Azad, “Climate change and livelihood in Bangladesh: Experiences of people living in the coastal regions” in Effendi Cecep, Vasanthi Rajendran and M.H. Kawsar, (eds.) *Climate Change Vulnerability: Cases from CIRDAP Member Countries*, Dhaka: Chameli House, CIRDAP, 2016, pp. 1-27. Available at <https://cirdap.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Climate-Change-Vulnerability-Cases-from-CIRDAP-Member-Countries.pdf>, (accessed on 22 January, 2020).
- 34 Jasminka Oliveric Young, “Climate change as human security risk in Bangladesh”, 2013. Available at https://www.academia.edu/10392500/Climate_Change_as_Human_Security_Risk_in_Bangladesh, (accessed on 13 September 2019).
-

5.1 Sampling

It is already mentioned that Tanguar Haor consists of four unions—Uttar Sreepur, Dakshin Sreepur, Uttar Bangshikunda and Dakshin Bangshikunda. Uttar Sreepur and Dakshin Sreepur lie in the Tahirpur Upazila whereas Uttar Bangshikunda and Dakshin Bangshikunda are under Dharmapasha Upazila. Eight villages have purposively been selected from the abovementioned four unions as these localities are highly vulnerable to climate change-induced threats and other natural disasters. The selected villages from which data have been collected through the survey, FGD and KII (Key Informant Interview) are Joypur and Mujrai from Uttar Sreepur; Lama Gaon, Ramshingopur and Patabuka from Dakshin Sreepur; Antorpur and Nababpur from Uttar Bangshikunda and Rongchi from Dakshin Bangshikunda.

5.2 Sample Size

A total of sixty participants (forty-eight in FGD and twelve in KII) of different professions have purposively been chosen from selected vulnerable villages and institutions of the research area. Hence, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) has been used amongst the following individuals who have homogeneous backdrops or experiences to reconnoitre the sense of survey data. Data have also been collected from purposively selected twelve key informants of different professions who have come up with insights on the attributes of problems of the haor community.

Table 5.2.1: Participants in FGD and KII; researcher's dataset.

Numbers of FGD	Profession of Participants	Number of Participants (Persons)	
FGD-1	Male Farmer	5	8
	Female Farmer	3	
FGD-2	Landless	5	8
	Share Cropper	3	
FGD-3	Fisherman	5	8
	Fish Merchants	3	
FGD-4	Shop Keeper	8	8
FGD-5	Day labour	5	8
	Handy crafts	3	
FGD-6	Teachers-primary, secondary and college level	4	8
	College students (two boys and two girls)	4	
KII	Government officials, elected peoples' representatives, civil society members and NGO activist	12	
Total	Total Participants	60	

5.3 Ethical Issues

On ethical grounds, the participants were free to share information and their experiences. The interviewer did not exert any pressure to disclose information that participants did not wish to release. They also had the space to refuse any question which they felt uncomfortable to answer. Hence, the relationship with the respondents during data collection was “professional” but “comfortable”. Besides, in the analysis and reporting, the identification of participants (such as real name) is anonymous.

6. Data Findings and Analysis

The data obtained in the study have been analysed in conjunction with four components of human security.

6.1 Economic Security

The economic security of the people of Tanguar Haor has been assessed based on main threats such as persistent poverty, the income of the household, availability of income sources, and lack of access to credit.

Persistent Poverty: Despite the abundance of nature, a very low density of population, the birds, the rivers, the sand and coal mines in its vicinity, the Tanguar villages are dreadfully poor.³⁵ In spite of the availability of such huge resources, the *haor* basin is identified as a high food insecure locality and ‘hot-spots’ of poverty in Bangladesh.³⁶ The haor ecosystem is such that it withholds the flow of water into the plains right after the early monsoon months and allows the people in the lower regions to harvest their crops while people inside Tanguar Haor often have a fifty-fifty chance of harvesting their crops.³⁷ Many times, it goes underwater with early flash floods. Rahman and Motiur³⁸ have identified natural calamities along with high population growth and density, low level of economic growth, uneven social structure, low resource endowment (land), low productivity, illiteracy, unemployment as one of the major causes of poverty in rural Bangladesh. People living in the villages of Tanguar Haor do not have access to many of the basic amenities of life like electricity, water, sanitation, school, and also markets due to their poor socio-economic conditions.³⁹

35 A.K. Enamul Haque and Mizanul Hoque Kazal, *op. cit.*

36 S. Farid, “In search of a development model for haor dwellers”, *The Daily Observer*, Dhaka, 10 November 2017. Available at <https://www.observerbd.com/details.php?id=105109> (accessed on 09 June 2019).

37 A.K. Enamul Haque and Mizanul Hoque Kazal, *op. cit.*

38 P. K. Rahman and M. Motiur, *Poverty Issues in Rural Bangladesh*, Dhaka: UPL, 1994.

39 A.K. Enamul Haque and Mizanul Hoque Kazal, *op. cit.*

Different climatic vulnerabilities like flash floods, heavy rainfall, drought, potable water crisis, cyclone and tidal surge, and river erosion affect the overall livelihood pattern of the people of Tanguar Haor. The inhabitants of this area are mostly poor farmers and fishermen and survive below the poverty line.⁴⁰ The peculiar characteristics of the high seasonality of the haor-based economy force local people to remain out of work for about half of the year resulting in income-poverty.⁴¹ The Head Teacher of Ramshingapur Government Primary School, Tahirpur says,

Poverty creates other problems like malnutrition and unwillingness of guardians which are the main obstacles to complete education here. Parents are so poor that they cannot even fulfil the basic demands of their children. We noticed that when their children don't get any scholarships or facilities from school, then they send them to madrasah to study almost free of cost. They demand that we will send our children to school if you provide us scholarship. So, I think that this is happened due to poverty.

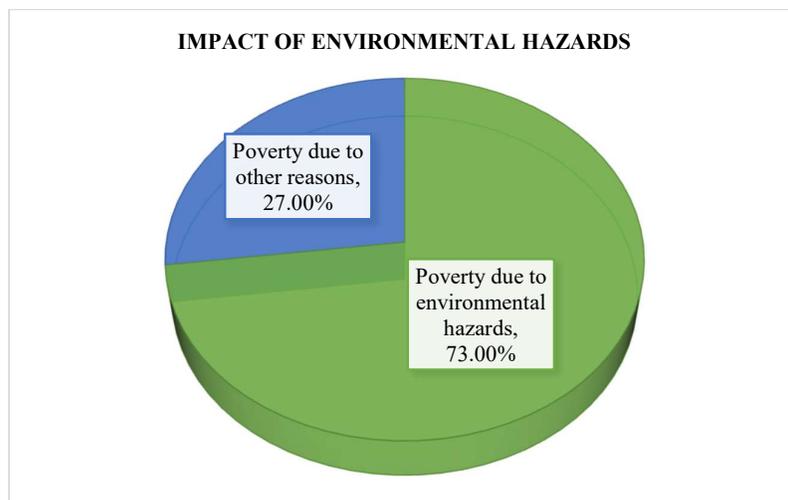


Figure 6.1.1: Impact of Environmental Hazards on Poverty.

-
- 40 M. K. Alam and M. R. Hasan, “Protection Works against Wave Attacks in the Haor Areas of Bangladesh: Analysis of Sustainability”, *Journal of Construction in Developing Countries*, Vol. 15, No. 2, 2010, pp. 69–85. Available at <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/63e5/0cdea89801bb3dc654034b1696542026f0d1.pdf> (accessed on 5 August 2019).
- 41 M. M. H. Kazal, C. Villinueve, M. Z. Hossain, and T. K. Das, “Food Security Strategies of the People Living in Haor Areas: Status and Prospects”, 2010. The report was produced with the support of *National Food Policy Capacity Strengthening Programme*, Dhaka. Available at http://fpmu.gov.bd/agridrupal/sites/default/files/Final_Technical_Report_Kazal.pdf (accessed on 17 May 2019).

Thirty-five (73%) of the respondents opine that most of the people in this area are poor because frequently happened environmental hazards like flash floods, drought, etc. directly affect the income sources and living conditions of the individuals. On the other hand, thirteen (27%) respondents think that there are other reasons behind poverty like ancestral financial condition, lack of education, lack of jobs, etc. (Figure 6.1.1).

Earning person/persons of households: The majority of the families of those interviewed (except KII) live on the income of a single person, with monthly income ranges from a minimum of Tk. 3,000 to maximum Tk. 11,000. Sources of income of the households of Tanguar Haor are farming, fishing, sharecropping, small business, cattle and duck rearing, day labor, etc. It is observed that there are large seasonal variations in the income of the families. Income is typically higher during winter, due to farm output in addition to fishing, which is the sole occupation for the rest of the year. Most of the households have little or no income during the rainy season.⁴²

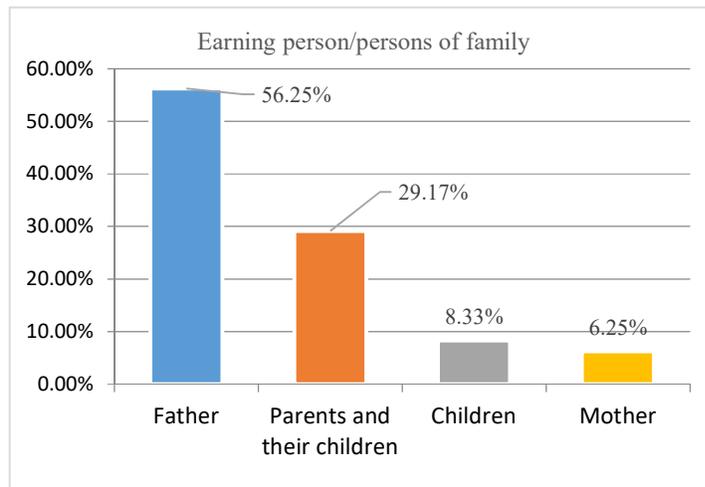


Figure 6.1.2: Main earning person/persons of the households.

⁴² Remeen Firoz, Ahana Adrika, Ahsanul Wahed, Zinat Hasiba, Karishma Sinha, Maria Mahbub and Md. Amir Khan, "Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) on Tanguar Haor", *IUCN Bangladesh Country Office*, a report published on 13th December 2010. Available at https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/import/downloads/drr_report_of_tanguar_haor.pdf (accessed on 26 February 2020).

Among the respondents 56.25% vote for father while only 6.25% give an opinion in favour of the mother as the main earning person of a family in the Tanguar Haor. On the other hand, 29.17% of respondents think both parents and their children earn money for their families while 8.33% opine that children are the main source of income for their families (Figure 6.1.2).

Impact of flash flood on income sources: Flash flood adversely affects the income sources of people in Tanguar Haor area. Crop cultivation is the main source of income for the livelihoods of people in the area. Many farmers do fishing when they get free time from harvesting boro crops. No alternative sources of income are available here for the people during the flood and other natural calamities. During pre-monsoon flash floods and the rainy season, most of the people of the haor area either migrate to other areas or switch their jobs to manage their livelihoods. Due to the seasonality of occupations and lack of capital available in the haor areas, poor and landless people migrate to big cities such as Dhaka, Chittagong, Sylhet and Comilla in the rainy season, to find alternative sources of income in construction, coal collection, hauling soil, brick breaking, day labours, etc.⁴³

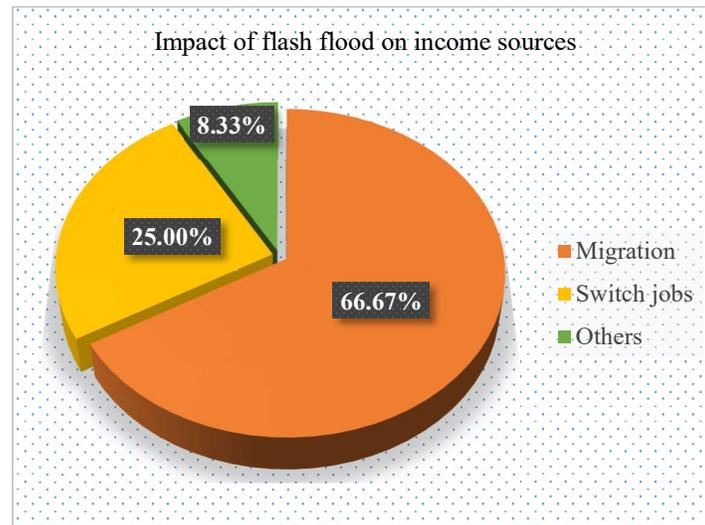


Figure 6.1.3: Views of respondents on what flash flood-induced factors affect income sources.

43 Remeen Firoz, Ahana Adrika, Ahsanul Wahed, Zinat Hasiba, Karishma Sinha, Maria Mahub and Md. Amir Khan, *op. cit.*

Thirty-two (66.67%) of the respondents opine that they have to migrate to other areas like Dhaka, Chottogram, Sylhet, Sunamganj and Feni, while twelve (25%) respondents think that they are compelled to switch their current jobs to manage livelihoods for their family (Figure 6.1.3).

Facilities of loans/microcredits: The majority of the people have access to get credit facilities from different NGOs like BRAC, ASA, World Vision, Paritas, Polidurikoron, etc. Unfortunately, this access is not easy for poor people due to the high-interest rate against the loan. Although they benefit temporarily from the loan, they suffer long-term losses due to high-interest rates and short repayment time. Therefore, they are forced to take loans from the local ‘mohajon’ (moneylender) at exorbitant interest rates. If a poor person takes a loan of Tk.1000 from a moneylender, he/she has to pay interest of Tk.25 per week or Tk.100 per month. It pushes a lot of the people into the downward spiral of poverty, as they are unable to repay the interests. Often, they use loans to meet their subsistence needs and are not even able to invest in a business that can bring income.⁴⁴A sharecropper of Lama Gaon village said about high-interest rate against the loan he received,

I received a loan of Tk. 30000 from Polidurikoron NGO but I am paying Tk. 5000 monthly against the loan. If I cannot pay money in a month they create pressure on me to pay urgently.

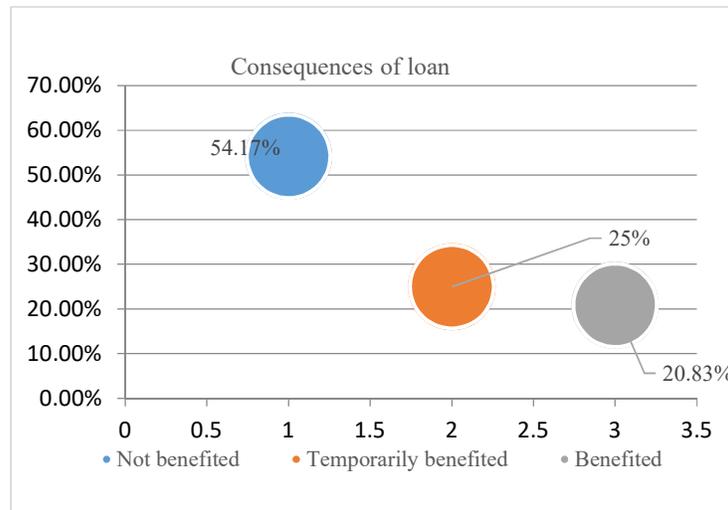


Figure 6.1.4: How much they benefit from credit received from the local NGOs.

44 Remeen Firoz, Ahana Adrika, Ahsanul Wahed, Zinat Hasiba, Karishma Sinha, Maria Mahub and Md. Amir Khan, *op. cit.*

Twenty-six (54.17%) of the respondents think that they are not truly benefited from the credit received from the local NGOs due to the high-interest rate while twelve (25%) have given an opinion in favour of temporary benefits. On the other hand, only ten (20.83%) respondents think that the received credit from local NGOs is very effective to overcome their problems (Figure 6.1.4).

Alternative sources of income during flash flood: There are no alternative income sources during monsoon in the Tanguar Haor area. Forty-four (91.67%) of the respondents think that most people have no alternative sources of income during the rainy season and flash floods. They go to different bigger cities outside of Sunamganj as temporary migrant workers for earning money. However, only four (8.33%) respondents think that they have alternative sources of income even during the flash flood (Figure 6.1.5).

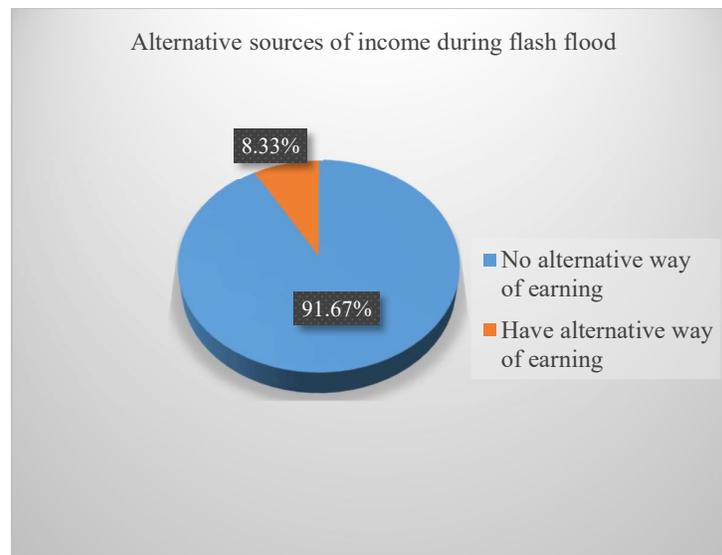


Figure 6.1.5: Views of respondents on alternative sources of income during flash floods and natural calamities.

Access to fishing: Fishing is one of the dominant income sources in the haor area. Some of the fishermen have self-owned fishing boats to catch fish, but most of them have to rent boats at Tk. 60 to 70 per day. Many fishermen cannot catch fish regularly due to two main constraints—lack of capital (boats or fishing gears) and

difficulty in getting consent for fishing from local elite groups. 87.50% of the fishermen who depend solely on fishing for their livelihoods opine that they need prior permission from the respective leaseholder for fishing in the haor area while only 12.50% have easy access for fishing (Figure 6.1.6). However, they acknowledged that the situation is improving in terms of access to fishing for the co-management system.

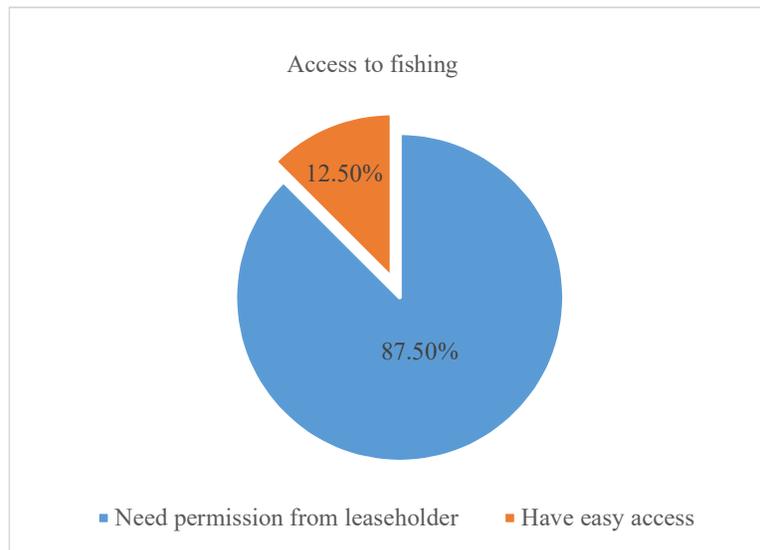


Figure 6.1.6: Access of fishermen who depend solely on fishing for their livelihoods.

6.2 Food Security

Food security depends on the physical and economic access at all times of every man, woman and child, alone or in community with others to adequate food or means for its procurement.⁴⁵ Since the people of the Tanguar Haor area are mainly dependent on agricultural (rice) production, their food security depends on three main factors—the amount of produced rice, the adequacy of and easy access to food, and the price of daily necessities.

Disruption of production due to climate change-induced hazards: Flash flood is now a common phenomenon in the Haor basin during the pre-monsoon

⁴⁵ Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), "Human Security and Food Security", 2016, Available at <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5522e.pdf>, (accessed on 17 July 2020).

(March-May) period. It is the main disaster in the haor area that engulfs the primary production sector (e.g., agriculture) and thus threatens the lives and livelihoods of the people, especially share-croppers and landless farmers.⁴⁶ The most recent flash flood has hit the Tanguar Haor in 2017. The flash flood of 2017 started in late March affecting six districts (Sylhet, Moulavibazar, Sunamganj, Habiganj, Netrokona and Kishoreganj) in the northeast region of Bangladesh. Sunamganj District has been affected most extensively. The flash flood of 2017 damaged 18,610 and 7,610 hectares of standing crops in boro fields of Dharmapasha and Tahirpur Upazila respectively.⁴⁷

Drought is another major problem in land cultivation in the Tanguar Haor because farmers do not get enough water during the production period. As a farmer of Rongchi village of South Bangshikunda, Dharmapasha said,

Since we are farmers by profession, we know the scenario of Tanguar Haor well. Farmers have many acres of land here but they cannot cultivate due to lack of sufficient water in the dry season. Again, many farmers have to spend a lot of money to cultivate paddy but they do not get the price accordingly.

Landless farmers or sharecroppers cannot benefit if the crop production is not bumper due to climate change-induced threats like flash floods and drought or other reasons. Farmers have admitted that they are completely dependent on chemical fertilizers and insecticides for crop production, but these become very difficult to get at a fair price during the cultivation period. Some of the respondents agreed that crop yield in the haor area is divided between the landowner and farmers on a half-half basis or as otherwise agreed upon. Landowners do not share the costs of cultivation; it is solely borne by the farmers.⁴⁸

Availability and price of food: The majority of the families in the haor area are very large, with a minimum of four to a maximum of eleven members each family. Lack of easy access to daily-foods is a major obstacle to ensure the food and health security of the households of Tanguar Haor. In the area, access to essential food is very limited by poverty and other relevant factors such as syndicate and poor communication systems. A good number of people in this area often do not eat because they cannot afford to buy food at high prices, which often makes them more

46 CEGIS, Vol. 1, *op. cit.*

47 Flash Flood Situation, 19 April 2017, *Network for Information, Response And Preparedness Activities on Disaster (NIRAPAD)*. Available at https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Flash_Flood%2C%20Updated%20%28April%2019%29%2C%202017.pdf (accessed on 13 October 2019).

48 IUCN, *op. cit.*

weak and vulnerable. The condition of women, in this case, is even worse, often as the last member of the family, they have to eat just plain rice with chili. It is noteworthy that most individuals can only eat twice a day—once in the morning and once at night.

When some unscrupulous businessmen increase the price of necessary commodities, especially during and after the flash flood and monsoon period, it becomes almost impossible for poor people to buy sufficient food. There are always syndicates here who are mostly responsible for increasing the food price. However, those who are in the administration here, we are working to solve this problem.”—Social Welfare Officer of Dharmapasha Upazila.

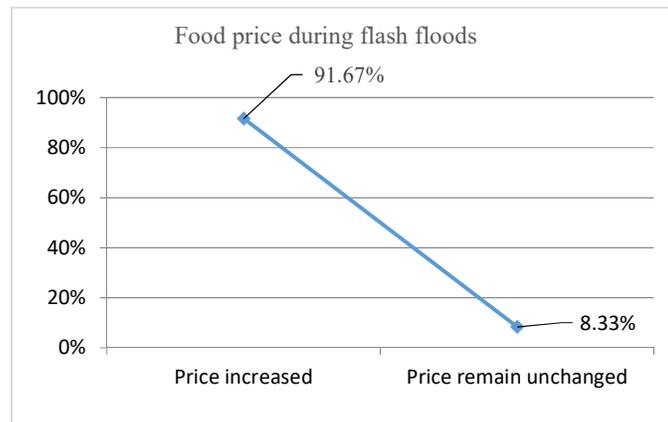


Figure 6.2.1: Whether the price of necessary commodities increased or remain unchanged during flash floods.

Forty-four (91.67%) of the respondents think that during flash floods and natural calamities, the price of daily-necessities increases a lot compared to the past while only four (8.33%) respondents think that it remains unchanged (Figure 6.2.1).

Impact of food price on livelihood: The price hike is a considerable factor in the economic and food security of people. As Tanguar Haor is a disaster-prone area, the livelihoods of the poor in the area are severely affected by the price hike.

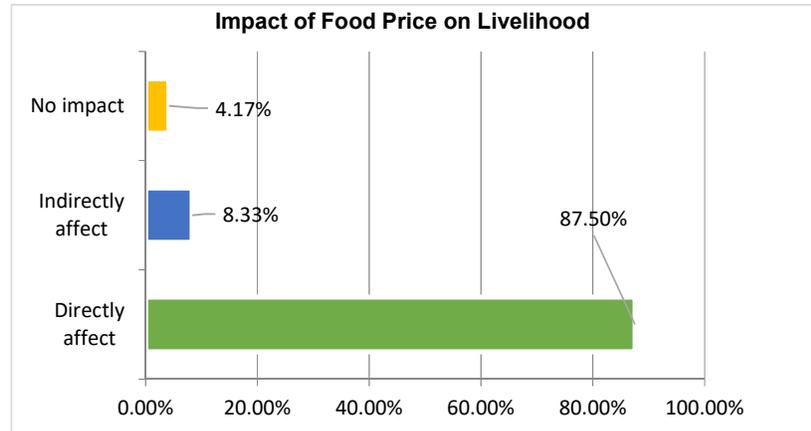


Figure 6.2.2: Impact of food price during flash flood on the livelihood of the people of Tanguar Haor.

Forty-two (87.50%) of total respondents give the opinion that rising commodity prices have a direct and serious effect on their livelihoods. On the contrary, four (8.33%) respondents think that rising food prices affect their livelihoods but indirectly while only two respondents (4.17%) think it does not affect their livelihoods (Figure 6.2.2).

6.3 Health Security

Climate change can affect human health in three main ways—i) direct impacts due to the change in frequency of extreme weather (as flood/flash flood and drought), ii) effects caused by natural system (as disease vectors and air pollution), and iii) effects directly attributed through human systems (as undernutrition and mental stress).⁴⁹ The National Centre for Environmental Health (NCEH) remarks that climate change, associated with other natural and human-made health stressors, can be dangerous to human health causing diseases in various ways.⁵⁰

Access to nutritious food: Availability and easy access to nutritious, diverse, and balanced diets are considered key elements for ensuring food and health security of people. Most families cannot consume nutritious food like eggs, milk, meat, fruits regularly due to their financial constraints. Inadequate nutritional intake increases

⁴⁹ Fifth assessment report, 2014, *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)*.

Available at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envint.2019.03.020>, (accessed on 19 May 2020).

⁵⁰ Md. Ashrafuzzaman and Luis Gustavo Furini, *op. cit.*

their health risk which is strongly associated with chronic disease. A farmer of Patabuka village of Dakshin Sreepur, Tahirpur said,

There are seven members in my family...I can't buy eggs and milk because I don't have money. Sometimes when I can buy...we eat an egg divided into two or three or we all eat half a kilo of milk together. We do not know whether our nutrition is ensured by consuming these foods.

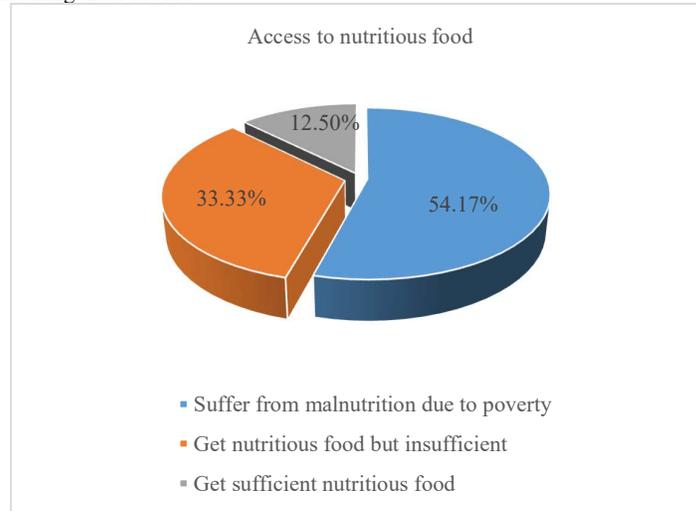


Figure 6.3.1: How much nutritious food do the people of Tanguar Haor get.

Twenty-six (54.17%) respondents think most of the time they suffer from malnutrition because they cannot eat nutritious food at all. Sixteen (33.33%) respondents said that they get nutritious food but these are not enough for good health while six (12.50%) participants opine that they can always consume nutritious food (Figure 6.3.1).

Availability of basic medical care: The common diseases of this area are fever, common cold, pneumonia, malaria, diarrhoea, dysentery, gastric and night-blindness. However, the frequency of illness varies from family to family because it is observed that members of well-off families are less prone to these ailments. The health security task force or committee or working group that works for providing basic health care in the village is not available in most of the villages of Tanguar Haor. Villagers have to travel 7-10 miles to the nearest hospitals which are situated in the Upazila headquarters of Tahirpur, Dharmapasha and Kalmakanda. Engine-driven boats are the only means of transportation to the hospitals during monsoon and it takes 4 to 5

hours to reach the hospital and get treatment. Even in the dry season, the situation does not improve as most of the local roads are impassable except for motorcycles, which are too costly at the same time. Besides, medicines and good doctors are not available in these hospitals. Local quack and *kabiraj* provide medication and advice for common diseases from the local dispensary. There are no medical services for pregnant women, which can lead to serious accidents at any time.

The people of this area do not get proper medical care....though the neighboring Upazila Kalmakanda is far away from us, we go there for better treatment because of a good communication system. If there is any pregnancy case then we have no alternative but to rely on God.”—said UP Chairman of Uttar Bangshikunda, Dharmapasha.

Availability of tube well and potable water: Despite Tanguar Haor being a large wetland, the people of this area do not have easy access to potable water. Potable water is closely associated with the health security of people. Unsafe water causes skin and waterborne diseases. During flash floods and natural calamities, most of the individuals of Tanguar Haor suffer from different waterborne diseases such as cholera, diarrhoea, dysentery, etc. which are directly linked to unhygienic and contaminated drinking water.

There are almost twelve tube wells in our village. But the villagers do not get enough safe water as the tube wells are damaged most of the time. Unfortunately, local administration does not take any initiative to resolve the problem”.— a farmer of South Sreepur, Tahirpur.

There are not enough tube wells in the villages but there are many tube wells in various government institutions like schools and union council offices. People in this area do not get hygienic water from tube wells for two reasons—arsenic contamination and flash floods. Villagers cannot collect water from tube wells of low-lying areas during flash floods.”—a civil society member of Tahirpur Upazila.

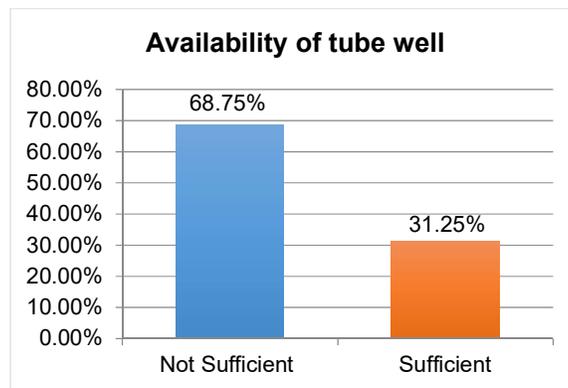


Figure 6.3.2: Availability of tube well in the study area.

Thirty-three (68.75%) respondents think that the tube wells that are available here are not enough for everyone in the village to get pure water while fifteen (31.25%) of them opine that the number of tube wells is sufficient (Figure 6.3.2).

Arsenic contamination in tube well water: Collected water from tube wells is hardly potable as it is contaminated by high levels of arsenic and iron. Therefore, they are forced to collect water from the haor, canals and ponds and use it directly for drinking, cooking, and other household works.

Since the tube wells are contaminated with arsenic and iron, I collect water for all purposes from the haor instead.”—a female farmer of Ramshingopur village of South Sreepur, Tahirpur.

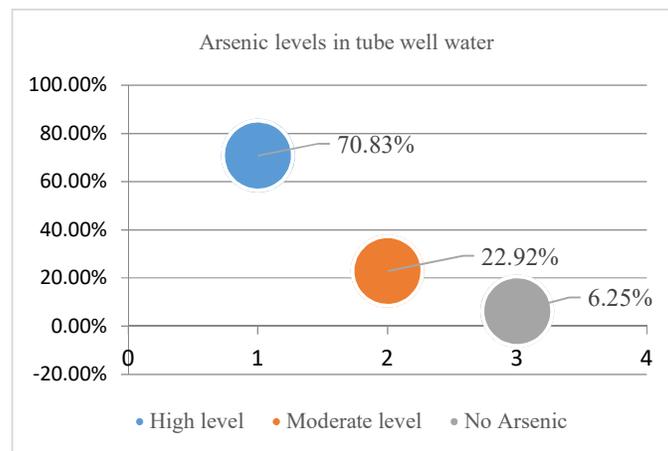


Figure 6.3.3: Arsenic levels in water of tube wells in the study area.

Thirty-four (70.83%) respondents think that collected water from tube wells contains high levels of arsenic that is ultimately a cause of serious health risks while eleven (22.92%) opine that the level of arsenic in the tube well water is tolerable. Conversely, three (6.25%) respondents think that there is no arsenic in the tube well water (Figure 6.3.3).

Potable water during flash flood: Most of the tube wells in the villages of Tanguar Haor are half-submerged during flash floods. Although some tube wells do not submerge, the villagers cannot collect drinking water from these due to the breakdown of the communication system. Then they have no alternative but to drink

haor water during flash floods, even though many of them suffer from dysentery and diarrhoea as a result.

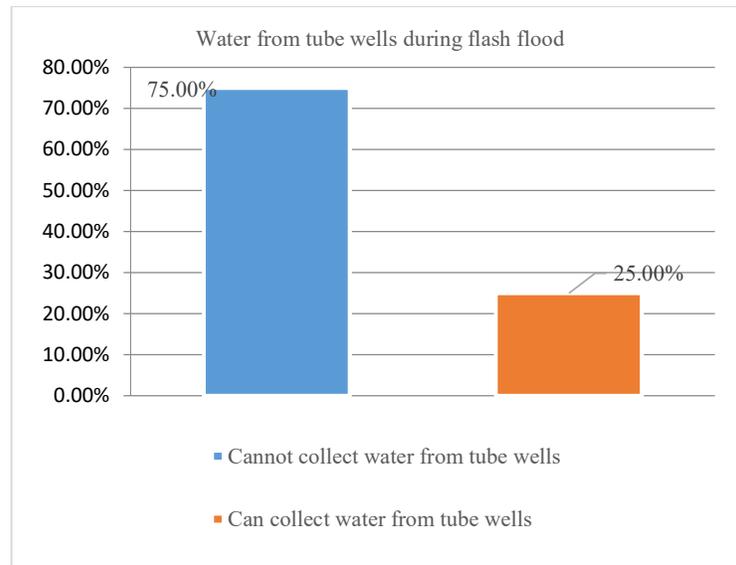


Figure 6.3.4: How many people can or cannot collect water from tube wells during flash floods.

Thirty-six (75%) of respondents give the opinion that they cannot collect water from tube wells during flash floods for various reasons while twelve (25%) respondents think that they do not face any difficulties regarding this matter (Figure 6.3.4).

Sanitation system: The sanitation system in the Tanguar Haor is very poor that gradually leads to many diseases. There are three main reasons why it is so bad—poverty, frequent flash floods/natural calamities, and unconsciousness.

We cannot use healthy toilets mainly due to the poverty of our parents. If a family wants to set up a sanitary latrine, then they have to spend at least six thousand takas which is not possible for our guardians. This is why we make toilets with bamboo in different ways near to our houses.”—students of Bangshikunda College which is located at Dakshin Bangshikunda, Dharmapasha describe how poverty is hindering the use of sanitary latrines.

Most of the people in this area always use unsanitary toilets. Even though the authority provides sanitary latrines, they don’t use them properly. Unfortunately, many times they use sanitary latrine items as cattle feed containers. However, the situation is improving compared to the past.”—a female UP member of Uttar Sreepur, Tahirpur.

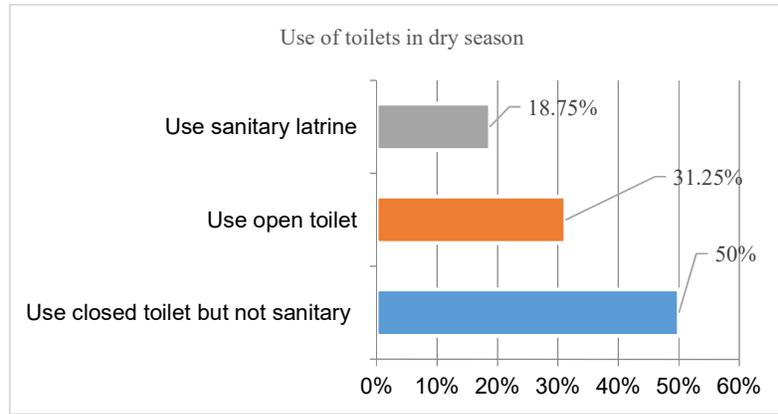


Figure 6.3.5: Respondents’ opinion regarding use of toilets in dry season.

Half (50%) of the respondents use closed toilets but these are not hygienic whereas fifteen (31.25%) interviewees use completely open toilets during the dry season due to their poverty and unconsciousness. On the contrary, nine (18.75%) persons always use the sanitary latrine as they are aware of this issue, and they also have enough money to set up hygienic toilets (Figure 6.3.5).

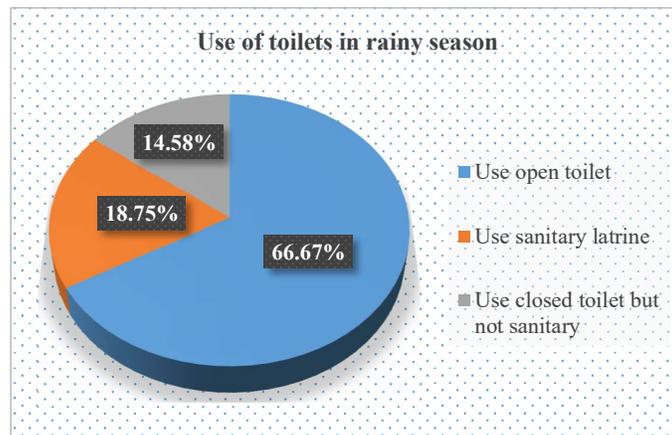


Figure 6.3.6: Opinion of respondents regarding use of toilets in rainy season or during flash flood.

The situation is worse in the monsoon than in the dry season. A large number of respondents (66.67%) are forced to use open toilets during the rainy season while only seven (14.58%) respondents use closed toilets this time but these also are not

healthy. Nevertheless, the percentage of individuals (18.75%) using sanitary latrines remains unchanged even in the rainy season (Figure 6.3.6).

However, the condition of the sanitation system of this area is improving. As an activist of World Vision (an NGO) who has been working for a long time in vulnerable villages of Tahirpur Upazila said,

We are trying to increase the consciousness among the rural people and we provide sanitary latrine to poor people every year. In the last three years, we have built healthy toilets with rings and bamboo fences for about one thousand families in this locality.

6.4 Environmental Security

Climate change and natural disasters are two major threats to environmental security of the people of Tanguar Haor. The two immediate consequences of climate change are flash floods and droughts which adversely affect the economic, food, and health security of the people. Environmental security is closely connected with food security—natural calamities destroy large amounts of food and seriously disrupt agricultural production, while environmental degradation can reduce the long-term productivity of the land.⁵¹

Flash flood: Different areas of Bangladesh experience various types of natural disasters almost every year because of worldwide global warming and climate change impacts. Climate change has led to frequent flash floods in the haor region. Thirty-four (70.83%) of the respondents give an opinion that flash flood is an immediate effect of climate change while eight (16.67%) of them don't think so. Six (12.50%) respondents do not give any opinion regarding the question of whether the flash flood is the effect of climate change or not (Figure 6.4.1).

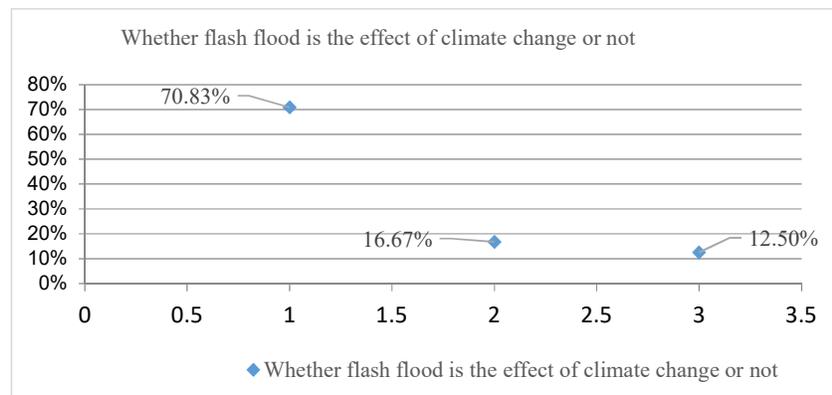


Figure 6.4.1. Whether flash flood is the effect of climate change or not.

51 Saferworld, *op. cit.*

Many people in the area are affected by water-borne diseases after flash floods. Being poor, they are unable to receive proper medical care, which in turn exacerbates health insecurity. Flash floods severely damage crops, infrastructure and impede the education of students. Children in flood-hit areas of Sunamganj have remained absent from school for nearly a month, mostly because there are waters all around making it difficult for them to travel, and parents want them to help out in saving crops gone underwater.⁵²

A landless farmer, who is solely dependent on fishing and farming for livelihoods, of Antorpur village of North Bangshikunda, Dharmapasha said,

Water remains here for about six months...we can't farm and catch fish properly...so we often have to go without food.

Drought: Extreme temperature and drought are immediate effects of global warming and climate change. Due to severe drought, farmers of the Tanguar Haor do not get enough water during cultivation. Inadequate paddy production ultimately affects the food and economic security of the people in this area. All respondents said that drought is a serious problem here for cultivation during the dry season. Thirty-eight (79.17%) of them think the drought is an acute effect of climate change while ten (20.83%) respondents do not know whether it is the effect of climate change or not (Figure 6.4.2).

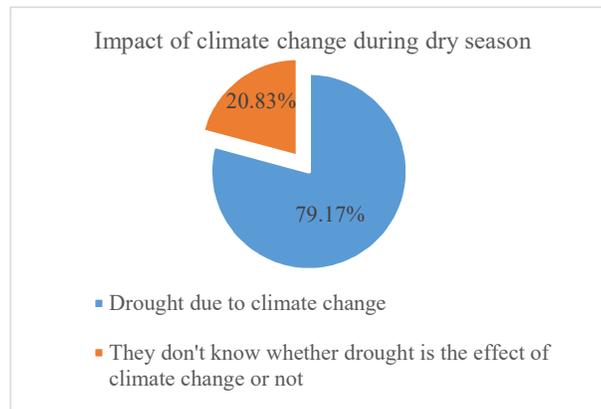


Figure 6.4.2: Respondents' opinion on the impact of climate change on farming during dry season.

52 Mintu Deshwara, "No school for haor kids for nearly a month", *The Daily Star*, 1 May 2017. Available at <https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/no-school-haor-kids-over-month-1399045> (accessed on 11 October 2019).

7. Conclusion

The findings of the research show that the state of human security of the people of Tangaur Haor is very vulnerable because of the extreme remoteness, isolation, and difficulty for livelihood. There are many identified problems like flash floods, drought, poverty, food shortage, price hike, unemployment, lack of resources (for farming and fishing), limited income sources, lack of easy access to microcredits, malnutrition, lack of easy access to basic healthcare, fragile communication system due to wave related erosion, scarcity of potable water, lack of hygienic sanitation, etc. which are making the lives of the people in the area miserable and insecure. The research findings indicate that climate change-induced threats and natural disasters are primarily responsible for generating these drawbacks that create obvious obstacles to ensuring the human security of the people of Tangaur Haor.

Poverty and unemployment are two major causes of human insecurity of the individuals of Tangaur Haor. Most of the households in the area are included in three levels of poverty—poor, ultra-poor, and extremely poor. Poverty encourages many more problems—food insecurity (lack of resources, inability to purchase food), health insecurity (inability to getting basic healthcare, unhygienic sanitation system), obstacles to education. The frequent rise in commodity prices due to disasters caused by climate change is deepening the economic and food insecurity of the people in the area. The majority of the people in this area are in poor health which is a threat to human security because it emasculates the socio-economic development of people. Climate change immensely affects public health both directly and indirectly by mounting incidence and frequency of natural disasters, conducting to waterborne diseases and food insecurity.⁵³

However, it is inevitable to find out ways for sorting out the existing drawbacks towards ensuring human security and improving the quality of lives of the people of Tangaur Haor. It has been observed that the community-based haor co-management has adopted some measures to ensure that the local people can utilize the haor resources. More initiatives from different sectors like government, NGOs, and the local community are essential to overcome the problems caused by climate change and natural disasters.

53 Md. Ashrafuzzaman and Luis Gustavo Furini, *op. cit.*