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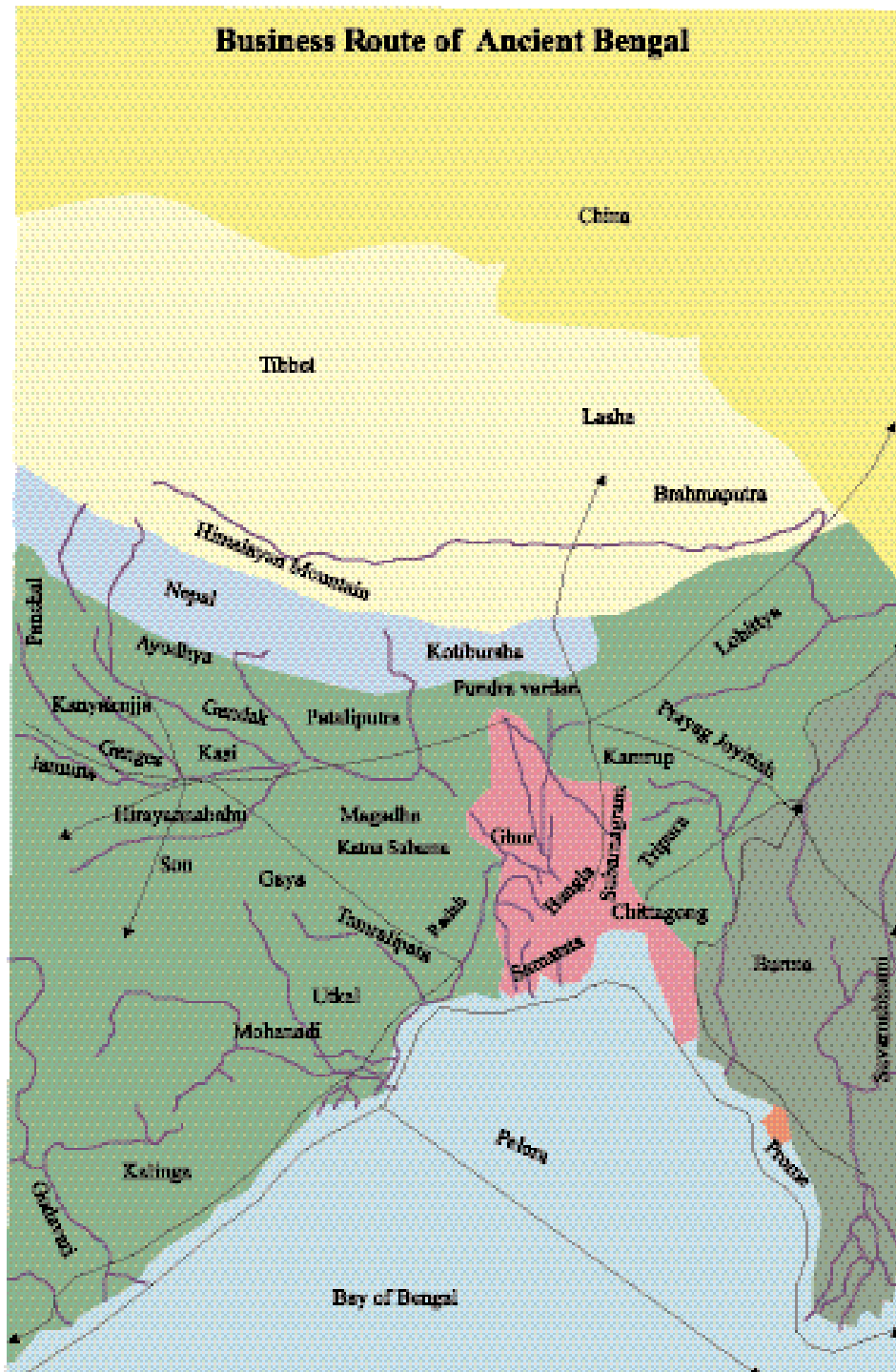
## Business History of Dhaka upto 1947

Sirajul Islam

### Prologue: Business Tradition of Dhaka

Historically, Dhaka grew and sustained itself from the interplay of two major factors: one is political power and the other trade, commerce and industries. Politically, Dhaka played the role of a capital city of Bengal under the Mughals for about two hundred years. From the first decade of the seventeenth century, Dhaka was the capital of the suba Bangla of the Mughal Empire until the first decade of the eighteenth and since then the city served as the secondary capital to the suba until the end of the eighteenth century. During this period, a hereditary naib-nazim was stationed in Dhaka to administer the eastern part of suba Bangla. Dhaka again became the capital of Eastern Bengal and Assam in 1905, but only to be annulled in 1911. Again it was made the capital of East Bengal (East Pakistan) in 1947 to become the national capital of Bangladesh from 1971. Politically, Dhaka was just next to Murshidabad and Calcutta since the early 18th century. In short, Dhaka's political significance was always there in Bengal politics, whether the capital or not. The Mughals did not develop the place as a premier city of the empire *ex nihilo*. The supreme reason was Dhaka's commercial prospects. If formerly, the capital cities of Gaur, Pandua, Rajmahal, Ghoraghat, Sonargaon and others lost their significance and soon got merged up with rural regime, it was because those cities were planned and set up for military purposes alone. None of these places had any connection with the commercial lifeline of the country. Military strategic consideration was only the basis for their establishment and existence. If the later Afghan dynasties, for example, chose Sonargaon as the site for their capital, it was purely because this low lying water logged location was militarily suitable for keeping the Mughal cavalry attack at bay.

For the first time this security idea received low priority, when Mughal Mansabdar Islam Khan was directed to chose Dhaka as the capital of the province after subduing the resisting local potentates of eastern Bengal. Formerly, Raja Man Sing and later Munim Khan, who made temporarily successful combing operations against the resistance of the local chiefs, made Dhaka a *thana* (military district) on the consideration of both civil and military advantages. One great advantage was that since mid-fifteenth century, Dhaka had been an important outpost of Muslim settlers. In 1456-57, one Musammat Bakht Binat (Banu?), during the regime of Sultan Nasir al-Din Mahmud Shah I (1433-59), built a mosque in Dhaka, which is still extant. Sultan Nasiruddin built another mosque in Dhaka, but it has no trace now. Building several mosques in the place





mean the presence of many Muslims were there in Dhaka. Sultan Nasiruddin himself lived in Dhaka for some time.<sup>1</sup> Thus, when Emperor Jahangir's viceroy, Islam Khan, landed in Dhaka to make it the permanent capital of the Suba, it was already a thriving market town with its links to other commercial centres in the region and beyond.

For its commercial products, Dhaka was well-known to the ancient maritime world. Roman historian Pliny (d. 113 A.D.) recorded the presence of Dhaka's textiles in the Mediterranean trade as early as 73 A.D.<sup>2</sup> Dhaka's textile and embroidery products became the fashion in the Sultani and Mughal durbars long before the place was renamed as 'Jahangirnagar' in honour of Emperor Jahangir. No gift from 'Jahangirnagar' to the emperor and his amirs became worthy without Dhaka's muslin.<sup>3</sup> As a commercial centre, Dhaka was so well-known regionally and internationally that people never called Dhaka by its new name 'Jahangirnagar' though it was the official name for the place ever since the capital was established in 1608 or 1610, as some historians think. As an item of international trade and commerce, muslin carried the name of Dhaka around the maritime world until Bengal's textile industry ceased to dominate the international market from the second quarter of the nineteenth century. While muslin commanded the world market and as a coveted product came to be known to all contemporary royalties and nobilities, it reached there with the place name 'Dhaka' tagged with it, not Sonargaon or Vikrampur, though both the areas then belonged to the zone of muslin production. It was because all the textile centres in eastern Bengal found their way out to the outside world with their products through Dhaka - the entrepot of eastern Bengal. In this essay, an attempt has been made to highlight the business history of Dhaka. In doing that, we deal with some major areas of the city's trade and commerce only, such as textile manufacturing and trade, currency and indigenous banking, cottage industries, commercial crops and industries, and changing pattern of Dhaka's enterprise and economic organizations under changing circumstances over time. We emphasise the fact that no city can flourish durably without its own dynamics drawn on agriculture, trade and commerce and industries operative cumulatively. We shall maintain throughout this essay that the place of Dhaka in history as an urban centre has to be credited no less, if not more, to its entrepreneurial vigour than to its political life.

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1 Shamsud-Din Ahmed, ed. and trans., *Inscriptions of Bengal*, vol. 4, (Rajshahi Varendra Research Museum 1960); Richard M. Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier 1204-1760*, (Oxford 1994), p.149.

2 William Milburn, *Oriental Commerce*, vol. II, (London 1813), p. 229.

The term 'muslin' in the sense of super fine cotton cloth, according to Hobson Jobson, is derived from the territorial name Mosul (Mausal or Mausil) on the Tigris. (The Arabs employ *mausil* in the same sense of muslin as employed by Europeans later). Archaeological evidences suggest that Arabs had trading contact with India and Bengal from very early times. It may be assumed that the name 'muslin' for fine cloths produced in India, especially Dhaka, was given by the Arab traders first, which was later adopted by the European overseas traders and then lexically it became a universal term.

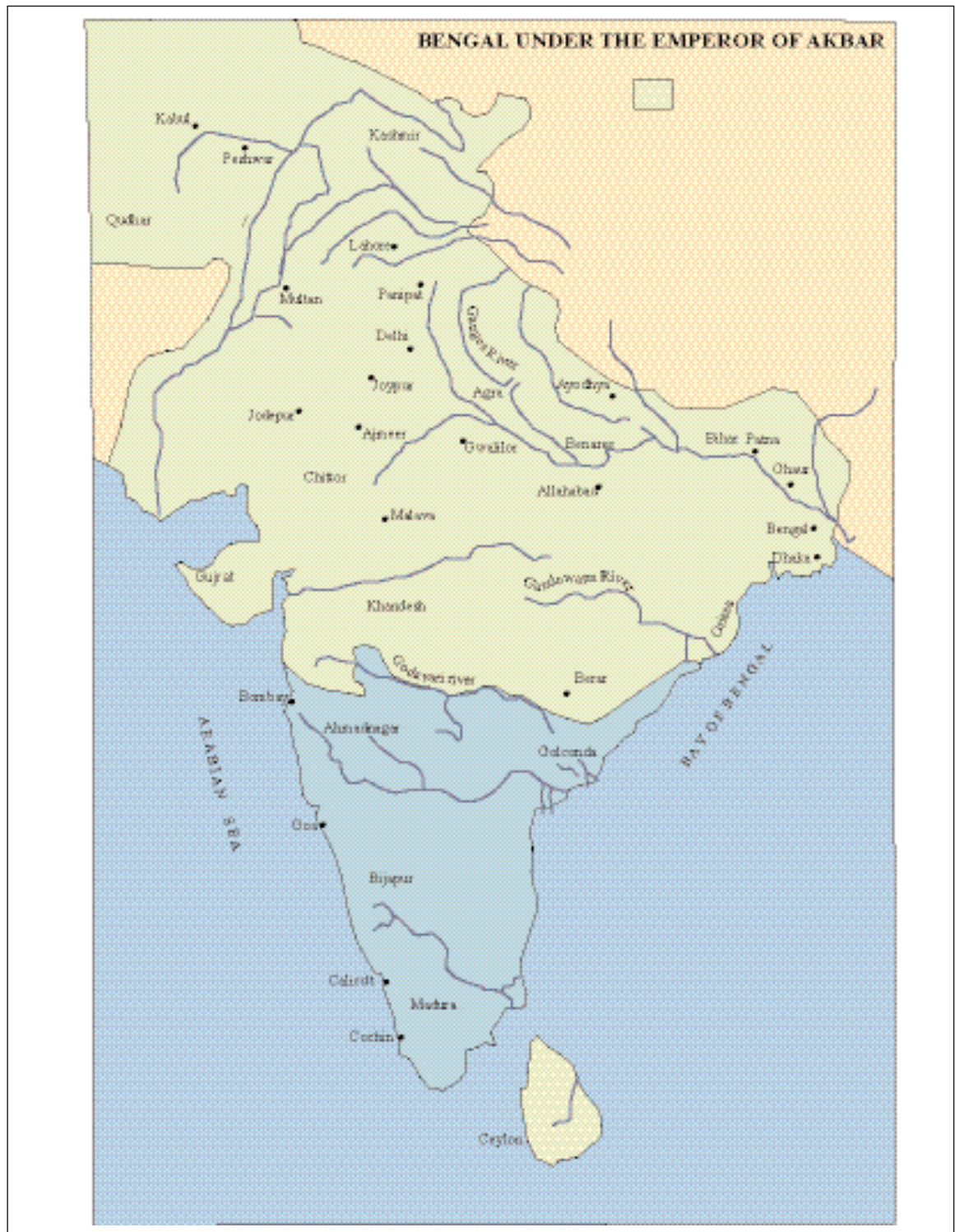
3 Some of the best works on the subject are: E. Baines, *History of the Cotton Manufacture in Great Britain*, (London 1966); G.C.M. Birdwood, *Industrial Arts of India*, (London 1884); A.H. Dani, *Dacca: A Record of its Changing Fortunes* (1956); Hameeda Hossain, *The Company Weavers of Bengal : The East India Company and the Organization of Textile Production in Bengal 1750-1413* (Delhi 1988); Devendra Bijoy Mitra, *The Cotton Weavers of Bengal 1757-1833* (Calcutta 1978); and James Taylor, *A Descriptive and Historical Account of the Cotton Manufacture of Dacca in Bengal* (London 1851).

### The place of Dhaka in the pre-colonial business history

All sources tell us that the singular item that dominated the business history of Bengal in the pre-British period is the cotton industry. So far foreign trade and internal industry is concerned most participating country stand out pre-eminent in one or other item of production. In the eighteenth century and before, for example, what wool was to England, linen to Egypt and silk to China, cotton was to Bengal. Within Bengal, Dhaka region emerged to be the heartland of Bengal's cotton industry. As mentioned earlier, Dhaka's cotton products reached Arabia and Europe and other parts of India and the world even before second century A.D.<sup>4</sup>



4 Two classic studies on this subject are: K.N. Chaudhuri, *The Trading World of Asia and the English East India Company, 1669-1760*, (Cambridge 1978) and Om Prakash, *New Cambridge History of India: European commercial enterprise in pre-colonial India*, (Cambridge 1998).



### Textile Industry: Its Rise and Fall

Bengal's cotton manufacturing is much synonymous to two place-names: Dhaka and Murshidabad - Dhaka from ancient time and Murshidabad from the early 18th century. There is reason to believe that the transfer of Suba Bangla's capital from Dhaka to Murshidabad was also accompanied by the transfer of weaving technology. We are aware that most capitalist cotton merchants and exporters left Dhaka with Murshid Quli Khan when he shifted his Diwani Daftar to Murshidabad (1704), wherefrom they could, besides from being close to power, operate their export business better due to its proximity to Calcutta and land-routes to northern India. It may be reasonably assumed that many master weavers also left Dhaka for Murshidabad. But such a shift could not, of course, produce any significant adverse effect on the cotton industry as a whole, because the Dhaka cotton industry linked to production of high quality cotton grown in Sonargaon and Vikrampur. Bleaching the yarns/cloths in the transparent water of Meghna at Sonargaon was another important factor. Furthermore, Dhaka artisans were traditionally weavers and agriculturists at the same time. It was, therefore, impossible to allure the weaving class as a whole to migrate to Murshidabad. But it was certainly possible to motivate many weavers to shift to Murshidabad and holding out the hope of making quick fortune there. However, soon Murshidabad, rather Kashimbazar, turned out a cotton production centre competing with Dhaka.

However, while we discuss cotton industry as a whole, the discussions must spread out to three levels at least. The first level takes into account those special masters, spinners and artisans, who manufactured for the supply to imperial and other royal and aristocratic houses of India, including the great capitalist amirs like the Jagat Seths. What happened to the manufacturing classes who served them with their productions ? Secondly, what happened, again, to the weavers and weaving entrepreneurs when Britain's Industrial Revolution totally routed the traditional pattern of foreign trade? It makes our second level of discussion.



Fine Muslin Cloth

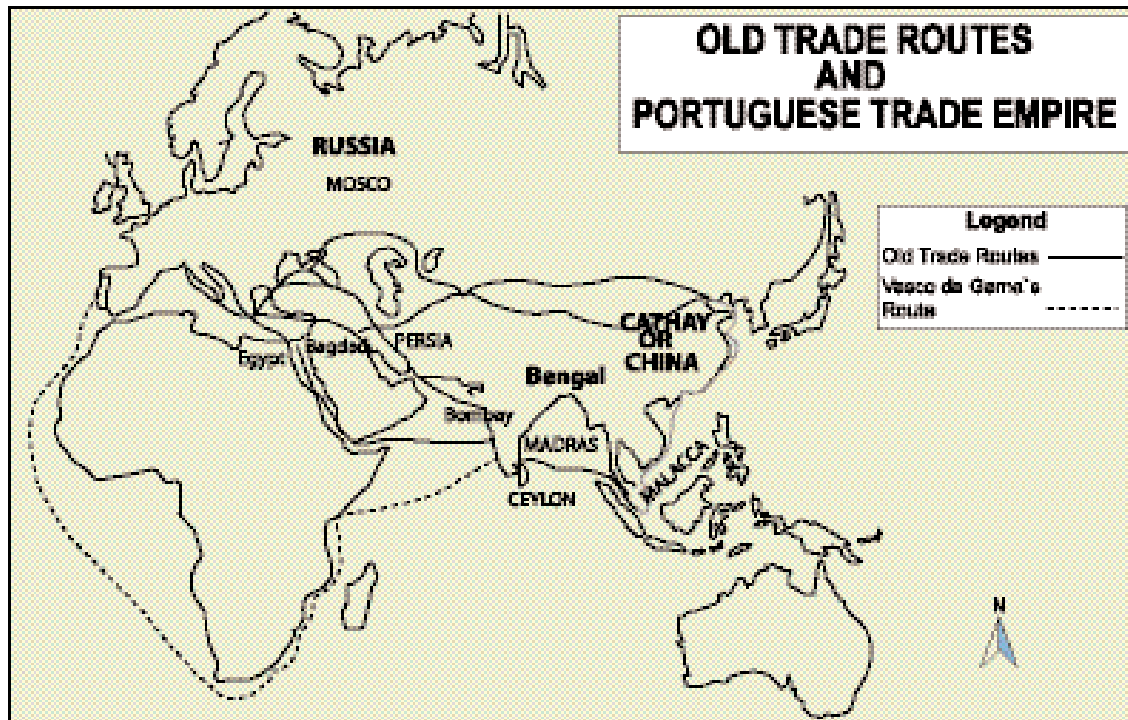


Embroidered Muslin Cloth

The third level of discussion arises from the question what happened to the Dhaka textile entrepreneurs who made fortunes from Dhaka's cotton industry boom in the three decades from the 1780s. These are questions concerned directly with the rise and fall of the textile industry and its impact on the textile produces and the mediators between the weavers and Calcutta exporters.

Our first level of discussion takes us to the consideration of the fate of royal *karkhanas*, where muslins of various variety were produced under royal supervision and control.





The Mughal royalties formed the exclusive and reserved group of customers for whom artisans applied their highest exertions to make their products as fine and fantastic as possible. Their assortments were made in special manufacturing centres called *karkhana* (modern factory). Designated royal officers supervised the weaving and embroidery of the assortments. Until the mid-eighteenth century, when imperial and provincial elites were at the height of their glory, greatest part of the muslins manufactured in the *karkhanas* was bought by the royalties. Following was the amount of purchase of muslin in money terms for the year 1747:

Imperial household at Delhi	Arcot Rs. 1,00,000
Nawab's household at Murshidabad	3,00,000
House of Jagatseth at Murshidabad	1,50,000
Turani merchants	1,00,000
Total	6,50,000

Source: A. Karim, 'An Account of the District of Dacca, Dated 1800', *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan*, vol. VII, No. 2, December 1962.

We have no information for the purchases made by the Indian princely and zamindar families. We may reasonably guess their purchases together should not be less than those of the royalties. This exclusive production and purchase meant a huge capitalist investment and the consequent engagement of thousands of artisans and supervisors and ancillary labours including spinners, washers and bleachers in the sector of the muslin production. Agriculturally, the production of cotton for royal *karkhana* also provided employment for thousands of cotton producing husbandmen.

As expected, the royal *karkhanas* collapsed after the fall of the Mughals and Mughal aristocracies. The Mughal chieftains and zamindars were the regular customers of muslins manufactured in the royal *karkhanas*. Under the operation of the Permanent Settlement all the landed aristocratic families lost their fortunes and got reduced to insignificance.<sup>5</sup> They were no more in a position to buy expensive muslins. Ordinarily, this turn of affairs is supposed to have created a large scale crisis in the cotton industry of Dhaka. Because, the artisans, supervisors and raw material suppliers were supposed to all out of employment. But in reality, it did not.

The explanation will be explicit in the second level of discussion on the Dhaka cotton industry, which we make now. This level points to the creation of new opportunities for cotton society of Dhaka, for that matter of Bengal. After the Peace Treaty of Paris (1784), American and European traders began to participate in the Bengal export trade on a very large scale (see table). Dhaka cotton products and cotton constituted the common cargo of all those exporters. With the steady growth of demands on Bengal textiles, new entries in the production side increased phenomenally. Greater and greater number of people were leaving agriculture and joining the trade of weaving. According to an official estimate, about six million people were employed in the production and manufacture of goods for company's trade in 1786.<sup>6</sup> The figure certainly applies to whole of Bengal. Even then six million people engaged in textile manufacture by the company alone sounds incredible. It will mean nearly more than half the population was engaged in "piecegoods" manufacturing. The figure may not also sound too absurd in the sense that at the time weavers and spinners were traditionally part time manufacturers and part time peasants. However, our main argument was that the fall of the royal houses and elite classes, the main consumers of muslin, did not correspondingly lead to the fall of the industry. The loss was more than compensated by the rising foreign demand for Bengal textile. The demand became so huge that in the trading season of 1795-96, Bengal exported cotton piecegoods numbering 22,87,479 pieces, the total value of which stood at Sicca Rs. 20,41,513 of which Dhaka cotton textiles of all assortments made the greatest chunk region-wise.<sup>7</sup>

Against these exports, Bengal received bullion amounting Sicca Rs.48,71,052 from the following sources:<sup>8</sup>

London	Sicca Rs. 4,81,538
Hamburg	50,462
Copenhagen	22,470
Lisbon	8,36,645
America	4,88,348
Mocha and Muscat	5,21,788
Manila	26,166
Coromandal Coast	17,51,366
Penang	6,25,929
China	66,340
	Sicca Rs. 48,71,052

5 For details, see Sirajul Islam, *Permanent Settlement in Bengal: A Study of its Operation 1790-1819*, (Bangla Academy 1979). Zamindaris sold under the revenue sale law have been identified and enumerated in chapters four and five.

6 External Commerce of Calcutta 1750-1830, "Entry: 1786, January, MSS.Eur.D.281, British Library Oriental Records.

7 Annual Report on Bengal External Commerce, 1795-96, British Library Oriental Records, P/174/13.

8 *Ibid.*, Statement No.11.

It has to be noted that more than half the bullion came from the Asian trade. The quantum of Asian trade in Bengal must be much greater in the sense that Asian countries had much more trading goods to be exchanged with those of Bengal than European countries, whose goods were yet to get significant market in India.

Consequent upon the participation of European and Asian merchants in greater degrees than ever before, Dhaka textile industry did not get the pinch of the loss of north Indian princely market. The weaving classes received orders from foreign buyers for delivery of cloths according to specifications and received advances from foreign merchants. The merchants put up orders for not only fine muslins but also for other assortments of textiles, such as *jamdani*, *malmal*, *terrindam*, *tanjib*, *serhadkhana*, *seerbati*, *kasida*, *bafta*, *cossa*, *humnam*, *gurries* and *doria*. The manufacturers of these assortments are both contractual labours as well as free sellers in the market. Dalals of foreign merchants bought them from various hats and bazaars of Dhaka district, especially Babur Hat in Narshingdi. The spinners and weavers who produced for free market were the greatest beneficiaries indeed.

But Dhaka's cotton products, especially muslin became a world item of trade of commerce in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, thanks to the patronage of the Sultani and Mughal rulers. State patronage was accompanied by rising foreign demand since the opening of the sea lanes in the seventeenth centuries. Almost all the European maritime nations set up business contact with cotton centres of Bengal, including Dhaka. By the 1660s, the Portuguese, the Dutch, the French, the English had set up their respective *kuthis* or trading posts in Dhaka. With the rising demand of Dhaka's cotton goods, production was also expanding phenomenally. One characteristics of cotton industry in Bengal was that most of the weavers were also peasant producers at the same time. With the expansion of foreign market for textiles, many took to weaving leaving behind accompanying agricultural pursuit. Robert Orme, an eighteenth century East India company official and writer, observed this phenomenon. He noted that "in the province of Bengal, when at some distance from the high road or a principal town, it is difficult to find a village in which everyman, woman and child is not employed in making a piece of cloth".<sup>9</sup>

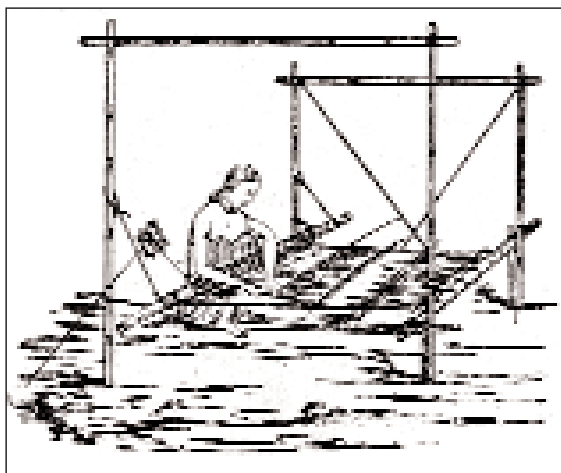
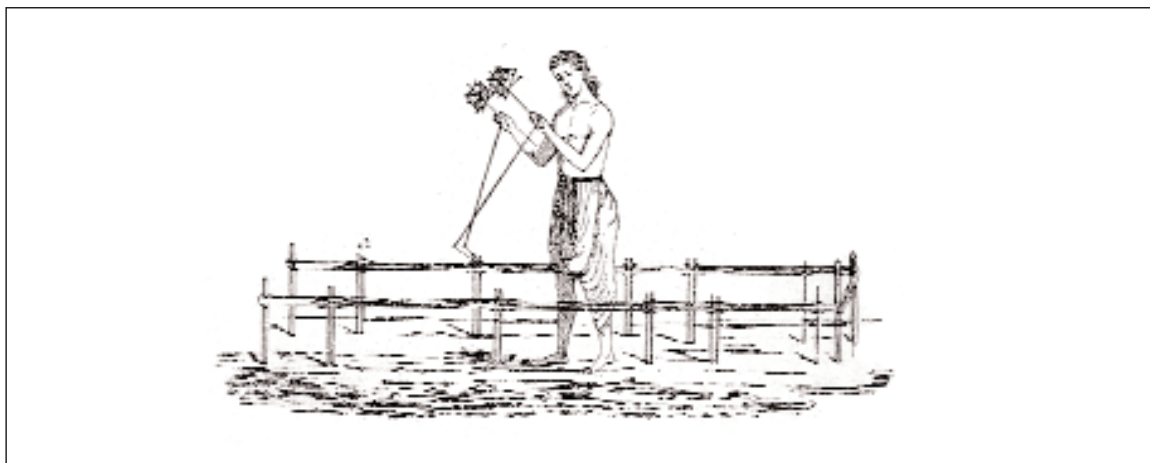
All contemporary travel accounts give the same impression about Bengal's cotton manufacture, particularly of Dhaka's.<sup>10</sup>

During the Sultani and Mughal periods, a super fine cloth called muslin<sup>11</sup> was the most pre-eminent item for trade and commerce in terms of capital investment and demand. Muslin's principal customers were the royalties of Asia and Europe. From travellers' accounts, we are informed that Dhaka brand of muslin was in tremendous demand from the princes and princely families all around the world. Formal dresses and costumes of royal and aristocratic families

9 Robert Orme, *Historical Fragments of the Mughal Empire*, quoted in Debendra Bijoy Mitra, *The Cotton Weavers of Bengal 1757-1833*. (Calcutta 1978), p 151.

10 For the accounts of travellers, see Syed Ejaz Hussain, *The Bengal Sultanate: Politics, Economy and Coins AD 1205-1576* (Delhi 2003), chapter 8; M. R. Tarafdar, *Husain Shahi Bengal 1494-1538: A Socio-Political Study* (University of Dhaka 1999, first published by Asiatic Society of Pakistan 1965), chapter 4.

11 The term 'muslin', which we first get from European sources, is definitely not indigenous nor European. European traders and travellers of ancient and medieval times called fine cloths muslin. Most writers believe that the term is derived from the ancient and medieval Arab port Mosul, wherefrom this fine cloth was exported to Europe. Mosul traders imported this cloth from Bengal, especially from Dhaka. For details, see James Taylor, *A Descriptive and Historical Account of the Cotton Manufacture of Dacca*, pp. vii-vii. and Abdul Karim, *খিটাব গম্বুজ* b, (Bangla Academy 1965), pp. 2-3.



Weaving processes of Muslin



remained incomplete without muslin. Muslins of various levels of fineness were manufactured in many parts of India, but it was only the Dhaka brand of muslin, which commanded the highest demand among the royal consumers. Foreign travellers have described its unparalleled fineness and beauty and universal popularity. They have particularly mentioned the name of muslin fabrics manufactured in Dhaka and Sonargaon.<sup>12</sup> In this connection, Sebastien Manrique, a visitor to Dhaka in 1640, mentioned the hectic business activities in Dhaka by merchants from many nationalities, with a special reference to merchants from Khorasan (Persia).<sup>13</sup> We have no data to ascertain the extent of export of muslin from Dhaka to other lands. Nor have we any definite information about the foreign buyers. But this is certain that Dhaka's muslin had a considerable foreign market.

It is however certain that the demands of the darbars of Delhi and Dhaka and aristocracies of north Indian provinces for muslins were almost entirely served by Dhaka weavers. After serving this captive market, taking supply orders from foreign merchants was indeed a saga which we cannot quantify in the absence of contemporary data. Subadars were obliged to send muslin annually to Delhi imperial household in gift. To manufacture those gifts, royal *karkhanas* (modern factories) were established under the supervision of royal officers. The title of the royal *karkhanas* was called *Daroga-i-Malbus Khas*. *Malbus Khas* was the finest assortment among the muslin brands. There were other assortments ranging from fine to coarse varieties plain, coloured and decorated. We have no definite records about the cotton industry. Our only sources are the factory records of various foreign companies operating in Dhaka's export trade. Even those factory records are not consistently available. Some idea about the quantum of export may be formed from an estimate made for the year 1747.

**Estimate of the amount of cloth exported from Dhaka in 1747**

Imperial household at Delhi	Arcot Rs.1,00,000
Nawab's household at Murshidabad	3,00,000
House of Jagatseth at Murshidabad	1,50,000
Turani merchants	1,00,000
Export by Pathan or Afghan merchants	1,50,000
Export by Armenian merchants	5,00,000
Export by Mughal merchants	4,00,000
Export by Hindu merchants	2,00,000
Export by English Company for Europe	3,50,000
English individuals for foreign markets	2,00,000
French Company for Europe	2,50,000
French individuals for foreign markets	50,000
Dutch Company for Europe	1,00,000
Estimated prime cost	Arcot Rs. 28,50,000

Source: Based on various contemporary official and private papers, the statement was prepared for James Taylor, East India Company's Commercial Resident in Dhaka, in 1800. See A. Karim, 'An Account of the District of Dacca, Dated 1800', *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan*, vol. VII, No. 2, December 1962.

12 Abdul Karim, *XvKvB gmj b*, 3-5|

13 Travels of Fray Sebastien Manrique, vol. 1, pp. 44-45.



Muslin court attire



A Mughal Prince attired in Muslin



Noorjahan in Muslin court attire



Gul Saffa, the Mistress of Dara Shukoh  
wearing Muslin attire



Emperor Jahangir and courtiers in Muslin attire



Muslin court attire



Muslin attire in 1860

VERKAUFFUNGS CONDITIONES			
Derer Waren, so mit dem Schwedischen privilegirten Ost-Indischen Compagnie Schiffe, die Königin ULRICA ELIO- NORA, den 12. Februar 1735. in Gothenburg angekommen, und den 20. Junii 1735. dafelbst an die meistbietenden öffentlich sollen verkauft werden, nemlich:			
	Stück.		Stück.
Corrihays	826	Aechthambies	110
Ginghams	21	Cocantes	118
Copoes	149	Alajars	31
Bollocks	66	Elachacs	8
Baites	1433	Seerlockers	86
Demays	388	Soufies	177
Sancoes	242	Romalls Calimbasar	50
Coffees	492	Romalls Choopas	266
Dacca Baftas	54	Romalls Camon	6
Daccaes	284	Parna Chints	96
Therendams	6	Mosses Hemischen	1109
Romall Mullmull	230	Großliche Handsocken	37
Romall Kilins	245	Madras Chints	24
Romall Mulliparam	10	Verchiedene brodirte Camones so Moss- und Feuersammer Camiolen etc. und andere Kleinigkeiten	
Corrahs	411	Caen-Garn ungefähr Pfund	440
Doodoors geblickte	386	Coffee ungefähr	3900
Dito ungeblickte	120	Lang. Pfeffer dito	4600
Berons	80	Rodex Chinas	150
Humboms	1740	Ebenholz	36400
Sutta Romalls	1030		
Tafeln	650		

1. Alle Waren insgesamt, ohne Ausnahme, genießen freye Ausfuhr, nach allen  
außerhalb Reichs gelegenen Oertern, gegen Erliegung 1 Pro Cent Recognition von  
dem belauf derjenigen so ungepackt wird, worüber denen Käufern auf Verlan-  
gen, ein Amort soll mitgetheilt werden. Dergleichen Waren aber, so von einem  
Orthe zu dem andern innerhalb Reichs verhandelt werden, sind vor allem Zoll und  
Liegenden befreit.

2. Ein jeder Käufer soll gehalten seyn 8 Tage nach Einruftung eines oder mehrer-  
en Laifs derer zu verkauffenden Waren, 10 Pro Cent von dem Belauf derjenigen  
so thme zugechlagen worden, an die Compagnie zu bezahlen.

3. Alle Waren, so nach dem Gewichte gehen, sollen nach niedrigem Stadt-Gewichte,  
durchgehende Waagen gewogen werden, mit 1 Pro Cent Anschlag auf der schale,  
und sollen die Käufer pfechtig seyn, ihre eingekaufene Waren, längstens 6 Wochen  
nach dem Tage des dafelbst ihnen zugechlagen worden, nach gebührender Zahlung  
in Empfang zu nehmen. Wobei ein jeder, der die Bezahlung vor dem Verlust  
von

A rare list of the goods exported from Bengal to Europe in February 1735 which includes *Dacca Baftas*, *Romall of Mull Mull*, *Sutta (Suti) Romalls*

indicating that it was the users and exporters rather than the weavers themselves who gave the names to various brands indicate the poetic outlook of their manufacturers. The names were given according to the texture, colour, designs and thread counts. The most elegant and expensive muslin was called *Malbas Khas*. This brand was exclusively manufactured for the Delhi emperor and his household, and hence it was called *Khas*. The Bengal nawab himself sent *malbus* to the emperor as tributes. *Malbas*, locally called Jamdani, was flowered and decorated in loom. Besides *malbas*, other textiles such as patterned jamdanis, silk products flowered in silver, plain cloths, *seerbands* (for headgear) were sent to Delhi. These products were procured from the arangs of Dhaka, Sonargaon, Bajitpur and Jangalbari. It has to be surely

The estimate gives us a general impression about the production and distribution of Dhaka textiles in the mid-eighteenth century. From this account, we also get some idea about the extent of the international demand for Dhaka textiles. From this account we get an impression as to how textile productions were organised and marketed at various levels from cotton spinning to final export to markets beyond Bengal and India. The most vital role in manufacturing and marketing the cotton products on the part of the indigenous people were the weavers at the bottom and *gomosthas* and *paikars* at the top. *Dalals* or agents made another most crucial agency for the foreign buyers. It must be noted that the local consumption of cloths of all brands and varieties were also supplied by the local producers. But normally they were not involved in meeting the demands of the foreign buyers. The weavers engaged in manufacturing cloths for foreign buyers normally worked contractually and received advances from buyers.<sup>14</sup>

In the contemporary commercial society they were called *Jogis*. They were specially trained through a hereditary system of apprenticeship.

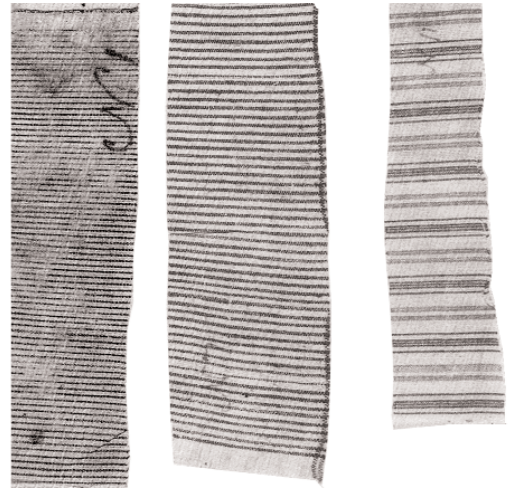
The names of Dhaka textile assortments were mostly of Persian origins

14 For details, see D.B. Mitra, *The Cotton Weavers of Bengal 1757-1833*, (Calcutta 1978); Hameeda Hossain, *The Company Weavers of Bengal: The East India Company and the Organization of Textile Production in Bengal 1750-1813*, (Delhi 1988).



admitted that Delhi imperial household played a significant role in the growth and sustenance of Dhaka textile industry, at least of its fine variety.<sup>15</sup>

Besides textile, other manufactures were also sent to Delhi in great quantities, such as atar, ornamented shields, sticks patterned with gold thread, ornamented *punkas* (fans) made of palmyra trees, gold and silver washing bowls. Muslin had demand in the Middle-eastern and other Asian countries. The garment fashions current in the upper class society in the seventeenth century Europe, as is evident in literary descriptions of female characters, portraits, theatre costumes, indicate unmistakably the demand for muslin in Europe. Muslin appears as a common item in the cargoes of the ships of the European companies trading in Calcutta (see table).



Samples of 'Dacca Bafta' were found in the ship 'ULRICA ELONORA' in 1753 (now in the Govt. Archives, Copenhagen)

### State of Cotton Industry since 1757

Until mid-eighteenth century, we have limited quantitative information about Dhaka's trade and commerce on textiles. Since then we begin to get quantitative picture of the state of Dhaka's cotton industry from the investment accounts and import-export figures provided by various Western companies trading in Bengal cities, towns and Bazaars.<sup>16</sup> All these sources affirm that the most profitable business item for local producers, entrepreneurs and the foreigners was cotton products. It may be noted that in the business parlance of the time, cotton manufactures were called 'piecegoods'.

The markets for cotton manufactures of Dhaka had three zones mainly: local market, Indian Ocean market and Euro-American market. We have practically no records on the scale of the local market. But we may reasonably imagine that practically the entire local demand was met by the locally manufactured cloths. From all sources we are informed that most varieties of cloths were manufactured for meeting the local demand. The local culture and economy dictated the cotton products to be coarse by and large. We have satisfactory records about the manufacture of cloths for foreign buyers. The following table gives us a quantitative picture of the export of muslin from Dhaka from 1790 to 1799:<sup>17</sup>

15 For details of Delhi's contribution to Dhaka's industries, see Abdul Karim, *An Account of the District of Dacca*, dated 1800', *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh*, vol. VII, No. 2, December 1962.

16 In fact, it is the Western maritime companies trading with Bengal which provide all the information about our textile industry. Our local sources are extremely scanty and mainly of literary sort. Keeping records of life and activities was not much in the culture of the Bengal people.

17 Consult, A. Karim, *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh*.

Abstract of piecegoods manufactured at the Dhaka arangs for exportation from 1790 to 1799 (fractions of a Rupee excepted).

Years	Private trade (S.Rs.)	Company's trade (S.Rs.)	Total (S.Rs.)
1790	1491109	745548	2236658
1791	1080893	401121	1482014
1792	1011103	637096	1648199
1793	689926	578286	1268212
1794	413656	460706	874363
1795	662069	516093	1178162
1796	648781	552171	1200953
1797	894157	507388	1401545
1798	639948	439799	1079747
1799	752450	503710	1256160
Total	8284095	5341913	13626018

Besides the company and its servants, there were other European and Asian exporters.

The table shows that the last decade of the nineteenth century was showing a declining trend in the export of Dhaka cotton products both by the private traders as well as East India Company. Mathew Day, the Collector of Dhaka, made a survey of the quantum of trade and commerce of Dhaka district in 1787. He concluded that in money terms, Dhaka had business transactions of about one crore Rupees, of which textile sector alone accounted for about 60 to 70 lakhs of Rupees.<sup>18</sup>

The above chart shows the abrupt decline in the textile trade. The down turn trend continued until textile exports reached an insignificant level in the 1820s when, under the colonial economy, British made textiles could easily oust the local textile entrepreneurial class out of competition. British made cloths were much better in quality and cheaper in price than that of the local made staff. How cheap was the British cloths compared to local cloths has been documented by the *Asiatic Researcher* of 1830.<sup>19</sup> Following is the comparative charts for 1830.

For all practical purposes, the Dhaka brand of textiles lost its market and viability after 1830. Yet, like the remnant of a dead river, Dhaka muslins also maintained its nominal existence throughout nineteenth century, thanks to some demands yet left for Dhaka muslins from Basra, Jedda, Egypt and Turkey.<sup>20</sup>

In the Industrial Exhibition in London (1862), six brands of muslins were sent from Dhaka and exhibited side by side with British made muslins. Dhaka muslin was rated first in the rank of quality.<sup>21</sup>

Comparative Statement of the Prices of Muslins manufactured at Dacca, and the produce of the British Looms			
Assortments		Manufactured at Dacca	Produce of the British Looms
Jamdani, with small spot, ...	1st sort, ...	25	8
	2nd ditto, ...	16	5
Jamdani, Mahiposh, ...		27 to 28	6
Ditto, Diagonal pattern, ...		12 to 13	4 to 4½
Jaconet Muslin, 40½, ...	1st sort, ...	24 to 25	20 to 22
	corresponding with Jangle		
Cossas, ...		38 to 40	9 to 10
Nyansook, 40 by 2½, ...		8 to 9	5 to 6
Cambric, Corresponding with Camiz Cossas, ...		13 to 14	6 to 9½
Jamdani blue or red sprigs, ...		15 to 16	4 to 5
Jamdani Saris, ...		12 to 13	5 to 5½
Book Muslin, corresponding with Mulmulls, ...		10 to 11	7 to 8
Sahun, 48 by 3, ...		28 to 30	14 to 15

The reasons for the decline of Dhaka's trade and commerce are many, the most important of which being the beginning of large scale industrial production of muslin and other thin fabrics in Britain

18 Sirajul Islam, *Bangladesh District Records: Dacca District*, vol. 1 (1784-1787), (University of Dacca 1981), p. 422.

19 *Asiatic Researcher*, vol. XVII.

20 W.W. Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Bengal*, vol. v (reprinted edition, New Delhi 1973), p. 113.

21 J. F. Watson, *The Textile Manufacture and Costumes of the People of India*, (London 1866).

in imitation of Bengal muslin from the late 1780s. Glasgow and Paisley of Scotland became the main centres of the production of imitation muslin and other thin fabrics. British made muslin sold so cheap in the market that “every shop offers British Muslins for sale, equal in appearance, and of more elegant patterns, than those of India, for one fourth, or perhaps more than one third less in price”.<sup>22</sup> To protect the national industry, British government raised high tariff wall against Bengal muslin. Consequently, muslin soon lost its international market against the cheap British made muslins.<sup>23</sup> In the year 1753, when British textile industry was yet to become a threat, the total exports from Dhaka by the company alone amounted to Arcot rupees 28,50,000. In 1813, when British made textile appeared in the Bengal, the value of export from Dhaka was Sicca Rs. 1,20,188 only. By 1820, all the great cotton manufacturing centres, such as Sonargaon, Dhamrai, Narainpur, Chandpur, Srirampur, Janglbari, Bajitpur, Titabari and others got closed. The people engaged in cotton growing, thread making, spinning, dyeing, bleaching, weaving got unemployed and sought alternative career in agriculture. Similarly, the cotton merchants, *gomosthas* and the manifold middlemen were also rendered unemployed. For survival they turned to agriculture. Turning to agriculture was not a very big problem to them because the weaving class and also the textile traders traditionally maintained some connection with agriculture. Most weavers were part-time agriculturists too. Only the weavers making coarse cloth for local market survived and continued to weaving cloths which were not included in the British industrial production. In the official annual report on external commerce of Bengal for 1843-44, the government declared proudly the introduction of British textiles and eliminating “successfully” the local textile manufactures from competition in Bengal.<sup>24</sup>

### **General Impact of Company Rule on the Economy of Dhaka in the Late 18th Century**

The transition from the Mughal to Company rule meant many institutional changes including the collapse of local manufacturing and peasant economies. The district collector of Dhaka reported periodically on the economic conditions of Dhaka city and Dhaka district quite in details. It may be mentioned that until 1787 only one company official called ‘chief’ first and then ‘collector’ ruled supremely over the greater districts of Dhaka, Faridpur, Bakerganj, Patuakhali, Khulna, and parts of Jessore, Mymensingh, Comilla and Noakhali.

Due to company’s rack-renting, plundering and corruptions, Dhaka’s economy was declining fast. The Great Famine of 1768/69 decimated the economy of West Bengal, but not so much of East Bengal. Due to lack of enough rain, the major autumn crops failed in 1784 and it led to a famine.<sup>25</sup>

Most hard hit by the flood and consequent famine was the class of weavers and cotton growers. The collector reported that large number of weavers deserted their villages and abandoned weaving.<sup>26</sup> The famine situation never subsided until 1790. The great flood of September 1784

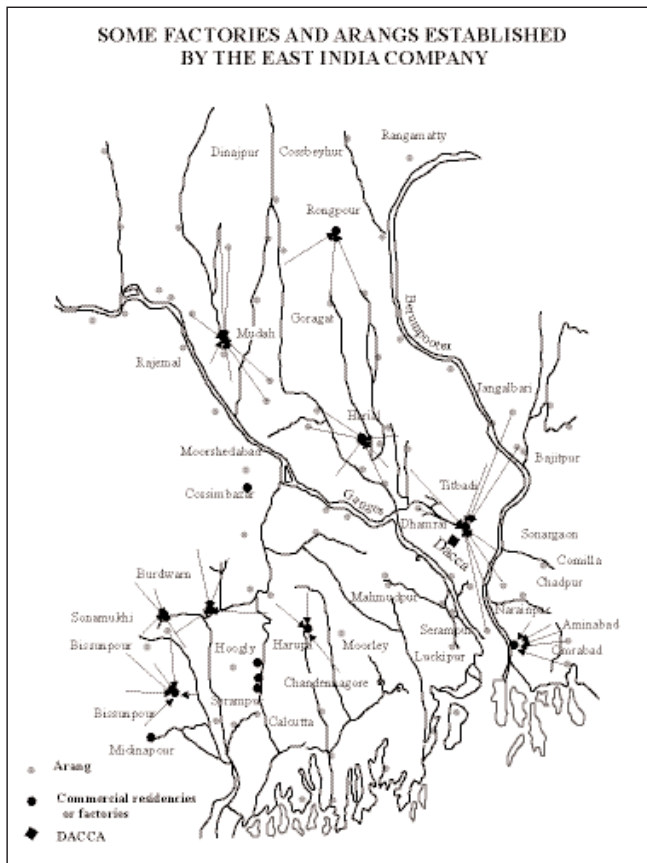
22 Memorial by the muslin and cotton manufacturers of the city of Glasgow for protection of from the East India Company’s flooding the British market with lower priced muslins and cotton goods, 10 March 1794. See Sirajul Islam, ‘Selections from Old Records: Glasgow-Paisley Cottonmen against Bengal Muslins’, *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh*, vol. XIX, No. 3, December 1974.

23 *Ibid.*

24 Sirajul Islam, ‘Colonialism at Work: A Critique on the rise and fall of the export market of Bengal ‘piecegoods’ c. 1760-1835; also see Report on External Commerce for Bengal 1843/44, British Library P/174/55.

25 Sirajul Islam, *Bangladesh District Records: Dhaka District (1784-1787)*, p. 58.

26 Dhaka Factory Chief to Committee of Grain, 24 September 1784, Sirajul Islam, *Dhaka District*, p. 92.



destroyed the standing crops and famine ensued. The hungry masses resorted to food riots. The grain *golas* were looted leading to a general collapse of law and order.<sup>27</sup>

To guard the *arangs* and markets, sepoys were stationed. Peasants, artisans and weavers were selling their wives and children in their struggle to survive. Portuguese slave traders were buying women and children and exporting them abroad as slaves.<sup>28</sup> The continuous deluge made the city of Dhaka inundated to the extent of forcing the city people to use boats for communication.

The government tried to persuade the business class not to raise price of foodgrains. But prices of foodgrains continued to rise in the wake of the flood. Government then tried to influence zamindars to establish granaries in Dhaka city. But zamindars, who could not collect rent from raiyats, expressed their inability to establish granaries in Dhaka city. They rather

asserted that it was the government's duty to build granaries and contain the rising prices of rice.<sup>29</sup> The government then tried to establish a government controlled grain *ganj* aiming at improving price hike. But the project failed. The Dhaka city and its environs got again severely inundated through a long standing deluge. The deluge destroyed the *aman* crops and post-aman rabi crops in 1787. It may be noted that the deluge of 1787 was accompanied by an earthquake, which led to considerable damage of structures and more significantly, to topographical changes in the environs of Dhaka. The famine struck again.<sup>30</sup> The district collector reported in July 1787 that the price hike reached such a height that even most city people had lost purchasing power.<sup>31</sup> The repeated floods and famines severely weakened the economy of the city and mofussil people (for natural calamities of the Dhaka district, see appendix). The raiyats lost their power to pay the zamindari *khajna* and correspondingly zamindars lost their ability to pay government revenue regularly. The economic distress impacted the city economy more precariously. Decline of trade and commerce reached

27 *Ibid.*, p. 97.

28 *Ibid.*, p.125,129.

29 *Ibid.*, pp. 136-3.

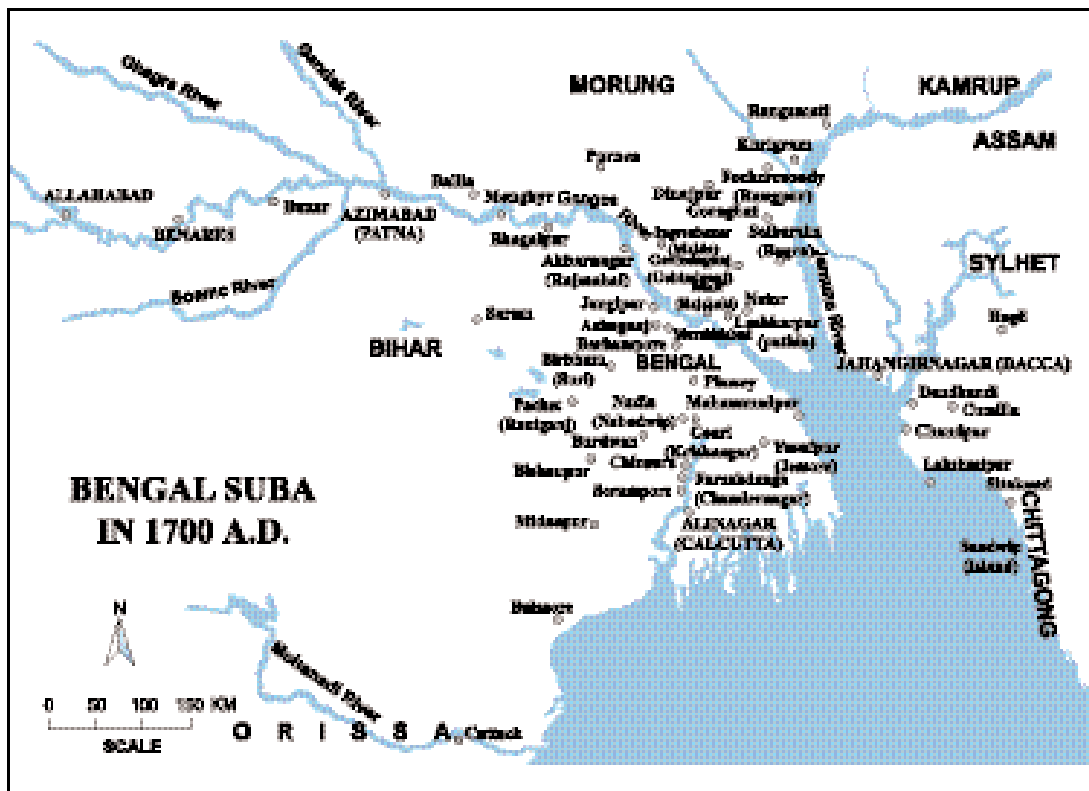
30 *ibid.*, p. 349.

31 *Ibid.*, p.349-50.



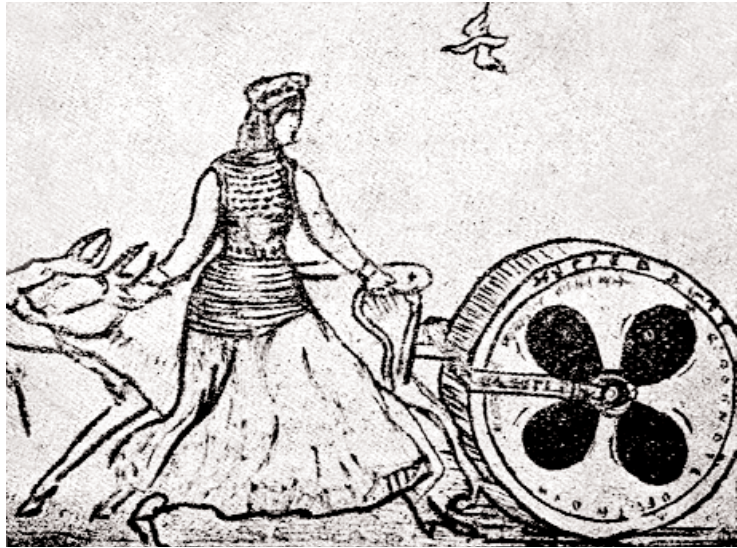
lowest ebb within the memory of the Dhaka society. The sack of the city by the English in 1763, while at war with Nawab Mir Qasim, raids of the city several times by the *fakirs* and *sannasies* already battered the economic lifeline of the city. The devastating natural disasters like the flood and earthquake of 1787 laid the last nail on the coffin of the city.

In the eighteenth century a huge trading and manufacturing society grew in Dhaka. Its elements were foreign mercantile companies, factory owners, *banians*, *gomosthas*, *paikars*, *dalals*, *kayals*, *sarrafs*, *mahajans*, *potdars*, artisans, boat manufacturers, various segments of the textile society, such as weavers, spinners, bleachers, washermen, cleaners, and other people such as, masons carpenters, thatchers, boatmen, palki bearers, shopkeepers, animal minders, grass cutters, slaves, prostitutes and so on. All these imply the existence of a high consumer class consisting of naib nazim and other exiled royal families, and the associated aristocrats including members of old and new bureaucracies, *lakherajdars*, local and foreign merchants, bankers and money changers, landowners and big and small business people of all varieties. They all made Dhaka a vibrant city. But decline in the rank and file began from 1765, when the control of Dhaka city and eastern Bengal passed on to the East India Company. Only one sector of the economy, textile, survived and even flourished further. But as it almost entirely depended on the external trade and commerce, the industry began to decline from the opening years of the nineteenth century and eventually disappeared in the face of the British industrial revolution and British colonial rule in 1830.



### Money and Money Market

As a medium of exchanging goods, money was there from the very ancient times. But until early nineteenth century, the use of money in the form of some metal like gold and silver was limited to a small urban society only and the rest of the population lived in the natural order of non-monetised transactions. At village level, at best *cowries* and copper made the business media on a limited scale and that was again directly linked to payment of rent and taxes to government. The Mughal government developed a



A contemporary cartoon named 'Manchester Roller' showing smashing the Indian economy

system to collect land tax in kind at local level and then managed to get it turned into currency at urban level. But for the profit minded company, such a system was highly uneconomic, clumsy and slow. From the beginning the government tried to monetise the economy for colonial reasons. A pre-monetised subsistence economy cannot generate enough surplus for the colonial government for remittance.

But at peasant level, transactions were so limited and their money value was also so small that high value gold and gold money played the role not of business in general but also of the extraction of peasant surplus by way of rent and taxes. It is now generally accepted that "taxation was the single money relation linking the peasant to the larger society and economy, so that once payment had been made the peasant returned to the natural order."<sup>32</sup>

Dhaka city, the capital of Mughal Bengal, worked as the nerve centre of economic activities of eastern Bengal until the first quarter of the nineteenth century. The city became linked to world market in the seventeenth century when the European maritime companies set up business contact with Bengal and established *Kuthis* or business houses called 'Factories' in Dhaka. Formerly, if money was necessary for only tax and rent collection, but now it became more necessary for making the foreign trade viable. Under the impact of the growth of trade and commerce in the eighteenth century and the growth of market towns and bazaars both inland and coastal areas, the economy had to be monetised at rural level in order to facilitate creating market at rural level. The changed circumstances accelerated the importance of money and its circulation among the producers, merchants and traders and eventually began to change the long established customary relations in the rural sector.

32 John F. Richards (ed.), *The Imperial Monetary System of Mughal India*, (Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 236.



Environs of Dhaka in 1780 A.D. after Rennell

Urban industries tended to stimulate local and external demand through specialization of trade and commerce.<sup>33</sup> However, the expansion of trade and commerce and growth of production specialization, expenditure on urban development, public monuments, luxuries and armies stimulated the market demand for money. The demand, though on a limited scale, percolated down to village level. Most authorities on Mughal Bengal now believe that there was very considerable monetisation in Bengal during the Mughal period, and in this there were some areas where moneytisation developed quite considerably. Dhaka and Dhaka region was one of those areas.<sup>34</sup> The main reason was the textile export trade. Weavers needed money to buy

33 Money is not much required in an economy based on subsistence. A consumer produced most goods he needed and the rest were borrowed or exchanged. Long or short term borrowing or outright customary gift from the neighbour was the system. The subsistence peasants had practically nothing to buy for money in the market. Market was an urban affair.

34 For details of monetisation of the economy of Mughal Bengal, see Debendra Bijoy Mitra, *Monetary System in the Bengal Presidency 1757-1835*, (Calcutta 1991; Satish Chandra, 'Some aspects of the growth of a Money Economy in India during the Seventeenth Century' in *Modern Asian Studies*, p. 374.

### EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT IN DHAKA



specialised things from the urban markets for manufacturing specified commodities. But the problem was that though the Sicca Rupee was the standard currency for the colonial state and revenue was collected in Sicca currency alone, Bengal had in use as many as 52 kinds of rupees. Informally, almost every district had its own brand of currency (see table 1). The circulation of different kinds of rupees, of different denominations minted at different places, on different date made the money market a real chaos indeed.<sup>35</sup> There was a standard market value of a particular currency. But all currencies differed in content value. One currency was converted to another currency on payment of *batta* or discount. Every Bengal district had a currency of its own. For example, Sylhet economy was dominated by cowries, Chittagong by *Mugy* currency, North Bengal by *Narayany* currency and Calcutta by Sicca Rupees and Dhaka by Arcot rupee. All these currencies were exchangeable with other currencies on the payment of *batta*. The chaos created a currency class to make conversion from one currency to another on *batta* or discount. The currency dealers called *poddars*, *shroffs*, banias emerged to rule the anomalous currency market.<sup>36</sup> Mathew Day, the Collector of Dhaka, made a detailed report on the currencies circulating in Dhaka. He reported that though Calcutta Sicca Rupee was the official currency and revenue was collected only in Sicca Rupee, yet the district was monetarily governed by Arcot Rupees of various brands and origins and dates, such as French Arcots, English Arcots, Dutch Arcots, Mussulipttam Arcot, Biss Sunu Arcots, Foorshee Arcot, Jhardar Arcot, Madras Arcot, Surat Arcot, Beneras Arcot, Delhi Arcot, and so on. All these Arcot currencies came partly from the Coromandal coast and Surat and partly coined in the government mints. European traders, in their coastal trade, sold their merchandize in the south India for Arcot Rupees, which brought to Dhaka for buying textiles and cotton. Day reported that the full value of an Arcot Rupee when new was fixed by government at a *batta* of Sicca Rs. 8-6 percent. Day remarked, "The principal currency of this province (Dhaka) is Arcot Rupee in which all commercial transactions are carried on and all purchases are made; it is also the specie received by the zamindars from the Talookdars and Ryots and is in short the only rupee current in the mofussil."<sup>37</sup> But the power of Arcot of Dhaka proved to be so overwhelming that traders and general buyers and sellers refused to accept the government rate of *batta* on the Arcot Rupee. The government finally retreated and issued a circular for the collector to ignore the regulation concerning *batta* and honour and accept Arcot Rupee "at the Bazar Rate of Batta for the time being."<sup>38</sup> Day estimated that the total volume of trade of Dhaka district amounted to about one crore rupees which was almost entirely transacted by the officially unacceptable Arcot rupee.<sup>39</sup>

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35 The Mughal currency system collapsed after 1757 and currencies of different denominations minted at different places began to pour in Bengal from all parts of India. Furthermore, the petty princes, even private bankers and individuals began minting currencies in collusions with each other. Currency market turned out such a chaos that every region of Bengal was seen to have its predominant currency for the local market.

36 Debendra Bijoy Mitra, *Monetary System in the Bengal Presidency 1757-1835*, (Calcutta 1991), p. 15.

37 Mathew Day, Collector of Dhaka, to the Revenue Board, 22 November 1787, in Sirajul Islam (ed.), *Bangladesh District Records: Dacca District*, vol. 1, (1784-1787), pp.420-21.

38 Accountant General to William Douglas, Collector of Dhaka, 13 September 1791, Dhaka District Records, Bangladesh National Archives.

39 *Ibid.*, p. 422.



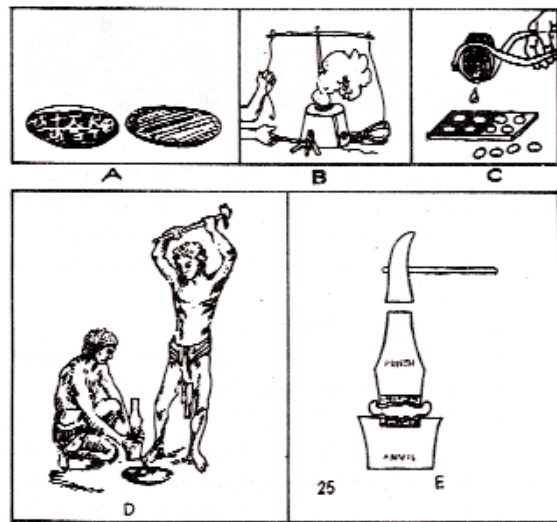


Cowries from the Maldives. Once the price of goods was paid by Cowries

The colonial state formation processes were not yet mature enough to enforce a single monetary system in the country. For the time being, the government yielded to market forces and accepted Arcot and other regional currency.

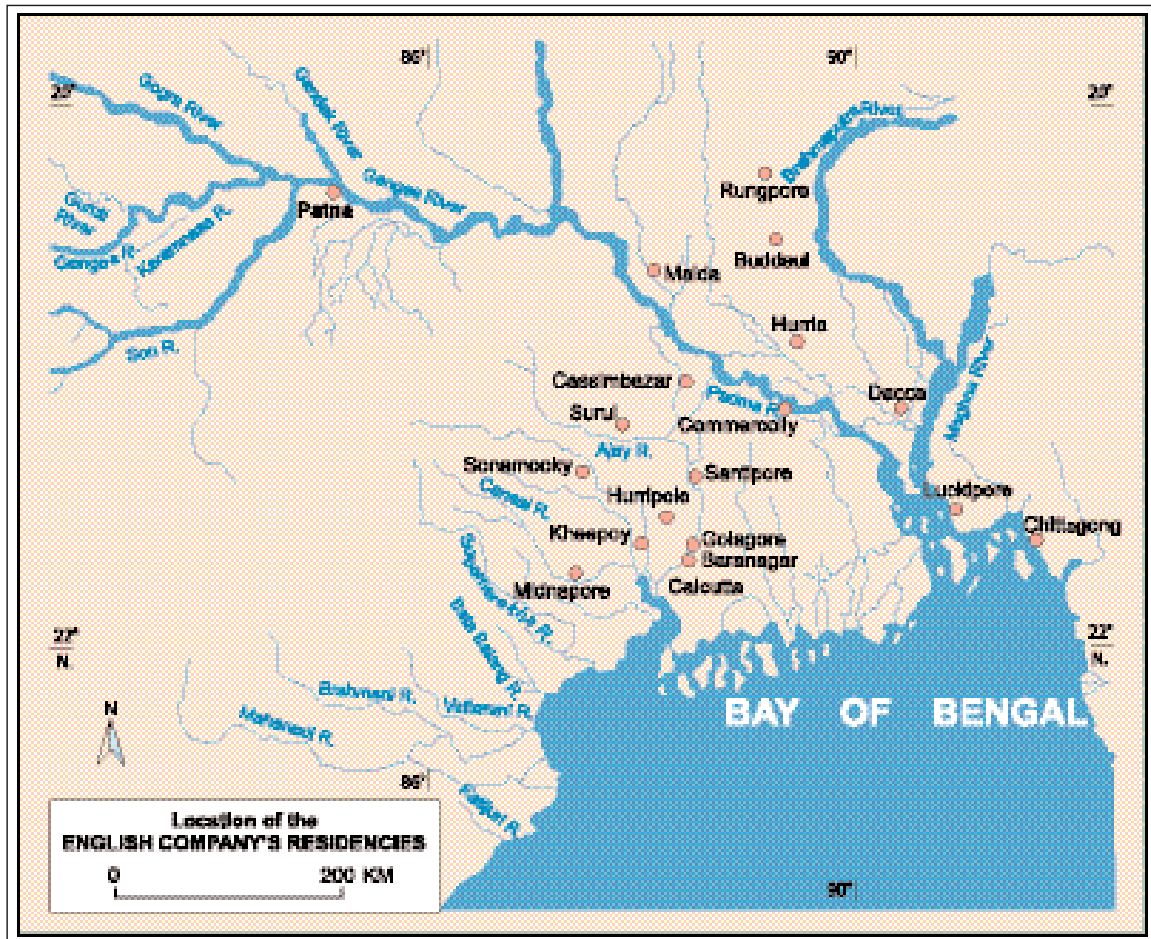
Until the late nineteenth century, the economy of the petty dealers, shop keepers, artisans and ordinary food and vegetable suppliers was so much of marginal nature that they did not even touch the fringe of the 'money-market', by which we mean a market for loans to government, big business houses and merchants. Here, we deal only with the latter category to give a brief account of Dhaka's money market in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The money market of Dhaka, for that matter all of Bengal, had a complex network of multiple credits of various types which were connected with each other in quite a complex manner. The credit institutions included numerous indigenous banking houses led by the house of Jagatseth until the transfer of Bengal's capital from Dhaka to Murshidabad. The other big houses controlling the credit market of Dhaka were the houses of Satur Murakawn, Ramdulal Bose, Balram Deb, Gopal Das, Krishnacharan Das, Shibnath Das, Monohar Das, Shiba Prashad and Kishore Das.<sup>40</sup> Most of these *shroffs* (money traders) were non-Bengalis settled in Dhaka or having branches in Dhaka and other Bengal districts. The issuing of large scale *hundis* (bills of exchange) and borrowing and lending took place mainly through these houses. Besides, there were small scale borrowing and lending operated through a currency class called *mahajans* whose main economic activity was conversion of one currency into another through a complex system of exchange based on *batta*. It has been stated earlier that in the late 18th century there were 52 types of currencies current in various regions of the country. A particular currency established a stronghold in a particular region. Among the major currencies were Arcots current in Dhaka, *Das Masa* in Chittagong, *Cowries* in Sylhet, *Narayani* in north Bengal and *Sicca* in Calcutta. *Sicca* was the official currency in which government revenue was collected. The local currencies were converted into *Sicca* Rupee on the payment of *batta*, not in accordance with the rate earlier determined by government, but by the forces of the local currency



Working process of minting

40 Sirajul Islam (ed.), *Bangladesh District Records: Dhaka District*, pp. 70, 159, 219, 286, 359, 371-75, 379, 383, 402, 408, 416, 424.



market. The shroffs made the most important element in that market force. So much was their influence on the money market that the government could establish little control over their operations. Mentioning their influence in the money market, the Dhaka Collector, Mathew Day, reported to Committee of Revenue in 1785,

“The currency in the Mofussil all over this district is entirely in Arcots and these being of various kinds, many coined by individuals and many of various denominations and the batta fixed upon them by the villainy of the shroffs, the knowledge and dissemination of the different kinds of arcots, has become a profession unknown to every person but themselves. In consequence of the mystery which attends this business and the collusion among them all receipts or payments of money must pass through their hands, this enables them to levy an arbitrary batta on all monies received from the mofussil which must be necessarily exchanged before it comes to the Collector’s Cutcherry and when the Arcot and Sicca Rupees in the bazaar have been equal or from the deductions made by the money changers under the heads of short weight Cooticchaullan and Bazar Chullan both of which are merely nominal and established by general collusion to assist their fraud.”<sup>41</sup>

41 M. Day, Collector of Dhaka, to Committee of Revenue, 18 January 1785, *Ibid.*, p. 115.



A Minting House at Sonargaon

It was the shroffs or indigenous bankers that regulated the forces of the money market. Until 1765, the house of Jagatseth controlled the money market with the support of the nawab.<sup>42</sup> As regards controlling the money market, what was the Bank of England in contemporary Britain, the House of Jagatseth was in Bengal.<sup>43</sup> Under the control of the House of Jagatseth, a single composite money market developed in Bengal, a control which collapsed with the fall of the house in the late 18th century.<sup>44</sup>

A chaos gripped in the money market. For some time, the house of Mathura Mohan Sen led the indigenous banking. But

soon indigenous banking houses disintegrated and hundreds and thousands of individual shroffs emerged to control the money market. But among them, there were some shroffs who combined to stabilise the money market and passed them for big bankers. They were Monohar Das, Gokul Das, Ram Chand, Motchand, Bhowani Das, Dwaraka Das. They were all Benares-based shroffs with their branches in Dhaka and constituted the first entrepreneurial class in colonial Dhaka. The leading Calcutta shroffs like Balaram Mallick, Rajib Lochan Datta and Kamal Charan Mondal and Mathura Mohan Sen also maintained branches in Dhaka. They issued and received *hundis* and exchanged money on *batta* and sold bullion.<sup>45</sup> To the common people, they were generally known in Dhaka as *mahajans* and *paikars*.

However, government was always active in establishing a meaningful control over the money market, which was deemed to be a strategic question from the point of view of the control system of the colonial state, for which *laissez faire* in the money market looked anachronistic, unsafe and uneconomic. To bring order in the money market in colonial way was to crush the influence of the

42 Debendra Bijoy Mitra, *Monetary System*, *Ibid.*

43 With the cooperation of government, Bank of England worked as a private limited company until the end of the Second World War.

44 For details about the fall of the House of Jagat Seth, see K.M. Mohsin, *A Bengal District in Transition: Murshidabad*, (Asiatic Society of Bangladesh 1978).

45 *Ibid.*, pp. 106-107.





Indo-Portuguese coins



Arcot rupees current in Dhaka

house of Jagat Seth. In north India, the Jagat Seth had already lost their influence and had to yield to the rules of the colonial banking system. That the Agate Seth Kathy in Dhaka was also made a target and had been made manifest in the case of one Joykissen Banerjee, a lender to European traders, against the Jagat Seth Kuthi at Dhaka.<sup>46</sup>

Due to changes in the climate of financing colonial ventures, all the agency houses and the banks run by the European Agency houses began to face bankruptcy from 1822. To overcome the crisis both

native and European financing houses combined and formed the Union Bank in 1829. The firmly based Union Bank was also collapsing under the impact of indigo crisis of early 1830s. The ruin of the Union Bank and Bank of Bengal had its repercussions on Dhaka indigenous banking, which was largely mortgaged to these two apparently trustworthy banks. It created a panic in the money market of Dhaka. People lost faith in the integrity and ability of the European banking in the Bengal setting. However, the



Sicca rupees current in Dhaka

indigenous banking houses in Dhaka survived the financial crisis by and large, mainly because they mostly dealt in *hundi* rather than taking deposits and lending out to speculators.

Where had gone all these banking entrepreneurs in the nineteenth century? Almost all of them lost their business to the modern banking system emerging in Bengal in the wake of the reforms introduced in the currency system in the 1820s and '30s. The dictating of money-market by local shroffs was inconsistent with the colonial situation and once the colonial rule was firmly established from the beginning of the nineteenth century, the shroffs and banians became the first target to be eliminated. While their volume of investment in the money-market was phenomenal and crucial for local, inter-regional and foreign trade of the country until the end of the eighteenth century, they practically disappeared in the 1830s. It was because of a general depression in the banking business in the 1820s and '30s and consequent government intervention in the money-market by introducing new modern banking system based on a uniform currency system and government control over the money-market from the 1840s.<sup>47</sup>

46 Narendra Krishna Sinha, *The Economic History of Bengal 1793-1848*, (Calcutta 1984), chapter v, 'Indigenous Banking 1793-1848'.

47 For details, see Debendra Bijoy Mitra, *Monetary System*, chapter six and N.K. Sinha, *The Economic History of Bengal 1793-1848*, vol. III, (Calcutta 1984), chapter five.

**Table 1: Showing the intrinsic value of the following species of rupees current in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa compared with the Sicca Rupee, from assays by the Calcutta mint in October 1792.**

Species of Rupee						Intrinsic value, compared with the sicca Rupees.		
						Rs.	A.	P.
1.	Siccas of Moorshedabad -	per	sicca	weight	100	100	0	0
2.	Siccas of Patna	---	---	---	---	100	0	0
3.	Siccas of Dacca	---	---	---	---	100	0	0
4.	Pholy Sonats	---	---	---	---	100	0	0
5.	Delhi Mahomet Shai	---	---	---	---	99	8	0
6.	Money Surat, Large	---	---	---	---	99	8	0
7.	Benares Sicca	---	---	---	---	99	0	0
8.	Bissun Arcot	---	---	---	---	97	14	6
9.	Sonats Sabic	---	---	---	---	97	8	0
10.	Sonats Duckie	---	---	---	---	97	8	0
11.	Forshee Arcots	---	---	---	---	97	6	6
12.	French Arcots	---	---	---	---	97	0	0
13.	Patanea Arcots	---	---	---	---	96	9	6
14.	Aurungzebe Arcots	---	---	---	---	96	9	6
15.	Gursaul	---	---	---	---	96	9	6
16.	Madras Arcots, new	---	---	---	---	96	4	9
17.	Muslipatam Arcots	---	---	---	---	96	0	0
18.	Shardar Arcots	---	---	---	---	96	0	0
19.	Patna Sonatts, old	---	---	---	---	96	0	0
20.	Benares Rupees, old	---	---	---	---	95	14	6
21.	Madras Arcots, old	---	---	---	---	95	14	6
22.	Furruckabad Rupees	---	---	---	---	95	12	9
23.	Jehanjee Arcots	---	---	---	---	95	11	3
24.	Chunta Arcots	---	---	---	---	95	11	3
25.	Calcutta Arcots	---	---	---	---	95	6	6
26.	Moorshedabad Arcots	---	---	---	---	95	6	6
27.	Old Arcots	---	---	---	---	95	3	3
28.	Dutch Arcots	---	---	---	---	95	0	0
29.	Surat Arcots	---	---	---	---	94	0	0
30.	Benares Frisolie	---	---	---	---	92	6	6
31.	Viziery Rupees	---	---	---	---	63	0	0
32.	Narrany half Rupee	---	---	---	---	63	0	0

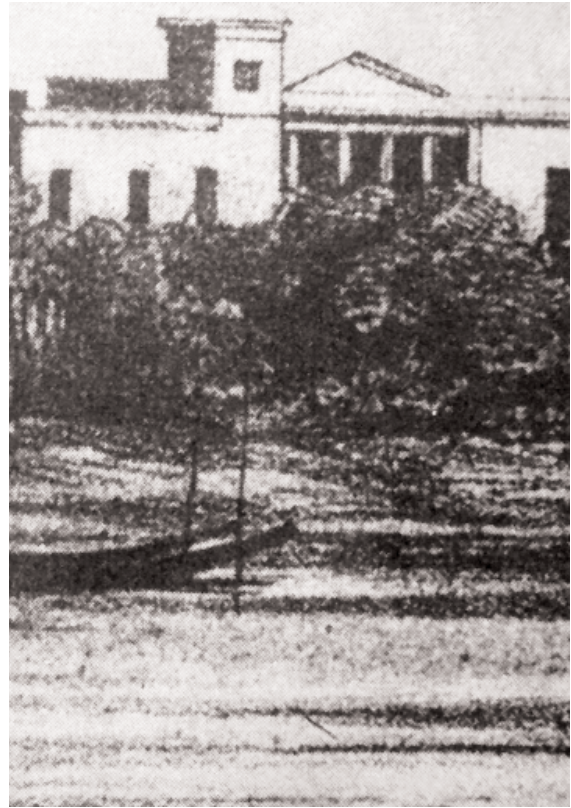
Source: W.W. Hunter, *Annals of Rural Bengal*, 1868

From May, 1836, the old Sicca Rupee was abolished and a new Company Rupee introduced. The rate of conversion of Sicca Rupee to Company Rupee was made by addition of Rs. 6-10-8 percent to the Company Rupee, that is, 106-10-8 would buy 100 Sicca Rupee.<sup>48</sup> The new currency denomination was called Rupee, Anna and Pie, and not the previous Rupee, *Anna*, *Gunda*, *Kranti*, and *Cowries*. The age of the shroffs was thus over.

<sup>48</sup> The currency reform was promulgated by the Act 17 of 1835.



Bengal Bank (Dacca Bank) at Dhaka in 1890



Jagat Sheth's Bank at Dhaka in 1840

### Rise of the Land Market

Due to several causes including over assessment during the conclusion of the permanent settlement, most of the zamindar families became defaulters in revenue payment punctually and their lands were sold in auction under the operation of the revenue law, popularly known as 'sun-set law'.<sup>49</sup> Before the permanent settlement, there was no market in land, as until then private property did not exist in land. Under the pre-colonial laws and traditions, land belonged to the king and actual occupants of land as tillers (raiyyats) and other users were obliged to pay *khajana* (rent) to the king. The colonial government renounced the traditional right in land for the state and created instead private property in land by declaring zamindars absolute proprietors of lands under their control. Under the rules of the permanent settlement, zamindars were absolute proprietors of land and raiyyats or tillers of land within the zamindari estates were made their tenants-at-will. As proprietors, zamindars were endowed with the right to evict any tenant any time. They also got the right to sell and gift their landed property just like any other private property. But they were burdened with one insidious conditions. It was that they must pay the government revenue

49 Sirajul Islam, *Permanent Settlement in Bengal: A Study of its Operation 1790-1819*, (Bangla Academy 1979). Zamindaris sold under the revenue sale law have been identified and enumerated in chapters four and five.



absolutely punctually failing which the defaulted revenue was to be realized by selling their lands in public auction without failing. Economically and socially, the permanent settlement meant the creation of marketable property in land and the creation of two classes in land control: zamindars and the tenantry under them. As absolute proprietors zamindars got the right to sell the holdings of the defaulting tenants and settle them with new tenants or annex them into his *khas* land. All these laws and their ruthless operations impacted on the economy and society very deeply. Under the operation of the permanent settlement zamindari society was destined to become better managers or lose their lands to new entrepreneurs. Due to over assessment, mismanagement and intrigues on the part of zamindari *amla* (officials), and also government policy to replace the extravagant and unworthy zamindars by new entrepreneurs, huge number of zamindari lands were put on auction sale every year under the Revenue Sale Law, what came to be known popularly as Sun-set Law. About 69% of the revenue lands of Bengal were sold in auction within the first ten years of the operation of the permanent settlement, and most of these lands were transferred to people who were hitherto engaged in city-based business.<sup>50</sup> Under the colonial setting business activities became increasingly unsustainable and thus one after another commercial houses of Dhaka left business and joined the newly created land market.

The auction papers show that in all districts, it was the merchants who bought the auctioned-out zamindari lands and Dhaka was no exception to this rule.<sup>51</sup> The shrofs and other merchant with large idle capital in hand bought zamindari lands and entered land control leaving behind their traditional business as shrofs, textile entrepreneurs, banians, importers and exporters, and so on. The most leading entrepreneurial houses of Dhaka city, who shifted their traditional businesses to land control, were the Khawja brothers: Alimullah and Hafizullah and later Abdul Gani Mia (nawab), Dul Singh, Rajiblochan, Barkatullah, Mirza Ashraf Ali, George Paniaty (a Greek merchant), Mirza Gulam Ali, Mirza Zafar Ali, Govinda Das, Mirza Hyder Ali, Rudisser Johanes (Greek merchant), Ramprashad Sarkar. All of them bought lands in all parts of eastern Bengal and established their conglomerate zamindaris.<sup>52</sup> As trader and exporters, they exported the local commodities like salt, chunam, betel nut, leather, agar, etc. to other parts of India and beyond. Among the most extensive purchasers of zamindari lands in Dhaka district and its neighbourhood, mention may be made of the most leading ones. They are George Paniaty, Dul Singh, Rajiblochan, Mirza Ghulam Ali, Mirza Zafar Ali, Govinda Das, Mirza Hyder Ali, Suddissur Johannes, Paniaty Alexander, Ramprashad Sarkar, Khawaja Hafizullah, Khawaja Alimullah.<sup>53</sup>

The most abrupt shift of capital investment from trade and commerce to land control is undoubtedly the most phenomenal feature of the changing fortunes of Dhaka City. In spite of the shift of the capital of Bengal from Dhaka to Murshidabad in the early eighteenth century, the city continued to function as a big centre of trade and commerce. Though the house of Jagat Seth, the greatest banking group of India, moved their headquarters to Murshidabad, they did

50 Sirajul Islam, Permanent Settlement, p. 157. A detailed quantitative description of district-wise land sale has been given in chapters four and five.

51 *Ibid.*, p. 159.

52 Sirajul Islam, 'The Operation of the Sun-set Law and Changes in the Landed Society of the Dacca District, 1793-1817, *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh*, vol. XIX, No. 1, 1974, pp. 49- 67.

53 *Ibid.*, p. 63.

not wind up their business in Dhaka. The banking houses of Govinda Das and Ramprasad Sarkar acted as their agents in Dhaka. All European trading companies and private traders kept their investments in Dhaka intact. Politically, Dhaka naib nazim family acted as the political agent of the Murshidabad nawab for eastern Bengal. So, the shift of the capital did not affect the business life of the city very materially.

But now, it is the permanent settlement which had changed the course of entrepreneurial life of the city. Under the colonial setting, Dhaka entrepreneurs, like many of their Calcutta counterparts, were forced to leave their old business and move their capital to the best alternative mode of investment, which was buying zamindari estates at auctions and seek profit from rentals. Such a mode of investment was also highly attractive because land control meant in the end social control. Furthermore, investment in land carried little or no risk. It would have been really revolutionary if the entrepreneurs turned zamindars could look at land control entrepreneurially like the landlords of England of the time. The entrepreneur's entry into land control did not, in fact, lead to any agricultural revolution as it happened in Britain. Instead of looking at land control as an enterprise, the new zamindars soon adopted the habits and outlook and lifestyle of traditional zamindars. The pre-permanent settlement zamindars looked at zamindari right as a means of social control rather than a profit making business. The new zamindars could have, in fact, tried to bring capitalist transformation in agriculture, but never did they venture to do so. Several factors account for the new seminar's failure to turn themselves into improving landlords like their British counterparts. Firstly, *raiya*s (peasants) were vehemently against any attempt of raising the rent structure sanctioned by tradition, what was then known as *pargana nirikh* or traditional rate of rent. Capital investment cannot take place if it does not bring back reasonable returns in profit. And peasants were not inclined to pay higher rent because their crops never brought them higher income under the given market conditions. It was basically a subsistence economy. In the absence of competitive market for agricultural produce, surplus production in agriculture depressed the market prices, which was a disincentive both for the landlords and tenants. Instead of trying to increase rental by way of improvement measures, zamindars could very much choose to get the same or higher income by buying new lands in auction rather than using capital in agricultural improvement. Another avenue to use zamindari surpluses was to send the male members of the family to Calcutta for education and make them qualified for government services and other white collar professions.

During the Mughal period, Dhaka's business society was linked to all other towns, hats, bazaars and *gaunjes* of Bengal and India. Textile and money market were the main linking factors. Both the factors ceased to operate from the early nineteenth century, and consequently Dhaka became an isolated outpost from the points of view of politics, trade and commerce. In the virtual absence of business and industrial activities Dhaka city population was declining so fast that the jungles and ferocious animals were encroaching upon the city making it almost a ghost city, which was going to meet the fate of Gaur, Pandua and Sonargaon of olden times.<sup>54</sup> A city's physical size is directly influenced by economic activities. Higher the scale and range of trade and commerce and industrial activities, higher the population. When Dhaka was the centre of economic activities in the pre-colonial period, the city had a population of as high as nine lakh in the late seventeenth century.<sup>55</sup>

54 S.U. Ahmed, *Urban Problems and Government Policies: a case study of the city of Dacca, 1810-1830*, in Kenneth Ballhatchet and John Harrison (eds.), *The City in South Asia: Pre-Modern and Modern*, (London 1980), p.139.

55 *Ibid.*, p. 131.

With the shifting of the capital from Dhaka to Murshidabd and the gradual diminution of economic activities under the colonial regime, the city was losing fast its population. The city was losing its vitality both economically and demographically ever since the gradual shifting of the capital from Dhaka to Murshidabad since 1704. By 1801, Dhaka's population came down to 200,000 and since then the decline accelerated further. In the Census of 1872, we find the city population descended to the depth of 69000 only.<sup>56</sup> It means Dhaka stood as a mere district town just like other district towns of Bengal.

### **Tradition of Internal Trade Barriers and its End**

It would be tumultuous if any government today proposes to put up internal trade barriers at all vantage points of the state for collecting revenue in the name of transit and town duties on goods passing or halting through them. But this sinister system was there in our country until it was formally abolished in 1836. In his description about the system of imposing duties on all goods passing through roads, highways, rivers, haunts and bazaars, James Mill, the historian and Chief Examiner of East India Company, remarks, "In India, as under most uncivilized governments, the transit of goods within the country was made subject to duties; and upon all the roads and navigable rivers, toll-houses or custom houses (in the language of the country chowkeys) were erected, which had power of stopping the goods, till the duties were levied. By the rude and oppressive nature of the government these custom houses were exceedingly multiplied; and in long carriages, the inconvenience of numerous stoppages and payments was very severe. As in all other departments of government, so in this, there was nothing regular and fixed; the duties varied at different times and different places; and a wide avenue was always open for extortion of the collectors. The internal trade of the country was by these causes subject to ruinous obstructions."<sup>57</sup> Such predatory system was operative in most pre-modern states passing through premature state formation phases. In fact, Europe passed through such internal trade barrier system when international trade was disfavoured and government revenue came entirely from internal sources. In Mughal India, Akbar abolished the *sayer* system, which he found to be economically ruinous. The literal meaning of *sayer* is market. In Mughal revenue parlance, *sayer* meant the system of customs duties collected from *hauts*, *bazaars*, *gaunjies*, and *chowkeys* (inland custom houses) erected on highways and rivers ghauts or landing places. But Akbar's well meaning measure did not succeed. The practice of collecting *sayer* from stopping the passing carriages, animals and boats loaded with merchandizes and collecting tolls at their whims flourished after his death.

The East India Company Government protested about the evils of *sayer* system before they occupied the country and they at one stage put up pressure on government and obtained an imperial *sanad* in 1717 exempting themselves from paying all internal duties in lieu of the payment of a lump sum of 3000 Sicca Rupees payable to government annually.<sup>58</sup> But when in control of the

56 The Census of India, 1872, vol. iv, Bengal, p.107.

57 James Mill, *The History of British India*, vol. III (5th ed.), Chapter v, Book IV.

58 The Mughal and British perceptions of inland duties have indeed the changes courses of the history of Bengal. It was the *sayer* policy which precipitated the ill-feeling between Nawab Ali Vardi and Sirajuddaulah, and it was the abolition of *sayer* again that led to the conflict between Meer Kashim and Company.

country, the company very much sustained the sayar system in order to augment the government revenue and income for themselves.<sup>59</sup> Besides government officials, zamindars also collected sayers of various types within their respective realms. Observing on the effects of sayar system on the economy, the Fifth Report on the Affairs of the East India Company (1812) comments:

“These duties which went by the name of sayar, as they extended to grain, to cattle, to salt, and all the other necessities of life passing through the country and were all collected by corrupt, partial and extortionate agents, produced the worst effects on the state of Society, by not only checking the progress of industry, oppressing the manufacturer, and causing him to debase his manufactures but also by clogging the beneficial operations of commerce in general and abridging the comforts of the people at large”.<sup>60</sup>

“The sayar items proliferated during the period from 1765 to 1772, when the central power structure collapsed and taking the weaknesses of the so-called ‘Double Government’ the zamindars and talukdars of all denominations assumed authority by starting collection of sayar from the trading classes of all descriptions. Items of almost all marketable items, how insignificant their market and value might be, were subjected to sayar impositions at all stages of their movement from home to market. One aspect of the sayar system was a document called *Rowannah*. A merchant had to procure a *rowannah* (a kind of modern bill of lading), from the darogah of the nearest *chowkie* to make himself a valid merchant. Boats and carriages were checked at every *chowkie* and the owners of merchandizes had to pay some to the chowkie chequers in order to avoid harassment and delay in the name of checking ‘valid’ rowannah.<sup>61</sup> Under the circumstances, it became impossible for traders of moderate circumstances to even survive, not to speak of making some fortune and forge an upward mobility in the society. As a result of sayar and rowannah systems, inland trade tended to become the monopoly of the big merchants, who could afford to bribe and influence the *darogah* of the chowkies, and those big merchants were essentially urban based. Thus we find in Dhaka so large number of merchants, but in the countryside, according to Charles Trevelyan, “ferriwallahs and other small traders were almost crushed down under the heavy wheel of the inland custom system.”<sup>62</sup> He observed,

“As commerce is the universal instrument of production, everything which tends to render our instrument more expensive, limits in the same degree the encouragement afforded by it, to the industry of the country. Whatever extra charge the merchant may be put to by unauthorised exactions, by delays and by the expense of various kinds attending the compliance with, or evasion of numerous and intricate restrictions, it is borne by him for a time only. He is merely the medium of its payment, and in the long run he must get back the full amount in the enhanced price of his goods; otherwise he would be obliged to desert his business. The expense, therefore, of every kind, falls upon the consumers, and by limiting the demand for goods, it imposes a check upon their production.”<sup>63</sup>

59 For details about the British method of sayar collections, see Tarasankar Banerjee, *History of Internal Trade Barriers in British India: A Study of Transit and Town Duties*, vol. I: Bengal Presidency (1765-1836), (Asiatic Society, Calcutta 1972), Chapters III and IV.

60 W.K. Firminger (ed.), *Fifth Report*, vol. 1, p.152

61 Tarasankar Banerjee, *History of Internal Trade Barriers*, p. 75.

62 C.E. Trevelyan, *Report upon the Inland Customs and Town Duties of the Bengal Presidency*, (1835), p. 10.

63 *Ibid.*, p. 11.

Under such circumstances, trade and commerce must be concentrated in the hands of few people and the middle and lower classes of traders, who become the lifeblood of any healthy economy, emaciate to insignificance. Such a situation forces the general people to avoid the hassle of going to business and go to agriculture and remain trouble free in life. Under such a situation entrepreneurial character of a society disappears, and exactly that happened to Bengal society in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Almost all the big business families of Dhaka in the early nineteenth century are found to have been Dhaka based and non-Bengalis. It was a common saying until late 20th century that Bengalis are temperamentally averse to business. The axiom had truth in it and development of the disposition must be attributed to the destruction of trade and commerce under the “heavy wheel” of *sayer* and *rowannah* system.

The age old system of *sayer* and *rowannah* began to erode from 1810, when the Regulation IX was enacted to reorganise the system of inland and town duties was reorganised. All the previous regulations concerning collection of transit and town duties were rescinded. The *chowkie* and *rowanna* system was made more simplified and number of *chowkies* reduced drastically. Thousands of *chowkies* in Bengal were consolidated into six Customs Houses established at Calcutta, Murshidabad, Hughli, Dhaka, Chittagong and Balassore and European collectors of customs were appointed for these houses. The number of *sayer* items was reduced and *rawanna* form was much simplified.<sup>64</sup>

It was expected that reforms in the system of inland customs would remove the obstructions to normal trade and commerce. But the situation never improved. Rather, the new set-up of *chowkies* turned out to be more ruthless in the collection of inland tax from *hauts*, *bazaars*, *gaunjies* and passing carriages and boats on the high ways and rivers. Complaints were general about the paralysing effects of the new *chowkies* run by European collector of customs.<sup>65</sup>

The conclusion of the Board of Customs was that the villainy of the native agents of the custom houses was responsible for the failure of the inland revenue collection system. The Board of Customs, however, came to believe that the very idea of collecting taxes from the travellers, shopkeepers and *bazaars*, *rowannah*, *chowkies* and so on is faulty and destructive for healthy economic development. It was argued that net income coming by way of inland revenue was too trifling to justify the continuance of the harassing system. A report of the Board of Customs showed that in 1831-32, the gross produce of the internal duties collected from the whole of the Bengal Presidency amounted to Rs. 681126 and collecting expenses stood at Rs. 406986, the net yield of the internal customs being Rs. 274140 only.<sup>66</sup> After a long debate on the problem of inland customs, it was at last resolved to abolish in 1836 the inland custom system altogether and allow the merchants to enjoy the freedom of trade internally like their counterparts in Britain.<sup>67</sup>

### Occupational Trade and Commerce

The fall of the textile industry was inevitably accompanied by the fall of the capitalist class that grew out of the industry. Most outstanding of the capitalists, particularly *shroffs* or indigenous banking

64 Tarasankar Banerjee, *History of Internal Trade Barriers*, pp. 50-52.

65 Sumachar Durpun, August, 1832 in Tarasankar Banerjee, *ibid.*, pp. 147-48.

66 C.E. Trevelyan, *Report upon the Inland Customs and Town Duties of the Bengal Presidency*, (1834)

67 Tarasankar Banerjee, *History of Internal Trade Barriers*, p. 125.



houses, transferred their capital to the acquisition of land control, as has been described earlier. The smaller capitalists like the money changers and dalals and paikars tried to survive by participating in other traditional industries. After textile, the next most capital intensive trade was *chunam* (limestone). Limestone was abundantly available in the sub-soil of Laur Pargana, the hilly region of the northern part of Sylhet. Limestone was mined during Mughal period for construction purposes. For the construction of brick building, lime served the purpose of today's cement. Furthermore, the finest limestone was crushed into powder and processed into an edible item to be consumed with betel leaf, a very common luxury among the high and low all over Bengal. Chunam was also used as a raw material for many industrial purposes.



Ivory products of Dhaka

For the British, Sylhet limestone thus appeared to be the first mineral to be exploited in eastern Bengal. Formerly, saltpeter, a mineral available in sand fields of Bihar, was the only mineral the company was exploiting. Chunam was brought to Dhaka for crushing and marketing. The principal merchants in the late eighteenth century who dealt with chunam were two Greek merchants Ezechail Bech and Nicholas. Among the English chunam merchants most notable were Thackeray, Colin Shakespeare and Richardson. Their principal local counterparts in the late 18th century were Ramlochan Sarkar and Gangaram Ghosal, both from Dhaka.<sup>68</sup> The chunam trade became insignificant from the early twentieth century with the introduction of cement for building construction and other synthetics replacing chunam.

Like *chunam*, *Kheda* was another item of business in Dhaka which flourished from the Mughal times to the mid-nineteenth century. Capturing live elephants and taming them for various civil and military purposes was another important business called *kheda*. Today's environmentalists will be surprised to hear that until mid-nineteenth century East had many forest lines inhabited by elephants, tigers, rhinoceros, rogues and so on. Since elephant was extensively used by the army, police, civil service, and landed gentry for communication and carrying purposes, and since ivory

<sup>68</sup> Proceedings of Nizamat Adalat, 25th April 1795. Dhaka District Records, National Archives of Bangladesh, Dhaka.

Taming elephant after *kheda*

had a world market from very ancient times, a class of entrepreneurs emerged to capture wild elephants from forests and tame them for the market. Buyers from far and near used to come to buy elephants. Elephants were captured from forests surrounding Dhaka and other places and brought to Dhaka for their marketing. The

system was called *kheda*. There were specialised elephant catchers (*mahuts*) and labours for *kheda* expedition. *Kheda* was indeed a highly capital intensive venture.

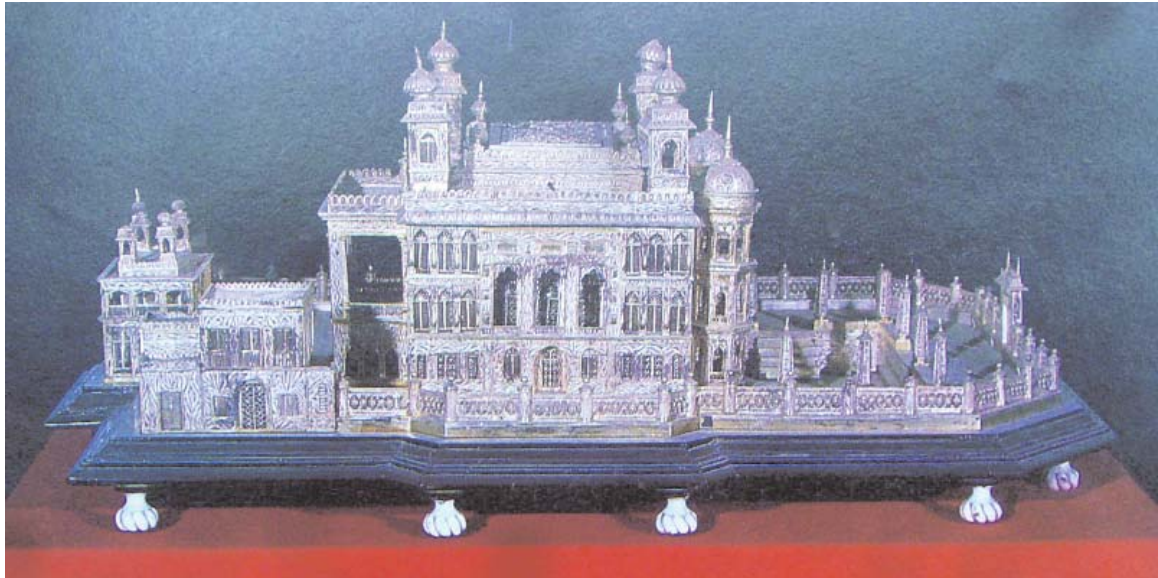
Capturing wild elephants and taming them for sale made a good business in the late 18th century, when Dhaka region was more known for forests than crop fields. The forest regime increased due to declining trend of population and cultivation under the impact of the chronic scarcities and famines since 1767. The population of elephants, rhinoceros and tigers grew so much that even Dhaka city was not free from their depredations. The company government encouraged catching wild elephants for market. Catching elephants by *kheda* system was a traditional trade in Bengal and the trade got acceleration under the patronage of the company government. The government took measures to kill tigers and rhinoceros and catch elephant for taming and sale. *Kheda* was a highly capital intensive affair. Elephant business had several levels: *kheda*, taming and maintaining until sold. Each level involved considerable expenditure. The expenses of an official *kheda* expedition of 1791 in the forest of Kashimpore have been returned by collector W. Douglas as follows:<sup>69</sup> Cost of a *kheda* organised by the Dhaka Collector in 1791:

<i>Coolies</i>	Arcot Rs. 1048-0-0
Wooden and iron implements	88-12-0
Bamboos	25-0-0
Ropes	14-8-0
Barkanduzes (armed guards) four	34-0-0
Pujas for safety and good returns	9-0-0
Powder and ball	22-0-0
Wages of <i>darogas</i> and <i>amlas</i>	90-0-0
Eight <i>mahuts</i> and one <i>doydar</i>	76-0-0
Stationery	3-8-0
Total	Arcot Rs. 1410-12-0

Elephants caught in all parts of Bengal were normally transported to Dhaka for sale. Elephant had a good demand locally and externally. Elephants were in good demand for transportation, construction, military, and aristocratic luxuries. Based on its ivory, Dhaka had also developed an

69 W. Douglas to Board of Revenue, 30 April 1791, Dhaka District Records, National Archives of Bangladesh, Dhaka.

industry for ivory products. The present area of *Peelkhana* (meaning abode of elephants- 'fil', an Arabic term means elephant) was the place for elephant market in Mughal times. The *kheda* as an enterprise began to decline with the gradual improvement of communication, cessation of wars, and decline of landed gentry under the company rule and virtually came to an end in the early nineteenth century, when its demand was falling progressively on the one hand and population of elephant was also declining due to growth of population and consequent expansion of agriculture.



Filigree works

### The Artisan and Labour Economy

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, an artisan and occupational economy developed in Dhaka. Being the capital city of Bengal and later a great business centre, Dhaka drew a huge and intricate service society of many denominations, the most remarkable and important of which are gold and silver workers, conch-shell artisans, bleachers, dyers, bakers, *hooka* manufacturers, boat builders, *palanquin bearers*, boatmen, turban makers, musicians, potters, carpenters, drummers, masons, manufacturers of musical instruments, umbrellas, blankets, candles, cane chairs, rope and twine, idle makers and so on.

Dhaka was renowned for gold and silver business from the Mughal times, may be even earlier. A class of entrepreneurs called *poddars* controlled the bullion market. They supplied gold and silver bullion to the individual artisans, who turned them into various kinds of jewellery and other marketable products. The Dhaka artisans in this business excelled in filigree work. They made bracelets, neck chains, ear-rings, nose-rings, finger rings, loin chains and many other kinds of ornaments. They also made silver bowl, jug, pitcher and other item of luxuries. The most popular medium scale business in Dhaka was embroidery. In this branch of economic life, Muslim artisans predominated, as the Hindus predominated in their labour at the spindle and the loom. However, the heyday of the embroidery and gold and silver business was over by the beginning of the nineteenth century, when Dhaka was losing population fast. The city population, according to a



<b>দ্রাক্ষারিচ</b> গুন কোট, বাস, কাশ, গলরোগ ও কংসেগ শিহই অরোগ্য হয়। (মূল্য ১০ আনা শিশি)	<b>অমৃতপ্রাশ</b> (মৃগনাজিহ্বক) বাসী-প্রাশ স্বাস্থ্য ও অরোগ্য হয়। বল, বাকি, মুক্তি ও শক্তিবদ্ধক (মূল্য ২০ মাস)	<b>সারিবাস্তাসব</b> —উৎকৃষ্ট টিনিক— সর্বাধিক স্নাতকপ্রাপ্ত অর্থাৎ মৌখিক সর্বাধিক বাত আশ্রয়াক্রমে প্রস্তুত হয় মূল্য ১০ আনা মাস
<b>বাসকারিচ</b> টার মূত্রেসের বাসি, অর, কাম ও ভূপিত্তের দোষ দূরিত্বের দ্রব্য করে। (প্রতিশিশি ১০ আনা)	<b>অকরুণবজ</b> ১০ তোলা <b>চন্দন প্রাশ</b> ১০ সের	<b>ব্রাহ্মী রসায়ন</b> আশ্রয় দ্বিতীয়াধিক, বলাকারক ও মস্তিষ্কের শক্তির আশ্রয়। শারীরিক ও মানবিক অবস্থানে অকার্যকর (প্রতি শিশি ২০ মাস)

Reflection of Swadeshi approach in advertisements

### Swadeshi Enterprises: A Nationalist Move towards Self-Reliance and Urban Growth

Generally, politics and economic life do not affect each other very directly. But for the colonial politics and economy, this principle did not interact so closely. Nationalist politics that developed in the last two decades of the nineteenth century opened up a new economic dimension to intensify nationalist politics and spread out its spirit down to rural *hauts* and *bazaars*. Bengali nationalist politicians called upon people to re-establish traditional self-reliance in economic life and in doing that they called upon people to boycott foreign industrial products and take to local products instead.<sup>71</sup> This brand of economic nationalism necessitated to create an indigenous industrial base in the country. The local entrepreneurs were thus motivated to establish industrial units, what we

report prepared by the Superintendent of Police in 1824, stood at 60,617, exclusive of villages in the suburbs.<sup>70</sup>

The loss of population inevitably meant the loss of business too. In other words, loss of business made a huge population of Dhaka unsustainable. Dhaka became virtually merged up with rural life. Under the circumstances, only one traditional business remained largely unaffected by the decline of trade and commerce of the city. It was the weaving of coarse cloths of all varieties for the village people. The kind of cloths the general village people used was so coarse and cheap that the colonial regime found it least profitable to sell the British made cloths in the countryside. Thus the *jugees* (Hindu weavers) and *joolas* (Muslim weavers), who made cloths for the rural poor, continued their trade largely unaffected by the general decline of trade and commerce of the city.

70 James Taylor, *A Sketch of the Geography and Statistics of Dacca*, (Calcutta 1840), p.222.

71 For details, see Amit Bhattacharya, *Swadeshi Enterprise in Bengal 1900-1920*, (Calcutta 1986).



call *Swadeshi* enterprises, to cater to the needs of the people. In the propagation of this thought, Dhaka stood just next to Calcutta.

From the second half of the nineteenth century, Dhaka's population began to grow again. The following table shows how Dhaka city was gaining population decennially:

Year	Population	Year	Population
1872	69,000	1911	109,000
1881	79000	1921	119,000
1891	82,000	1931	139,000
1901	90,000	1941	213,000

Source: Census of India, 1872, Bengal, p.107; *ibid.*, 1881, Bengal ii, p. 529; and *ibid.*, 1941, vol. iv, Bengal, p. 18. Figures have been rounded to the nearest thousand.

It is evident that population nearly trebled itself over the forty years from 1872. This growth may be attributed not to the corresponding economic growth, but to the changes in other factors. For example, Dhaka became the headquarters of administrative Division covering a large tract of the territory of present Bangladesh. Dhaka was made the focus of the introduction of railway, steamer service, postal and telecommunication services. The commercialization of agriculture, which was characterised by production of indigo, jute, tea, tobacco, timber, etc. also contributed to slow growth of population of the city. Commercialization of agriculture, particularly production of jute from the mid-nineteenth century also contributed to the rise of Narayanganj as a port town characterised by jute bailing. Narayanganj grew as extended wing of Dhaka city. These factors did prepare Dhaka for the future to rise again as a metropolitan city marked by manufacture, trade and commerce. The most important factor that contributed to the rise of Dhaka as a manufacturing city again was the *Swadeshi* movement.



Jogesh Chandra Ghosh, founder of  
*Sadhana Aushadhalay*

Amit Bhattacharya argues rightly that the dead industrial life of Bengal was revived not by any design and plan of the colonial government but by the anti colonial *Swadeshi* movement, which called upon people to give up the use of foreign goods and use instead the domestic products. The movement also called upon the educated people to revive the lost entrepreneurial life of Bengal.<sup>72</sup> The *Swadeshi* entrepreneurs did not remain confined to Calcutta alone. Dhaka was equally influenced by the *Swadeshi* economic thought. The Dhaka patriots of the *Swadeshi* movement created an anti British social force to industrialise the country following the track of the industrial achievements of the past. The *Swadeshi* enterprises encompassed a wide range of small and

72 *Ibid.*



Mathuramohan Chakraborty, founder of  
*Sakti Aushadhalay*

medium scale industrial commodities, viz, weaving, hosiery goods, cotton mills, chemicals, drugs, perfumes, ink, soap, candle, boot polish, cream, tannery and leather works, boatbuilding, cigarette, *bidi*, *zarda*, *hooka*, pottery, brick, tile, mortar, glass, iron foundry, bell metal, brass metal, match, comb, button, dairy produce, cheese, biscuit, condiment, oil, kerosene lamp, conch bangle, umbrella, gold and silver work, printing press and so on.

Most flourishing of the *Swadeshi* enterprises are the weaving firms. Keeping with the great tradition of Dhaka's textile industry, several weaving firms were established in Dhaka. The biggest among the weaving firm was the Gupta & Co. established at Patuatuli in 1904-5 with an initial capital of Rs. 15,000. It was managed by a Dhaka *Swadeshi* leader.<sup>73</sup> The firm imported British hand-machines, an improved version of the traditional handloom. Yarns had

to be imported since local production of cotton and yarn ceased long time ago. The yarn was dyed in the factory, an improvement in the sense that traditionally yarn was always dyeing and weaving was made by different people. The *Swadeshi* spirit made the factory a success, which inspired several other entrepreneurs to set up mechanical looms. Among these, mention may be made of Das Brothers & Co., De Sarkar & Co., Bengal Hosiery Supply & Co., *Swadeshi Shilpalay*, Ganguli & Co., and Basu Roy Chowdhury & Co.<sup>74</sup> The capital investment in these factories was not at all remarkable. The biggest textile company, the *Dhakeswari* Cotton Mills Ltd. was registered in 1922. Over two thousand operatives were engaged in running this mill.<sup>75</sup> But what was remarkable was the spirit of the entrepreneurs, who built these industrial units in Dhaka. They were determined to revive the textile glory of Dhaka. But the spirit soon sank. The market forces compelled several of them to wind up their business.

Another branch of enterprise which caught the interest and imagination of the *Swadeshi* workers was medicine. *Ayurvedic* or herbal medicine was one glorious part of Bengal's industrial life. Both *Aurvedic* and *Unani* systems of medicine was tremendously popular among people until the mid-nineteenth century, when government took a policy to create market in Bengal for British drugs and declared the indigenous medicine as unworthy and unacceptable. Along with the *Swadeshi* activists of Calcutta, their Dhaka counterparts also launched a move to revive the traditional medicine and dispense with the dependence on imported drugs. The most successful

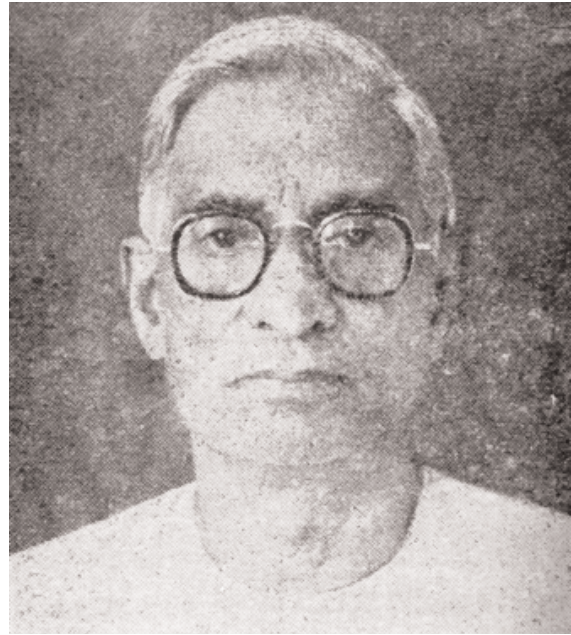
<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> G.N. Gupta, *A Survey of the Industries and Resources of Eastern Bengal and Assam for 1907-08*, (Shillong, 1908), p.13.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> Mukul Gupta, *Cotton Mill Industry in Bengal*, (Government Bulletin No. 75, 1937), p.13.

among the companies manufacturing indigenous medicine set up in Dhaka were the Dacca Ayurvediya Pharmacy Ltd., which extended its business to different parts of eastern India. The other several units which survived the test of market forces were Ayurvedic Medicine Mfg. Co. and *Gour Netai Ayurved Aushadanalay*, *Sakti Aushadhalay* and *Sadhana Aushadhalay*.<sup>76</sup> At a capital investment of Rs. 30,000, a soap factory called Boolbool Soap Factory was established in 1903 by Krishnachandra Saha, Satiya Mohan Das and Askhay Das. Encouraged by the *Swadeshi* activists, a colony of shoe makers, about 100 families, grew in Dhaka. Leather was imported from Calcutta for making shoes. The small scale industries like conch bangle and umbrella industries also grew a lot under the impact of the *Swadeshi* movement.<sup>77</sup> Umbrella making was another item which received impetus from the *Swadeshi* movement. Most remarkable among the *Swadeshi* enterprises was the East Bengal River Steam established by Raja Sreenath Roy of Bhagyakul, which was indeed the first Bengali steamer service on the Padma, Meghna and Ganges owned by any East Bengal entrepreneur.<sup>78</sup> The enthusiasm of the *Swadeshi* movement began to subside from 1915 and completely died down in the 1920s. However, it is true that the business and industrial life of Dhaka, which got a spurt after the partition of 1947, began to obtain modern characteristics, how poorly as it was, from the first quarter of the 20th century. But how much it contributed to the post-partition economy of Dhaka is highly debatable. The doubt arises from the fact that the Dhaka business world, how small it might be, was occupied by the Hindu entrepreneurs by and large and most of whom migrated to India in the wake of the partition.



Surya Kanta Bose, founder of  
Dhakeshwari Cotton Mills

### Concluding Remarks

To wind up the discussion we may maintain that so far as the business history of Dhaka is concerned, we may divide the long history of Dhaka into four distinctive phases: a. rise of Dhaka as a great business centre in eastern Bengal in the seventeenth and early eighteenth century; b. Dhaka's participation in the overseas business; c. Dhaka in decline in the nineteenth century; and d. finally the beginning of the rise of Dhaka again in the early twentieth century. Every such

76 Amit Bhattacharyya, 'Random Notes on Bengali Enterprise 1900-1920', *Jadavpur University, Journal of History*, vol 5, 1984.

77 Kedarnath Majumdar, *Dhakar Bibaran*, (Mymensingh 1910), p.195.

78 Amit Bhattacharyya, 'Random Notes on Bengali Enterprise 1900-1920', *Jadavpur University, Journal of History*, vol 5, 1984.

phase marking the changing fortunes of Dhaka is intensely associated with the contemporary political developments.

Dhaka is believed to have been an important mart of eastern Bengal from the Hindu period, but it began to assume metropolitan character from the early seventeenth century, when it was made the headquarters of the Mughal province, suba Bangla, in early seventeenth century.

It has to be noted that wherever in the Mughal state, the court-and-camp was established, it laid the foundation of a city, and soon it obtained commercial character alongside political power.<sup>79</sup> And because, the city was directly associated with political power, it tended to decline with the decline of political power. Because the business of the city was linked to political power, the city's decline invariably led to the decline of business too. The glaring example of this observation is Dhaka the Mughal capital. The transfer of capital from Dhaka to Murshidabad led to the rise of the city of Murshidabad with the proportionate decline of the old city of Dhaka. Dhaka was losing population fast and was destined to meet the fate of the old capital cities like Gaur, Pandua, Sonargaon, Rajmahal and others. But the fall did not occur the way it was expected historically. The supreme reason is business.

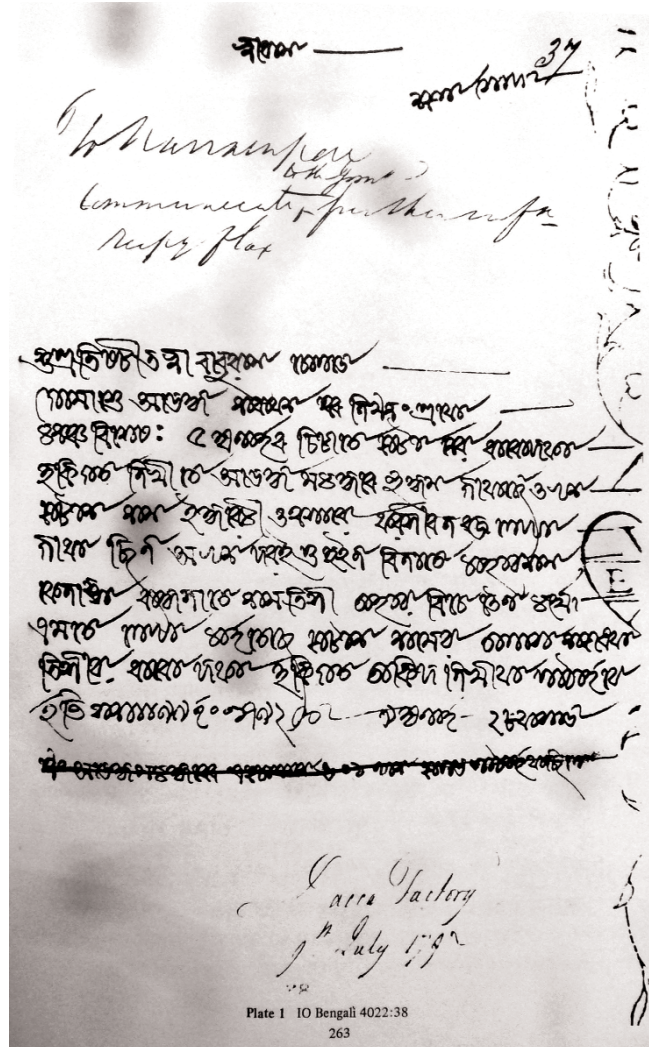
Commercially, Dhaka got linked to foreign trade. Every maritime nation of Europe trading in India had established their factories (business office and warehouse) in Dhaka. They invested their capital mostly in weaving products. Their capital investment generated new businesses and rise of business classes. Indigenous banking flourished. Export of textile products increased manifold. Inevitably, businesses subsidiary to textile export also flourished. Dhaka was thus heading towards becoming a capitalist metropolis. But the trend was halted by the Industrial Revolution in Britain. It led to the fall of Dhaka's textile production and trade. Muslin lost its international market. Losing its commercial significance, Dhaka became a decadent town by the second quarter of the nineteenth century. The indigo and jute businesses that developed subsequently and sequentially were agro-based and had little impact on Dhaka city economy. Jute trade contributed to the rise of Narayanganj and some other erstwhile bazaars of East Bengal as new towns. Dhaka's economy was least influenced by the new economies of indigo and jute. Jute contributed to the growth of Calcutta, rather than Dhaka. All the jute mills grew in and around Calcutta. It is the change of political scenario again in 1947 that led to the latest and most momentous phase of the history of Dhaka's trade, commerce and industries.

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79 For a thoughtful discussion on this aspect, see Barrie M. Morrison, *Political Centres and Cultural Regions in Early Bengal*, (University of Arizona Press, 1970); C.A. Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars: North Indian Society in the Age of British Expansion 1770-1870*, (Cambridge University Press, 1983)



## A facsimile of Dacca Arang records in 1792



Sri Ram

Well-reputed Sri Baburam Chopde, Gomasta, Narayanpur Aurang. Communicating for the [following] purposes:

On 5 July the said aurang was directed to provide twelve items of description of katan. At that time the name katan was given as the Persian word for the English one. It has now transpired that what is known as flax in England is called in Bengali tisi, the inside of which produces oil. It is therefore directed that instead of looking for the article by the name of katan, twelve items of description of tisi should be quickly sent. The end. Year 1199, A.D. 1792. Dated 9 July, 28 Asadh.

Dacca Factory  
9 July 1792.

## BENGAL AFTER PARTITION



# 2

## Industry, Trade and Commerce of Dhaka 1947-1971

Shafique uz Zaman

### Introduction

India and Pakistan emerged as two independent countries following the partition of British India in 1947 and East Bengal<sup>1</sup> became a part of Pakistan. Although the colonial ruler ruled the whole undivided India, Bangladesh suffered for the longest period and was the worst affected region of the sub-continent. Pre-British Bengal was known to be the richest region in the sub-continent both in terms of industrial output and food crop production. But at the end of colonial rule, the richest Bengal was turned into the poorest in the whole region. The peasant class experienced the most notorious form of exploitation. So, the emergence of Pakistan as an independent country generated new hope and aspiration for the people of East Pakistan. But unfortunately, within a few years of the partition, their dream of a new life began to evaporate as they faced new types of deprivation, which was only comparable with that of the colonial period.

East Pakistan, which was relegated to a periphery at the end of the British period, was again made by the Pakistani ruler the supplier of raw materials to the metropolis of West Pakistan, as the colonial ruler did for their own cities. East Pakistan accounted for a larger share of export than West Pakistan, but much of the surplus, which was mobilized in the East, was transferred to West Pakistan. So, during the post partition period of 1947-1971, Pakistan experienced an evolution in trade and industrialization, which instead of promoting a balanced prosperity generated wide disparity between East and West Pakistan.<sup>2</sup>

During the whole period of Pakistan and even the pre-partition period, Dhaka city occupied the premier position in trade, industry and business. Since, in any market economy, Chamber of Commerce and Industry plays a key role in promoting trade and commerce, the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) was not an exception. Bengali Muslim businessmen encountered enormous troubles in getting permission and acquiring facilities for starting any business. The DCCI was established in 1954, six years after the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Karachi, but started working in 1958. The DCCI played a pioneering role in generating business enterprises and at the same time struggled hard to get due shares which have been denied by the government and the non-Bengali business community.<sup>3</sup> The refusal of the government to

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1 The partition of British India took place under the Indian Independence Act, 1947.

2 For the extent of disparity, see S.S. Baranov, *Characteristics and of Economic Development 1947-1971*, translated from Russian to Bangla by I. Islam, Dhaka, 1986.

3 For details of the DCCI and its role, see Chapter eight of this book.

accept the legitimate demand put forward by the business community and various organizations, generated political turmoil which ended up with the creation of independent Bangladesh.

Given this background, an attempt has been made to analyze the structure and trend of the growth of trade and industry in East Pakistan, especially in Dhaka city during 1947 to 1971. Before going to a detailed description of the economy of Pakistan, it is important to highlight briefly the trade, industry and commerce of Dhaka as well as East Bengal in the pre-partition period. This comparative description is necessary to yield a deeper insight for understanding the changes of the post-partition period. With this end in view, Chapter-2 of this article highlights a brief profile of the economy of pre-partition Bengal.

Chapter-3 begins by describing the level of industries and trades, which fell to the share of Pakistan after partition, as well as their pattern of distribution between East and West Pakistan. Besides, the problems and challenges faced by Pakistan have also been included in this Chapter. Chapter-4 describes exclusively the nature and type of industries in East Pakistan. Industry usually tends to concentrate in some particular cities or centers. The industries, which fell to the share of East Pakistan, mainly grew up in Dhaka District, and flourished in the subsequent years. The type and trend of the growth of trade and industries have been discussed in Chapter-5. Concentration and share of manufacturing have also been highlighted in this chapter. Chapter-6 has brought the major factors, which contributed to the growth of trade and industry in Dhaka and its vicinity. Chapter-7 focuses on the shift in ownership and the position of Bengali businessmen. The extent of concentration of trade and industrial assets in the hands of non-Bengali and Pakistani businessmen has been discussed in Chapter-8 of this article. And lastly, Chapter-9 highlights the grievances of Bengalis and the role of the DCCI in protecting the interests and in securing due share of East Pakistan.

## 2. A Brief Profile of the Economy of Pre-Partition Bengal

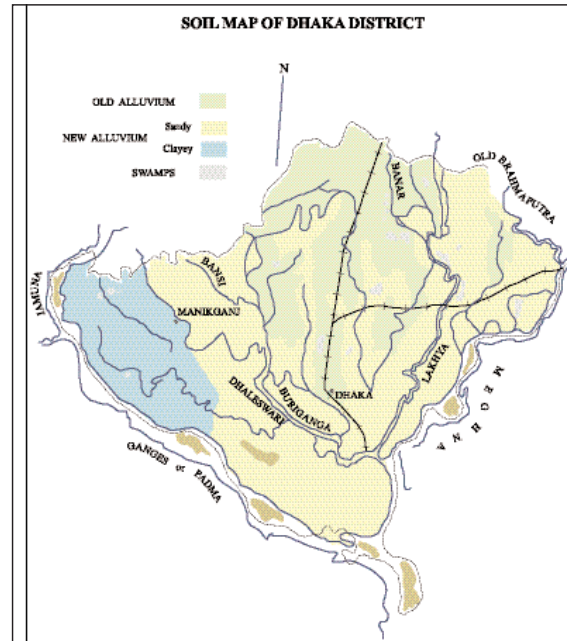
Before British rule, Bangladesh was known to be the richest region in the sub-continent. Fertile land, humid climate, monsoon rain and flow of water through many rivers and tributaries during whole of the year enabled the people to produce abundant food and raw materials out of which an excess produce was exported to the other regions of the sub-continent. Although agriculture was the mainstay of the economy, manufacturing industry contributed significantly to both income and employment. The weavers of Bengal produced high quality cotton fabric and silk. Robert Orme wrote in his book *Historical Fragments of the Mughal Empire* that in the early 50s of the eighteenth century cotton textile of Bengal was almost a national industry and there was hardly any village where people including women and children were not involved in producing a piece of cloth.<sup>3a</sup> After meeting the local demand, much of Bengal's textile goods constituted the principal export article in the world market. Although textile industry was dispersed throughout the country, Dhaka was the major area of concentration. The prestigious muslin was entirely a product of Dhaka, known as *Dhakai Muslin*. As the muslin earned name and fame for its delicateness and dexterity, Dhaka turned to be the main center of trade and commerce and the residence of Emperors and the class of nobility.<sup>4</sup> Along with these

3a R., Orme, *Historical Fragments of the Mughal Empire*, London, 1805, quoted by J.N. Sarker, p. 45.

4 R. Datta, pp. 180-81.



textiles of various arts and type, many other handicrafts and industries, based upon the supply of local raw materials and indigenous skills, formed an important aspect of the economy of the pre-colonial period. But this ever-flourishing industry began to decline owing to the imposition of many unjust and prohibitive duties as well as many other notorious repressive measures against the local industries and labors. It is worth mentioning that Bengal was the first target of the British and brought under colonial rule after the Battle of Plassey and it took almost a hundred years more to colonize the whole of India. East Bengal's industry was hit hard and began to decline from the late eighteenth century and extinct within the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Dhaka as the Capital of Bengal lost its importance, as trade and industry began to concentrate in and around Calcutta the new Capital of India.



Adapted from the unpublished Report, Agriculture Department, Government of Bengal, 1946-47

It is important to note here that when Bengal came under British rule, the Industrial Revolution had just begun in Britain.<sup>5</sup> The fertile land of Bengal producing varieties of raw materials allured the British businessmen who started to extract them to feed their rapidly expanding industries in England. So, with a view to ensuring revenue maximization and quick supply of raw materials, Bengal's agriculture was brought under the Permanent Settlement in 1793 little more than three decades after the establishment of colonial rule in Bengal. The Permanent Settlement created a new *Zamindar* class whose rights and prerogatives were enhanced while the peasants were deprived.<sup>6</sup> The *Zamindar* earned full support of the British government in exchange of supplying revenue fixed by the latter. Colonial rule made *Zamindari* a lucrative service to the Bengal's business community and the class of nobility. The new *Zamindars* took no initiative to develop agriculture, nor did they help the peasants to do so. Their primary concern was confined only to extract revenue at an exorbitant rate by exploiting the peasants while they themselves indulged in sensuous recreation and profligacy.

The Permanent Settlement, which made Bengal's agriculture the prime source of revenue for the British and raw material appendage of the latter's industry, causing enormous sufferings to the peasants, was not introduced in other parts of India. The regions of Bombay Presidency, Madras, Ahmedabad and Gujarat were brought under British rule much later. During this time, the merchant class of these regions comprising the *Parsi* community, Muslims of *Khosa* and *Bohra* and Hindu

5 For details, See L. C. A. Knowles, *The Industrial and Commercial Revolutions in Great Britain during the Nineteenth Century*, London, 1950.

6 For details, See Sirajul Islam, *Permanent Settlement in Bengal, A Study of Its Operation, 1790-1819*, Bangla Academy, 1979.



moneylenders has continued to ply their business as usual. Many of them, the *Parsis* in particular, worked in close cooperation with the British from the early days of the latter's arrival. Even after establishing British rule, their business continued to flourish side by side with that of the British.

The major area of concentration was Bombay. The soil condition of Bombay and Ahmedabad was suitable for cotton cultivation and Bombay Port had for long been used for the cotton trade. In the years of Industrial Revolution in England, cotton manufacturing was the rapidly expanding industry and the increasing demand for raw cotton was met by cotton exported by

the merchant class of Bombay. Soon the businessmen of Bombay began to invest their surplus in a textile manufacturing. Dhaka, the Capital of Bengal, was the trade and commercial hub of the sub-continent during the seventeenth and mid-eighteenth centuries. By the mid sixties of the nineteenth century, the Bombay Port City emerged as the industrial and commercial hub dwarfing Bengal's capital, Dhaka.

Calcutta, on the other hand, started to grow as the prime commercial and industrial center in eastern India. Although Bengal and other eastern regions of India lacked such a potential business community as was in Bombay, Calcutta emerged as the chief port for the export of many important primary products produced in large enclaves of the eastern part of India. The most important industrial raw material was jute, next to cotton. The demand for raw jute went up during the Crimean War, which abruptly cut off the supply of Russian flax mills of Dundee to search for alternative packaging materials. The beginning of the American Civil War gave a new impetus to the export of raw jute, which was used for burlap sacks and sound bags in the front line. As the jute proved to be substitute of flax, the raw jute export grew by leaps and bounds through Calcutta Port. Calcutta, which had already become an important administrative and commercial center over the last decades, got new impetus with the expansion of jute export. Soon the British prospective entrepreneurs discovered that the processing and manufacturing of raw jute could be more profitable than that of exporting it as primary product. The setting up of the first jute mill in Calcutta in 1854 opened up the door towards industrialization in the region. As the export of jute goods brought more profits, more large-scale jute industries began to grow. Within a decade, five more jute mills were set up along the bank of the Hooghly river and the number rose to 64 and 98 by the outbreak of the First World War and at the beginning of the Great depression in 1929-30.<sup>7</sup> The sector witnessed stagnation during the depression period of thirties. However, before partition in 1947, the number of large-scale Jute Mills rose by 106 making it the second largest industry of undivided India after cotton textile. The most interesting fact is that cotton textile was

7 O. Goswami, Chapter 5.

concentrating in Bombay and Ahmedabad due to the growth of raw cotton within the vicinity, but the jute industry began to locate and expand in and around Calcutta, although three-fourth of raw jute was produced in East Bengal, which is now Bangladesh.

The concentration of jute industry generated varieties of auxiliary industries which followed many large and medium industries. And, within a short period, Calcutta came out as the second largest industrial and commercial center of India. But Bangladesh remained as key supplier of raw jute to the Calcutta mills. In addition to that, 60 percent raw materials for tobacco and 40 percent for paper industries were supplied by the region of Bangladesh without owning a single mill in her own territory.

Bengal, which had earned name and fame for her prodigious textile and was known to be the richest region of the sub-continent till the first quarter of the nineteenth century, turned to be the poorest region of India by the end of British rule.

### 3. Salient Features of Trade and Industry of Pakistan and Its Challenges after the Partition of India in 1947

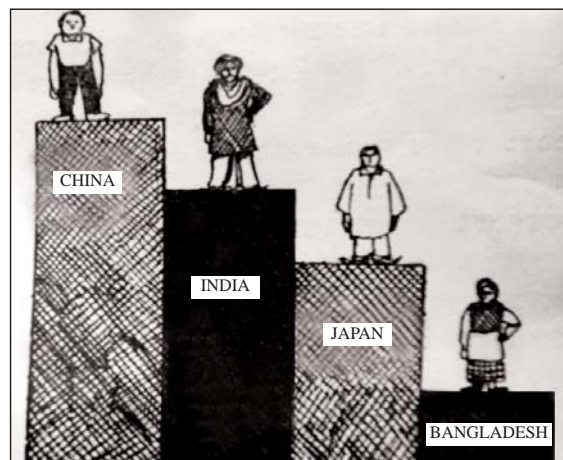
Before the partition in 1947, undivided India had a rural economy. Agriculture was the mainstay of economy. Industrially India was backward, and nearly 90 percent of employment was generated in the agricultural sector. But while undivided India as a whole was industrially backward, the unequal distribution of industries created great disparities among the regions of India.

**Table: 1 Industrial Establishment and Employment, 1945**

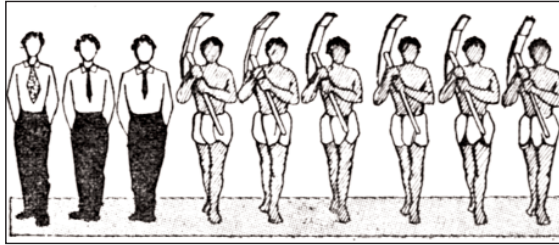
Country	Establishments		Employments	
	Number	Undivided India	Number	% of the Undivided India
Undivided India	14,677	100.0	3,141,774	100.0
India	13,263	90.4	2,935,729	93.5
Pakistan	1,414	9.6	2,06,045	6.5

Source: C.N., Vakil, *Economic Consequence of Divided India: A Study of the Economy of India and Pakistan*, Bombay, 1950, p.247.

India at that time accounted for the four-fifth of total population of undivided India, and had nine-tenth of the total number of industrial establishments and almost one hundred percent share in the total number of workers (table 1). Only 3.7 percent of total large industries or out of 921 only 34 fell to the share of Pakistan. These industries employed 11,37,150 persons of which 26,000 persons or 2.3 percent were involved in the industries located in both of the wings of Pakistan. In East Pakistan, only 2 percent of the total population lived in urban areas, while in West Pakistan, it was 4.8 percent or more than double and in India 13.8 percent or



Some rice producing countries in Asia



Ratio of the agriculture-dependent people

more than six times higher than East Pakistan. Only 5.3 per cent of the total electricity supply fell to the share of Pakistan, and East Pakistan got only 0.5 per cent. There were 14 large cotton textile mills in Pakistan of which 9 were located in East Pakistan (the largest of all industries in East Pakistan) and 5 in West Pakistan. Out of 5 cement industries, 4 and the only oil refinery were set up in West Pakistan.

Except 9 cotton textiles, there was no large industry in the East, and out of 106 large jute mills, the second largest industry of India, which grew up mostly with the raw materials supplied by East Bengal, none fell to the share of East Pakistan. Bangladesh supplied the two-third of raw jute, 60 percent tobacco, 40 percent raw material for paper and an equal share of hide and skin to the industries of undivided India. But, East Pakistan inherited none of these industries in her own territory. However, in East Pakistan there existed a large number of handlooms which produced mostly coarse cloth for local consumption.<sup>8</sup>

**Table: 2 Foreign Trades of India and Pakistan 1948-49 and 1949-50** (In crores of rupees)

Description	Indo-Pakistan Trade		Trade with other countries			Total
	1948-49	1949-50	1948-49	1949-50	1948-49	1949-50
<b>India</b>						
Exports	77	40	376	468	453	504
Imports	109	44	550	558	669	602
Balance of Trade	-32	-4	-184	-90	-216	-94
<b>Pakistan</b>						
Export	109	44	62	72	171	116
Import	77	40	54	95	141	136
Balance of Trade	32	4	8	-23	30	-20

Source: C.N., Vakil, *op.cit.* p. 431.

In other words, although industries grew up to a limited scale, these were confined mostly to the territory of India. In Pakistan, particularly in East Pakistan, agriculture was the mainstay of the economy, but the output of this sector fluctuated depending on nature. In good harvest years, rice production rose to 8 to 9 million tons, which was just enough to feed the 45 million people of East Pakistan. But in bad years, the production went down to 6 to 7 million tons, creating a famine-like situation.

The situation in West Pakistan was different. West Pakistan's main food crop was wheat, which was less vulnerable to weather condition. Besides, the chief industrial raw material was cotton, whose production did not so severely fluctuate as was in the case of jute or other crops in Bangladesh. Like jute of East Pakistan, although not to the same extent, 40 percent of raw materials of pre-British India's cotton textile came from West Pakistan.<sup>9</sup> But, out of 400 in British India, West

<sup>8</sup> For more details, see N. Ahmed *The Economic Geography of East Pakistan*, *ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> C.N., Vakil, *op.cit.* p.85.



Pakistan retained only 5 cotton textiles. In spite of this unequal development, the economies of India and Pakistan were complementary. Pakistan, both East and West, supplied raw materials to the industries of India, while the latter supplied industrial goods to the markets of Pakistan. But the partition created new challenges in which Pakistan suffered the most. Even after partition, India remained the largest trade partner of Pakistan. Table 2 shows that in terms of value, the Indo-Pakistan trade forms the bulk of the Pakistan trade, but India's share of the total trade was much lower with Pakistan. Pakistan's export to India accounts for nearly 62 per cent, while import from India was 54 per cent of the total imports on private account.

But the trade between India and Pakistan declined when India devaluated its currency, while Pakistan decided not to follow India. Furthermore, the imposition of customs barrier brought the trade to nearly a standstill. West Pakistan's major export item was raw cotton, hide and skin and wool. But earning from these articles constituted only about one-fourth of her total export income. The situation deteriorated because nearly 9 million Muslims migrated from India (about 6 million to West Pakistan and 3 million to East Pakistan).

Besides, Pakistan inherited very few industries, but Hindus and Sikhs who left after partition owned most of these industries of West Pakistan. Similarly, among the Muslim immigrants, a few were industrialists who left their enterprises in India. The wealthy Muslim immigrants took control over the industries left by Hindus and Sikhs. But the industries could not be started due to lack of working capital as well as foreign currency to purchase the required raw materials.

**Table 3: Balance of Merchandise Trade, 1950-53**  
(In Million US Dollars)

Year	Imports	Exports	Balance
1950	391.8	488.6	+96.8
1951	530.2	763.2	+233.0
1952	611.0	532.6	-78.4
1953	348.0	438.9	+90.9

Converted at \$0.3022 per rupee.

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, *Investment in Pakistan: Conditions and Outlook for United States*, 1954, Table 4.

Foreign aid was limited, and arrived only slowly, by phases. Foreign trade as well as commercial life, which were tied up with India, was disrupted due to the imposition of customs barrier with India where none existed earlier. Hindu merchants<sup>10</sup> who dominated the trade and commercial life of Pakistan, fled to India, and goods, which moved freely from Pakistan to India, became subject to control. Pakistan desperately needed huge foreign currency to purchase food to feed her 75 million plus 9 million refugees. There was no way other than export of primary products to earn foreign

currency. Disruption of trade with India posed a major threat for export as trade with this country could be expanded at the cheapest rate because of geographical proximity. However, after overcoming the initial obstacles, trade with countries other than India was restored. But, income received from export of primary products such as jute, cotton, hide and skin and wool was too little to meet the demand. There existed a famine-like situation, and it could go beyond control if appropriate measures were not taken. But dearth of foreign currency stood on the way of improving the situation. The beginning of the Korean War in 1950 changed the export scenario of Pakistan. An unprecedented increase of demand for jute, which was a monopoly production of East Pakistan, became the major export item of Pakistan. In 1951, Pakistan achieved a favorable balance of trade of \$ 233 million, which was 2.4 times higher than the export in 1950 (table 3).

<sup>10</sup> In 1965, after the Indo-Pakistan war the properties including commercial establishments were declared enemy property. The *Marwari* group, who had a long business association with E. Bengal, were compelled to leave Pakistan.

**Table: 4 Export by Major Item, Trade Balance, Calendar Year 1948-54**

(In million rupees) Current Account

Major item exported	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953
Jute	210.8	375.7	521.2	1226.1	729.5	579.1
Cotton	345.2	282.6	549.3	1092.5	807.1	638.0
Other exports	148.8	182.0	178.6	377.8	165.7	186.6
Total export earning	704.8	840.3	1249.1	2696.4	1702.3	1403.7

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, *Investment in Pakistan: Conditions and outlook for United States Investors*, 1954, Table 5

Table 4 shows that in 1948 jute export rose from 210.8 million rupees in 1948 to 1226.1 million rupees in 1951 or 6 times higher in two years. The soaring export income from jute and cotton resulting from the Korean War largely relieved Pakistan from an acute shortage of foreign currency, which Pakistan badly needed to reconstruct the economy. The jute, which was the monopoly production of East Pakistan, contributed largely to overcome the initial obstacles and streamlined the economy on the road to rapid growth. However, the government of newly independent Pakistan pursued a policy, which consciously undermined the development of East Pakistan.

#### 4. Characteristics of Industries of East Pakistan during Partition

As has been hinted in the preceding Chapter, with the deliberate choking of the famous textile industry of Dhaka as elsewhere in the country, Bangladesh turned into a raw-material production country for the metropolis of colonial rulers. However, handicrafts and cottage industries produced varieties of goods throughout the country for the local market. The large modern industries, the cotton textile in particular, started to grow only in the late twenties of the last century. These large textiles facilitated the growth of handloom manufacturing, as the former supplied raw materials to the latter. Information about the scale and type of industries appeared first after the publishing of the *Census of Pakistan 1951*, Vol. 3, East Bengal Report and Tables. The Census of 1951 presents the number of industries registered under the Factory Act.<sup>11</sup> In this Census, manufacturing was divided between agriculture raw materials and non-agriculture related industries. But in 1947 before publishing of the Census Report, the total number of industries was recorded 252. Out of these, the tea factory ranks highest with 100 units, followed by rice mill with 58 and with 27, 22 and 13 jute bailing,



Weaver at work

<sup>11</sup> The Factory Act requires the registration of only those factories that employ 20 or more workers or 10 or more if power-driven machine is used.

general engineering and cotton textile ranking third, fourth and fifth respectively. Besides, there were hosiery and 5 sugar industries; others were mostly agro-based industries.<sup>12</sup>

But, most of the sources say that Pakistan inherited 9 cotton mills and 3 sugar mills. However, in terms of asset structure and employment, cotton textile was regarded as the largest industry at the time of partition. This industry had 92024 spindles accommodating 10,000 workers. Out of 9 mills, 6 were located in Dhaka and the rest in Kushtia, Khulna and Chittagong (one in each).

According to the Census of 1951, the total number of registered manufacturing industries based on agriculture stood at 327, of which 116 are tea factories, 83 rice mills and 65 jute-bailing presses. Showing a substantial increase in number of manufacturing within 3 years of partition (table 5).

**Table: 5 Manufacturing Industries Based on Agricultural Products**

Name of Districts	Total	Sugar Mills	Hosiery	Oil Mills	Tea Factory	Rice Mills	Cotton Mills	Jute Press	Jute Mills	Others
East Bengal	327	9	9	18	116	83	15	65	3	10
Chittagong	34	---	1	5	15	3	3	1	1	5
Chittagong Hill Tracts	1	---	---	---	1	---	---	---	---	---
Noakhali	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Sylhet	99	---	---	---	99	---	---	---	---	---
Tipperra	17	---	---	---	1	---	---	16	---	---
Bakerganj	5	---	---	1	---	4	---	---	---	---
Dacca	56	1	1	7	---	9	8	26	2	2
Faridpur	1	---	---	---	---	---	---	1	---	---
Mymensingh	16	1	---	---	---	1	---	13	---	1
Bogra	10	---	---	2	---	8	---	---	---	---
Dinajpur	45	4	---	1	---	40	---	---	---	---
Jessore	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Khulna	4	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Kushtia	3	1	---	---	---	---	1	---	---	1
Pabna	15	---	6	---	---	1	1	6	---	1
Rajshahi	10	2	---	1	---	7	---	---	---	---
Rangpur	11	---	1	1	---	8	---	1	---	---

Source: *Census of Pakistan, 1951*, Vol. 3, East Bengal Report & Tables, p.129.

The total number of persons working in these industries was 43,504. Of them, 15,340 were in jute presses, 12,218 in cotton mills, 6,757 in tea factories, and 3,608 in sugar mills and 2,785 in rice mills.<sup>13</sup>

The category of manufacturing industries dealing with non-agricultural raw materials comprises 152 registered under the Factory Act. The total number of workers was recorded at 21,717 persons. The general engineering, electric engineering, match, railway workshops and glass industries were located largely in Dhaka (table 6).

<sup>12</sup> N. Ahmed, p.223.

<sup>13</sup> *Census of Pakistan 1951*, p. 128.

**Table 6: Manufacturing Industries based on Non-Agricultural Products**

Locality	Total No.	General Engineering	Electrical Engineering	Railway workshops	Ship repairing workshops	Match	Chemical	Cement	Glass	Soap	Other
East Bengal	152	34	14	9	2	11	2	2	5	1	72
Chittagong	43	10	2	2	-	1	-	-	1	-	27
Chittagong Hill Tracts	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Noakhali	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sylhet	8	4	1	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	1
Tippera	4	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Bakerganj	5	2	1	1	---	1	-	-	-	-	1
Dacca	60	8	1	1	1	4	2	2	4	-	39
Faridpur	4	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Mymensingh	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bogra	5	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	1	2
Dinajpur	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Jessore	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Khulna	4	1	-	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	-
Kushtia	3	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pabna	2	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rajshahi	4	2	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Rangpur	7	1	4	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: *Census of Pakistan, 1951, op. cit.*, p. 134.

Some of the agro-based industries are highly localized. Tea, for example, is exclusively located in Sylhet, and sugar industries were established in North Bengal. It should be mentioned here that besides these registered factories, there had been a large number of unregistered establishments throughout the country. These unregistered establishments were known as cottage industries<sup>14</sup> which occupied an important position in the economic structure. The Census of 1951 presents a total of 381643 cottage industries which generated employment for 9,95,518 persons. That means the unregistered cottage industries provided 10 times more employment than that of registered factories. The highest number of cottage enterprises was recorded in Dhaka. Dhaka District comprises 45,616 units employing 1,35,998 persons followed by Tippera having 40,273 units and accommodating 1,12,980 persons, Mymensingh and Bakerganj ranks third and fourth position respectively both in terms of number and employment. Among the various products of cottage industries, the cotton weaving is the most important.<sup>15</sup>

In this single industry, the total number of units, amounted to 1,83,682, employing 4,07,332 persons or almost half of the total employment were involved in this weaving industry. The other

14 Cottage industry is defined as an industry carried on at home and mainly members of the household, which manufactured goods for sale or capable of being sold and which employed less than 20 people or if power-driven machine is used, less than 10 people.

15 For Cottage industries in the 1960s, see *Directory of Small Industries in East Pakistan, EPSIC*, 1962.



important cottage industries were food, drink and tobacco processing, *Gur* (molasses) making, carpentry and boat making. Among the cottage industries, only 203 were machinery driven. Out of these, 83 enterprises, were food processing, while the other prominent enterprises using machinery were cloth dying 20, wax scaling 18, hosiery and cotton weaving 12 and 11 respectively.

The power driven cottage industry was mostly located in Chittagong. For example, out of 203 enterprises, 61 were located in Chittagong, 44 in Dhaka and 26 in Bakerganj. The other mechanized enterprises were located in Kushtia, Noakhali and Rajshahi.<sup>16</sup> Many districts, for examples, Bogra, Jessore, Mymensingh, Sylhet and Chittagong Hill Tracts had no power-driven cottage industries at all.

But, even all these industries, including registered non-mechanized ones together contributed only 4 percent to the GDP of East Pakistan at the time of partition.



A weaving process

### 5.A. Growth of Industry, Trade and Commerce during the Post-Independence years of Pakistan

Among the industries inherited after the partition, handloom textile occupied the prominent position. But these industries suffered a setback after the partition of India. The number of handloom declined to 1,83,682 in 1951 from 2,50,000 in 1947. Of them, as many as 1,83,169 were employed in producing cotton cloth, 416 in silk weaving, and the remaining 97 looms were employed in wool and juteweaving.<sup>17</sup>

It is worth mentioning that at the initial stage of industrialization, the textile industry got momentum, as it was one of the basic needs next to food. The growth of this sector provided the primary source of capital accumulation. But unfortunately, this did not happen in case of East Pakistan. The existing 10 large mills (1 was not in operation) could provide only 9 percent of the need. For many years, this sector stagnated not only because of capital required to set up mills, but also because of lack of sufficient production of raw cotton. During the end of the 1950s, the total production of raw cotton in East Pakistan accounted for only 3000 tons, while the figure for West Pakistan was more than 2 lac tons.<sup>18</sup> So, the cotton textile, the cotton weaving in particular, which survived colonial exploitation, became dependent for its development on the supply of raw materials from West Pakistan.

The pre-partition trade and commerce of East Pakistan was entirely linked with the industrial and trade centers of India, but mostly with the Calcutta Port. The Bangladesh region was simply treated as a hinterland of the Calcutta metropolis and supplied raw materials to the Calcutta-Howrah-Hoogly industrial belt.

<sup>16</sup> *Census of Pakistan*, 51, p. 148.

<sup>17</sup> S.S., Baranov p. 12.

<sup>18</sup> S.S., Baranov, *op.cit.*



Chittagong Port in 1950

The largest industry of this belt was jute, which relied heavily on the supply of raw jute from the region of East Bengal. Other import materials, which poured in the said industrial belt, were hide, tobacco and raw materials for paper. Both raw and processed jute as well as other items from East Bengal were exported through Calcutta Port. In East Bengal, Chittagong was the only port, but except tea from undivided Bengal and Assam, only a tiny portion of trade was shared through this port. (Appendix 2.6)

After partition, the situation took a new turn. The international boundary was demarcated



A partial view of  
the Chittagong Port

and East Bengal became a part of Pakistan, and Calcutta, the heart of trade and commerce of the whole eastern region, became a foreign port. The Chittagong Port, which was regarded as a tiny local port during the whole colonial period, got a new life.

Jute and cotton goods were the important export items of India. But after partition, the raw jute became the principal export item of whole Pakistan. Both wings of Pakistan inherited very few industries, but before partition, India's main industries such as cotton and jute textile were largely dependent on the supply of raw materials from East and West

Pakistan. Besides, before partition, the Hindu businessmen who left for India leaving their enterprises in Pakistan ran most of the industries. East Pakistani traders, on the other hand, inherited fewer industries than those in the West, and the Hindu entrepreneurs owned almost all the few large industries. Although most of the Hindu industrialists remained in East Pakistan, a large number of



Jute plants



A village jute market



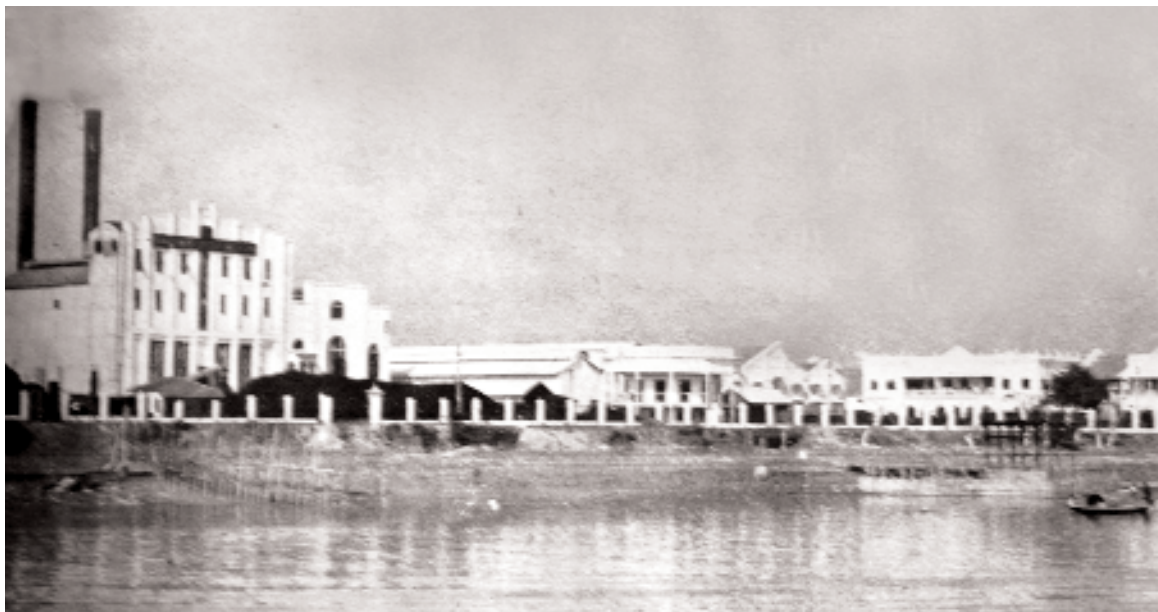


Adamjee Jute Mills now turned into Adamjee EPZ

Hindu traders left for India, leaving their paternal property. The economy was agro-based, and the scope of employment in this sector was extremely limited. On the other hand, most of very few industries, which fell to the share of West Pakistan, were owned by the Hindus who migrated to India leaving their enterprises in Pakistan. Similarly, many Muslim entrepreneurs left India and entered Pakistan. The migrated entrepreneurs took initiatives to run the abandoned enterprises. However, lack of capital, and scarcity of foreign currency in particular, stood on the way of starting these industries. The Government of Pakistan was not in a

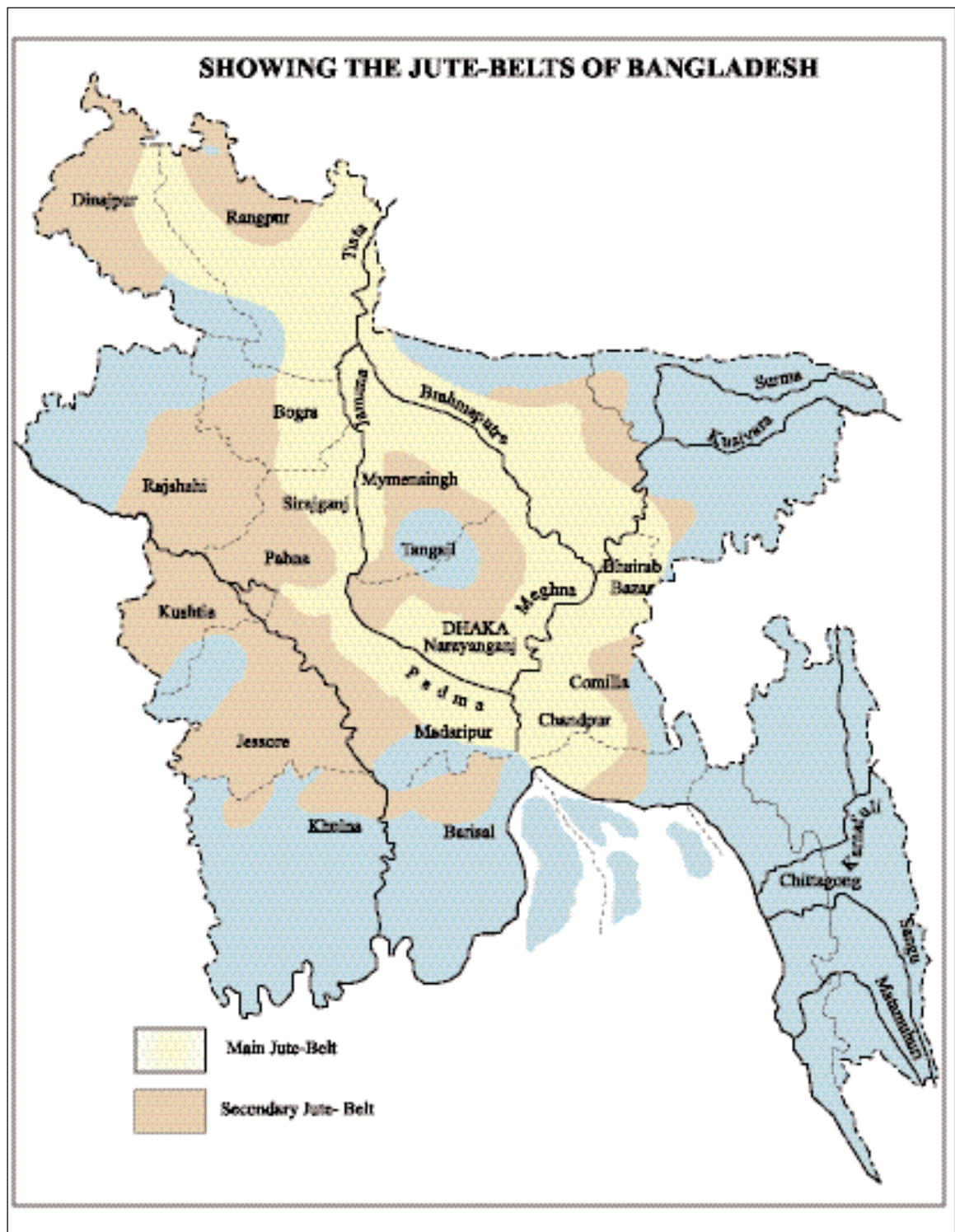
position to provide any assistance to re-start these industries because the major challenge at that time was to feed the people.

It is unworthy to say that industries tend to concentrate in areas which offer market and infrastructure advantages. Once large industries are set-up, other auxiliary industries expand exploiting the linkage effects of the large ones. Growth of industries of various sizes provides facilities for further



Dhakeshwari Cotton Mills in 1930







A jute boarded cart in 1905



A Jetty at Narayanganj Port

expansion of social and physical infrastructure, which in turn expand urbanization. With the development of cotton textile in Bombay and Madras and jute in Calcutta, other industrial and commercial activities began to expand to take the advantage of these industrial centers. No such industrial and commercial centers were developed in Bangladesh during the British colonial period. Prior to the advent of British rule, Dhaka was the capital of the *Subah* of Bengal and was the most flourishing trade and commercial center in the region. The city continued to expand as a trading and administrative center till the first quarter of the nineteenth century. But, because of the shifting of capital to Murshidabad and then to Calcutta, and most importantly, the deliberate choking of textile and other industries, the city began to decline and turned from a million-city in the seventeenth century into a small urban center with 69212 people in 1872. During the whole colonial period, Bangladesh region was made the hinterland of Calcutta industrial center, and Dhaka city which was once the magnet of trade and commerce, remained a tiny semi-urban center in the vast periphery of Bengal. After a long hiatus of more than one and quarter century, Dhaka began to attract trade and commerce. Already during the last two decades of the nineteenth century, Narayanganj emerged as an important center for trading of raw jute. Jute industry, which started to grow from the mid-fifties of the nineteenth century, became the second largest industry of India during the First World War. Nearly three-fourth of raw materials were supplied from Bangladesh, but this region inherited no industry at the time of partition. However, these raw jutes were collected by the *beparies* (middlemen traders) and brought to Narayanganj. These raw jutes were packaged in jute bailing presses.

So, although none of the 106 large jute industries fell to the share of East Pakistan, jute bailing presses of both *pucca* and *kachcha* types [mechanized and non-mechanized presses] grew up. The growth of the city got a new impetus in 1905 when Dhaka became the provincial capital and seat of the government of the newly created province of Eastern Bengal and Assam.<sup>19</sup> The importance of the city did not diminish even after the annulment of partition. The establishment of Dhaka University, and starting of the *Swadeshi* Movement led to continuous expansion of trade and commerce. The *Swadeshi* Movement increased the scope of developing local textile industries. This movement has certainly expanded the market of locally produced goods. Goods produced in handloom textile flourished in and around Dhaka but the largest market was located at *Baburhat*. However, until the mid twenties of the twentieth century, no large textile industry was built in and around Dhaka. The first large textile mill, 'Mohini Mill' was set up in Kustia in 1908, and about two decades later a number of large-scale cotton mills were established in Dhaka district. The first one was the Dhakeswari Cotton Mill, and was established on the Bank of the Sitalakhya in 1927, and after two years, the Chittaranjan Cotton Mill started its operation in 1929. This was followed by the Luxmi Narayan Cotton Mill, Bandhab Cotton Mill and Dacca Cotton Mill which were built in 1932, 1936 and 1938 respectively. The Bandhab set-up a Sugar Mill and Dhakeshwari opened a second mill in 1937.<sup>20</sup> These newly-established industries combined with jute bailing presses as well as the growth of handloom textile generated more auxiliary industries in and around Dhaka city. Increase of industry and trade attracted more people and thereby increased urbanization. The establishment of Dhaka as the capital of East Pakistan stimulated the growth of the city.

19 See MKU Molla, *The New Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam*, IBS, Rajshahi University, 1981.

20 See Appendix 23.



As has been highlighted in the earlier chapters, at the time of partition, the region of Bangladesh inherited very few industries. These industries were concentrated mostly in a few urban centers. But most of these industries grew up in Dhaka district. Suppose, for example, at the time of partition Bangladesh inherited only 9 textiles, 6 of them were located in Dhaka, while three others were set-up in Kushtia, Chittagong and Khulna. In 1947 Bangladesh was left with no large jute mills out of 106, but only 49 seasonal jute bailing presses including 27 *pucca* or mechanized presses. Out of these *pucca* presses, 20 were established in Narayanganj. With the establishment of the Adamjee Jute Mill, the first of this kind, Narayanganj began to expand as an industrial center along with a trading one.<sup>21</sup>

The handloom industry survived although the high quality cloth faced extinction due to the destructive measures of the colonial rulers. This industry dispersed throughout the rural area producing coarse cloth to cater to the needs of local people. However, the industry began to flourish during the first decade of the twentieth century showing a marked concentration in Dhaka, Pabna, Noakhali and Mymensingh. But, Baburhat of Narshingdi of Greater Dhaka district attained a special significance. High quality handloom textile and hosiery, which were closed down during the colonial period, began to cluster, and some areas of Dhaka city, and Baburhat emerged as the largest trading center of various textile goods. Because of large concentration of weaving industry and an incredible transaction of cloths of various types, Baburhat was called the “Manchester of East Bengal’s handloom industry.”<sup>22</sup>

Baburhat grew up into a large market, which had, within a radius of 8 miles, weaving villages clustered in a very densely populated area.<sup>23</sup> About 8000 families and 40,000 weavers were known to be engaged in these villages. The growth of a large number of industries has encouraged the setting up of the Kaliganj Muslim Cotton Mill near the weaving industries to meet the increasing demand for yarn of this area.

The establishment of this large mill followed other new mills to meet the ever-increasing demand of the handlooms of this region. So, prior to the partition, Bangladesh had very few industries, but whatsoever existed were concentrated mostly in Dhaka district.

The First Census of Pakistan, 1951 highlighted the industries at the time of partition.<sup>24</sup> The census report was published three years after partition, and by this time a number of industries have been set up. For example, at the time of partition, Bangladesh acquired only 9 textile mills but no jute mill. But within 3 years of independence, 3 large jute mills and 6 new cotton mills were set up. The total number of cotton mills reached up to 15, and out of this 8 mills and 2 out of 3 jute mills were established in Dhaka (table 5). The table shows that 327 registered establishments are very unequally distributed favoring a strong concentration in Dhaka district. The tea industry is a localized industry and Sylhet district enjoyed a monopoly containing all of the 99 tea factories. But other industries show a marked concentration in Dhaka and Narayanganj areas, which have the largest number of mills in the country. Even in case of industries dealing with agricultural

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21 Adamjee Jute Mills belonged to the Memon group. They were running their business at Rangoon before shifting it to East Bengal.

22 N., Ahmed, p. 241.

23 *Ibid.*

24 See *Census of Pakistan, 1951*, Vol. 3, *East Bengal Report and Tables*.



produces, Dhaka ranked highest comprising 56 mills. The district of Sylhet has an absolute monopoly of tea and Dinajpur district enjoys the highest concentration having almost half of the rice mills and sugar mills.

**Table 7: Annual Production, Jute Press and Share in East Pakistan 1964**

Location	Annual Production (Bales of 400 lbs)	% of Share	No of Jute press	% of share	No. of Mills and Installed Capacity 1969			
					No of Jute Mill	% of Share	Installed Capacity (loom)	% of Share
East Pakistan (total)	5,245,353	100	79	100	38	100	16604	100
Dhaka	2,498,696	47.62	32	40	16	42.1	7777	46.8
Chittagong	331,370	6.32	2	2.5	5	13.15	2458	14.8
Khulna	1,315,308	25.07	13	16.45	10	26.32	4119	24.8

Calculated from Table 6.4: Jute Press in East Pakistan, 1964, Table 6.5: Distribution of Major Jute Mills and Looms in East Pakistan 1969 in: S.H.H. Nagavly, *ET. Al. Location of Industry in Pakistan during the Fourth Plan Period, Location of Industries Project*, Department of Geography, University of Dhaka, Table 6.4 and Table 6.5.

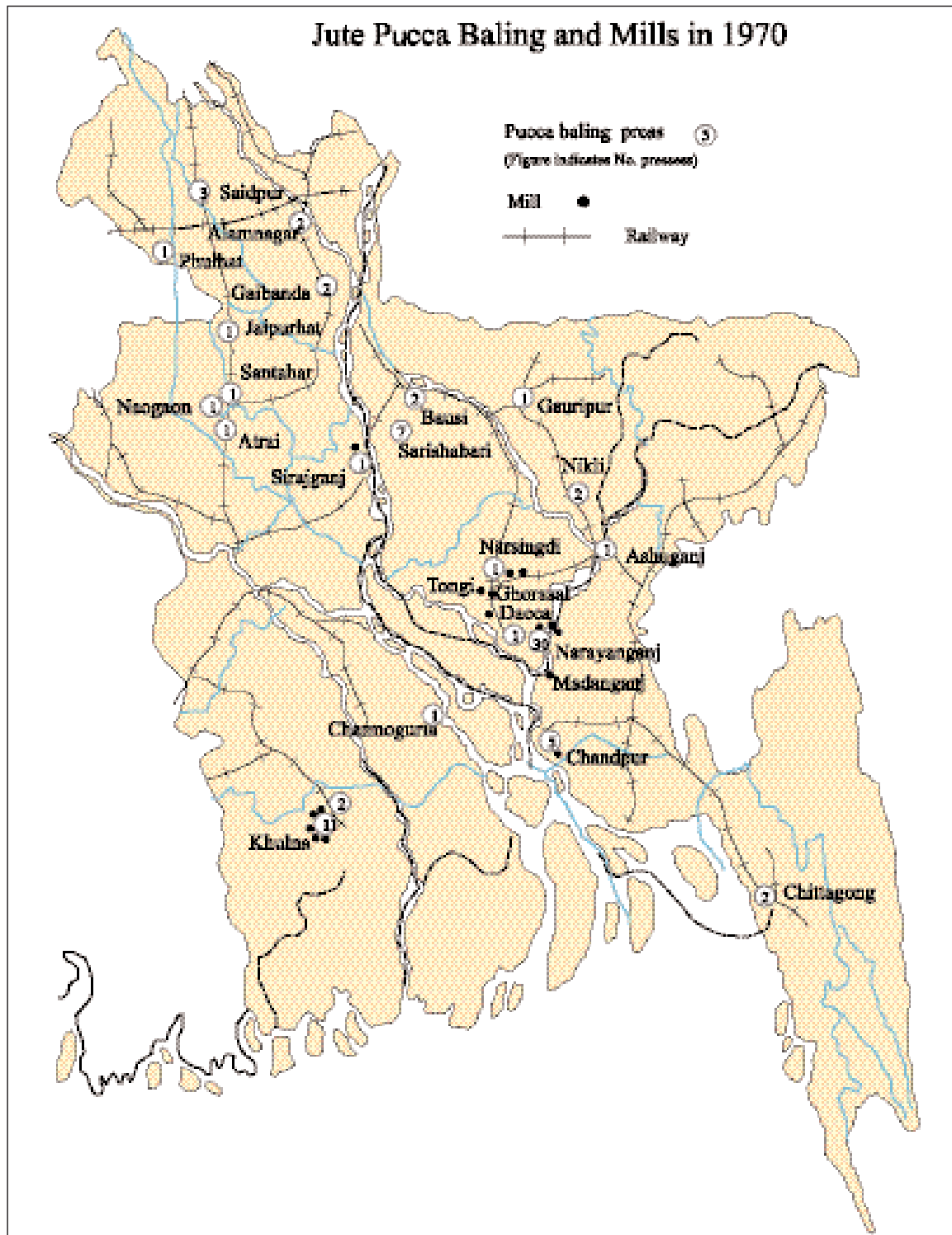
As regards manufacturing dealing with non-agricultural raw materials, Dhaka again ranked highest compared with other districts and areas. The figure presented in Table.6 depicted that 60 out of 152 registered under the Factories Act were located in Dhaka city. So, out of 479 factories of both categories i.e. industries dealing with agricultural products and with non-agricultural raw materials, 117 or about one-fourth (24.42 percent) were located in Dhaka. So, at the time of partition, the region of Bangladesh experienced a very low level of industries. But Dhaka provided the best location-advantage for the growth of these industries. But this tendency of setting up industries in and around Dhaka was further intensified in the fifties and sixties under Pakistani rule.

In the post-partition period, industrialization begins mostly with jute and cotton textile. The jute takes precedence, as it not only handles the raw materials, but also employs a large number of skilled laborers. With regard to textile industry, although the country does not produce raw materials, suitable moist climate, plentiful fresh water supply, easy access to any transport throughout the year and cheap labors were the favorable factors for location of cotton textiles. Like jute, cotton textiles were also clustered in the Dhaka-Narayanganj area.

In 1947, there was no jute manufacturing industry in Narayanganj except pucca jute bailing presses. But the position was changed after partition. Within less than two decades, the number of “pucca press” rose to 79 out of which 30 were located in Narayanganj, and 20 large jute mills were established all over the country and 10 of them set up in Dhaka and Narayanganj.

In 1967, there were 29 jute mills employing 75000 workers. One of these units located at Demra near Narayanganj was the largest in the world. From these units 20 jute mills accounted for 3 percent of East Pakistan’s gross income.<sup>25</sup> With the increase of the demand for raw jute in the world market, as well as in the local market, more and more industries were set up in the subsequent years, numbering to 72 in 1970 a year before the independence of Bangladesh. Dhaka and Narayanganj became the major concentration sharing almost half of the total jute mills of the then East Pakistan. Cotton textile was the second largest group in respect of value addition and labor employment.

25 H.E, Rashid, *East Pakistan: A Systematic Regional Geography and its Development Aspects*, SH. Ghulam & Sons, Lahore, 1967, p. 321..



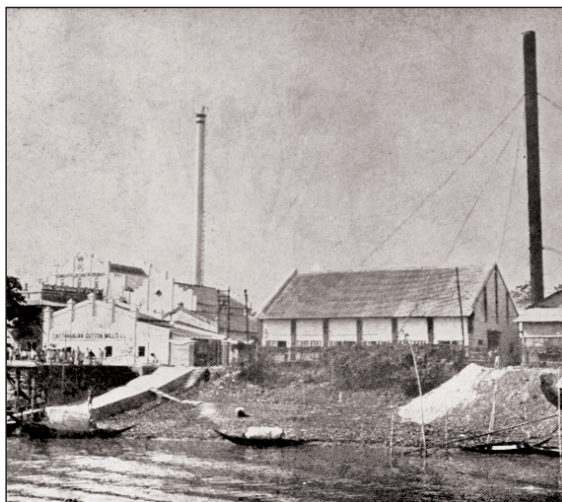
It is important to note that at the time of partition, cotton textile was one of the few industries inherited by East Pakistan. At that time, it was not only biggest in East Pakistan, but also bigger than Western Wing. East and West Pakistan together inherited 14 large cotton textiles out of 400 in undivided India. West Pakistan supplied 40 percent of raw cotton to the textile mills of India. Out of 14 large cotton mills, 9 were located in East Pakistan and 5 in West Pakistan. On the other hand, Bangladesh produced the best raw jute of the world and supplied three-fourth of all raw materials to the jute mills of India, but inherited none neither in East nor in West Pakistan. Although



A jute mill in operation

no jute mills were established in East Pakistan in spite of her producing high quality raw jute, a number of large textile mills were set up before the partition of India. Most of these mills were located in the Dhaka region. These mills are: Dakeshwari Cotton Mills and Chittaranjan Cotton Mills, Laxmi Narayan Cotton Mills, Dacca Cotton Mills, Bandhab Sugar and Cotton Mills and Luxmi Spinning and Weaving Mills which have already created an environment favorable for textile industry.

Soon, many more large and medium mills were established, and within two decades, total number of textile mills rose to 43 out of which 20 were located in Dhaka district. During the twenties and thirties of the last century, Pabna was the principal center of hosiery industry, but Narayanganj emerged, as the largest hosiery industry because the hosiery industry declined in Pabna as the market in Calcutta was cut-off and almost all the Hindu mill owners left for India after partition. Meanwhile new industrial areas have been developed within Dhaka city and suburb areas and many of these industries were set up in these areas. For example, two new industrial areas were developed. Tejgaon was located in the southeast of old Tejgaon airport. The Dhaka Improvement Trust comprising the gross area of 540 acres set up this Tejgaon industrial area. Mostly medium and light industries were encouraged. With the establishment of a number of chemicals, pharmaceuticals, glass, ceramic and printing industries, Tejgaon became the most industrially concentrated area of Dhaka. As Tejgaon became congested, a new and larger area developed in Tongi, which is 17 kilometers north of Dhaka. When a few large-scale textile and ceramic plants were installed, other firms and industries of different sizes found it as rule convenient to set up in close proximity. Soon, Tongi turned into a new attractive industrial area. Besides, the first tannery was set up in Dhaka in 1910, and there had been no significant development in this sub-sector till 1947. However, soon after partition, Hazaribagh, which was a suburb of the west of Dhaka city, was selected for the setting up of the country's largest tannery industry. Besides, another industrial



Chittaranjan Cotton Mills in 1940

area came into being in the east of the city, Postogola. Postogola is almost linked to Narayanganj, located about 6 k.m. in the east. This city of conurbation lies at the confluence of the bank of the rivers Burigonga and Lakkhya. On the east of the river its suburb of Madaniganj and to the north of Narayanganj, a new industrial area was developed at Demra on the bank of Lakkhya river.<sup>26</sup> Along with the industrial enterprises, the former Dilkusha area, Rajarbagh, Shantinagar, Malibagh, Kamlapur were developed into commercial and residential areas. While the industrial enterprises were set-up in the aforesaid areas, their offices as well residential buildings were built in their vicinity.

### **B. Pattern of Concentration and Share of Important Manufacturing Industries of Dhaka**

The preceding chapter highlighted that, at the time of partition, jute and cotton textile constituted the largest industries in East Pakistan. Apart from few large cotton textile mills, there existed a widespread handloom manufacturing throughout the country providing largest number of employment in the province. Although no large jute mill existed in 1947, high demand for jute and jute goods in the international market prompted the government to accord high priority to build jute mills in the country. With the setting up of the first ever-largest jute mill in Narayanganj, jute became the highest export income earner and the second largest employment provider in East Pakistan. Jute is a pure raw material based product, which does not lose weight while processing. Dhaka is not the principal jute growing area. But jute is the main export item, and jute manufacturing is more favorably located in Narayanganj, which is the largest jute manufacturing and trading center. Table 8 shows that more than half of the employment in jute industries of the province come to the share of Dhaka, and 60.9 percent of cotton textile is accommodated by Dhaka. The concentration of these two industries has attracted the other industries. The industries, which are market oriented, have a tendency to locate near the large center (the following chapter gives a detailed description about it).

Some of the manufacturing goods are exclusively produced in Dhaka. For example, 100 percent of the rubber products are produced in Dhaka. The industries like sugar and tea processing are weight-losing, i.e., lose weight while processing, and are highly localized. Sugarcane grows mostly in North Bengal and South Bengal, and the industries are located there, and tea factories are located in tea gardens of Sylhet district.

Almost half of the match industries are located in Dhaka, which use the raw materials from Madhupur Tract. Dhaka also enjoys a high concentration of iron and steel industries. Out of 87 iron and steel mills of the province, 41 were located in Dhaka accommodating 42 percent of the total

26 For details, see H.E., Rashid, pp. 365-366.

27 *Ibid.*



**Table 8: Percentage Share of Employment of Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna in the Province of Important Manufacturing Industries**

Manufacturing areas	East Pakistan	Dhaka	Chittagong	Khulna
Jute industries	100	50.7	20.2	29.1
Cotton Textile	100	60.9	16.6	10.0
Matches	100	43.7	15.9	31.4
Medicine and Pharmaceutical	100	29.4	49.4	5.9
Iron and Steel	100	46.2	37.1	16.2
Aluminum	100	67.9	24.5	---
Glass and Glassware	100	54.9	39.5	---
Jute pressing	100	40.4	---	16.3
Printing and Publishing	100	83.6	10.09	0.8
Shipbuilding	100	89.4	1.0	5.9
Tanning and Leather Finishing	100	48.6	44.0	1.8
Rubber Products	100	100	---	---
Electric Appliance	100	54.5	45.5	---
Wood Furniture	100	56.1	18.0	25.5

Source: CMI, East Pakistan, 1962-63.

employment of this industry in the province.<sup>27</sup> Most of the shipbuilding and repairing industries and printing and publishing industries are located in Dhaka. Dhaka was well connected by the river route, and the locations of the river ports in Buriganga and Lakkhya favoured the growth of shipbuilding,

**Table 9: Concentration of Manufacturing in Dhaka in Terms of Employment, Value-added and Non-agricultural Labor Force (expressed as percentage of corresponding total by districts of East Pakistan)**

Districts	Employment in Manufacturing	Value-added by Manufacture	Non-agricultural Labor Force
Dhaka	44.6	35.67	22.1
Chittagong	19.2	19.50	14.3
Khulna	13.5	12.50	6.0
Sylhet	6.0	17.50	5.4
Chittagong Hill Tracts	1.9	4.40	1.0
Kushtia	2.4	2.20	3.2
Pabna	3.6	0.90	4.3
Dinajpur	1.7	1.40	2.1
Bogra	1.8	1.30	2.0
Comilla	1.3	1.20	5.5
Mymensingh	1.1	0.80	9.1
Rajshahi	0.5	1.40	3.9
Rangpur	0.7	0.80	3.6
Noakhali	1.0	0.30	3.3
Jessore	0.3	0.02	3.9
Faridpur	0.2	0.24	4.5
Barisal	0.2	0.07	5.8

Source: CMI East Pakistan 1962-63, *Census of Pakistan, 1961*, vol., 5.

boat making and repairing industries of different sizes and types. The largest shipyard and dockyard and engineering works were set up in Narayanganj which was the principal river port of the country. Similarly, other industries like aluminum, glass and electric appliance concentrated significantly in Dhaka district. More than half of the manufacturing employment in the province was accommodated by the industries located in Dhaka. Table 8 depicts that 44 percent of all employment in manufacturing sector and 35.67 percent of value added by manufacture fall to the share of Dhaka district. In the non-agricultural labor force, Dhaka again ranks highest and accommodated more than one-fifth of the labor force of the province which shows the superiority of Dhaka in locating and concentrating manufacturing industries of the district.

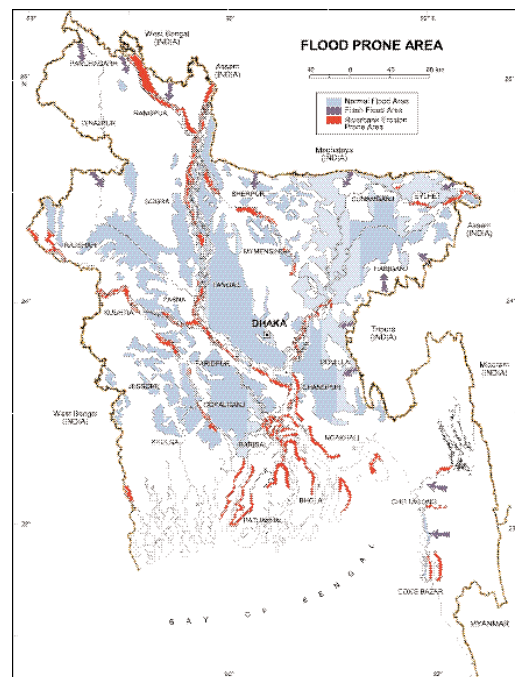
## 6. Factors contributing to the Location of Industries in Dhaka

Industry, trade and commerce always tend to concentrate in areas that provide location-advantages. These location-advantages are: geographical factors, historical factors, political and administrative reasons, infrastructure facilities like transportation and communication and most importantly, the agglomeration factors which attract the trade industry and commerce to set up and run their business in a particular location.

Not all the factors act with an equal intensity in all countries regardless of socio-economic considerations. Location may change due to climatic conditions or due to administrative and political reasons. But, no less important is the geographical factor. The impact of these factors are discussed below:

### 6.1 Geographical Factor

Dhaka is located in a very favorable place. Most of the region of Bangladesh lies in the plain and low land area, which is often submerged by devastating floods. Floods inundate sometimes three-fourth or even nearly 100 percent of the territory. So, any place located above the flood level will always be an attractive place for commerce, trade, industry and administration. Dhaka enjoys a very favorable location. Most of the city on the southern-part, most spur of the Madhupur Tract, and is, therefore, on firm high ground and above the flood level. In addition, the city is, at the same time, at the head of the delta. So, because of this, the city has an easy access to the North by railways and roads to the South by numerous rivers.<sup>28</sup> Fortunately the city is situated almost at the center of the country, which is considered an additional advantage owing to the lack of communication with the remote areas.



28 H.E., Rashid *op. cit.* p. 366.

### ***6.2 Advantage as a Capital City***

In most of the developing countries, the capital city enjoys maximum privilege in all development activities. In these countries, it is the capital city, which offers maximum facilities available in the country. All political decisions and administrative measures are important in economic considerations. Most of the political, administrative and commercial institutions are highly centralized and concentrated in the capital city. So, people decide to live in close proximity to the capital city to avail themselves of these opportunities.

In many developed countries, the capital city turns into purely an administrative center while industrial and commercial centers have developed in separate locations. Even in some developing countries, port cities have been made commercial city to ease the pressure on the capital city and to exploit the location advantage of the international trade. But, very few countries have achieved this goal and the capital city continues to grow dwarfing all other cities of a country.

In the colonial period, the foreign ruler made the port cities capital, and set up all administrative hierarchy to speed up transfer of resources from the colony to their homeland. The capital-cum-port city became the single largest city in a country. This type of port city-oriented development continued to flourish even in the post-independence era creating disparity in the country.

After partition when Dhaka became the capital of East Pakistan, the city began to grow by leaps and bounds in socio-economic and political spheres. Because, in a newly independent poor country private capital for investment remains at a primary stage, and development starts with the



National Assembly House

government initiative. Even the growth of the private business depends on policies and supports provided by the government. Besides, any development starts usually with the large urban center and East Pakistan was not an exception. Being a rural periphery of the external ruler, there was no large urban center except Dhaka where trade and commerce could flourish. So, after partition, Dhaka became the chief administrative center. In spite of the creation of Divisional and District Head Quarters, the major decision regarding investment in trade and business was in the hands of the central administration of the capital city. So, businessmen from any remote corner must have contacted Dhaka regarding license and any other issues concerning business. But, bureaucratic procrastination often diminished the inspiration of the off-city businessmen to undertake business outside Dhaka. Although Chittagong city has been declared to be the commercial capital of Bangladesh to reap the benefit of the location advantage of the port, the city barely reached the level of commercial city as most of the trade and commercial activities are accomplished in Dhaka. So, the traders and industrialists of Dhaka city enjoyed the facilities, which were hardly available for people of remote areas, and businessmen were inspired and sometimes compelled rather to invest in the capital city than in other district centers or areas.

### **6.3 Historical Factor**

Regarding historical factors, Islam Khan established Dhaka as the Capital of the *Subah* of Bengal in 1610. Soon it became the most important center of trade and commerce in the sub-continent and grew up by leaps and bounds till the first quarter of the nineteenth century. But, the destruction of muslin and the emergence of Calcutta as the new trading center as well as the declaration of Calcutta as the Capital of India diminished the importance of Dhaka. During the whole colonial period, Dhaka remained a small urban center in the large rural periphery. Dhaka with nearly a million populations was one of the largest cities in the sub-continent in the mid-seventeenth century, but declined to only a tiny urban center with only 69212 populations in 1872. The city began to retain its prominence in the early twentieth century as Lord Curzon divided Bengal and made Dhaka, the capital of Bengal and Assam in 1905. Although the partition lasted only for 6 years and was annulled in 1911, Dhaka's importance continued to grow. The creation of Muslim League in Dhaka in 1906 stimulated the movement for establishing the rights of the deprived majority Muslims of the region. The establishment of the university in 1921 made Dhaka the single largest center for higher studies in East Bengal. Besides, market for handloom textile began to expand due to the *Swadeshi* Movement in various centers of the district. The *Swadeshi* Movement expanded the market of locally produced textile goods, which, in turn, inspired the growth of some large textile industries in Dhaka district. The growth of trade and industries and services increased urbanization.<sup>29</sup> The growth of Dhaka city got a new impetus with the establishment of capital of East Pakistan in 1947.

### **6.4 Roads and Communication Advantages**

The location of Dhaka city offers distinct roads railways, and waterways communication than the other areas or centers of the country. Any center connected with roads, highway, railways or other means of communication would certainly offer location-advantage for trade and commerce. As has

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29 For the growth of industries during the *Swadeshi* movement, see MKU Molla, *The New Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam*, IBS, Rajshahi University, 1981.



**STEMAER SERVICE ROUTES AND PRINCIPAL RAIL ROUTES IN EAST BENGAL 1947**



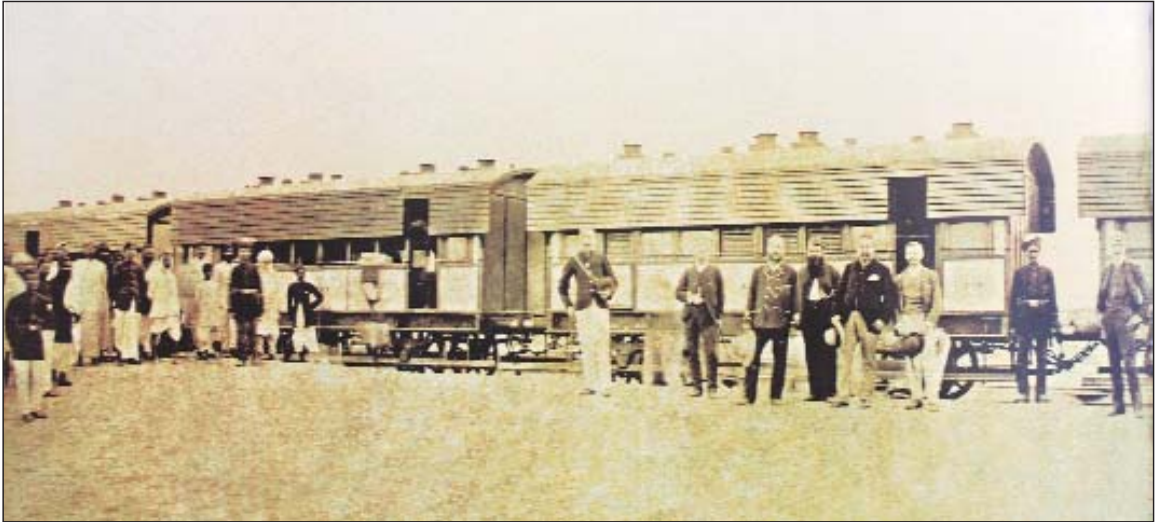


EBR Railway Bogie in 1935

been noted earlier, geographically Dhaka enjoys advantages due to its location above the flood level as well as in the center of the country. From time immemorial, Dhaka was connected with commercial centers of the country as well as the region. A few large and navigable rivers flow south and east of Dhaka. These rivers are the Ganges (Padma), the Meghna, the Dhaleswari, the Buriganga, the Lakkhya and the Arial Kha. Regular launch, steamer and cargo service two decades ago were the principal means of communication and transportation of goods from and to Dhaka. Although, the importance of river service declined due to the development of roads and railways, the districts of Barisal Division have still largely been dependent on waterways.



Paddle Steamer in the Lakkhya River



Fulbaria Railway Station in 1880

The location-advantage of Dhaka city acquired a new dimension when the Eastern Bengal State Railway constructed the first rail line in the district connecting Dhaka with Narayanganj and



Kamalapur Railway Station in 1968





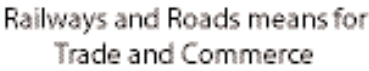
East Bengal Railway in operation

Mymensingh and opened that for traffic in 1885.<sup>30</sup> However, the rail line from Calcutta to Kushtia was opened in September 1862. The main aim was making and maintaining line from Calcutta to Kushtia on the Ganges with an ultimate extension to Dhaka. But the proposal to connect Dhaka via Jessore and Faridpur was abandoned for geographical realities of the area, and the Calcutta line was extended to Goalando. Although the proposed construction of Dhaka-Calcutta district rail line was not materialized, rail-cum-steamer service between Dhaka and Calcutta via Narayanganj and Goalando increased the scope of trade and services.

Furthermore, Comilla-Chittagong railway was constructed in 1885 and the line was extended to Akhaura and thence Karimganj in 1896. Later, this Assam-Bengal Railway connected Dhaka via Tongi to Bhairab and Ashuganj. The construction of this Railway network made Dhaka a “nodal” point connecting the important trading and commercial centers, which stimulated further the growth of Dhaka. Although at the time of partition no roads were there in the interior of East Bengal, Dhaka was well-connected with Calcutta by rail-customer service and centers of East Bengal with rail link or steamer, cargo and launch services. No other centers of East Pakistan were so well-connected as the capital Dhaka. This communication network was another attraction for the rapid growth of Dhaka than other places of East Pakistan.

30 For details, see Dinak Shohani Kabir, *History of Eastern Bengal Railway 1862-1947*, APPL., 2007.





### 6.5 Agglomeration Factor

Industries usually draw more benefits without or less expenditure in an economic activity where they are located in close proximity. New industrial undertakings have evidently been attracted to the same location, and the process tends to be cumulative.<sup>31</sup> The initial attraction to the industry, for example, may have been the availability of raw materials, energy supply, a port or a market. Once a few large industries are set-up, other auxiliary industries also expand in tandem with the large one exploiting the linkage effects of the latter. Besides, the presence of a number of industries generate the demand for supporting services like telecommunication, press and printing, repairing workshop, financial and training institutes, health complexes, marketing organizations, specialized school and colleges and research centers. These benefits that accrue to the firms come from the agglomeration of many firms and industries in the same location.<sup>32</sup>

At the time of partition, Dhaka enjoyed, at least to some extent, agglomeration of industries, which attracted the new industrial and commercial undertakings during the whole period of Pakistan. For example, as has been hinted earlier, among the few large industries, which fell to the share of East Pakistan, was cotton textile. Out of nine industries 6 were located in Dhaka district. Growth of these industries generated the initial triggers, which attracted many other industries to the same location.

The establishment of Dhaka as the capital of Bengal and Assam increased the administrative importance of the city. People began to move to the city in search of jobs and opportunities. As a result, pace of urbanization accelerated, which in turn, increased market for industries. But the main impetus for large industrial undertakings came from the handloom weaving which expanded to a large extent owing to the *Swadeshi* Movement. When the *Swadeshi* supporters asked the people to use local cloths boycotting the English cloths, demand for locally produced cloth increased.<sup>33</sup> Given the increasing demand for local cloths, some businessmen took initiatives to set up textile mills and the first large-scale textile mill the Dhakeswari Textile Mill was set-up on the bank of the river Sitalakhya in 1927, which was followed by a number of other textile mills.<sup>34</sup> These textile mills comprised spinning and weaving materials, which were used by the local handloom weavers, and the traders sold finished cloths to the local market. The availability of raw materials within the locality encouraged more weavers to set-up new handloom who otherwise had been earning their livelihood by daily labor in agriculture. Besides, the growth of the large textile industries generated various associated industries such as dying, washing, cartoon and packing box industries and thereby turning this into an industrial center for the whole region.<sup>35</sup>

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31 R.C., Estall, O.R. Buchanan, p. 145.

32 R. Chandra, p. 80.

33 Mukanda Das, a *Swadeshi* organiser used to sing many *Swadeshi Gaan*.

34 The first large-scale modern textile mill was 'Mohini Mill' and was set up in Kushtia in 1908.

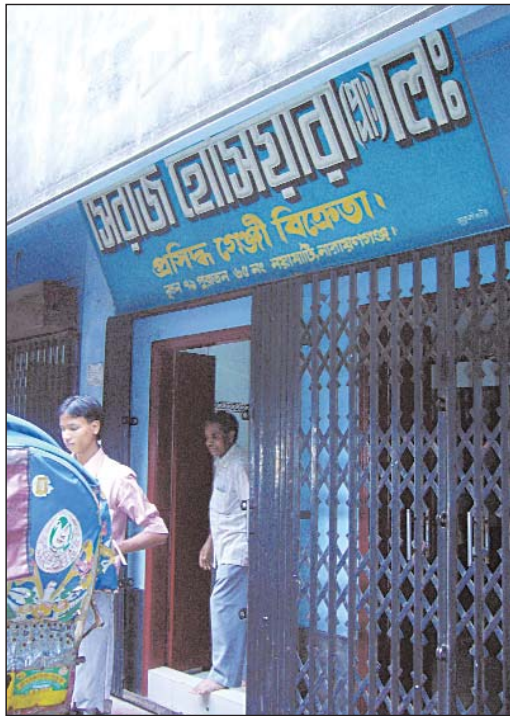
35 With the decay of prodigious cotton of Dhaka city, skilled artisans lost their jobs and were forced to eke out their livelihood by cultivation. But the handloom existed in the rural area and produced ordinary cloths for local people. These coarse cloths did not face any competition from foreign cloths, as the wealthier class who resided in the large urban areas consumed the latter. However, the market of the locally produced coarse cloth was limited as the income of the people was very low. The skilled weavers, who have learned no profession, other than weaving, began to survive as agriculturist, and some of them ply handloom as part-timers along with agriculture. Most of the weavers plied textile part-time, earning from agriculture was low. So, the scope of taking handloom as a profession diminished owing to the lack of large commercial centers. After a long hiatus of almost one hundred and fifty years, handloom began to retain its heritage as the trade and commerce started to grow in Dhaka district. The growth in urban population increased the demand for cloth of both coarse and fine quality, which were mostly met by the handloom industry. The *Swadeshi* Movement during First World War and in the twenties of the last century gave a new boost to the textile production as the movement called for a boycott of foreign goods. The professional weavers who have disappeared in the past came back to their old profession in the rapidly growing urban centers of Dhaka district.



Along with cotton textile, jute was the most promising industry as the country produced world's best quality jute. With this jute, India developed her second largest industry. So, the businessmen from West Pakistan as well as East looked for a center advantageous for the location of jute industry. Although, at the time of partition, there was no jute mill in East Pakistan, Narayanganj emerged as the largest trading center for jute in the nineteenth century and flourished in the subsequent decades. During partition, 20 firms out of 27 in the whole East Bengal were located in Narayanganj. These were engaged in the purchase, pressing, bailing and supply of raw jute to the Calcutta mills. Narayanganj was well-connected with



Narayanganj Port

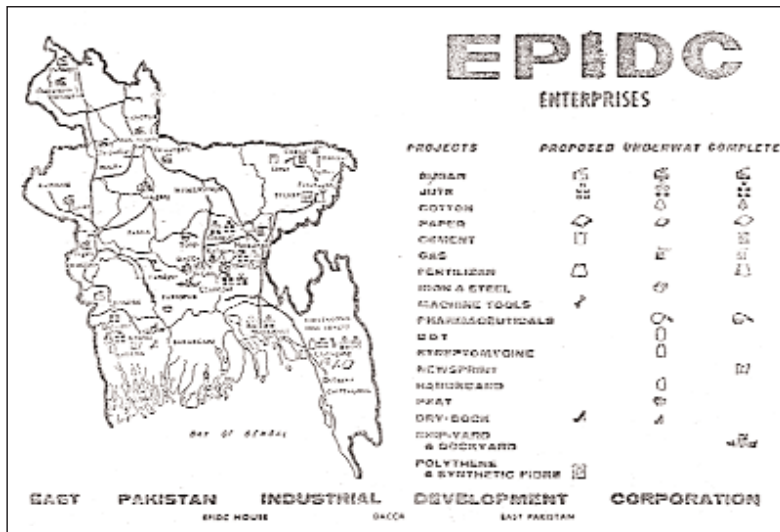


A hoseiry industry in Narayanganj

Calcutta by rail-cum-steamer service, and almost all the important trade centers either by steamer launch or by railroad. The purchased raw jute from all over the country was assorted in the merchant's godowns into different qualities and pressed in hydraulic presses into bales. But in spite of the existence of these jute bailing presses and jute-based trade, Narayanganj was a small town before partition. But, when after independence, Dhaka became the capital of East Pakistan; Narayanganj grew up from a small town with a few jute presses and godowns to the most important center of jute and other industries.

The initial trigger of Narayanganj came from the establishment of the largest jute mill in 1951, which attracted other industries to the vicinity. Given the rapid and spectacular growth of jute industry, the Jute Board was set up in 1949 in Narayanganj and in 1953 i.e. four years later. P.I.D.C. was established which gave necessary impetus to the growth and development of jute industry in Narayanganj and other areas of the region.<sup>36</sup> Along

36 For details, see Sirajul Islam Choudhury (ed.) *Jute*, 1956.



with jute mills, other industries, which existed before the partition, have grown up in size and scale in the post-independence period.

Besides, hosiery industry started to grow in Pabna, and the industry sprang up when Calcutta-Kustia rail-line was extended to Ishwardi following the construction of Hardinge Bridge in 1915. The hosiery continued to grow in the subsequent years, but

declined after the partition in 1947. This decline was attributed to the fact that Calcutta was the chief market which was closed after partition and most non-Muslim entrepreneurs left for India. However, this industry, which had a large market, began to grow again in Narayanganj along with the other industries and soon Narayanganj became the most important center of hosiery industry. Needless to say, Dhaka was the location of hosiery in the early years of the twentieth century. It started with hand-driven machine and only *ganjis* (under-shirts) and socks were made. But the machine-driven products from Calcutta were proved to be superior in quality and the industry of Dhaka lost the market of hosiery industry. But Pabna based hosiery flourished as these were produced in machine-driven factories and sold both in Calcutta and Dhaka. So, the relocation of hosiery industry along with the growth of jute and textile industries accelerated the pace of agglomeration, which further intensified the process of industrialization in Dhaka.

### 6.6 Growth of Trade and Commerce related Institutions

It is worth mentioning that prior to partition, there were no mentionable research center, laboratory, and research institute or training center. A rapid and sustainable industrialization is unthinkable without these centers and institutions. The situation was changed in the post independence period, when Narayanganj was selected as the prime center for the location of jute industry. The Jute Board was set up in 1949 even before the establishment of the first and the sub-continent's largest Adamjee Jute Mill. This institution was built to face the challenges that arose out of the dislocation of trade with Calcutta, the nerve center of trade and commerce of the province and trade routes. Only one year after the creation of Jute Board, the East Pakistan Institute of Leather Technology was located at Hazaribagh on the outskirts of Dhaka city under the Department of Industries. The institute was set-up aiming at conducting research with the indigenous tanning materials and their uses in the leather trade, and providing consultant to the trade and produce technicians for the growing tanning industries. With the growth of the economy more and more and trade and industry based research centre and institutes were located in the city. For example, East Pakistan Ceramic





College of Textile Engineering and Technology



Bangladesh Institute of Glass and Ceramic

and Glass Institute was established in 1951 at Tejgaon of Dhaka city. Already in 1950, the East Pakistan Textile Institute, Central Jute Research Institute, Eastern Regional Laboratories of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, the Central Testing Laboratory were established in different parts of Dhaka during the fifties of the twentieth century.

**Table 10: Major Offices of the Central and Provincial Government in East Pakistan in Dhaka**

Sl. No.	Offices of the Central Government of East Pakistan in Dhaka	Sl. No.	Offices of the Provincial Government in Dhaka
1.	Export Promotion Bureau, Department of Trade Promotion and Commercial Intelligence	1.	Directorate of Agricultural Marketing
2.	Department of Investment, Promotion and Supply	2.	Department of Commerce and Industries
3.	Jute Board for the improvement of jute production and regulation of jute trade	3.	Directorate of Technical Education
4.	Ministry of Commerce	4.	Labor Directorate to look after the welfare ad labor force and their interest
5.	Ministry of Industries, Central Testing Laboratories	5.	Industrial Court for adjudication of labor disputes
6.	Pakistan Central Jute Committee		
7.	Pakistan Tea Board for fixing tea production and of the controlling tea department		
8.	Regional patent office for registration of patent and trademark		
9.	Ministry of Health, Labor and Social Welfare		
10.	Regional national sample		

The offices of the central and provincial governments as well as the institutes and laboratories are depicted in tables 10 and 11.

Although Chittagong emerged as the chief commercial center of the province and grew up rapidly after independence,<sup>37</sup> Dhaka surpassed all other centers and became the focal point of both commercial and administrative activities of East Pakistan. Both the Central and the Provincial Governments located their Ministries and Directorates relating to the matter of trade promotion, regulation of principles and policies in Dhaka. The following offices of the Central Government for the East Pakistan were located in Dhaka.

Like Insurance Companies, most of the banks and their head offices were also concentrated in Dhaka. The important banking institution are the following: (1) The State Bank of Pakistan, (2) The National Bank of Pakistan, (3) The Habib Bank Ltd., (4) The Muslim Commercial Bank Ltd., (5) The Commerce Bank, (6) The Eastern Merchantile Bank Ltd., (7) The Eastern Banking Corporation Ltd., (8) The Standard Bank Ltd., (9) The United Bank Ltd., (10) The Dacca Central Co-operative Bank, and (11) The East Pakistan Provincial Co-operative Bank. The last two are the

<sup>37</sup> For details of Commercial importance of Chittagong Port, see *Hundred Years of Chittagong Port*, Chittagong, 1968.

**Table 11: Institutes, Laboratories and Research Centers and Organization of East Pakistan**

Sl. No.	Name of the Centers and Institutes and Organizations	Location	Year of establishment
1.	The Jute Board	Narayanganj/Dhaka	1949
2.	The Central Jute Research Institute	Tejgaon/Dhaka	1956
3.	East Pakistan Ceramic and Glass Institute	Tejgaon/Dhaka	1951
4.	The East Pakistan Institute of Leather Technology	Hazaribagh/Dhaka	1950
5.	The Eastern Regional Laboratories of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research	Dhaka	1955
6.	The East Pakistan Textile Institute	Dhaka	1950
7.	The Central Testing Laboratory	Tejgaon/Dhaka	1955
8.	East Pakistan Jute Marketing Corporation	Dhaka	1957
9.	Atomic Energy Center	Dhaka	1965

government sponsored co-operative organizations which advance money to the agriculturists as well as to the petty artisans through the affiliated banks, (12) The Industrial Development Bank of Pakistan which is a government sponsored bank for advancing loans to the industrialists and (13) The Agricultural Development Bank of Pakistan, a government-sponsored bank which advances loans to the farmers. Among the foreign banks, the following had their branches in Dhaka:

(1) The State Bank of India, (2) The Central Bank of India, (3) The United Bank of India, (4) The National and Grindlays Bank Ltd. and (5) The Australia Bank Ltd.

### 6.6 Growth of Large Urban Centers/Urbanization Factor

Large urban centers generate some advantage and facilities, which the smaller centers cannot. A large urban center is also an area of concentrated earning and spending. Such area is certainly attractive for many enterprises producing final consumer goods. Some consumer goods, which are perishable and bulky in nature, will be located near the large market area. Demand for these products increases in tandem with the growth of urban population. So, for any investment decision the entrepreneur will have to have many important considerations relating to his market in mind.<sup>38</sup>

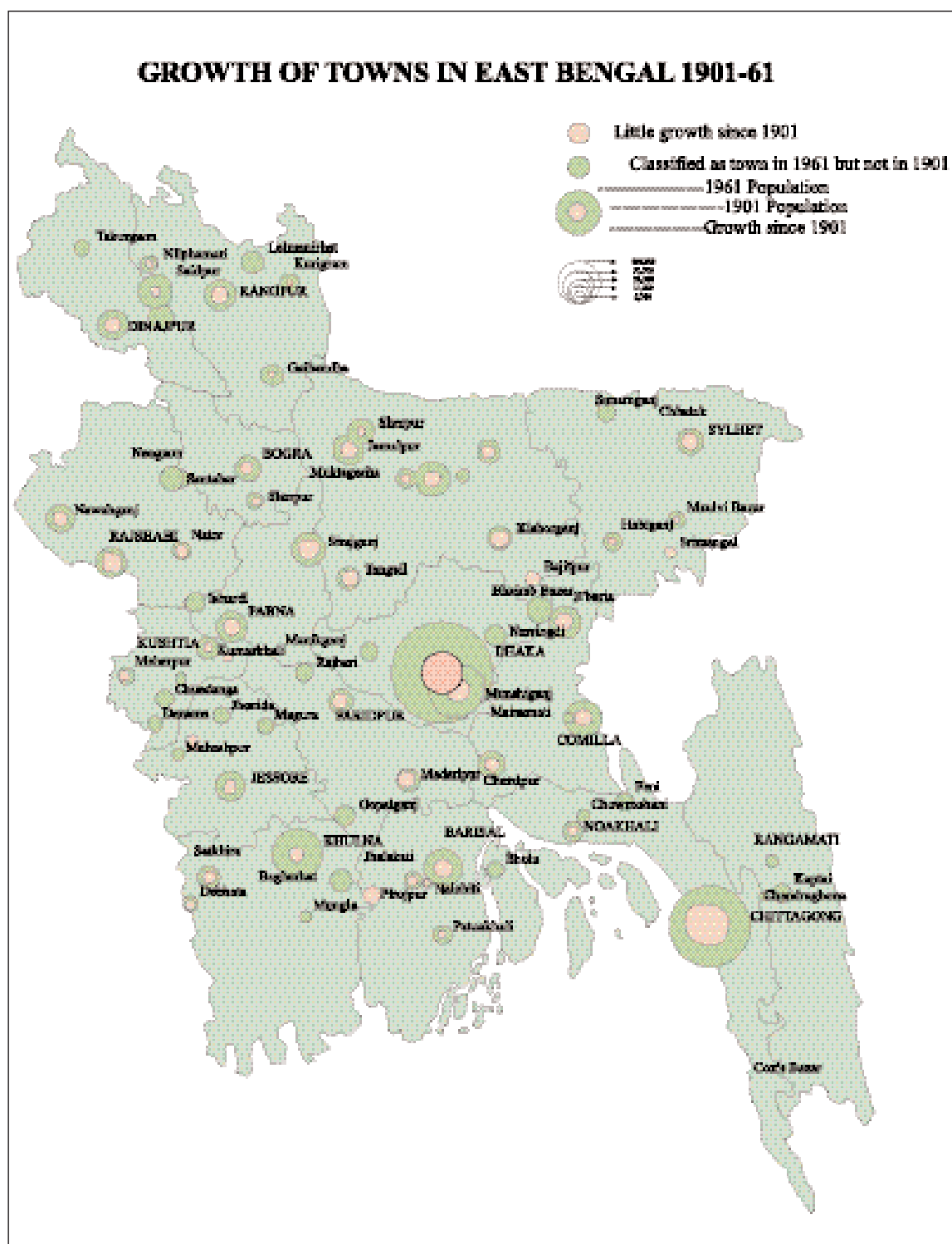
For the market of final consumer goods, the size and future prospect of population growth and income is important. In most of the newly independent countries, development starts with the capital city drawing the resources from the rest of the country. So, the capital city flourished and people from other parts of the region moved to the rapidly-growing capital city. Some moved in search of a better life, others for survival.

**Table 12: Percentage share of Urban population of Dhaka city**

During 1901 and 1961			
Year	Whole Urban Population East Bengal	Urban Population Dhaka City	Percentage Share of Dhaka City
1901	3,26,598	1,14,505	35.06
1961	3,78,281	1,36,427	36.06
1921	4,28,284	1,50,061	35.04
1931	5,06,382	1,72,707	34.11
1951	11,67,679	4,07,134	34.87
1961	16,38,126	7,18,766	43.78

Source: Calculated from Table: LXVII in: N., Ahmed, *An Economic Geography of East Pakistan*, London, 1968.

38 R.C., Estall, O.R., Buchaman, *op. cit.*, p.41.





As Table 12 shows, Dhaka was always the largest urban center accommodating more than one-third of the total urban population of the country. So, the highest concentration of urban people was always an attraction of industrial location the past and is continuing to be the major choice of the businessmen.

### **7. Shift in Ownership of Trade, Commerce and Industry**

As has been noted in the earlier chapters, Hindus and foreigners controlled the limited trade and commerce, which expanded before partition. Before partition economies of the areas, which now constituted Pakistan and India, were largely complementary. The area of Bangladesh mostly furnished raw materials for India's most important industries. Narayanganj was the center of trade and commerce. Although business association like Chamber of Commerce was introduced in Bombay, Madras and Calcutta in 1833, no such organization was established in East Bengal till the early years of the twentieth century. The Europeans set up the first association of business in 1904 in Dhaka/Narayanganj<sup>39</sup> and in the port city of Chittagong. But this Chamber of Commerce contributed little till the partition of India. There were few industries, and the organizations were involved only in trading of raw materials to other centers of India. These Chambers of Trade and Commerce were very small and were overshadowed by the powerful Bengal Chamber of Commerce based in Calcutta.<sup>40</sup> The principal trade was jute and was controlled by the foreigners and the Chamber's major concern was to solve the problems faced by these alien traders. There was no attempt to develop the local entrepreneurs or to solve the problems faced by the local businessmen.

Although the Hindu businessmen controlled the dominant shares in trade, commerce and industry, their associational linkage was centered in Calcutta. No East Bengal district developed a chamber of commerce comparable to any of the chamber of Bombay, Madras Calcutta or even Buyers and Shippers Chamber of Karachi till the partition.<sup>41</sup> A small organization calling Indian Merchants Association did exist in Chittagong and another chamber comprising Hindu and Muslim traders was created in Khulna in 1934. But none of these organizations was capable to undertake any promotional task similar to those of chamber of Indian cities.

Initially, it was the most backward region in the sub-continent, and there existed a few large industries, which were controlled by the non-Muslims the Hindus in particular. Out of the existing nine textile mills, the Muslim Bengali entrepreneurs owned none. Jute was the flourishing trade in the pre-partition time, and Narayanganj was the chief trading center. Only 20 large firms were engaged in the purchase, pressing, building and supply of raw jute to the Calcutta center. Besides, the banking system was entirely under the control of Hindus. Even one year after the partition i.e., in 1948, a number of banks had been continuing their transaction in East Pakistan through 105 branches. By this time, two Pakistani Banks opened their operation in Dhaka.

The banks dominated by Indian businessmen began to withdraw their capital from East Pakistan during the mid-fifties.<sup>42</sup> Many Indian businessmen along with their counterpart Hindu businessmen

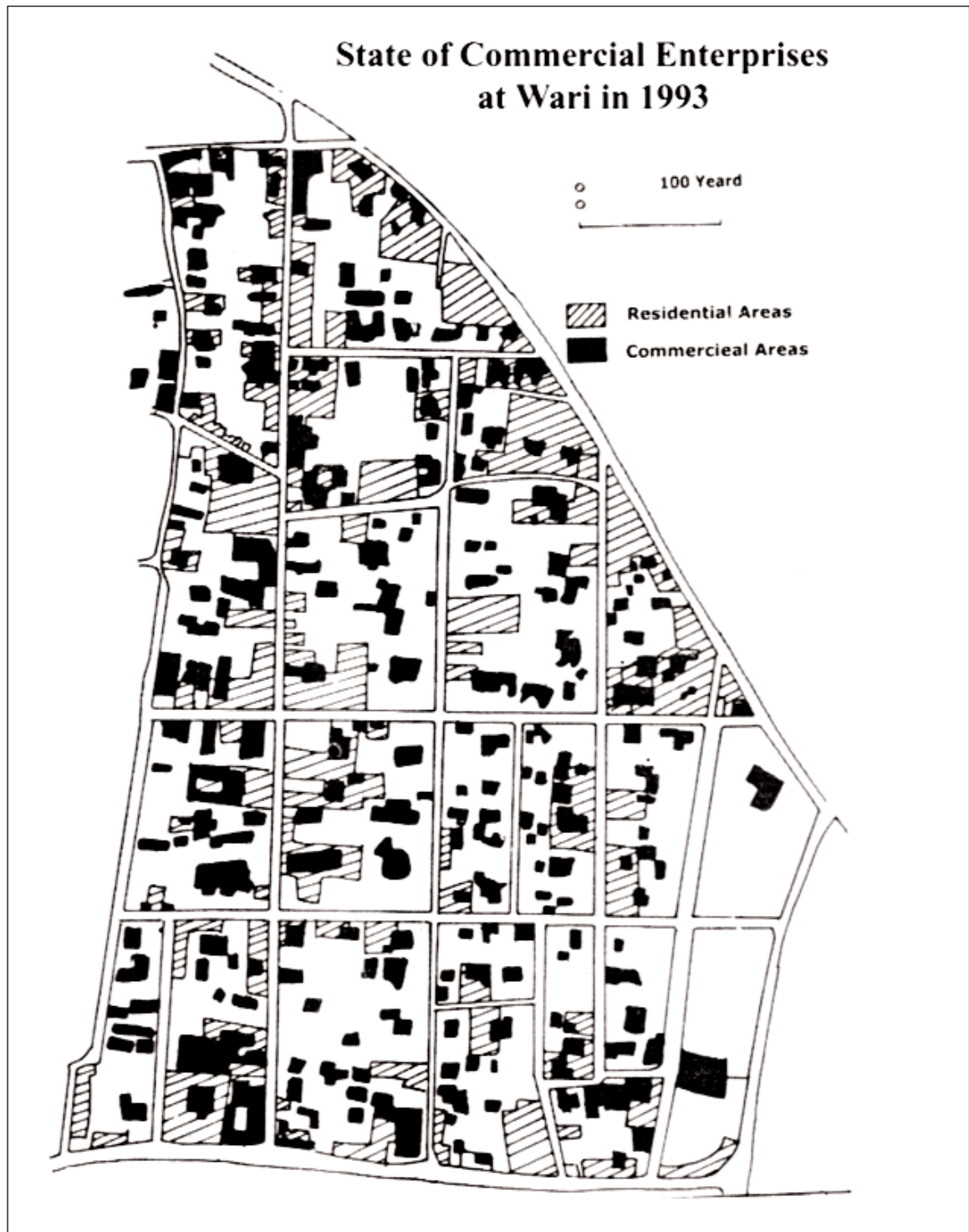
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39 This organisation was named Narayangong Chamber of Commerce and subsequently transferred to Dhaka city and renamed 'Dhaka Metropolical Chamber of Commerce and Industry'.

40 S.A., Kochanek, p. 128.

41 S.A., Kochanek, op. cit., p. 129.

42 S.S., Baranov, p.18.



Source: Professor, Nazrul Islam, *ibid.*

continued to conduct their business in East Pakistan. But this partnership business of Indians with the Hindus of East Pakistan was seen as an act of treason by administration and businessmen of Pakistan. Their hostile attitude was felt at every step of their business.

In the beginning, they owned about 15 percent of investment capital in East Pakistan. They controlled almost all the large textile mills, the single cement factory of the region and 17 large tea gardens. According to some sources, even in 1956 i.e. nearly a decade after the partition, the non-Muslim industrialists and businessmen owned more than 50 large mills and factories and 200 trade and business enterprises.<sup>43</sup>

Pakistani government treated the Hindus of East Pakistan irrationally and at the time of war in 1965 between Pakistan and India, their assets and properties were declared "Enemy Property" and brought under government control. A large number of Hindu businessmen left in the early years of partition. But many industrialists who had industries and established businesses and had strong hold among the local community continued to run business in East Pakistan. The Hindu community continued to play a dominant role in the economic life of East Pakistan until the mid-sixties. One study<sup>44</sup> estimated that in 1959-60 the Bengalis controlled 8.5 percent industrial assets of Pakistan. The Marwari Hindus, who came from Rajasthan Province, had also a dominant share in the trade and business of Bengal. They were mostly engaged in the jute trade, and jute and sugar industries. These *Marwaris* were mostly Indian nationals and some of them took Pakistani nationality and continued to run their business. In 1959, their total industrial asset in all Pakistan accounted for about two percent.<sup>45</sup>

In agriculture of East Pakistan, government carried out a land reform programme in 1950. This programme made fixation of a maximum ceiling of land holdings and the excess land was brought under government control and redistributed among the landless peasants. This programme changed the traditional land, ownership structure, damaging interest of the *Zamindars* most of whom came from the Hindu community. They along with many others migrated to India. In the industrial sector, the combined holdings of Bengali and *Marwari* Hindus were about one-third of total industrial assets of East Pakistan in 1954. But a massive migration took place following the outbreak of the Indo-Pak War in 1965. Because, during the war, the government seized the assets of Hindus under the Enemy Property Act.<sup>46</sup> An enquiry into the causes and consequences of Deprivation of Hindu minorities in Bangladesh through vested property ACT, Dhaka 2000.(?) But soon Pakistanis and non-Bengalis who migrated from India grabbed the industrial assets left by the Hindus.

It is also important to note here that, the literacy rate in East Bengal was very low and the rate varies widely among different communities. According to the Census of 1951 the average literacy rate in 1951 was 21.11 percent, while among the Hindus it was 25.28 percent and only 19.93 percent went to the share of Muslims, which shows 26.84 percent lower than that of Hindus.<sup>47</sup> But the situation in higher education was worse off for the Muslim community. Hindu doctors, lawyers, teachers and government servants, constituted the top echelon of urban society in East Bengal. Even in the rural areas, most of the teachers, physicians and lawyers came from the Hindu community.

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43 Papanek and Hanna, p.19.

44 R.I. Sobhan, and M., Ahmed, p.76.

45 *Ibid.*

46 For detail, see A, Barkat, S.U., Zaman, A, Poddar, M., Ullah, K.H. Hossain, and S.K. Gupta. *An enquiry into the causes and consequences of Deprivation of Hindu Minorities of Bangladesh Through Vested Property Act, Prip-Trust, Dhaka 2000.*

47 *Census of Pakistan 1951*, Vol. 3, East Bengal Report and Tables, P. 102, Statement No. 7.3.

So, at the time of partition, industry and trade were in the hands of Hindu trading castes and British merchants. The Muslims were the late starters in education and business, and the middle class was very small. The urban-based middle class was dominated by Hindus, and in the rural areas, where the principal economic activity was subsistence agriculture, almost 100 percent *Zamindars* and *Talukders* (owner of a landed estate) were from the Hindu community. After the partition, the emigration of Hindu landlords, their subordinate and urban professionals, created a great vacuum and that was partly filled by Muslims. But, the non-Bengali Muslims coming from Pakistan occupied the upper lawyer level of the governmental administrative hierarchy quickly. The Bengali Muslims engaged themselves in acquiring land and entering white color jobs in the urban areas.

In the rural areas, the *Zamindari* system, which was created by the British ruler, was abolished under the East Bengal State Acquisition and Tenancy Act 1950 (EBSATA). As has been noted earlier, at the time of partition, East Bengal was one of the most backward region of the sub-continent. Industry, trade and commerce contributed very little to income and employment. Agriculture was the principal source of income. At that time, possession of more land meant more wealth of power and status. Acquiring land means easy access to wealth and security. So, although the *Zamindari* system was theoretically abolished, the representatives of *Zamindars* exercised a strong influence on the government. When EBSATA fixed the ceiling of cultivable land at 33.3 acres or 100 bighas per family, the *Zamindars* and the rich farmers, who had surplus land, distributed those among the relatives and subordinates. Besides, the excess land of *Zamindars* was acquired after paying large compensation. And, within less than a decade i.e. in 1961, the new Military Regime of Ayub Khan raised the ceiling of land from 100 *bighas* or 33.3 acres to 125 acres. This was done consciously to create a mini-type *Zamindar* or landlord who would be loyal to the Regime. The people with surplus came to purchase land, which was regarded as the easiest way of acquiring wealth, power and status. So, Bengali Muslims quickly filled the gap, which was created by the emigration of Hindu landlords in the rural areas. Those who had money and resources paid little attention to exploiting the new opportunities in trade and industry.

One point deserves attention. In British India, some Muslims had been very active in trade, commerce and industry. Banking was largely in the hands of Hindus, Parsians and Europeans.<sup>48</sup> The upper class Muslims traditionally served as military officer, government officials, and many were landlords. The business activity among these Muslims were confined to caste-like communities as those of Hindus and their occupation was traditional and hereditary. Although they belong to the Muslim community, they have their own cultural identity and have less interaction with other Muslims or Hindus except regarding their business interest.

The largest and the most successful Muslim trading communities are the Bohra, the Memons and Khojas who were in western India. They had a long history of maritime trade with the Middle East and East Africa even long before the arrival of the British to the Indian Sub-continent.<sup>49</sup> In spite of long experience in trade and commerce, these communities had failed to expand their business to the extent of their counterpart *Parsis*, *Marwaris* and the *Gujaratis*. For their failure to expand the business as expected, they blamed the largest Hindu majority, who prevented them from exploiting the opportunities offered by the government.<sup>50</sup> The people of these communities migrated to both East

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48 S.A., Kochanek, p. 20.

49 S.A., Kochanek, pp. 20-21.

50 *Ibid.*



and West Pakistan and became the dominant traders and industrialists in whole Pakistan. In East Pakistan too, industrialization began with the dominant position of Pakistanis and non-Bengalis. So, since the Bengali wealthy Muslims traditionally preferred to invest their surplus money in purchasing land, the pattern of ownership in trade, commerce and industry did not change to any significant extent.

The Hindu traders and industrialists, as was mentioned earlier, continued to play a significant role till the War of 1965 between Pakistan and India. During the war, the government seized large amount of Hindu properties, which included 52 large industries and 250 commercial and industrial enterprises with a worth of Rs. 10,000 million, under the Enemy Property Act. These assets included jute and cotton textile mills, inland water transport, tea, jute bailing and real estate.<sup>51</sup> These industries and businesses were quickly taken over by non-Bengali Muslims who came from Burma, East Africa, North India, West Bengal and Calcutta.

So, in the absence of a dominant Bengali Muslim entrepreneurial class, the West Pakistani as well as the non-Bengali businessmen quickly entered into the economy of East Pakistan, and took control of trade, commerce and industries.<sup>52</sup>

The large group among the non-Bengali businessmen who migrated to East Pakistan was the Khoja Ismailis. The total people of this community were estimated at 10,000 by the end of the 1960s. By 1971, they owned about 100 enterprises with an estimated asset value of about Rs. 30 crore. They started with the marketing of foreign cigarettes and biscuits, and then moved into jute, metal, paper, leather and textiles.<sup>53</sup> The second largest non-Bengal business community was Memon group, which comprised a total population of about 6,000 in East Pakistan. Although most of them migrated to East Pakistan after 1947, some of them came from Burma, as the latter was invaded by Japan during the Second World War.<sup>54</sup> There was no exact estimate of their asset, but according to one source, they controlled about 150 enterprises including tea, jute and cotton textiles, insurance, banking and wholesale trade.<sup>55</sup> The largest industrial families of the Memon group were Adamjee, Bawany, Karim and Dawood. These families alone controlled 54 industrial and trading enterprises. Adamjee alone owned 16 companies or Rs. 70 crore, Bawani and Karim controlled 19 and 10 companies or Rs. 15 crore and Rs. 4 crore respectively. They had 10 jute mills with 500 looms, which make 14 percent of the total jute textile.<sup>56</sup>

Besides, the Memon group owned 7 large cotton mills with 128 thousand looms and 7 tea gardens. The tea gardens together shared 6.8 percent of the garden and 8.2 of the total output of the country.

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51 For detail, see A. Barkat, S.U. Zaman, A., Rahman, A. Poddar, M. Ullah, K.A.; Hussain, S.K.O. Gupta. *An inquiry into causes and consequences of Deprivation of Hindu Minorities in Bangladesh through vested property*, Dhaka, 2000.

52 By West Pakistani, it meant those who have their home in Pakistan commonly known as *Punjabis, Pathans, Baluchis* and *Sindhis*. While, on the other hand, another business community, migrated from India to Pakistan and settled in Karachi, which was the capital of Pakistan during the period of 1947 to 1958. This community is known as Memons and Bohras who dominated the trade and industries of both East and West Pakistan. None who came to dominate the economy of East Pakistan were classified as West Pakistani because that was their place of business and their home, while those who came to East Pakistan from Calcutta and other parts of India but culturally more related to West Pakistani were known as “non- Bengali”.

53 S.A., Kochanek, pp. 25-26.

54 See interview with Mr. A. Y. Bawany, in the Chapter -6

55 S.S. Baranov, *Characteristics and of Economic Development 1947-1971*, translated from Russian into Bangla by I. Islam, *et. al.*, Dhaka 1986, p.81.

During the late sixties, the Memon traded a larger share of food and agricultural products. They were the chief purchaser of raw jute and had also actively involved in export of jute.<sup>57</sup> The third group of non-Bengali businessmen who played a dominant role in the trade and industry of East Pakistan was known as Chiniotis. Textile, jute, leather and tea were their principal areas of business. The richest 10 Chinioti families controlled 55 percent companies with a total asset of Rs. 34 crores.<sup>58</sup> They set up 6 large jute textile mills having 2500 looms which was 11 percent of the total, and out of these, three were owned by the Amin, Nishat and Elahi family. In the textile sub-sector, they had a strong hold sharing 21.3 percent of the total production. But their major involvement was in leather industry. They had 20 large leather factories of their own which processed 40 percent of the raw hide. Among the big 10 companies were the Dost Mohammad, Mohammad Amin, Mahbub, Elahi and the Mohammad Shafiq family. These companies conducted the major export of leather to West Pakistan and abroad.

But, the most prominent were Monnoos and Saigols who were involved in versatile businesses. They started with textiles and then moved into chemicals, pesticides and then synthetic rayon. Besides, they were also importers of motorcars and refrigeration equipments. The Monnoos were among the first who started industries in East Pakistan. In 1936, they established a rubber factory in Calcutta which was exchanged with for an industrial unit in Narayanganj. During the first decade of Pakistan, they invested in textile, rubber and ceramics mostly in Dhaka. In early sixties, they moved to West Pakistan and expanded their industries there.<sup>59</sup>

Another prominent business community was the Khoja Ismailia who came from Bombay and other parts of North India. Earlier, like the Memons they ran their business with local Hindu communities. The Khoja community had a strong community feeling and was united by different kinds of bonds. They preferred to live in isolation from other communities. They had long experience of trading and understood the market mechanism. Since markets are volatile and uncertain, the entrepreneurs required strong financial and credit facilities. So, they put emphasis on the banking sector. They were one of the pioneers in developing banking institutions in Pakistan.<sup>60</sup> When they came to East Pakistan, they were involved in trading cigarette and biscuit, and they expanded their involvement in other trades and industries in the subsequent years. In 1971, the Khoja Ismailia owned around 100 industrial and commercial enterprises with a total asset value of Rs. 30 crore. Their main investment was concentrated in jute, metal, paper and hardboard industries. They had also joint venture with foreign companies in cotton textile, leather and cold storage. The major mills, which were controlled by them, were the Jessore Jute Mills, Crescent Jute Mills, People's Jute Mill and Carpeting Jute Mills. These mills together shared 11 percent of the total output of jute industries, and fixed capital of these mills was accounted for Rs. 12.5 crore. As has been mentioned earlier, for cultural and linguistic reasons, they maintained relationship mostly with the Pakistani Muslims. However, in the mid-sixties, they started partnership with the Bengali Muslims, but the Ismailias controlled business. The last important trader community, which migrated to East Pakistan, was the Bihari. Although their industry and commercial ventures were

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56 *Ibid.*

57 S.S. Baranov, *op.cit.* p. 83.

58 Kochanek, *op.cit.* p. 26.

59 Altaf, Z., p. 204.

60 Z., Altaf, *op.cit.*, p.19.

not as big as those of the other non-Bengali communities, however, some prominent companies such as Ilahi Box, Nasir Brothers and Hassan Brothers had a significant share in the trading of television, refrigerator and other industrial goods. The most prominent person of this group was Sabbir Ahmed, who was the President of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce, and member of the Board of Directors of eight companies. Besides, he was the Director of Karnaphuli (Dawood Group) and Peoples Jute Mills (Ismailia Khoja Company).<sup>61</sup>

Actually, the aforesaid old Calcutta-based business companies such as, the Ispahanis and Bawanys had their businesses in Burma.<sup>62</sup> They were the first group of entrepreneurs who setup their industries in East Pakistan. Their involvement in the trade and industries of East Pakistan began with the producing of goods in West Pakistan for export to East Pakistan. Themselves also conducted Shipping and marketing of these products. Later, they began to establish their mills and factories in East Pakistan. Their common language, customs and cultural affinity encouraged them to work together. However, their ever-growing trade and commerce did not encourage them to include the Bengali Muslims. Besides, even after living for more than two decades, they have showed little or no interest to learn the *Bangla* language to accustom themselves to the culture and tradition of the people of this country. Their deep community feeling and isolated life-style led the Bengalis to treat them as foreigners. Because of this isolation, the Bengalis have hardly benefited from their flourishing trade and commerce.

## 8. Concentration of Trade and Business and Its Impact

The Bengali Muslims as has been hinted in the earlier chapters were late starter in education, trade and business. Most of them were agriculturists and a very insignificant section was professionals and businessmen. During the pre-partition times trade and business were dominated either by Hindus or by foreigners. The partition of 1947 created a new opportunity to the Bengali Muslims to start trade and business. But the wealthy Muslim Bengalis showed little interest to invest in trade and industry instead of agriculture.

However, the establishment of university and educational institutions in the early years of this century created a new class of educated people some of whom took initiative to involve themselves in commercial and business undertakings in the post-partition period. But, they faced enormous difficulties from their experienced Pakistani and Non-Bengali counterparts. So, in the newly independent country, the Bengali Muslims, who deserved more facilities and opportunities from the government entrepreneurial class to overcome the initial challenges faced by the Bengali businessmen, had a different treatment from the Government and their associates.

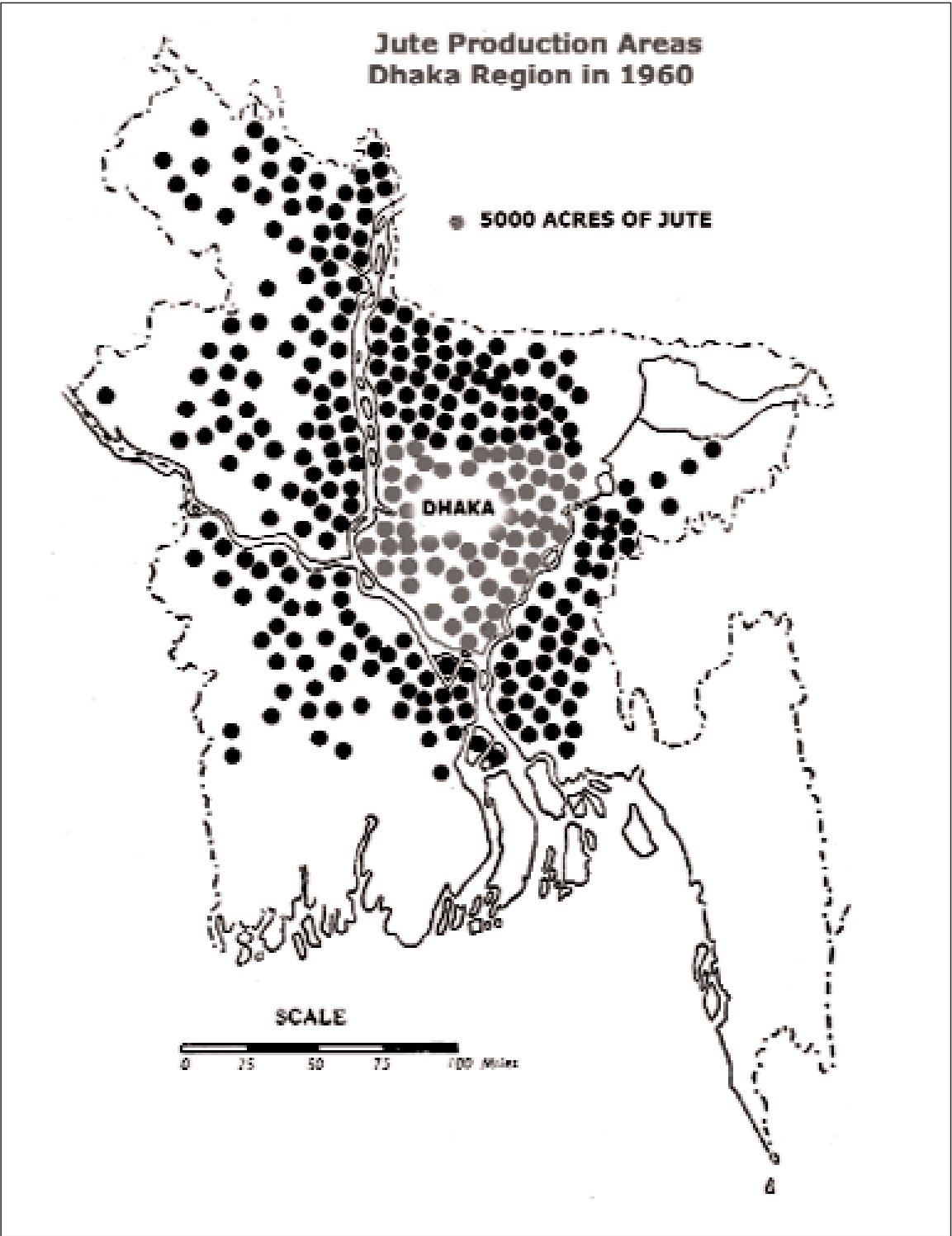
**Table 13: Ownership of Industrial Assets in Bangladesh in 1971 by Pakistani and non-Bengalis**

Ownership	Number of Units	Percentage of Units	Value of Fixed Asset (Tk. Million)	Percentage Share Fixed Asset
Public Sector (EPIDC)	53	1.7	2,097.0	34
Private Non-Bengali	725	23.7	2,885.7	47
Private Bengali	2,253	73.8	1,228.8	18
Foreign	20	0.6	36.0	1

Source: S.A., Kochanek, p.113.

61 S.S. Baranov, *op.cit*, p.90.

62 Ispahanis shifted their business from Burma to Calcutta in the early forties and finally shifted to East Bengal after partition.







East Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation Building

The concentration of industries in the hands of a few West Pakistani and Non-Bengali business houses began from the early years of partition under director or indirect state patronage. Almost 100 percent big industrialists were the Non-Bengalis, and, as a rule the big industrialists had always an easy access to cheap credit. The West Pakistani businessmen controlled most of the banking institutions. They imported capital goods through licenses at the official rate of exchange and hereby artificially lowering the price of such goods.<sup>63</sup> On the other hand, the smaller industrialists encountered great difficulties while obtaining credit and import license. For that reason, the small Bengali industrialists were forced to buy from West Pakistani importers at a higher price.<sup>64</sup> Besides, although East Pakistan earned up to two-thirds of the exports of Pakistan, West Pakistan received 70 percent of the total imports. Even the import trade of Bangladesh was mostly in the hands of the West Pakistani businessmen. The Pakistan Planning Committee set up in 1949 (from 1951 Pakistan Planning Commission) sanctioned 111 projects with an investment of Rs. 112.6 crore. But, out of these, East Pakistan received only 33 projects with an investment of 2.8 crore.

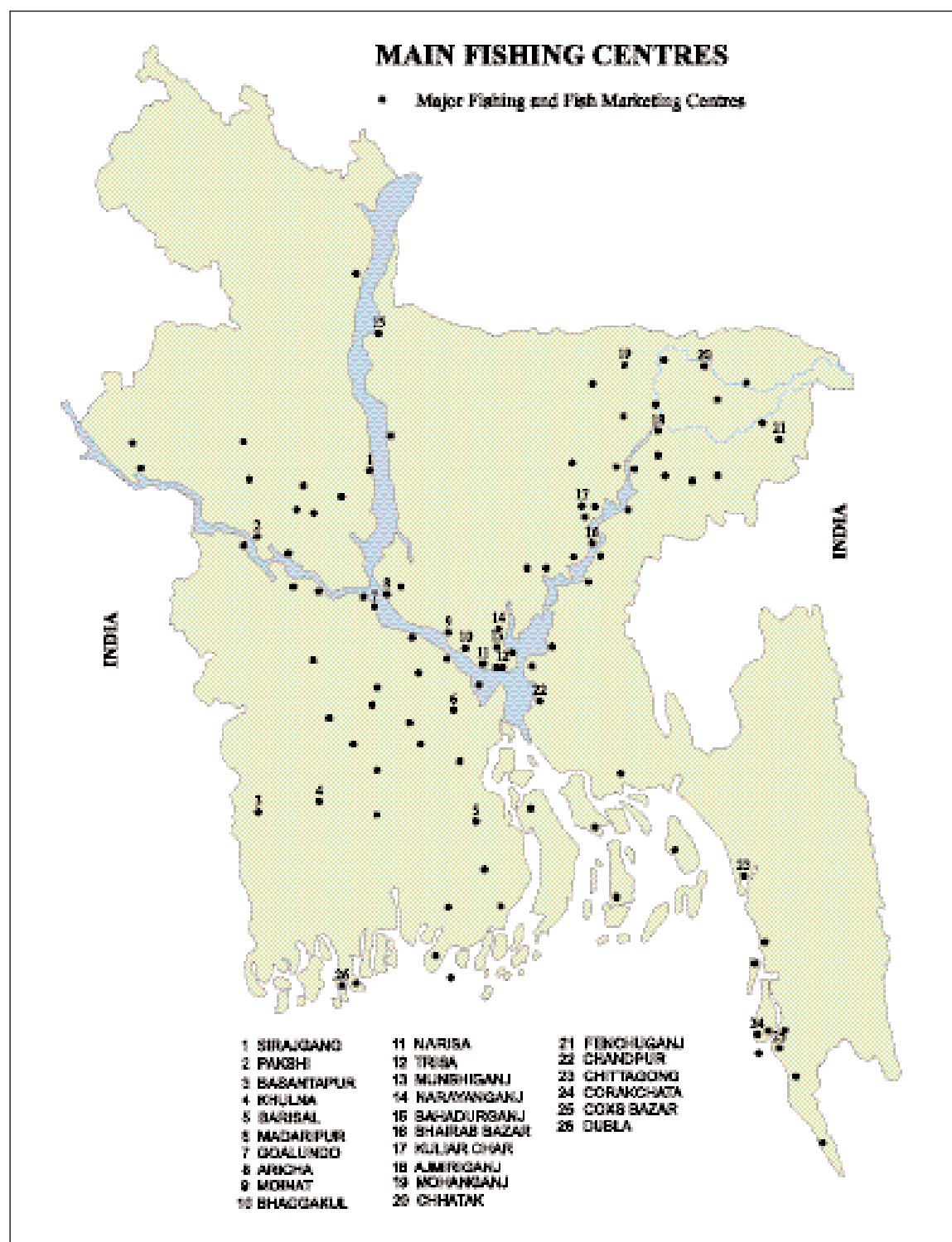
The Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation (PIDC) was set up in 1952. It was later bifurcated in 1962, known as the East Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation, EPIDC, was the chief state involvement for not only industrialization as a whole but the growth of the private sector in the country. The PIDC, soon after its inception, undertook a big programme to set up jute industries in joint venture with various trading groups. They decided to set up 12 large jute mills but no Bengali Muslim entrepreneur was taken in this joint venture. Not only that many industries based on local raw materials were established by the PIDC and sold over to the private entrepreneurs. The Karnafully Paper Mill set up by the PIDC in 1954 at a cost Rs. 67.56 million was sold to the Dawood Group one of the leading business families of West Pakistan. Similarly, was the Khulna Newsprint Mill, the largest of this kind, which was running on profit, but sold to the Dawood group.

Already, in the fifties, jute became the main industry and the principal export item. But, the major investment in this sector came from the Non-Bengalis. By the end of the sixties out of 68 jute mills 34 were owned by the non-Bengalis. These industries shared 68 percent of production and 66 percent in total capital investment in jute industry<sup>65</sup> In cotton textile, 21 out of 45 belonged to the

63 A.R., Khan, p. 65.

64 *Ibid.*

65 S.S. Baranov, *op.cit.* p. 93.



Non-Bengalis, which accounted for 44 percent of total production and 47 percent capital. This information does not reveal the whole truth. Most of the non-Bengalis mills were spinning mills, and only in pinning, and weaving, were done together. This type of specialization made the Bengali mill owners dependent on non-Bengalis for their raw materials. Since cotton was also supplied by the West Pakistani traders, they used it as an instrument of controlling the Bengali industrialists.

The private sector in East Pakistan was strongly influenced by the Dhaka stock market, which was established in 1954, six years after the establishment of the Karachi stock market. The Dhaka stock market actually started its operation in 1958. This stock market played an active role in developing Bengali entrepreneurs. But, it did not go against the interest of West Pakistani businessmen. And soon it was made dependent on the Karachi share market. However, the number of registered companies rose from 45 in 1962 to 109 in 1965, and 169 in 1969 with a paid up capital of Rs. 243.7 crore. At this time i.e. in 1967, the number of enlisted company in Karachi was 207 with capital of Rs. 263 crore.<sup>66</sup> In the Dhaka Stock Exchange, the number of companies rose to 173 in 1970. But, out of them, 99 enjoyed “double citizenship” i.e. they were registered both in Karachi and Dhaka simultaneously.

**Table 14: Background of Industrial Families of Pakistan**

Industrial House	Community	Area of Family Origin	Please Settled	Business Headquarter in pre-1947
Adamjee	Memon	Kathiawar/Jetpur	Karachi	Calcutta/ Rangoon
Dawood	Memon	Kathiawar/Bantwa	Karachi	Bombay
Saigol	Punjabi Sheikh	West Punjab/Chakwal	Lahore	Calcutta
Valika	Dawood Bohra/Chinioti	West Punjab/Chiniot	Lahore	Lahore
Fancy	Khoja Ismaili	Kathiawar	Karachi	East Africa
Bawany	Memon	Kathiawar/Jetpur	Karachi	Rangoon
Crescent	Punjabi Sheikh/Chinioti	West Punjab/Chiniot	Lyallpur	Delhi
BECO	Punjabi	East Punjab	Lahore	Batala
Wazir Ali	Syeds	West Punjab/Lahore	Lahore	Lahore
Amin	Punjabi Sheikh	West Punjab	Karachi	Calcutta
Nishat	Punjabi Chinioti	West Punjab/Chiniot	Lahore	---
Hoti	Pathan Landlord	Charsaddah	Charsaddah	Charsaddah
Fateh	Marwari	Gujarat	Karachi	---
Ispahani	None	Iranian	Karachi	Calcutta
Karim	Bohras	Bombay	Karachi	---
Habib	Khoja Isnasheri	Bombay	Karachi	Bombay

Source: Amjad Rashid, 1974, p.15; and Hanna Papanek, quoted in Baranov, 5.5 *op.cit.* Table 6.2

Of these companies, 68 were from West Pakistan. The central office, bank, insurance, factories were located in West Pakistan. These companies controlled Rs. 137 or 54 per cent of total share of the Dhaka Stock Exchange. Although the remaining 35 companies were located in East Pakistan, only six of them were East Pakistani, 28 were controlled by West Pakistani businessmen such as Adamjee, Bawani, Ismailia of Khoja community. These 28 companies alone controlled 15.8 per cent of total capital in 1970. Besides, although the stock market was established by Bengalis, the majority of the members of the Board of Directors were Non-Bengalis and they always protected the interest of the West Pakistanis by depriving the Bengalis.<sup>67</sup>

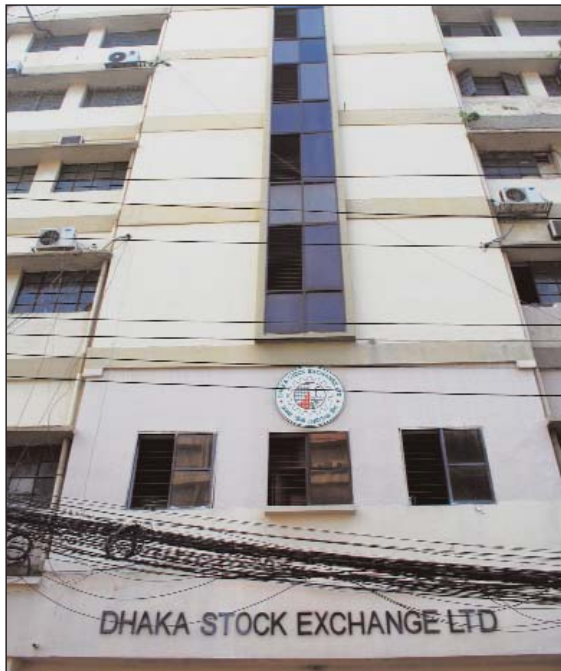
66 S.S., Baranov *op.cit.*, p. 66.

67 S.S. Baranov, pp. 66-62.



Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry Bhaban in 2008





Dhaka Stock Exchange Ltd.



Shilpa Bank Bhaban



Adamjee Court Building



BISIC Bhaban



Bangladesh Secretariat Bhaban



Dhaka City Corporation



Gustav Papanek first analyzed the extent of concentration in 1959. He discovered that out of 3000 individual firms in Pakistan, 24 individuals' wealthy families' controlled nearly half of the private individual assets.<sup>68</sup> Table 14 shows that none of the 16 leading entrepreneurs families was Bengali. Another study conducted by Lawrence J. White identified 43 families controlling 72.8 percent assets of firms operating in Pakistan in 1962.<sup>69</sup> Even in East Pakistan these 43 families controlled 45.1 percent of total assets of privately owned firms. The most striking feature is that out of these 43 families, only one was Bengali conglomerate, A.K. Khan from Chittagong. The total asset of A. K. Khan amounted to Rs. 74.9 million, sharing only 1.2 percent of asset of 43 families and ranking 29th among the families.

Although number of Muslim industrialists rose during the sixties, their share was very little compared to that of their counterpart non-Bengalis. The Bengali Muslims owned 2253 factories in 1971, or 74 percent in number but they controlled only 18 per cent of the asset. Baranov listed 16 Bengali Muslim businessmen in 1969-70 with a capital asset of Rs. 25 million or more; the Bengali Muslims owned 36 jute mills, 25 spinning mills and only one sugar mill.

But according to another source only 10 Bengali Muslim companies owned asset of Rs. 1.5 million per head.<sup>70</sup> Some measures were taken to increase the share of Bengali entrepreneurs in the sixties, but still the gap continued to widen till the break-up of Pakistan.

## 9

### The Emergence of Bengali Nationalism as a Consequence of Economic Disparity

After a long traumatic experience of colonial exploitation, the people of East Pakistan had begun to dream a better life. Although the country was made a rural periphery, many countries had developed their industrial base with the raw materials of East Bengal. The creation of Pakistan generated new opportunity to develop the country with her rich natural resources, favorable climate and industrious people. At the time of partition, although West Pakistan enjoyed some advantages in terms of infrastructure, energy, density of population, entrepreneurship, but both the wings depended largely on subsistence agriculture, which was the principal source of income and employment. But, East Pakistan, produced the golden fiber, jute, which was the most important industrial raw material. This raw jute as well as jute goods had a large demand in the world market. On the other hand, West Pakistan possessed cotton, which was also important industrial raw material as well as an export item.

**Table 15: Regional Gross Domestic Product: Population and Income Per Capita**

Sectors	(Crores of Rupees: 1959-60 prices)							
	1949-50		1954-55		1959-60		1964-65	
	East	West	East	West	East	West	East	West
Agriculture	850	589	887	649	938	701	1151	849
Manufacturing	12	18	31	79	50	142	80	302
Others	451	576	514	703	567	836	768	1228
Total:	1,313	1,183	1,432	1,431	1,555	1,679	999	379
Population (Million)	43.1	35.8	48.1	40.2	53.9	45.0	61.2	51.3
Per Capita Income (Rs.)	305	330	298	350	288	373	327	464

Source: G.F., Papanek *Pakistan's Development: Social Goods and Private Incentives*, Harvard, Massachusetts, 1967.

68 Kochanek, *op. cit.* p. 109.

69 This information was taken from R. Sobhan and M., Ahmed, *Public Enterprise in an Intermediate Regime*, Dhaka, 1980.

70 A., Roy, *The Economy of Bangladesh: Past and Present*, p. 98.

**Table 16: Contribution of the Manufacturing Sector to the GDP in East and West Pakistan Between 1950 and 1970 in %**

Year	East Pakistan	West Pakistan
1950	3.8	9.94
1960	6.03	12.26
1965	7.91	13.66
1970	8.25	16.36

Source: S.A. Kochanek, *Patron-Client Politics and Business in Bangladesh*, Dhaka, UPL 1993, Tale 6.1

the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. One of the largest industrial cities of England, Dundee, was built with the golden fiber of East Bengal. Before partition, India's second largest industry was built with the jute of East Bengal. These resources existed and partition gave Pakistan a golden opportunity to develop both the wings by utilizing these resources. Unfortunately, the opportunity was cultivated out of narrow regional and tribal interests.

As has been highlighted in Chapter 2, the initial years of Pakistan were most critical for the economy. The acute shortage of foreign currency in 1949-50 brought the economy of Pakistan to the brink of collapse. The export boom of jute and jute goods contributed to a great extent to overcome the challenges and continued to play an important role to develop the industrial base. But, East Pakistan, the land of jute production, failed to get its due share.

It is worth mentioning here some factors which dictated the course of development between East and West Pakistan in the post-independence period. Firstly, a central government came into existence, with absolutely centralized power; secondly, the Federal Capital was established first in Karachi and then in Islamabad, both located in West Pakistan; and thirdly, the most important inheritance of Pakistan from British India being a large army, mostly came from the Punjab, Old British Beluchistan and North-West Frontier Province.<sup>71</sup>

Besides, the Muslim members of Indian Civil Service and Finance Service who supported the movement for the creation of Pakistan migrated to Pakistan. They along with the army, took control of the administrative machinery of the central government in Karachi. Almost 100 percent of the civil and military bureaucrats came from West Pakistan; East Pakistan although earning two-thirds of export income, was ignored. The impact of this negligence was severe. Table 15 depicts that East Pakistan enjoying a higher GDP had almost equal per capita income to that of West Pakistan. But the share continued to change in favor of West Pakistan. The per capita income of East Pakistan declined from Rs. 305 in 1949-50 to Rs. 288 in 1959-60, and, after increasing marginally, the figure rose to 327 in 1964-65. In other words, during more than one and half decades, per capita income increased by about 7 percent, while for West Pakistan the figure rose from Rs. 330 in 1949-50 to Rs. 373 in 1959-60 and to Rs. 464 in 1964-65, or 41 percent which was nearly 6 times higher than that of East Pakistan. As has been noted earlier, India was Pakistan's chief trade partner, and even in 1948-49, 62 percent of her export went to India while 52 percent of import covered from India. But the trade relation between these two countries disrupted and declined to almost 'nil' during the fifties and sixties. Trade between East and West Pakistan filled up this gap. However, the nature of trade, which

Table 15 shows that during 1949-50 East Pakistan's GDP was 11 percent higher than West Pakistan, but West Pakistan's per capita income was 8 percent higher because of less population. So, in this backdrop, regional disparity was not inevitable. Because, East Pakistan was not a barren land. It is the most fertile and resourceful country in the sub-continent. Because of her diversified resource potentials, it has always been the target of colonial power. Dhaka's textile industry earned worldwide reputation in

<sup>71</sup> K.U., Ahmed, p. 24.



existed between two wings from the beginning, was unequal and often detrimental to East Pakistan. A colonial type centre-periphery relation was created in which East Pakistan was made a supplier of raw materials to the metropolis of West Pakistan as well as market for the products of the later. For example, in 1949, exports from East to West Pakistan amounted to Rs. 4 crore but import from West to East was Rs. 24 crore, or 6 times higher.<sup>72</sup> This unequal trade occurred even though East Pakistan earned the larger share of foreign currency. In 1962, about 70 percent of export of Pakistan fell to the share of East Pakistan while the rest was earned by West. But two-third of the foreign currency was used for the development of West Pakistan. In 1967-68, exports from East to West stood at Rs. 79 crore but import from West to East accounted for Rs. 123 crore.<sup>73</sup>

The transfer of resources occurred in different ways. Since the capital of Pakistan was in West Pakistan and only 15 percent of the government staffs were employed from Bengalis, the lion's share of revenue was earned from East Pakistan was spent in the West. Transfer of resources went through defense spending. In 1968-69 for example, allocation for defense amounted to Rs. 245 crores, which was 60 percent of the revenue budget. But, out of 2,75,000 persons (soldiers and staffs) the Bengalis comprised 5 percent or only 13,750 persons. Although East Pakistan provided about half of the budget, but because of this unequal share, she lost Rs. 70 crore.<sup>74</sup> In 1968-69, the GDP of East Pakistan was estimated at Rs. 2,112 crore and spending in defense from East Pakistan accounted for 3 percent.<sup>75</sup> According to a group of Harvard-based economists, transfer of resources from East to West Pakistan during the last two years was estimated at \$ 210 million or about Rs.1500 crore (\$ US 1 = 7).

Besides, we have seen in an earlier chapter the extent of concentration of trade and industries in the hands of a few West Pakistani and non-Bengali businessmen. Non-Bengalis owned most of the industries of East Pakistan. Among the largest importers, only 7 percent were Bengali Muslims, while 57 percent were Memons and 29 percent were from other non-Bengali communities.<sup>76</sup> Most of these importers had their headquarters in West Pakistan and the bulk of import in East Wing from abroad and particularly from West Pakistan was controlled by West Pakistani importers.<sup>77</sup> Bengali businessmen encountered enormous trouble while obtaining licenses and government registrations, as the offices concerned were located in West Pakistani cities and controlled by non-Bengalis. These increasing discrepancies and disappointments generated anger among the Bengali businessmen. The PFCCI (Pakistan Federation of Chamber of Commerce and Industries), which was officially inaugurated in 1960, was aimed at providing links between the government and the private sector. Although the chamber was established by the government, it was largely dominated by non-Bengali and Pakistani businessmen of Karachi Chamber of Commerce. The association, which was supposed to be an all-Pakistan organization, but having headquarters in this former capital, in practice, majority of the membership was located in the city. East Pakistan was able to create 8 chambers of commerce to match West Pakistan, but it had never shared more than 20 percent of the total trade and industry of the association.<sup>78</sup> In the backdrop of domination from the large businessmen from West Pakistan, East Pakistani businessmen demanded the federation to be bifurcated. The Dhaka Chamber of Commerce, in a letter on 17 May, 1965, raised a set of demands

72 A., Farouq, *An Economic History of Bangladesh*. Dhaka University, Dhaka, 1983. p. 153.

73 *Ibid*.

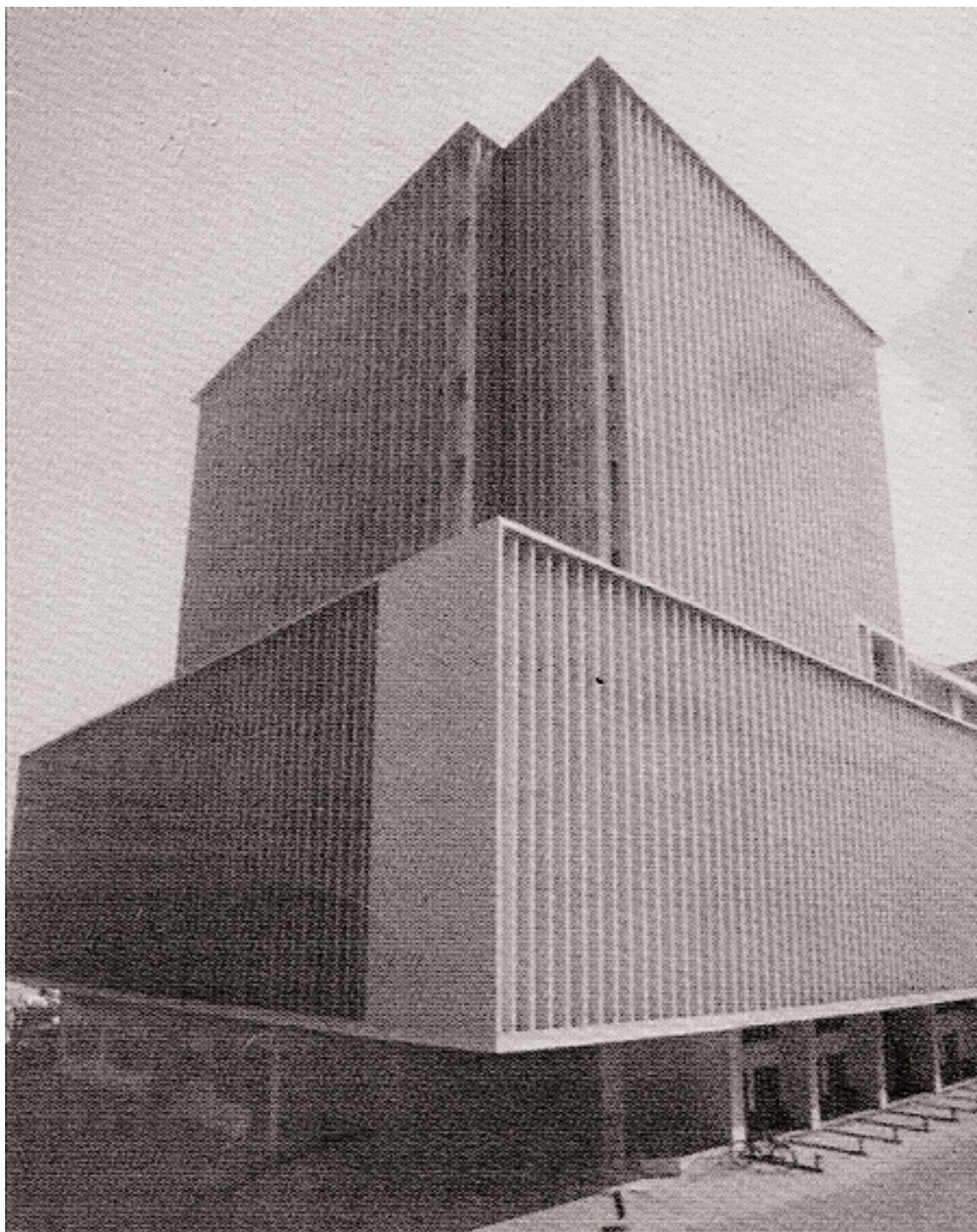
74 A., Farouq *op.cit.*, p. 155.

75 Rs. 75 crore of the GDP. *ibid*.

76 R., Sobhan, M.U., Ahmed, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

77 *Ibid*.

78 S.A., Kochanek, p.138.



Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Bhaban

highlighting a set of grievances as well as reorganization of the federation based on the principle of parity for East and West Pakistan. The demands were refused.

Later, the East Pakistan Chamber of Commerce again put forward few more tangible demands, such as equalization of representation of both the wings in the managing committee, rotation of presidency between the two wings each year, and upgrading of the federations Zonal office at Dhaka. The committee accepted the demand in a modified form but rejected the principle of equal representation. However, the compromise, which was achieved, was not materialized and in new constitutional amendments retained the original three zones representing Karachi, West Pakistan and East Pakistan.<sup>79</sup> This amendment went against the interest of East Pakistan.

The Bengali businessmen hoped that their demand would be materialized through a peaceful discussion. The situation took a new turn after the war in 1965. This war had strengthened the feelings among Bengalis that they were defenseless from external aggression. These feelings intensified the demand for greater autonomy in both political and economic fields, which in turn, spread the movement of Bengali nationalism. Meanwhile, in this backdrop of dissatisfaction, East Pakistani businessmen elected a Bengali businessman with a political background, Mohshin Ali from the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce as the President of East Pakistan Zone. Being elected President, Mohshin Ali publicly complained that 80 percent of industries of East Pakistani was owned by non-Bengali, Gujrati and Urdu speaking businessmen and did not represent the interest of Bengalis. He also raised the issue of obstacles encountered by the Bengali traders while doing their business. This was a time when East Pakistan became caught up in the movement for provincial autonomy. Six points demands were raised from the President of Awami League Bangabandu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and got huge public support.

The grievances of the businessmen had a popular support among the businessmen as well as politicians. The movement of Bengali nationalism got a new dimension as the interest of the politicians coincided with those of the businessmen. As a result of this movement, the popularity of Awami League reached the peak and the party secured absolute majority in the 1970 national election. But when the West Pakistani rulers as usual, declined to accept the verdict, people of East Pakistan moved into a bloody war, which created new, independent Bangladesh.

## Conclusion

At the time of partition, there were no significant discrepancies in the level of development between East and West Pakistan. West Pakistan enjoyed a better physical infrastructure; East Pakistan too had some advantages. For example, East Pakistan produced no cotton, but inherited more textile mills than West Pakistan. Besides, although East Pakistan inherited no jute mills, but obtained 27 mechanized jute-bailing presses. East Pakistan also produced varieties of industrial raw materials and food crops. So, when the colonial power left Bangladesh in 1947, by making it a periphery of the colonial rulers, the country's fertile land, water resource, favorable climate, and hard working people, remained. The independence generated new opportunities to bring the country out of stagnation that was made during the century-long colonial exploitation.

The prospect of industrialization in East Pakistan was greater than in West Pakistan as the former possessed the most potential raw materials, which created India's second largest industry, and many industrial metropolises in Europe. The high demand for jute and jute goods in the

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79 S.A., Kochanek op.cit., p.140.



international market increased the possibility of rapid industrialization from which both East and West Pakistan could be benefited.

So, disparity was not inevitable. Eastern region possessed rich resource potential. Policy formulation had to be made in such a way that both East and West Pakistan had balanced development. Although balanced development does not necessarily mean that East and Western regions should attain the same rate of growth. This is not possible to attain. Because, each region enjoys some particular advantages in terms of resource potential or strategic locations which enhance the possibility of higher growth. In that case the regional disparity can be blamed on natural factors. But, even then, if disparity increases at an alarming rate, state should take the appropriate measures to make the backward region attractive for investment.

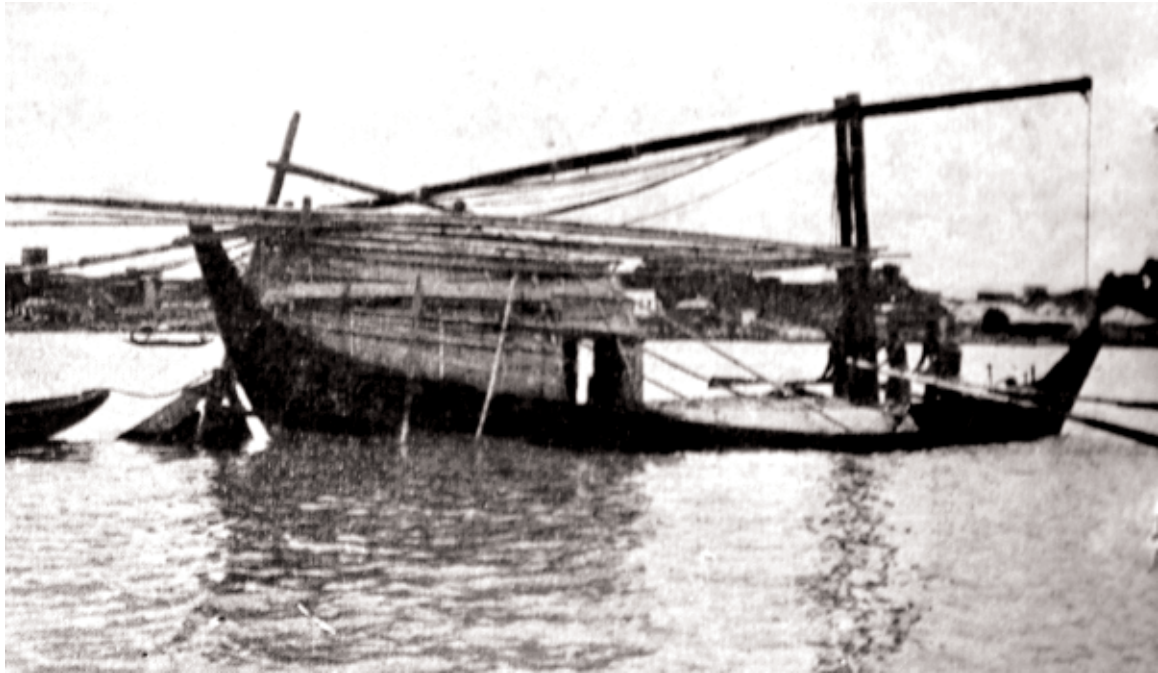
But a region lags behind not because of lack of resource potentials, but because of lack of willingness of the government to exploit the resource for development of that region, or because the desire to exploit the resources to develop other countries or regions. The latter factor was responsible for the backwardness of East Pakistan. Because, examples of the resource potential of East Bengal were highlighted in literature and documents. Chapter Two gave a brief description how rich Bengal was made poor through exploitation of her resources.

The creation of Pakistan generated new hope for a society free from exploitation. But that dream never came true during Pakistan. We have seen earlier, that during partition, many non-Bengali Muslim experienced businessmen migrated to East Pakistan. They, along with the Pakistanis took control of the trade and industry in East Pakistan. The Bengali entrepreneurs were the late starter and deserved preferential access to incentives while carrying out any business undertakings. Unfortunately, the policies pursued by the government were biased against and detrimental to the Bengali business community. Industrialization in West Pakistan grew up more rapidly with direct state patronage than in East Pakistan. A large number of industries were also set up in East Pakistan with the local raw materials. However, most of these were under the control of non-Bengalis and Pakistanis.

The Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry from its inception launched an arduous battle in attaining and protecting due share of Bengali businessmen. But, as their legitimate demands were refused, they joined the movement with other political and social organizations, which culminated in an Independence War. But, one thing deserves attention that during the sixties, East Pakistan experienced a relative rapid industrial growth. Although the share of Bengali businessmen was increased, still most of the industries and businesses were under the control of the West Pakistani and non-Bengalis. Although most of the industries were concentrated in Dhaka, some large industries were set-up in other urban and semi-urban areas and were agro-based. They generated maximum value addition and accommodated employment for large number of rural people. These agro-based industries expanded the market by creating income and employment in the remote areas. Industries and businesses were not confined to a particular city, and rural to urban migration was not so severe as now. Besides, these agro-based industries were closed, and demand for these products was met by imported goods.

The new wave of industrialization began with export-oriented garments. This is a significant development in the history of industrialization. But export-promotion strategy was adopted disregarding the agro-based industries. Almost 85 percent of garment industries are located in Dhaka city. The single city-oriented industrialization has not only increased regional disparity and urban-rural disparity but threatened the structure and environment of the Dhaka city. The pattern of industrial location, which existed in the sixties of last century, could help to formulate a new strategy of industrialization and ensure a balanced regional development.





A country boat



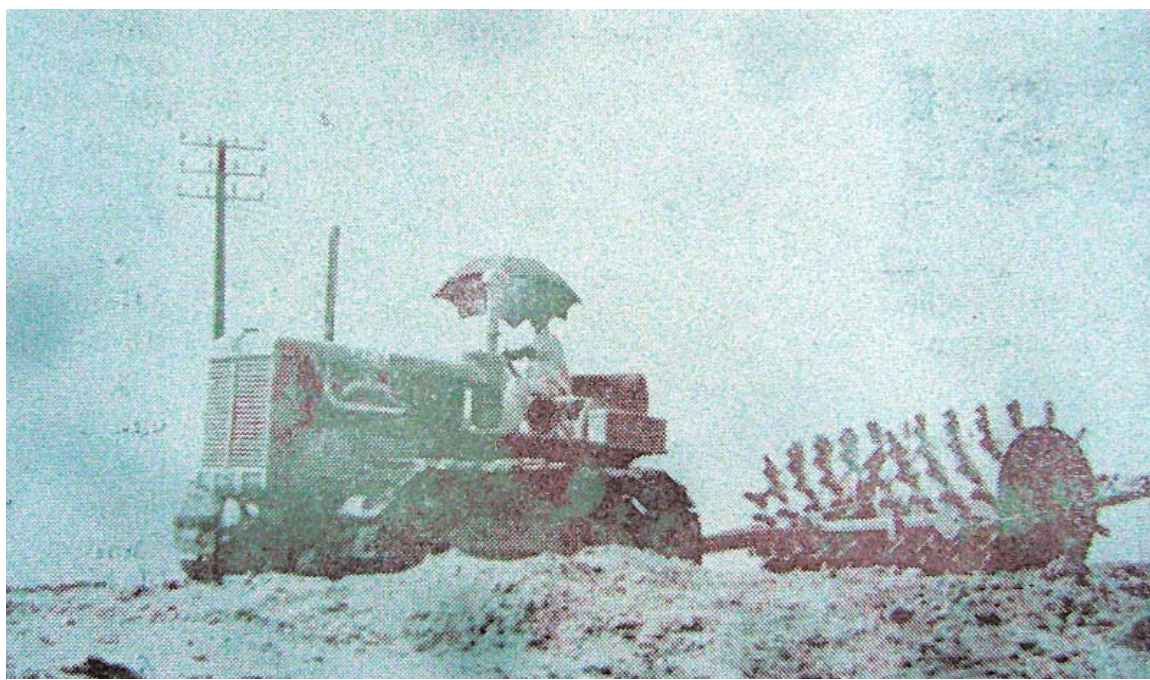
Early means of Dhaka's transportation





Motijheel Commercial Area under construction in 1952

Artist: Abdur Razzak



Tejgaon Industrial Area at the beginning in 1950s





A farmer's house at Dhanmondi (now Balaka Cinema Hall) in 1950s

Artist: Abdur Razzak



Maghbazar in 1950s

Artist: Abdur Razzak

**Appendices to Chapter Two**  
**Appendix 2**  
**Industrial establishments between 1911 and 1963**

Industrial establishments	Number of establishments				Average number of workers employed daily	
	1911	1947	1955	1963	1955	1963
1. Jute-mills	---	---	7	20	28,302	70,247
2. Jute presses	---	27	59	79	15,735	---
3. Cotton-mills	2	13	20	46	16,485	52,334
4. Sugar factories	---	5	5	10	3,097	5,983
5. Distilleries	---	1	1	1	---	---
6. Tobacco factories	1	---	---	4	---	198
7. Match factories	---	3	16	18	4,700	7,645
8. Paper-mills	---	---	1	3	3,000	5,063
9. Oil –mills	5	3	46	263	1,367	3,367
10. Tea factories	---	100	115	128	24,629	99,874
11. Cement factory	---	1	1	1	309	440
12. Glass works	---	3	7	9	1,480	2,350
13. General engineering	3	22	56	94	5,547	4,630
14. Iron and steel factories	---	---	---	28	---	2,333
15. Dockyard	2	2	---	7	---	1,414
16. Chemicals	---	1	2	48	82	2,600
17. Hosiery	3	9	13	62	319	1,486
18. Rice-mills	3	58	72	112	3,235	3,704
19. Silk factories	3	---	2	12	56	348
20. Leather works	---	2	16	106	1,025	2,667
21. Saw-mills	---	2	5	55	195	1,106
22. Aluminium works	---	---	14	16	509	859
23. Rubber factories	---	---	4	13	634	1,572
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>462</b>	<b>1,135</b>	<b>110,706</b>	<b>270,220</b>

Source: Crookshank: 'The Search for Oil in Pakistan', *Fourth World Power Conference*, Paper No. 6, London, 1950



**Appendix 2.1**  
**Analysis of important industries in Dhaka in the 1960s**

Area	% Share of Province/ District's total industrial employment	% Share of Provincial employment in same industry	Location Quotient	Input-output Ratio
Jute Industry	43.8	50.7	1.1	4.5
Cotton Textiles	22.7	60.9	1.3	1.7
Sugar Manufacturing	0.4	5.5	0.1	1.5
Matches Industry	4.8	43.7	0.9	3.6
Medicines and Pharmaceuticals	0.4	29.4	0.6	2.2
Iron and Steel Industry	3.6	46.2	1.04	1.6
Pulp, Paper, Board	0.1	2.2	0.5	1.3
Aluminum Industry	2.0	67.9	1.5	1.4
Jute Pressing	1.1	40.4	0.9	1.4
Ship Building & Repairing	3.0	89.4	2.01	2.3
Printing & Publishing of Books	3.0	83.6	1.8	2.4
Tanning & Leather Finishing	0.9	48.6	1.1	1.3
Rubber Products	1.2	100	0.2	1.6
Umbrella Malting	0.2	69.4	1.5	1.4
Electrical Appliances	0.2	54.5	1.2	2.3
Wood Furniture	0.1	56.1	1.3	2.0
Glass, Glassware	1.6	54.9	1.2	1.7

Source: CML, East Pakistan, 1962-63

**Appendix 2.2**  
**Industry wise distribution of Factories of the Dhaka District in 1964**

Name of Industry	No of Regd. Factories	Name of Industry	No of Regd. Factories
<i>Dal</i> Milling	1	Silk and Art silk	21
Flour Milling	5	Narrow Fabrics	13
Dairy products	1	Rope, Cordage and Twine	1
Canning and preservation of Fruits and vegetables	3	Carpets and Rugs	Nil
Sugar	1	Woolen Textile	1
Rice Milling	9	Readymade Garments	6
Bakery	19	Dyeing, Bleaching and Finishing of Textile	30
Confectionery	5	Miscellaneous Textiles	11
Edible Oil	14	Rubber products	15
<i>Vanaspati</i>	1	Tanning and Leather finishing	51
Distillery	1	Leather products	16
Soft Drink	7	Printing and Publishing of News paper	8
Tobacco	Nil	Printing and Publishing of Book	80
Cotton textile Mills	21	Book Binding	2
Jute textile Mills	13	Type Foundry Block making	7
Handloom Industries	195	Pulp and Paper	1
Hosiery (knitting)	78		

Source: GOEP, Bureau of Statistics; CIF, Govt. of East Pakistan, Census of Manufacturing Industries, 1963-64.

**Appendix 2.3**  
**Area under leading crops by old districts, 1963-64**

	Rice	Jute	Sugar cane	Tobacco	Rape and mustard	Wheat	Pulses
1. Barisal	719,800	36,230	16,700	5,900	4,800	200	54,900
2. Bogra	743,100	60,860	18,900	800	18,400	3,000	19,400
3. Chittagong	948,200	205	4,900	4,900	1,300	400	72,000
4. Chittagong H.T.	158,400	155	600	1,300	8,300	-	500
5. Dhaka	1,185,100	141,300	17,400	3,400	35,800	7,600	31,040
6. Dinajpur	1,012,600	42,580	59,300	2,400	64,300	4,000	13,600
7. Faridpur	1,554,000	179,760	26,000	5,900	42,600	21,900	49,400
8. Jessore	1,126,500	79,390	17,000	1,000	38,200	5,500	52,800
9. Khulna	1,145,900	17,420	7,000	2,200	8,700	300	22,200
10. Kushtia	564,100	37,110	36,600	700	18,700	17,400	70,900
11. Mymensingh	3,285,900	461,980	29,800	10,500	100,500	7,900	66,400
12. Noakhali	920,600	24,140	4,100	200	1,300	800	11,325
13. Pabna	804,400	86,470	13,200	1,500	23,400	23,300	52,000
14. Rajshahi	1,509,100	104,020	54,700	1,400	37,200	26,400	70,900
15. Rangpur	1,916,700	222,650	28,700	47,300	51,500	16,200	24,600
16. Sylhet	1,874,600	30,420	5,200	7,500	15,900	300	3,050
17. Comilla	1,477,700	237,300	5,700	3,800	28,600	6,600	22,400
<b>East Pakistan</b>	<b>20,946,700</b>	<b>1,761,990</b>	<b>345,800</b>	<b>100,700</b>	<b>499,500</b>	<b>141,800</b>	<b>637,415</b>

Source: Nafis Ahmad, *An Economic Geography of East Pakistan*, London, 1968.

**Appendix 2.4**  
**Jute Production, 1947-48 to 1963-64 (Yield in bales of 400 lb. each)**

Districts	1947-48	1950-51	1953-54	1956-57	1960-61	1962-63	1963-64
1. Mymensingh	1,829,310	1,154,070	684,730	1,472,118	1,930,469	1,817,701	1,602,500
2. Rangpur	927,945	612,230	308,395	967,448	568,634	891,849	783,640
3. Dhaka	758,795	494,675	297,025	502,846	814,205	523,888	469,610
4. Comilla	597,170	465,415	277,550	385,136	742,180	737,529	676,290
5. Faridpur	629,110	438,180	221,060	399,188	418,732	528,792	550,850
6. Pabna	364,385	195,485	126,630	238,484	218,349	245,624	307,660
7. Rajshahi	316,540	199,895	105,870	283,706	193,814	378,675	365,200
8. Dinajpur	272,960	184,550	102,165	274,606	38,016	129,483	140,320
9. Jessore	379,270	166,860	94,935	267,064	140,870	263,722	294,250
10. Bogra	230,760	155,070	100,260	234,304	211,929	203,586	205,820
11. Barisal	114,965	98,250	33,470	89,786	50,789	129,501	116,110
12. Sylhet	94,740	93,740	49,010	144,000	125,660	118,783	100,700
13. Kushtia	133,845	82,255	39,410	95,974	21,426	164,406	125,940
14. Noakhali	103,250	60,515	36,140	92,622	124,870	97,793	79,980
15. Khulna	88,640	42,250	24,100	60,886	24,763	66,122	55,250
16. Chittagong H. T	---	8,625	1,965	5,400	252	1,063	550
17. Chittagong	290	390	150	378	42	1,501	330
<b>East Pakistan</b>	<b>6,842,605</b>	<b>4,452,455</b>	<b>2,502,865</b>	<b>5,513,946</b>	<b>5,625,000</b>	<b>6,300,018</b>	<b>5,830,000</b>

Source: Nafis Ahmad, *An Economic Geography of East Pakistan*, *ibid.*

**Appendix 2.5**  
**Distribution of Jute Collecting Centers by old Districts**

District	Number	Collecting Centre	District	Number	Collecting Centre
Dhaka	6	Dhaka	Khulna	3	
		Narayanganj			
		Narsingdi			Daulatpur
		Lohajang			Khulna
		Bayra			Chalna
Mymensingh	16	Kaoraid	Jessore	1	Jhingergacha
		Sarisabari			
		Bausi			
		Handina			Kushtia
		Jamalpur			Kushtia
		Pirpur			Alamdanga
		Mymensingh	Pabna	4	Sirajganj
		Ram Amtitganj			Ulupara
		Gaffargaon			Bhangura
		Sachna			
		Netrakona	Bogra	4	Bera
		Iswarganj			Jaipurhat
		Atharabari			Jamalganj
		Husainpur			Sonatala
Kishorganj	Bogra				
Sylhet	3	Nikli	Rajshahi	4	
		Bhairab			Rajshahi
		Inayetganj			Natore
Comilla	4	Markhali	Dinajpur	3	Atrai
		Ajmiriganj			Raninagar
		Ashuganj			Ruhea
		Akhaura			Setabganj
Noakhali	1	Hajiganj	Rangpur	7	Dinajpur
		Chandpur			
		Chaumohani			Domar
Chittagong	1	Chittagong			Saidpur
Barisal	1	Gournadi			Lalmanirhat
					Kurigram
					Bamondaraga
Faridpur	5	Pangsha			
		Goalundo			Gaibanda
		Faridpur			
		Charmuguria			Bharatkhal
		Madaripur			

**Appendix 2.6**  
**Export of Raw Jute *Via* Chittagong** (in bales of 400 lbs.)

**a. British Period**

<b>Year.</b>					<b>Export</b>
1925-26	...	...	...		168,000
1926-27	...	...	...		160,000
1927-28	...	...	...		217,000
1928-29	...	...	...		206,000
1929-30	...	...	...		201,000
1930-31	...	...	...		99,000
1931-32	...	...	...		187,000
1932-33	...	...	...		187,000
1933-34	...	...	...		107,000
1934-35	...	...	...		239,000
1935-36	...	...	...		219,000
1936-37	...	...	...		144,000
1937-38	...	...	...		178,000
1938-39	...	...	...		191,000
1939-40	...	...	...		168,000
<b>15 years' Total</b>					2,671,000

**b. Pakistan Period (up to 1956)**

1947-48	...	...	...		764,417
1948-49	...	...	...		1,056,480
1949-50	...	..	...		1,546,091
1950-51	...	...	...		1,980,661
1951-52	...	...	...		1,998,918
1952-53	...	..	...		2,214,395
1953-54	...	...	...		2,073,000
1954-55	...	...	...		1,903,000
1955-56	...	...	...		1,878,000



**Appendix 2.7**  
**Showing the Kutcha Baling Presses including Dhaka in the 1960s**

Districts	Number of Presses	
	Engine-driven (Steam Hydraulic)	Hand Driven
Dhaka	23	151
Mymensing	5	354
Tippera	10	84
Noakhali	---	7
Khulna	---	11
Jessore	---	48
Faridpur	2	120
Kushtia	---	37
Pabna	6	47
Rajshahi	10	66
Rangpur	2	350
Dinajpur	---	87
Bogra	1	78
Sylhet	2	16
Chittagong	---	---
Barisal	---	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>1,457</b>

Source: Based on Nafis Ahmed, *ibid.*

**Appendix 2.8**  
**Total Value of Inter-wing Trade: 1948-69**

Year	(In crores)	
	Imports into West Pakistan	Imports into Bangladesh
1948-49	1.88	13.76
1949-50	3.23	22.92
1950-51	4.60	21.08
1951-52	3.64	16.12
1952-53	10.11	17.70
1953-54	13.07	37.00
1954-55	18.7	29.30
1955-56	22.07	31.89
1956-57	23.51	51.01
1957-58	26.40	68.92
1958-59	27.76	66.07
1959-60	36.10	54.26
1960-61	35.59	80.05
1961-62	39.47	82.93
1962-63	46.53	91.75
1963-64	50.86	84.42
1964-65	53.60	85.68
1965-66	64.97	118.98
1966-67	72.03	130.46
1967-68	77.90	121.60
1968-69	86.85	134.25

Source: *Pakistan Economic Survey 1969-70*, Statistical Appendix, Table 41, p. 92.

**Appendix 2.9**  
**Exports of Raw Jute and Jute Goods from Bangladesh to West Pakistan and the rest of the world**  
(In crores)

Year	Exports to West Pakistan <i>Jute goods</i>	Exports to Rest of the World Total	
		<i>Raw Jute</i>	<i>Jute goods</i>
1962-63	9.02	79.3	30.68
1963-64	10.00	75.3	32.32
1964-65	10.49	84.5	39.32
1965-66	10.34	86.3	57.55
1966-67	13.59	87.01	58.77
1967-68	14.22	77.3	61.96
1968-69	15.83	73.4	67.45
1969-70 (9 months)	8.14	60.3	57.35

Source: *Pakistan Economic Survey, 1969-70.*

**Appendix 2.10**  
**Allocation between ‘Consumers’ and ‘Producers’ Goods Industries in the 2nd and 3rd Five Year Plans**

Consumer's Goods	(In crores)			
	2nd Plan		3rd Plan	
	Bangladesh	West Pakistan	Bangladesh	West Pakistan
Food manufactures	22.4	13.3	48.6	30.0
Beverages	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.5
Tobacco	0.5	1.0	2.5	2.5
Textiles	48.6	16.3	147.7	100.0
Footwear	0.4	0.4	2.8	2.2
Wood & Cork	0.5	0.3	13.0	1.3
Furniture	---	0.2	1.5	2.5
Paper etc.	5.8	0.5	53.4	10.0
Printing	0.8	1.4	1.6	2.9
Leather	1.5	0.95	2.0	1.9
Rubber	0.1	0.1	2.5	2.5
Miscellaneous	2.4	5.7	29.7	14.7
Small Scale Industries	12.5	10.0	29.7	16.6
Industrial Estates	6.0	1.5	14.0	4.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>10.17</b>	<b>51.8</b>		
<b>Percentages</b>	<b>59.7</b>	<b>30.1</b>		
<b>Producers' goods</b>				
Chemicals	24.0	28.3	88.5	58.5
Petroleum Chemical	---	7.8	37.1	45.0
Non-metallic	4.3	15.2	41.9	56.1
Basic metal Industries	10.5	5.2	44.1	110.5
Metal products	1.9	2.3	21.1	25.0
Machinery	3.9	5.3	34.5	41.2
Electrical machinery	1.7	3.6	17.4	22.0
Transport in equipment	3.7	1.7	40.6	14.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>50.0</b>	<b>69.4</b>		
<b>Percentages</b>	<b>29.5</b>	<b>41.4</b>		

Source: Second Five Year Plan 1960-65, p. 231, Table 1, Third Five Year Plan, p. 458. ‘Training’ and ‘research’ not included in the 3rd Five Year Plan.

## Appendix 2.11

Table A: Composition of West Pakistan Exports to Bangladesh during the Third 5 years Plan (1969-70)

	(In crores)				
Goods	1965-66	1966-67	1967-68	1968-69	1969-70**
<i>(a) Primary</i>					
Oil Seeds	13.46	9.57	12.14	11.51	6.42
Raw Cotton	13.64	9.38	12.10	15.78	5.89
Tobacco	6.54	9.54	9.68	10.14	5.27
Food grains (rice)	14.76	*	10.41	14.92	24.57
Others	2.64	17.97	7.62	10.38	8.47
<b>Total</b>	<b>51.04</b>	<b>46.46</b>	<b>51.95</b>	<b>62.72</b>	<b>50.62</b>
<i>(b) Manufactures</i>					
Cotton Fabrics	18.34	22.10	19.51	21.72	11.27
Cotton Yarn & Thread	10.20	5.69	5.08	6.12	4.29
Machinery	5.21	5.32	6.73	6.64	3.38
Drugs & Medicines	5.50	5.96	6.58	5.39	2.82
Tobacco Manu.	3.83	2.61	3.81	2.22	1.82
Metal Manu.	1.27	1.49	1.47	1.88	0.76
Rape & Mustard Oil	.73	1.55	2.10	.73	0.17
Rubber Goods	.86	2.26	2.12	1.45	1.35
Paper & Board	1.22	2.05	1.44	2.61	1.48
Vegetable Oils (non-edible)	1.10	1.50	1.20	1.12	0.07
Cement	1.33	6.09	5.98	7.02	1.82
Others	18.25	27.38	13.70	14.63	6.44
<b>Total</b>	<b>67.94</b>	<b>84.00</b>	<b>69.71</b>	<b>71.53</b>	<b>35.69</b>
<b>(a) + (b)</b>	<b>118.98</b>	<b>130.46</b>	<b>121.66</b>	<b>134.25</b>	<b>86.31</b>

Source: Pakistan Economic Survey 1969-70. Pakistan Economic Survey 1966-67, p. 80, Table 34. \* Not available. \*\* includes July-March only.

Table B: Composition of West Pakistan Imports from Bangladesh During the Third Five-Year Plan (1965-70)

	(In crores)				
Goods	1965-66	1966-67	1967-68	1968-69	1969-70 (Jul-Mar)
<i>(a) Primary</i>					
Betel-nuts	.74	.79	11.9	.85	—
Spices	1.46	1.80	1.06	.98	.02
Wood & Timber	.65	.92	1.11	1.17	—
Others	1.87	2.47	6.36	7.85	7.61
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.72</b>	<b>5.98</b>	<b>9.72</b>	<b>10.84</b>	<b>7.63</b>
<i>(b) Manufactures</i>					
Tea	24.34	28.73	22.89	25.71	15.36
Jute goods	13.75	13.59	14.22	15.83	8.14
Paper & Board	7.89	7.63	9.10	10.96	6.22
Matches	3.96	2.95	3.17	4.27	2.48
Leather	2.32	2.46	2.76	2.96	1.44
Others	8.00	10.69	16.00	16.27	9.81
<b>Total</b>	<b>60.25</b>	<b>66.05</b>	<b>68.14</b>	<b>76.00</b>	<b>43.45</b>
<b>(a) + (b)</b>	<b>64.97</b>	<b>72.03</b>	<b>77.86</b>	<b>86.84</b>	<b>51.08</b>

Source: Pakistan Economic Survey 1969-70, pp. 138-9, Table 70; Pakistan Economic Survey 1966-67, pp. 77-78, Table 33; Pakistan Economic Survey 1967-68.

**Appendix 2.12**  
**Control of Industrial and Manufacturing Assets in Pakistan in 1968**

	(Rs. Million)			
	All Non-Financial Assets listed on the Karachi Stock Exchange	All Non- Financial Assets listed on the Karachi and Dhaka Stock Exchanges	All Manufacturing Assets listed on the Karachi and Dhaka Stock Exchanges	All Manufacturing Assets listed and Unlisted
1. Dawood	55.78	557.8	557.8	557.8
2. Saigol	529.8	529.8	528.9	556.5
3. Adamjee	437.6	450.9	450.9	473.2
4. Jalil (Amin)	418.8	418.8	418.8	418.8
5. Sheikh	325.4	325.4	318.5	342.7
6. Fancy	280.4	280.4	215.4	330.5
7. Valika	320.2	320.2	252.8	252.8
8. Bawany	237.4	237.4	237.4	237.4
9. Bashir (Crescent)	199.5	199.5	199.5	199.5
10. Wazir Ali	132.7	132.7	132.7	178.5
11. Ghandara	153.2	153.2	153.2	163.2
12. Ispahani	90.6	90.6	90.6	154.0
13. Habib	128.1	128.1	126.2	136.2
14. Khyber Textile Group	127.5	127.5	127.5	127.5
15. Nishat Group	64.6	64.6	64.6	126.9
16. BECO	113.6	113.6	113.6	113.6
17. Gul Ahmed	21.1	21.1	21.1	109.2
18. Arag (Haji) Habib)	32.4	32.4	32.4	105.4
19. Hafiz	100.1	100.1	100.1	105.4
20. H. A. Karim	95.4	95.4	95.4	95.4
21. Millwala	-	-	-	95.0
22. Hyesons	68.4	68.4	68.4	94.3
23. Dada	48.0	48.0	48.0	90.6
24. Premier Group	77.3	77.3	77.3	89.3
25. Hussein Ebrahim	88.4	88.4	88.4	88.4
26. Monnoo	7.9	7.9	7.9	79.4
27. Maulabaksh	58.9	58.9	58.9	79.1
28. Adam	45.1	45.1	45.1	78.0
29. A.K. Khan	-	18.2	18.2	74.9
30. A.A. Ghani	41.2	41.2	41.2	71.2
31. Rangoonwala	44.5	44.5	44.5	68.2
32. Haroon	13.1	13.1	13.1	61.2
33. Hirjina	-	-	-	60.8
34. Shaffi	60.2	60.2	60.2	60.2
35. Fakir Chand	-	59.6	59.6	59.6
36. Haji Hashan	33.3	33.3	33.3	58.5
37. Dadabhoy	-	-	-	53.9
38. Shah nawaz	36.3	36.3	36.3	52.8
39. Fateh Textile Group	52.7	52.7	52.7	52.7
40. Noon	36.0	36.0	36.0	48.0
41. Hoti	40.6	40.6	40.6	45.8
42. Ghulam Faruque	36.7	36.7	36.7	36.7
43. Haji Dost Mohd.	20.4	20.4	20.4	31.6
Total, Largest 4	1,944.0	1,957.3	1,956.4	2,006.3
Total, Largest 10	3,450.1	3,473.4	3,333.0	3,547.7
Total, Largest 20	4,472.2	4,495.3	4,354.0	4,884.4
Total, Largest 30	4,962.7	5,010.7	4,868.6	5,624.6
Total All 43	5,165.2	5,266.1	5,124.0	6,314.6

Source: White, 1974, pp. 60-61.



**Appendix 2.13**  
**The Leading Bangladeshi Business Houses in 1969-70**

No.	Business Group	Number of Companies	Estimated Assets (Rs. Million)
1.	A. K. Khan	12	75
2.	Gul Baksh Bhuiya	5	65
3.	Zahurul Islam	14	60
4.	Md. Fakir Chand	10	60
5.	Maqbulur Rahman and Zahurul Qayyum	9	50
6.	Al-Haj Muslimuddin	6	50
7.	Al-Haj Shamsuzzoha	5	50
8.	Khan Bahadur Mujibur Rahman	4	45
9.	Afil	7	40
10.	Sattar	5	30
11.	Ashraf	4	30
12.	Bhandari	6	30
13.	Safdar Ali	7	30
14.	Ibrahim Mia	7	30
15.	Serajul Islam Chowdhury	4	25
16.	Mohammad Abdus Samad (Delta Group)	5	25
Total		110	695

Source: Baranov. 1986, p.13.

**Appendix 2.14**  
**Ownership of Industrial Assets in Bangladesh in 1971**

Ownership	Number of Units	Percentage of Units	Value of Fixed Asset (Tk. Millions)	Percentage Share Asset
Public Sector (EPIDC)	0.53	1.7	2,097.0	34
Private Non-Bengali	725	23.7	2,885.7	47
Private Bengali	2,253	73.8	1,118.8	18
Foreign	20	0.6	36.0	1
	3,051	99.8	6,137.5	100

Source: Humphrey, 1987, *Privatization in Bangladesh A study submitted to the Center for privatization for the U. S. Agency for International Development*, Washington, D. C., P. 41. East Pakistan Industries Development Corporation.

**Appendix 2.15**  
**Labour disputes in East Pakistan Since 1947**

Period to which the figure relates	Number of disputes resulting in stoppage of works	Number of workers involved	Number of man-days lost
<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
1947*	26	12,091	18,963
1948	48	28,224	112,163
1949	54	29,839	82,839
1950	20	7,972	40,381
1951	23	11,628	35,792
1952	55	21,174	75,624
1953	55	34,006	116,080
1954	31	19,738	90,556
1955	25	16,221	38,940
1956	64	82,261	273,632
1957	71	115,249	693,167
1958	51	45,903	152,351
1959	7**	22,488	35,482
1960	12	6,086	17,947
1961	10	4,464	5,486
1962	31	16,949	85,248
1963	54	102,198	938,093
1964	72	158,614	3,787,357
1965	55	63,707	236,805
1966	60	78,278	241,100
1967	48	66,391	605,222

Source: Adapted from Kamruddin Ahmad, *Labour Movement in East Pakistan*, 1969.

\* For the period from 15 August to 31 December 1947.

\*\* Due to the imposition of Martial Law in 1958, Labour Union activities declined considerably.

**Appendix 2.16**  
**Classification of Trade Unions by Industry in 1968**

Branch of industry	No. of Unions	Percentage to total	No. of Membership	Percentage to Total
<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
Railway	4	1.00	48,106	13.94
Other Transport	36	8.98	26,027	7.54
Cotton Textiles	47	11.72	30,080	8.72
Jute Textiles	37	9.22	35,627	10.33
Tobacco	24	5.99	8,124	2.35
Seamen	2	0.50	4,147	1.20
Municipal	7	1.75	1,893	0.55
Printing Press	19	4.74	3,112	0.90
Sugar	10	2.49	17,169	4.98
Dock	1	0.25	8,758	2.54
Paper Mills	3	0.75	4,110	1.19
Port Trust	6	1.49	8,563	2.48
Match	9	2.24	4,155	1.20
Engineering	19	4.74	5,841	1.69
Tea	3	00.75	1,00,576	29.16
Power Electricity	9	2.24	3,641	1.06
Glasses	7	1.75	2,661	0.77
Commercial	51	12.72	8,605	2.49
Post and Telegraph	1	0.25	9	0.00
Miscellaneous	106	26.43	23,827	6.91
Total	401	100.00	3,45,031	100.00

Source: Kamruddin Ahmad, *Labour Movement in East Pakistan*, 1969.

**Appendix 2.17**  
**Area under jute in East Pakistan, 1872-1963**

District	1872	1902	1912	1932	1936	1940	1944	1948	1963
1. Dhaka	40,000	165,000	188,000	223,300	264,700	393,700	175,610	195,105	141,300
2. Mmensingh	84,000	545,000	756,000	420,000	518,000	819,000	465,137	511,695	961,980
3. Faridpur	16,666	105,000	150,000	133,000	189,000	339,000	186,555	189,240	179,760
4. Barisal	11,686	10,000	29,000	21,600	39,000	78,000	28,937	33,720	36,230
5. Chittagong	100	---	300	300	300	300	---	410	205
6. Chittagong Hill Tracts	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	155
7. Noakhali	3,636	7,000	26,000	32,000	45,000	90,700	26,042	35,740	24,140
8. Comilla	78,389	292,000	268,000	157,000	225,000	342,500	159,684	167,175	237,300
9. Sylhet	572	Not available		7,800	11,400	36,200	20,880	28,230	30,420
10. Rajshahi	20,353	159,300	114,900	78,100	124,300	180,900	128,218	108,600	104,020
11. Pabna	122,880	140,500	220,000	57,000	75,000	180,000	100,675	100,310	86,470
12. Bogra	46,599	71,000	130,000	62,000	80,000	158,7000	81,021	90,550	60,860
13. Rangpur	103,000	381,900	298,700	195,700	240,000	379,000	272,867	222,705	222,650
14. Dinajpur	79,988	47,600	79,400	29,000	42,800	100,800	63,403	88,550	42,580
15. Kushtia	480	12,000	43,700	12,000	32,500	43,200	30,465	45,640	37,110
16. Jessore	5,682	27,400	146,800	39,200	75,700	97,300	84,800	91,065	79,390
17. Khulna	---	12,00	38,000	20,500	25,000	50,000	24,752	30,855	17,420
East Pakistan	614,031	1,975,700	2,488,800	1,418,500	1,987,000	3,419,300	1,809,046	1,940,590	1,761,990

Source: Compiled from Kerr (1876), Season and crop Rep or 1944-45, Monthly sum. Jute Stat., East Bengal Agr. Stat., Assam, and Adjusted according to post-Partition areas of divided districts. Recent figures from Dir. Age. East Pak., Dacca.

**Appendix -2.18**  
**Area under Rice, 1911-12 to 1963-64**

Districts	<i>(in thousands of acres)</i>					
	1911-12	1930-31	1944-45	1947-48	1957-58	1963-64
1. Barisal	1,566	1,622	1,840	1,685	1,839	2,251
2. Bogra	443	447	749	786	643	743
3. Chittagong	652	653	769	626	945	948
4. Chittagong Hill Tracts	86	101	---	110	200	158
5. Comilla	1,105	1,054	1,443	1,486	1,624	1,477
6. Dhaka	1,026	905	1,211	1,129	1,332	1,185
7. Dinajpur	801	591	1,109	881	783	1,012
8. Faridpur	625	729	1,061	1,200	1,315	1,334
9. Jessore	720	677	1,024	952	1,064	1,126
10. Khulna	801	838	1,127	1,116	842	1,145
11. Kushtia	308	312	481	421	531	564
12. Mymensingh	1,624	2,224	2,970	2,987	2,558	3,285
13. Noakhali	1,086	974	994	594	944	920
14. Pabna	592	732	753	594	944	920
15. Rajshahi	1,236	1,008	1,526	1,176	1,176	1,509
16. Rangpur	1,234	948	1,733	1,301	1,741	1,916
17. Sylhet	---	1,380	1,600	1,581	1,844	1,874
East Pakistan	13,905	15,195	20,390	18,799	20,206	22,251

Source: Nafis Ahmad, *An Economic Geography of East Pakistan*, London, 1961.

**Appendix 2.19**  
**Area under wheat, 1911-12 to 1963-64**

Districts	1911-12	1930-31	1944-45	1947-48	1957-58	1963-64
1. Barisal	---	---	150	2,400	3,000	200
2. Bogra	---	1,000	2,380	---	---	3,000
3. Chittagong	---	---	---	---	100	400
4. Chittagong Hill Tracts	---	---	---	---	---	---
5. Comilla	---	---	50	---	4,200	6,600
6. Dhaka	---	3,300	6,540	8,000	8,100	7,600
7. Dinajpur	880	1,600	4,100	2,000	3,800	4,000
8. Faridpur	2,400	2,800	3,780	3,700	7,700	21,900
9. Jessore	890	180	2,400	2,300	2,600	5,500
10. Khulna	---	---	20	100	---	300
11. Kushtia	8,500	5,700	11,900	12,500	12,200	17,400
12. Mymensingh	---	500	2,790	2,800	4,900	7,900
13. Noakhali					400	800
14. Pabna	16,00	8,000	8,320	11,000	12,000	23,300
15. Rajshahi	10,790	15,760	34,400	20,000	22,000	26,400
16. Rangpur	3,600	4,000	27,800	20,000	26,000	16,200
17. Sylhet					300	300
East Pakistan:	43,060	42,840	104,630	84,800	107,300	141,800

Source: Directorate of Agriculture, East Pakistan, 1963-64

**Appendix 2.20**  
**Area Under Sugar Cane, 1911-12 to 1963-64**

(in acres)

Districts	1911-12	1930-31	1944-45	1950-51	1963-64
1. Dhaka	15,900	18,000	11,750	30,200	17,400
2. Mymensingh	21,100	16,300	12,570	30,500	29,800
3. Faridpur	5,300	6,700	9,700	10,800	26,000
4. Barisal	11,800	27,000	13,220	19,500	16,700
5. Chittagong	5,000	5,900	3,250	6,000	4,900
6. Chittagong Hill Tracts	1,000	1,100	---	1,500	600
7. Noakhali	700	1,700	1,660	1,000	4,100
8. Comilla	4,000	900	3,120	2,600	5,700
9. Sylhet	---	2,800	2,300	2,000	5,200
10. Rajshahi	18,700	8,900	24,100	30,500	54,700
11. Pabna	10,000	3,900	3,050	4,000	13,200
12. Bogra	20,000	4,000	7,660	7,500	18,900
13. Rangpur	13,700	21,600	9,700	20,300	28,700
14. Dinajpur	19,900	21,200	10,300	45,000	59,300
15. Kushtia	3,300	2,900	6,900	8,000	36,600
16. Jessore	3,500	2,200	1,600	5,400	17,000
17. Khulna	1,300	400	430	1,200	7,000
East Pakistan	155,200	151,600	121,310	226,00	345,800

Source: Nafis Ahmad, *ibid.*



**Appendix 2.21**  
**Item-wise business concentrations of Dhaka city in 1960**

Articles/Products	Principal Concentration
1. Jewellery	Patuatuli, Islampur, Tantibazar, Nawabpur Near Satrapurbazar, Jinnah Avenue (Now Banga Bandu Avenue)
2. Mill's Dhuti, Saree	Patuatuli, Sadarghat Market, Nawabpur
3. Dhuti, Saree of tant	Patuatuli, Sardarghat Market, Nawabpur, Stadium, New Market
4. Shirting made of mills and tant	Islampur, Chawkbazar (whole sale), Patuatuli, Sadarghat, Nawabpur, Jinnah Avenue, Stadium, New Market.
5. Silk and other foreign clothes	Patuatuli, Midford, Nawabpur, Jinnah Avenue, Azimpur, New Market, Stadium, Baitul Mukarram
6. Ready made Garments	Patuatuli, Sadarghat Market, Nawabpur, Jinnah Avenue, New Market, Stadium, Chawk Bazar (whole sale)
7. Tailoring Shops	Jinnah Avenue, New Market, Islampur, Sadarghat, Patuatuli, Nawabpur, Stadium, Baitul Mukarram
8. Hosiery	Patuatuli, Nawabpur, Jinnah Avenue, New Market, Chawk (whole sale)
9. Caps	Chawkbazar, Islampur, Patuatuli, Nawabpur, New Market
10. English Hat	Nawabpur, Jinnah Avenue, New market, Islampur, Patuatuli
11. Quilt, Mattress, Pillow	Ruhhatta, Patuatuli
12. Churi	Chawkbazar, Churihatta (whole sale) Patuatuli, Stadium, Azimpur, New Market
13. Shakha	Shakaripatti
14. Lungi	Sadarghat, Nawabpur, New Market, Chawkbazar (Retails and whole sale)
15. Mosquito net	Sadarghat, Patuatuli, New Market,
16. Gamcha	Sadarghat and Chawk Bazar
17. Triple, Canvas	Babubazar, Patuatuli, Motijheel commercial Area, New Market
18. Rexene, well cloth, Plastic sheet	Islampur, Patuatuli, Nawabpur, New Market, Bangshal
19. Shoes	Jinnah Avenue, Nawabpur, Patuatuli, Midford and Azimpur-New Market
20. Wooden furniture:	Farashgonj, Nayabazar, Stadium, New Market
21. Steel furniture:	English Road, Liakat Avenue, Nawabpur, Thatari Bazar, Stadium, New Market
22. Bucket, Iron cookeries	Thatari Bazar, Nayabazar, Nawabpur, Liakart Avenue, Patuatuli, Chawkbazar, New Market.
23. Glass and Ceramic ware	Midford, Chawkbazar, Patuatuli, Nawabpur, Jinnah Avenue, Stadium, New Market
24. Pest Board, Card Board	Nayabazar, Banglabazar, Bangshal
25. Glass made Bottles	Midford (whole sale centre)
26. Cookeries (Aluminum)	Midford, Chawkbazar, Sadarghat, New Market (Retailers)
27. Electronic Goods	Wiseghat, Nawabpur, New Market, Stadium, Baitul Mukarram
28. Brass Copper metals	Midford, Bangshal
29. Paper	Bangla Bazar, Patuatuli, Islampur, Babubazar, Chawkbazar, New Market
30. Books	Bangla Bazar, Patuatuli, Islampur, Babubazar, Chawkbazar, New Market
31. Medicine (Allopathic)	Midford, Nawabpur, Jinnah Avenue, New Market, Stadium, Baitul Mukarram.
32. Medicine (Homeopathic)	Wiseghat, Station Road, Nawabpur, New Market
33. Ayurved	Nawabpur, Midford, Banglabazar, Sutrapur

34. Bi-cycle machineries	Nawabpur, Jinnah Avenue, New Market
35. Motor cars & Scooter	North Brook Hall Road, Liakat Avenue, Motijheel Commercial Ara, Simson Road, Laxmi Bazar, Nawabpur
36. Sewing machines	Islampur, Patuatuli, Nawabpur, Jinnah Avenue, Baitul Mukarram, New Market
37. Steel Made trunk, suitcase	Patuatuli, Midford, Chawkbazar, New Market
38. Leather suitcase, bags	Patuatuli, Bangshal, Nawabpur, New Market
39. Raw materials for shoe	Bangshal, Chawkbazar
40. Radio, Gramophone recorders	Wiseghat, Patuatuli, Jinnah Avenue, New Market
41. Eye glass	Patuatuli, Nawabpur, Jinnah Avenue, Baitul Mukarram, New Market
42. Watch/Clocks	Patuatuli, Islampur, Nawabpur, Jinnah Avenue, New Market,
43. Umbrella	Mughaltuli, Chawkbazar, Patuatuli, New Market,
44. Football, Cricket, Hockey Carom board	Islampur, Nawabpur, Stadium, New Market,
45. Toys	Nawabpur, Stadium, New Market, Chawkbazar
46. Game made furniture	Moulavi Bazar, Sadarghat, Liakat Avenue, New Market, Station Road
47. Mat and Shital pati	Imamgonj, Sadarghat, Raisaheb Bazar
48. Ropes	Imamgonj Maulavibazar, Rai Sahebbazar
49. Patka, Atasbaji	Rahamatgonj, Islampur
50. Pulses	Rahmatgonj (wholesale) Hemendra Das Road (Dal patti)
51. Nursery Plants	Stadium, Azimpur, New Market, Dhanmondi,
52. Arat (Ghee)	Ramakanta Lane, Maulavibazar
53. Arat (oil)	Imamgonj Maulavibazar, Rahmatgonj
54. Arat (rice)	Badmtali, Moulavibazar
55. Milk, Chana	Rath khola
56. Lime, Sands, Cement	Farashgonj, Badamtali, Nayabazar, Imamgonj
57. Chemicals	Sadarghat, Wiseghat, Midford Road. Bangla Bazar, Nawabpur, Soarighat, Motijheel
58. Washing soap	Imamgonj, Maulavibazar, Baburbazar, Roy Saheb Bazar, Station Road
59. Fountain pen	Patuatuli, Islampur, Nawabpur, Stadium, New Market, Chawkbazar.
60. Torch light	Chawkbazar, Midford, Patuatuli, Nawabpur, New Market.
61. Cake, Pastry, Biscuit	Nawabpur, Stadium, Newmarket, Ray Saheb Bazar, Baitul Mukarram
62. Bombai Chanacur/Chanacur	Nawabpur Baitul Mukarram, New Market
63. Wraith & Mala	Babubazar Fari, Chawkbazar and New Market
64. Office stationary	Banglabazar, Patuatuli, Nawabpur, Stadium, New Market, Chawkbazar,
65. Musical Instruments	Banglabazar, Putauatuli, Islampur, Vicitoria park
66. Sanitary equipments	Banglabazar, Patuatuli, Islampur
67. Marvels and mosaic	Jinnah Avenue
68. Bamboo, pole	Roy Saheb Bazar, Sutrapur Bazar, Dayagonj, Sowarighat
69. Horn button	Amligola, Choudhuri Bazar, Nawabgonj, Chawkbazar, Hazaribagh, Subal Das Lane.

Source: S. Rahmatullah, *Dhaka Darpan*, 1960 and field survey.

# 3

## **Growth of Private Business Houses in Dhaka after 1971**

Selim Raihan  
Abu Eusuf

### **I. Introduction**

Private sector business is a key to development initiative of any country. In the era of globalization, the need for strong and flourishing private sector is a demand for development agenda and as most of the nations are netted through the world trade organisation (WTO) and other international institutions, the prevailing perplexity forced the countries to nourish their private sector to gain competitive advantage. Technological advancement, frequent capital flow, skilled manpower, geographical location, easy access to resources – all these factors are becoming more important in making benefits from trade. The government role can well be defined – in such a free-trade era – to unite these numbers of activities, promote entrepreneurs with sufficient incentives and create linkages between global and local markets through various facilitating institutions. Both developed and developing countries are thus now aggressively promoting private sector by facilitating policies and institutions that assist them to gain from the competition. Ironically, Bangladeshi private entrepreneurs have hardly been facilitated; and even in most cases the state apparatus hinder their efforts by administrative red-tapism, bribery, corruption and misuse of state power with very poor service providing facilities. However, having all these obstacles, they tackled these problems sufficiently and courageously leading the economy from a least developing country to middle income country.

### **II. Immediate past of the Bangladesh period – the Pakistan period**

Bangladesh emerged as East Pakistan in 1947 parting from Bengal, India and finally gained independence from Pakistan in 1971 following a sanguinary 9-month long liberation war.<sup>1</sup> In both cases, large number of entrepreneurs and skilled left the country and as such the business network collapsed almost entirely. The private sector had to start from scratch. So, they had enormous implications on the current shape, size, growth and performance of the private sector in Bangladesh. As Calcutta was the chief seaport for trading and also the provincial capital of Bengal, most industries in Bengal during the British era were set up in the adjacent regions of Calcutta city. Only a few were established in the territory of present Bangladesh.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, after the partition of

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1 For details of the Liberation War, see *Bangladesh Documents*, Vol- I& II, New Deihi, 1972; *History of the Liberation War*, 12 Volumes, Ministry of Information, Government of Bangladesh.

2 See G. N. Gupta, *A Survey of Industries and Resources of Eastern Bengal and Assam for 1907-1908*, Shillong, 1908; *Report of the Bengal Industrial Survey Committee*, Government of West Bengal, 1948.

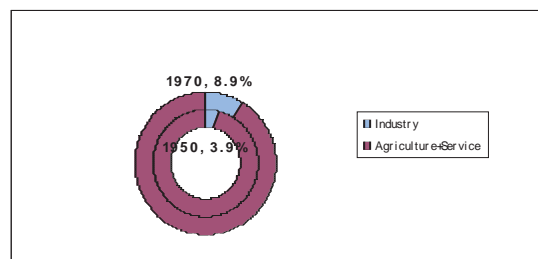
Bengal in 1947, Bangladesh, the then East Pakistan, inherited a nominal share of the industries from Bengal. Bangladesh got none of the 108 jute mills, 18 iron and steel mills and 16 paper mills of Bengal. Only 90 of Bengal's 389 cotton mills, 10 of its 166 sugar mills, and 3 of its 19 cement factories fell in the territory of Bangladesh. The cement factory at Chhatak (Sylhet) had to depend upon limestone supplied from Assam (India). The cotton mills of Bangladesh also had to depend upon imported raw materials. The 1951 Census revealed that the manufacturing sector employed only 4.67% of the total labour force and 7.36% of the total labour force are employed in 360,603 cottage enterprises. Of all the manufacturing units, only about 200 enterprises used power.<sup>3</sup>

**Table 2.1: No. of Industries inherited by West Bengal (India) and Bangladesh, the then East Pakistan, after the partition of Bengal in 1947.**

Large Industry	West Bengal (India)	Bangladesh, the then East Pakistan	Total industry in Bengal
Cement Factory	16	3	19
Cotton Mill	299	90	389
Iron and Steel Mill	18	-	18
Jute Mill	108	-	108
Paper Mill	16	-	16
Sugar Mill	156	10	166

*Source: Banglapedia*

With a view to filling the gap and becoming self-sufficient in production within the country, the then government of Pakistan architected a bold industrial development policy that encouraged public as well as private sector investment in some sectors. Public investment was planned and accomplished in iron and steel, hydroelectric and thermoelectric power, railway wagon, telephone, telegraph and wireless communication, arms and ammunition, etc. The private sector was encouraged to come up with industrial ventures in all other sectors. Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation (PIDC) made significant contributions in terms of easy financing to the establishment of industrial units in sectors such as jute, paperboard, cement, fertilizer, sugar, chemicals, textile, pharmaceuticals, light engineering and shipbuilding. The central government, however, followed a discriminatory policy. It favoured West Pakistan, now Pakistan, in industrial development and drained resources from Bangladesh. It also directed most of Pakistan's external resources to the cause of the industrial development of West Pakistan. Non-Bengalis dominated the list of entrepreneurs coming up with new industrial ventures in Bangladesh. The central government had control over product pricing to such an extent that products grown or manufactured in Bangladesh were sold in the local market at prices higher than in West Pakistan.



**Increased Contribution of Manufacturing Sector in GDP: From 1950 to 1970**

<sup>3</sup> Census of Pakistan. 1951, Karachi.



Despite all these impositions, however, some progress was made in industrialisation in Bangladesh during the period between 1950 and 1970. The number of industrial enterprises in Bangladesh in different sectors in 1970 were: food manufacturing - 408, beverage - 6, tobacco processing - 26, textile - 792, footwear - 204, wood and cork - 14, furniture - 70, paper products - 33, printing and publishing - 14, chemical products - 572, petroleum and coal products - 3, rubber products - 3, mineral products - 53, basic metal - 35, metal products - 257, non electric machinery - 88, electrical machinery - 34, transport equipment - 65 and other goods - 166. Official sources of the government recorded that in 1970, there were 1,580 manufacturing units in Bangladesh and total gross output was valued at Taka 3.636 billion and total value added amounted to Taka 1.708 billion. The share of the manufacturing sector in the GDP was 8.9% in 1970 as compared to 3.9% in 1950.

### III. Policy Shifts in the Bangladesh Era

Bangladesh emerged from its war of independence as desperately poor, over-populated and reeling from overwhelming war damage to its industry sector as well as institutional and physical capital. For example, it was not until 1978/79 that per capita income had recovered to its pre-independence level. Just after the independence, the then ruling political regime adopted a socialistic development strategy. The government nationalized a large number of enterprises including those that had been abandoned by their Pakistani owners. Private sector investment is capped up to a level and an overall framework of extensive state control is imposed on the industry sector.<sup>4</sup>

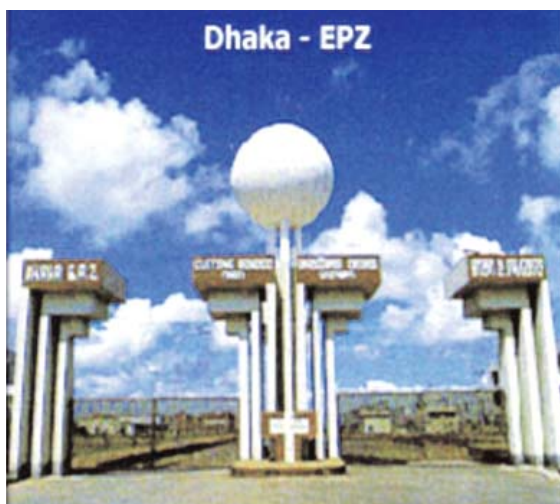
The public sector started in 1972 with 72 jute mills, 44 textile mills, 15 sugar mills, 2 fertiliser factories, one steel mill, one diesel engine unit and one shipbuilding yard. Mills and factories in the public sector, however, soon became losing concerns largely because of mismanagement and leakage of resources. The government had to quickly review its policy of dominating the public sector. Although it continued to exercise control over industries, it soon raised the allowable ceilings of private investment. Even though, this did not bring much improvement.

As General Ziaur Rahman emerged as the military ruler in 1976, there was a significant policy shift towards privatisation and the promotion of the private sector. Denationalization of abandoned or loss making enterprises started and certain sectors of domestic market is opened for international competition. Local representatives of World Bank and IMF chiefly assisted the government in outlining and implementing and made this new strategic shift successful. However, these changes and adjustments were short-lived as another military ruler General Ershad came to power in 1981. In 1982, the government finally adopted a new industrial policy in align with market-oriented development strategy. As before, World Bank and IMF partnered with government to implement this policy reform but imposed a fairly rigid aid conditionality. The policy reforms in the 1980s included mainly the withdrawal of food and agricultural subsidies, privatisation of selected state-owned enterprises, partial financial liberalisation, and withdrawal of quantitative import restrictions. For Example, a total of 1,076 state-owned enterprises were handed over to private owners in the first half of the 1980s.

Unfortunately, denationalisation created a new problem for industries. They started getting sick because of failures of the inexperienced owners. Many of them were more interested in getting ready cash from selling of the cheaply acquired property than in sustaining and developing the industries.

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4 For Industrial Investment Policy, see Bangladesh Gazette Extraordinary, dated January 12, 1973; also see Bangladesh Gazette, Extraordinary, dated January, 1972, President Order No. 3 of 1972.



The result was that industrial sickness affected 50% of industries in food manufacturing, 70% of textile, 100% in jute, 60% in paper and paper board, 90% in leather and rubber products, 50% in chemicals and pharmaceuticals, 65% in glass and ceramics, and 80% in engineering industries. The beginning of the 1990s saw a major refinement of the market-oriented development strategy with greater focus on openness to trade competition and integration with the global economy. Industrialisation efforts included investment in balancing, modernisation and reconstruction, creation of new industrial estates and export processing zones, promotion of private investment, and attraction of foreign

#### Major Economic Reforms in Bangladesh<sup>5</sup>

##### 1. Agricultural Policy

- Liberalization of input markets
- Curtailing the role of government agency in input distribution
- Deregulation of input prices
- Reduction of subsidies on agricultural inputs
- Liberalization of import of agricultural import
- Liberalization of output markets with produce's price incentive
- Gradual elimination of distribution of food at subsidized price
- Price stabilization through a procurement policy
- Liberalization of import of food grain.

##### 2. Trade and Industrial Policy

- Reduction of maximum tariff rates
- Rationalization and simplification of the tariff structure
- Elimination of quantitative restrictions on imports
- Simplification of industrial regulations.

##### 3. Privatization and Public Enterprise Reforms

- Denationalization
- Reduction of Excess Labor in SOEs
- Rationalization of jute mills
- Improve operational performance of public utilities
- Privatization of selected public manufacturing and commercial enterprises.

##### 4. Fiscal Policy Reforms

- Expand the base of the value-added tax
- Reform personal and company direct taxes
- Strengthen the tax administration
- Adjust prices for public goods and services while improving their operational efficiency
- Limit the growth of current expenditures to less than the growth of nominal GDP
- Reduce subsidies and administrative costs
- Improve project aid utilization
- Reduce the operating deficit of Bangladesh railway.

##### 5. Financial Sector Reforms

- Implement reforms aimed at a market-oriented system of monetary management
- Privatization of NCB and allowing banking in the private sector
- Interest rate liberalization
- Strengthen commercial bank loan recovery programs.

5. Source: Understanding economic reform: A case study on Bangladesh, North South University.  
[http://www.gdnet.org/pdf/global\\_research\\_projects/understanding\\_reform/country\\_studies/proposals/Bangladesh\\_proposal.pdf](http://www.gdnet.org/pdf/global_research_projects/understanding_reform/country_studies/proposals/Bangladesh_proposal.pdf)

direct investment. The policy changes have been in line with trends in the international market, recommendations of donor countries and agencies for liberalisation of trade and investment, and Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) as suggested by World Bank and IMF. Almost at regular intervals of 4 to 6 years after 1982, the government adopted new industrial policies with increased incentives for private investors from both home and abroad. These policies have some common aspects such as incentives to promote industrialisation in rural and remote areas and to encourage entrepreneurs to use local raw materials, and the efforts towards development of a system that would help in transfer of technology. Special incentives are also introduced for export oriented sectors in terms of tax break, cash incentive and importation of raw materials without import duty under the bonded warehouse system. These policies spurred private investment in the ready made garments (RMG) sector in the 1990s and made it the largest industrial sector within the next decade.

#### IV. Sectoral Analysis

##### 4.1 Ready Made Garments Industries

It represents mainly those industries who do the job of ‘sewing and tailoring’, joining together, by means of needle and thread, pieces of fabric or other materials to make wearing apparel, accessories, household furnishings and other items. The fabric is cut to the desired shape and size, often devised by the buyer, and is then stitched or sewn together by hand or machine.

**History:** In the sixties when Bangladesh was a part of Pakistan, the domestic market for ready-to-wear garments began developing by initiative of a number of small family firms who produced basic shirts for domestic markets. The Mercury Shirts, a company located in Karachi, made a few consignments of shirts during 1965-68 made by some tailoring outfits operating in Dhaka. Some of those consignments were exported from Karachi to European countries. As far as Dhaka-based order suppliers were concerned, the business was within the domestic market as both Dhaka and Karachi were at that time cities of the same country, i.e., Pakistan. Therefore, they were not considered as exporters. At the end of the 1970s, it was the external market force, the urge of the high wage countries to relocate production facilities in the low wage countries; it created an environment congenial to the growth and development of RMG industry in Bangladesh.

**Early Pioneers:** In 1977-78, there were only 9 export-oriented garment manufacturing units which generated annual export earnings of about US\$1 million. Three of such small and established units were Reaz Garments, Jewel Garments and Paris Garments. Of them, Reaz Garments is the oldest and considered the pioneer of garment industry in Bangladesh. It was established in 1960 as a small tailoring outfit, named Reaz Store at Urdu Road, Dhaka. It served the domestic markets including markets in Karachi for about 15 years. Later on in 1973, it changed its name into M/s Reaz Garments Ltd and in 1978 it expanded its operation in export market by selling 10,000 pieces of men’s shirts worth 13 million French francs to Hollander France, a Paris-based firm. It was thus the first private direct exporter of garment from Bangladesh.



Reazuddin Ahmed of Reaz Garments



Working in garments

Apart from Reaz Garments, Desh Garments was also, in some indicators, one of the pioneers in the RMG sector. In 1979, Desh Garments formed the first joint-venture in the garment industry with Korean conglomerate Daewoo Corporation. It was also the first hundred percent export-oriented company of Bangladesh, as the previous ones used to sell their products in the domestic market too. Moreover, it also introduced modern technology equipped factories and up-to-date management systems which contributed to creation of a smart group of entrepreneurs in this sector.

**Present Status:** Within a very short period of time, RMG industry became the major driver of Bangladesh's economic growth and the largest earner of foreign currency. The growth history is tremendous and overwhelming. From a few million in the early 1980s, the industry achieved US \$ 600 million (US\$0.6 billion) export mark in 1990 and reached US\$7.9 billion in 2006. From 1990 to 2006, the average growth rate of export earnings from RMG was about 19 percent per annum. According to the latest estimate, the contribution of the RMG sub-sector to GDP is said to be 9.5% and within the manufacturing sector the contribution of this sub-sector has increased to 27.8%. RMG also now constitutes 76% of total export earnings of Bangladesh. This is also the largest sector in terms of employment - while in 1985 just about 0.1 million people were employed in this sector, in 2005 this figure rose to more than 2 million, which is 35 percent of all the manufacturing employment in the country. Another important aspect of employment is that 80% of them are women. If one considers the jobs created in the complimentary enterprises as a result of the growth in this sector, the number of people either directly or indirectly depending for their employment on the existence and expansion of the export-oriented apparel sector will rise to three millions.



Year	Export of RMG (in million US\$)	Total export of Bangladesh (in million US\$)	% of RMG to Total export
1983-84	31.57	811	3.89
1984-85	116.2	934.43	12.44
1985-86	131.48	819.21	16.05
1986-87	298.67	1076.61	27.74
1987-88	433.92	1231.2	35.24
1988-89	471.09	1291.56	36.47
1989-90	624.16	1923.7	32.45
1990-91	866.82	1717.55	50.47
1991-92	1182.57	1993.9	59.31
1992-93	1445.02	2382.89	60.64
1993-94	1555.79	2533.9	61.4
1994-95	2228.35	3472.56	64.17
1995-96	2547.13	3882.42	65.61
1996-97	3001.25	4418.28	67.93
1997-98	3781.94	5161.2	73.28
1998-99	4019.98	5312.86	75.67
1999-00	4349.41	5752.2	75.61
2000-01	4859.83	6467.3	75.14
2001-02	4583.75	5986.09	76.57
2002-03	4912.09	6548.44	75.01
2003-04	5686.09	7602.99	74.79
2004-05	6417.67	8654.52	74.15
2005-06	7900.8	10526.16	75.06
2006-07	9211.23	12177.86	75.64

Source: BGMEA website, compiled from Export Promotion Bureau

**Type of RMG Industry:** The RMG industry produces varieties of products. They are usually differentiated into three broad categories: Woven, Knit and Sweater. In terms of export size, Woven is the highest while Sweater is the lowest among them. On the other hand, in terms of value addition, Knit holds the top position while Woven lies at the lowest.

**Current Trends:** The woven RMG companies, who have excellent track record in the last decade and enough capital in the coffers, started to invest in fabric production in the last five years. Alternatively, the large and well-established knit RMG companies are investing in yarn production. In this way, local value addition in RMG export has been increasing and more people are getting employment in this sector.

USA is the chief export market for many years. However, after the MFA phase-out in 2005, exports in EU, Canada and in other countries are increasing. The recently signed SAFTA agreement enables RMG industries to export to India but in a limited scale.

## 4.2 Textile industries

Textile industry is commonly applied to woven fabrics, but the horizon for textile industry is much larger and includes production of natural and synthetic filaments, yarns and threads as well as woven, knitted, felted, tufted, braided, bonded, knotted and embroidered fabrics made from them.

Production of fabric usually encompasses three stages of processing: (i) Fiber (cotton, wool, silk, etc.) processing and Spinning into yarn, (ii) Weaving into woven fabrics, or knitting into knit fabrics, and finally, (iii) Dyeing and printing. The large textile industries usually accomplish all





A textile mill in operation with womenfolk at work



A view of a textile mills within



these three stages, while the smaller industries operate in one or two stages. Modern industries have another level of processing – applying finishes to the fabric to improve its appearance and service, like resistance to shrinking, staining and soiling.

**History:** Throughout the British period, the weavers of Dhaka suffered seriously because of various restrictions imposed by the then British government and its endeavours to popularize the machine-made cheap clothes imported from Britain. But the trends experienced a setback in 1919 when the swadeshi movement stimulated the demand of locally made handloom clothes- the coarse clothes and thus its production increased. In that context, in 1927 Dhakeswari Cotton Mill was established on the bank of the Sitalakhya, Dhaka. After a short interval, another cotton mill - Chittaranjan Cotton Mill - was established in 1929.

After the partition of 1947, Bangladesh, the then East Pakistan, inherited only few textile mills of small capacity. Therefore, private as well as public investments were encouraged in a resolute to make the country self-sufficient in clothes. This resulted in the establishment of a large number of textile industries, both in public and private sectors, with significant production capacity. However, just after independence, in 1972, all of the private textile mills were nationalised. After 1982, state-owned spinning mills were gradually denationalised. Even to assure the private sector, the government committed not to invest in this sector in future, resulting the increase of private investment considerably. At the same time, the tremendous growth of the RMG sector created enough demand of locally-made knit and hosiery clothes. This export phenomenon generated enough profit and allured the entrepreneurs to invest more heavily in large composite textiles in both knit and woven segments. Thus the sector flourished and turned into almost entirely a private sector by 1999, total spindles installed were 2.4 million in the private sector as compared to 0.4 million in the public sector.

**Early Pioneer:** Dhakeswari Cotton Mill was the pioneer of textile industries from the 1940s to the early 1960s. It was established in 1927. In the 1950s, much renovation and reinvestment were implemented to replace the worn-out spindles as well as modernize the industry to a composite textile mill. The number of spindles for spinning and looms for weaving reached to 28,500 and 780 respectively.

**Present status:** Besides meeting the domestic demand of fabrics, the sector is now mainly operating as a fabric supplier to the Ready-Made Garment (RMG) industry. Almost all large RMG industries are now investing in the textile segment to reduce cost and lead-time in their struggle to become more competitive in the international market and achieve economies of scale. Therefore, the textile sector is experiencing more growth than ever. However, at this time it ensures not only the growth in volume but also in terms of product type. For example, output and investment increased in many folds mostly in knit and grey fabrics in the last decade. Simultaneously, the industry also entered in producing denim clothes and other polyester made high-end clothes.

GSP utilization rate (local value addition) in EU<sup>6</sup>

	Woven	Knit
2000	14.60	85.00
2005	28.20	69.70

6 Abdul Matin Chowdhury, Former President of BTMA. The Daily Star, 02 February, 2008.  
<http://www.thedailystar.net/story.php?nid=22301>



However, the overall growth performance of modern textiles except the RMG industry has been very poor with only very limited investment taking place in weaving sub-sectors in comparison to relatively more new investment in the spinning sub-sector. The total demand-supply gaps of fabric and yarn for 1996-97 were 2,433 million metres and 429 million kg respectively. These gaps increased to 3,717 million metres and 639 million kg respectively by 2002. Moreover, till now the RMG industry has to depend upon imports for 85% of fabrics and 40% of yarn required for the export market. The country, however, exports limited amount of high quality fabrics to Southeast Asian countries. These statistics demonstrate that textile industry is a very potential sector for investment and for future economic growth.

At present, the local market for textile products consists of 135 million consumers, while investment in the textile sector amounts to 4.0 billion Euros, employing 2,700,000 people.

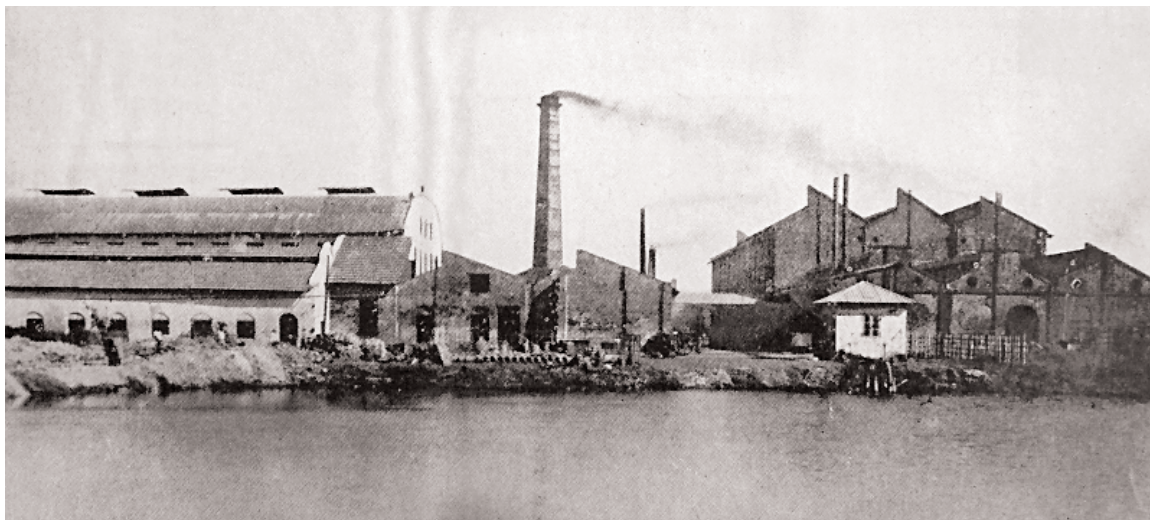
**Present Trends:** As the textile industry requires large investment, the large business houses of the country are the major players in this sector. Initially these projects were financed through self-investment and credit from banks. After 1996, many of these companies started to enlist in the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and raised substantial amount of capital for further expansion.

In a recent statement, the EU hinted to lower the level of local value addition for ensuring eligibility under the EU GSP arrangement. The government of Bangladesh has been discussing the matter for a while and expressed concern about the local textile sector's grim future in the new scenario. Under current EU GSP system, the RMG export companies are bound to use local yarn and textile to be eligible for tax-free benefit. BTMA president Abdul Hai Sarker observes that if the rule for receiving GSP is changed in favor of 30 percent value addition, it would definitely jeopardise the local textile sector, which has been supplying 90 percent backward linkage support for the knit and 40 percent for woven.<sup>7</sup>

### 4.3 Pharmaceuticals

The pharmaceutical Industry manufactures medicinal drugs which are used for the prevention and control of diseases. In Bangladesh, the pharmaceutical industry is engaged in formulating drugs only. However, in the developed countries, the major activity of any pharmaceutical industry is to engage itself in intensive and costly research and development process for developing new drugs.

**History:** The system of Ayurveda that served as the basis of Indian pharmacopoeia right from the ancient period declined when the allopathic system of the West got ascendancy with the patronage of Great Britain. Soon companies from Japan, Italy, USA, etc. set up their units in India to occupy significant market shares. Of those, the major companies were D Waldie & Co, Bathgate & Co, Wilkinson, Smith Stanistreet & Co, R Scott Thomson & Co, King & Co and Hahneman Home. The Swadeshi response to this challenge took two forms: one was the regeneration of ayurvedic medicine, and the other was the introduction of swadeshi allopathy in the form of an admixture of eastern and western systems of medicine. Thus Bengal Chemical & Pharmaceutical Works and the Bengal Immunity Co were established in Calcutta in 1882 and 1919 respectively. In 1919, Dhaka Ayurvediya Pharmacy Ltd was established in Dhaka, which was the first pharmaceutical industry in Bangladesh. After the partition of Bengal, Bengal Industries Ltd., Alpha Chemical Industries, Acme Laboratories, Albert Devid (Pak.) Ltd and some other chemical and pharmaceutical factories were set up.



Bengal Chemical and Pharmaceutical Works

The pharmaceutical industry was a neglected sector during the Pakistan period. At that time, Bangladesh, the then East Pakistan, had to import about 90% of its pharmaceutical needs from the multinational companies situated in West Pakistan. So, with the emergence of Bangladesh in 1971, the country inherited a poor base of the pharmaceutical industry. After independence, foreign investment is favoured due to patent issue and technological complexity in the pharmaceutical sector. This resulted in foreign dominance in this sector. In 1981, there were 166 licensed pharmaceutical manufacturers in the country, but local production was dominated by eight multinational companies which manufactured about 75% of the products. There were 25 medium-sized local companies which manufactured 15% of the products and the remaining 10% were produced by other 133 small local companies. In spite of having 166 local pharmaceutical production units, the country had to spend nearly Tk. 300 million for importing finished medicinal products.

**Early Pioneers:** Dhaka Ayurvediya Pharmacy Ltd was mainly engaged in producing medicines from plants using Indian pharmacopoeia. So, they did not play any role in the initiation and growth of the allopathic sector. Bengal Industries Ltd., Alpha Chemical Industries, Acme Laboratories, Albert Devid (Pak.) Ltd, etc. are some chemical and pharmaceutical factories that were the early pioneers of the allopath based pharmaceutical sector. These industries were mainly engaged in manufacturing of disinfections (power and liquid), distilled water, syrups, tonics and other non-patent medicines.

**Present status:** After the promulgation of Drug Control Ordinance 1982, the development of this sector was accelerated. The ordinance prohibited many medicinal products that were considered harmful, useless or unnecessary and banned importation of finished medicines produced by any company in the country. This relieved the local companies from unfair competition of multinational companies through cheap import from the plants of neighbouring countries and also exclusively made scope for local companies to invest in new medicine formulations. Some of the local pharmaceutical companies utilized this opportunity by investing heavily to increase product range and improve product quality. The result is that the value of locally produced medicines rose from Tk. 1.1 billion in 1981 to Tk. 16.9 billion in 1999.

At present, 97% of the total demand of medicinal products is met by local production. Local companies increased their share from 25% to 70% on total annual production between 1981 to 2000. And the share of multinational companies decreased from 75% to 25% between 1981 and 2000. However, of the largest 20 pharmaceutical companies, 6 are still multinational companies. Value addition of local companies also increased in recent times – there are now 13 drug manufacturing units which also manufacture certain basic raw materials.

In 2000, there were 210 licensed allopathic drug-manufacturing units in the country, out of which only 173 were in regular production; others were either closed down on their own or suspended by the licensing authority for drugs

due to non compliance to drug laws. Besides, there were 1,495 wholesale and about 37,700 retail drug license holders in Bangladesh. The original number of drug retailers or pharmacies is more than 10 times of this number. Furthermore, in 2000 there were 261 Unani, 161 Ayurvedic, 76 Homeopathic and biochemical licensed manufacturing units. In total, they produced medicines worth Tk. 1.2 billion in 2000. In 2007, there were 239 registered pharmaceutical industries, of which 161 were in operation.

Another remarkable progress made by the local pharmaceutical companies is the export of medicine to a large number of countries. At present, local companies are exporting medicine regularly to around 20 countries and irregularly to additional 10 countries. The largest importers of Bangladeshi medicines are Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Vietnam and Philippines. However, only the large ten companies dominate the export market.

**Present Trends:** Because of the WTO TRIPS-patent rules, Bangladesh as a least developed country is permitted to produce and export patent drugs up to 2016 without paying royalty to the patent holder company. On the other hand, after 2005, India, the largest exporter of medicine to developing countries, has started to oblige the medicine patent law and paying royalty to the patent holding companies. So, Bangladesh has large potential to become competitive in the export market and can hold a substantial share. Based on this proposition, the pharmaceutical industry grasped large number of investments in the last decade. However, medicine export requires a complex and time-consuming procedure including permission of drug administration of importing country and visit to the factory by the drug administration of the importing country. So it will be around 2010 when these new plants will start exporting medicines.

This sector boasts a number of state-of-art companies. One of them in 2007 became the first Bangladeshi company to receive certification by the United Kingdom Medicine Registration Authority (UK MHRA). The company has already exported the first batch to the UK market after obtaining the certification. This approval will not only help that company to enter into the regulated pharmaceutical markets in other countries like France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Australia, South Africa



AP Bhaban at Armanitola



and the gulf countries – Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirate, Kuwait, etc in near future but also boost the image of the Bangladesh pharmaceutical industry in the world and thus assist other quality companies to obtain permission easily and increase the export penetration. Last fiscal year, 2006-07, total exports of the local pharmaceutical companies were only US \$ 28.12 million with a growth of 47 per cent. The major lacking of the industry is that it depends highly on raw materials import for medicine formulation; the industry imports 85 percent of the total required raw materials.

The new companies have intensified the competition in domestic market. As a result, the companies are regularly launching new and innovative products to capture more market share and at the same time to provide quality medication. Only one or two companies now expend for research and development in a limited scale and employ pharmacists, doctors, microbiologists, etc. for this purpose. Very recently, the large pharmaceutical companies have entered into the poultry and veterinary pharmaceutical market.

#### 4.4 Iron & Steel

The Iron and Steel Industry is related to the production of iron and its alloys, particularly those containing a small percentage of carbon. The differences between the various types of iron and steel are sometimes confusing because of the nomenclature used. Commercial iron contains more carbon than commercial steels. Cast iron, malleable cast iron and pig iron contain amounts of carbon varying from 2 to 4 percent. Steel, on the other hand, is an alloy of iron, carbon, and other elements. Steels of various types contain from 0.04 percent to 2.25 percent of carbon. There are, however, exceptions to this rule – for example, open-hearth iron and wrought iron contain only a few hundredths of 1 percent of carbon.

**History:** The ironsmiths of Bengal who used to produce articles of daily use in rural and urban centres began losing their professions with the introduction and expansion of the railways and the gradual rise in the quantity of imported iron and steel under colonial rule. European hard iron was more suitable for industrial establishments than the indigenous iron of the malleable type. Despite these limitations, some ironsmiths and entrepreneurs continued manufacturing certain products



Insite of a re-rolling mill

through indigenous process. The products included agricultural implements, knives, scissors, nut-crackers, daggers, steel trunks, iron-safes, dustbins, tubes, sugarcane-crushers and different types of light engineering machines.

The major companies that excelled in this branch of manufacturing were Sikdar & Co, Subal Factory, India Cutlery Mfg Co, Bhowani Eng Works, Maya Eng Works and Betjan & Co of Calcutta, House of Labourers and Pioneer Iron Works of Comilla, the Great Eastern Galvanising Works and Ghatak Iron Works of Chabbish-Parganas; KL Mukherjee, Hind Machineries (*sic*) Ltd and the India Machinery Co of Howrah. These firms manufactured a variety of machines like wood-cutting, peeling,



dipping, splint-levelling, various match-making machines, drilling, milling, grinding, lathe presses, shearing, printing, weighing, machines for cotton and jute mills, etc.

**Early Pioneers:** Iron & steel industries in Dhaka started with the establishment of the Sarma Iron Works initiated by Babu Rajendra Lal Sarma, a Zamindar, in 1906 and managed by Kanai Lal Karmakar with a capital of Rs. 25,000. Besides this private initiative, East Bengal Railway also had a workshop where petty repairs of railway engines, coaches and wagons were accomplished. After 1947, a large number of such industries flourished under the patronage of the Pakistan government Bengal Steel Mills, Dhaka Re-Rolling Mills, Rahim Metal Industries, Tejgaon Engineering Company, Modern Engineering Works and many others had started their operations. Also, the then Pakistan government established a large steel mill in Chittagong port in the public sector to produce iron and steel for railway, machine tools factories and shipyards, and foster industrial establishments. The mill had production capacity of 350,000 tons, employed about 4200 people and made with state-of-art technology of that period. The mill worked as a supplier of finished raw materials to local metal, re-rolling and engineering companies and thus reduced import dependency on finished raw materials.

**Present Status:** As soon as Bangladesh got independence, it inherited the large steel mill in Chittagong. The government included the mill under the supervision of the Steel and Engineering Corporation of Bangladesh that until now foresees the small and medium sized iron based engineering works owned by the government. This leads to bureaucratic red-tapism in importing iron ore and other raw materials, negligence in product innovation and above all rampant corruption which leads to significant drop of production in the largest steel mill of Bangladesh in the very first decade. Eventually, it hampered the growth of private sector in metal, re-rolling mills and engineering works.

However, as local demands were increasing significantly, some entrepreneurs came forward to invest in this sector. Thus the production levels grow quiet steadily. Major investments took place in re-rolling mills to produce deformed bar which is used in erecting buildings and bridges, in galvanised tin sheet production which is used to shed the homes, and in metal based products like metal pipes, bathroom fittings, etc. However, the production of Chittagong Steel Mills continued to decrease and ultimately shut down in 1997. This prompted many of the large companies to invest in finished raw material production. For example, Bangladesh Steel Re-Rolling Mills Ltd. (BSRM) which sourced billets from Chittagong Steel Mills started building their own continuous billet plant in the very same year with a production capacity of 60,000 m tons per annum. In 2004, the production capacity of billets was increased to 120,000 m tons per annum.

The shutting down of Chittagong Steel Mills also resulted into importation of entire steel requirement of the country for the engineering and automobile companies. Therefore, in 1998, the government undertook a policy – import duty is reduced on hot-rolled strip to 5% from 15% while import duty on cold-rolled strip remained at 15% – to promote private investment in steel production. The policy encouraged at least seven companies to invest in installing cold-roll steel mills. The country's total cold-rolled consumption was between 400,000 and 500,000 m tons per year. The first cold-rolling mill with 125,000 m tons per year production capacity was started by PHP Cold Rolling Mills in Chittagong in 1999. The other cold-rolling mill became operational in 1999 was Abul Khair Steel Products Ltd. with 60,000 m tons per year capacity which later expanded to 100,000 m tons per year

in 2001. RM Steel Mills, Karnaphuli Steel Mills, KIY steel Mills, S Alam Cold Rolled Steels Ltd and Moulana Ispat started cold-roll steel production from 2001 to 2003. Average production capacity of these companies is 80,000 m tons/year. The growth, innovation and diversifying – all these are taking place in this sector.

#### Steel sector

Bangladesh has about 295 manufacturing units. Of these, 293 are fully indigenously owned and two are foreign or joint ventures. The country's steel products include billets, finished long products like buyer rods, rebars, plain rounds, squares, plates, hot-rolled and cold-rolled coils and sheets and galvanised sheets.

Domestic demand for steel in 2003 was 4 million tons per annum (mtpa), and was estimated to be 5.1 mtpa in 2007. The ship breaking industry is the main source of raw material for the steel industry, since Bangladesh does not have a domestic source of iron ore, though it has about 2.5 billion tons of high-quality coal deposits.

Source: Bangladesh: Little development, great potential, Tata Services (2006)<sup>8</sup>

**Present Trends:** Even as early as 2002, the scrap of the outdated ships was the principal raw material source for re-rolling mills. The scenario changed as China entered into this market and frantically bought the outdated ships ensuring smooth supply of deformed steel bars to the mega constructions that was going on for Beijing Olympic 2008. Now the industry imports used irons from Central Asia and East European countries. This has increased the production cost of re-rolling mills around three times. Currently, Bangladesh meets 75 per cent of the scrap demand through import, while the rest comes from the local ship breaking industry, according to industry insiders.

Though sales price increased more than three times, the demand of deformed steel bars in domestic market has not slowed down. So, investments are increasing in this sector. For example, the work is going on for the establishment of the largest state-of-art re-rolling mill by Bangladesh Steel re-rolling Mills Ltd. (BSRM). The project started in 2005 and is scheduled to commence production in 2008. Some steel companies produce high quality CR coils and CRCA sheets and sell the output to the local market. In the cold roll sheets segment, the largest industrial houses are now taking interest. The major buyers of this steel are automobile industry, precision tubes, furniture and drum/barrel making companies. The large and high end technology producers prefer to export these steels. Some of them are highly successful in export. The major raw material for the production of cold rolled coils is hot rolled coils which are not produced in the country. The total requirement is met by imports from Japan, Korea, China, Russia and India.

#### 4.5 Tobacco

Tobacco, plant grown commercially for its leaves and stems, which are rolled into cigars, shredded for use in cigarettes and pipes, processed for chewing, or ground into snuff, a fine powder that is inhaled through the nose. Tobacco is the source of nicotine, an addictive drug.

**History:** Although tobacco had been fairly well-known in India for a long time, the British East India Company, with the object of increasing its exports to Europe took the initiative from 1829 to extend tobacco cultivation in Bengal, Madras and Burma. One of the elements of this economic penetration was the conversion of parts of Bihar by private firms such as Begg, Dunlop & Co and the Peninsular Tobacco Co into tobacco-producing zones. The first foreign cigarette company to

8 [http://www.tata.com/0\\_tata\\_worldwide/across\\_asia/articles/20060306\\_bangladesh.htm](http://www.tata.com/0_tata_worldwide/across_asia/articles/20060306_bangladesh.htm)



Tobacco plants

get its market in Bengal was probably W D & H O Wills. This company went into mass production of cigarettes in 1883 but its products remained beyond the reach of the common people of Bengal. The common people used to smoke bidi made by local tobacco companies.

Before World War II, bidi was not produced on a large-scale in cottage or small industry units. The smokers themselves used to make them at home. In betel-nut growing regions, the upper layer of betel-nut leaves called khui paper was used to wrap up dried and powdered tobacco leaves. During partition of Bengal in 1947, most tobaccos were imported from West Bengal. So the then Pakistan government established a tobacco station in Rangpur to boost up local production. Large scale tobacco production started in Rangpur and adjacent districts. Soon some cottage industries developed to make bidi. Mostly women and child workers are employed in those companies.

**Early Pioneers:** The first tobacco company in Bangladesh was Rangpur Tobacco Company established in 1907. It attained similar repute and prosperity like other tobacco companies of other parts of India such as India Cigarette Mfg Co Ltd of Murshidabad, the Naidu Cigarette Co of Howrah, AC Dutt & Co of Nadia, and the Globe Cigarette Co, the Bengal Cigarette Co, the National Tobacco Co and the East India Cigarette Mfg Co (1908) of Calcutta. One interesting fact about Rangpur Tobacco Co. is that at the beginning the banks refused to give it loans, so after few years of successful operation, the company started its own bank named Rangpur Loan Office.

**Present Status:** The tobacco industry in Bangladesh demonstrates a unique case where local entrepreneurs exhibited intelligence, foresight and investment ingenuity. People engaged in the

industry as managers or labourers can be acclaimed for their labouring habit, punctuality and indigenous skills. Among the initial success stories of the sector are Fakirchand Bidi Factory, Bhandari Bidi Factory, Abul Bidi Factory and Akij Bidi Factory.

Sheikh Akij, the owner of Akij Bidi Factory, made a significant contribution to the sector by striving to overcome the difficulty created by the stoppage of import of tendu leaf used to make quality bidi. He also trained local youths in the art of bidi making, which had undergone changes because of the introduction of paper wrapped bidi. The Akij group and many others successfully transformed their bidi making units into cigarette manufacturing ones. Most bidi entrepreneurs accumulate enough capital for diversifying their business in other sectors of the economy and later became leaders of established groups of industries. At present, about 15 local companies produce cigarettes.

**Present Trends:** Following the examples of the multinational cigarette companies in Bangladesh, the local companies have started contract farming for tobacco production. The intensified competition has enforced them to invest more on quality improvement.

The bidi factories have been working together with the principles of the International Labour Organization (ILO) since 2003 to uproot child labour from the industry and rehabilitate them in other sectors. In 2006, about 90% of the factories have declared their success in eliminating child labour permanently.

The leading local tobacco companies have been successfully exporting cigarettes since the last decade. Dhaka Tobacco Industries, producer of eight brands of cigarettes - Navy, Legend White, Five Star, Red & White, K2, Surma and Diamond - exports around 100 million cigarette sticks each year to Middle East countries, mainly UAE. Because of the use of cutting edge technologies in production, well-disciplined environment and efficiency, some multinational and national companies in south Asian companies now produce their branded cigarettes in these companies. On February 2008, the global tobacco leader Philip Morris audited the factory on Akij, the largest local company in tobacco business and signed a contract to produce Marlboro brand in the factory using imported roasted tobacco. Both the companies will make a franchise to market the brand in local market.<sup>9</sup>

#### 4.6 Leather

Leather is animal skin that has been chemically modified to produce a strong, flexible material that resists decay. Almost all the output of leather in Bangladesh is produced from cattle hides and goatskins. Leather is used for a wide range of products. The variety of skins and the way they are processed can produce leather as soft as cloth or as hard as a shoe sole. The process of using chemicals to turn skin into leather is called tanning.

**History:** The leather industry became organized in the 19th century when Dutch merchants started buying large number of processed leathers. Later British and German firms entered in the business and established some tanneries also. However, Indians own most tanneries and the principal centres of leather production were Calcutta and its suburbs, Dhaka, Pabna, Noakhali, Khulna and Jessore. The number of tanners and curriers exceeded 5000 in 1901. However, the suburbs chiefly used to supply primary processed skins and hides to Calcutta factories for further processing. In the first decade of this century, Babu Sachindra Nath Ghosh established the first complete processing factory

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9 [http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/search\\_index.php?page=detail\\_news&news\\_id=26598](http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/search_index.php?page=detail_news&news_id=26598)





Leather processing in the 1940s

with an authorised capital of Rs. 50,000. He received training on the technology from Madras. He sold the processed leathers among over 100 shoemakers at Lakshmibazar, Malitola and Nawabpur, who used to make new shoes as well as mend the old ones. The swadeshi movement of 1906 to 1911 gave great encouragement to the local leather industries. For example, Whiteman and Sons, the British firm, which used to import at least 25,000 rupees worth of English boots and shoes annually, abandoned their operation as the annual sales dropped to 100 rupees during the movement.

**Early Pioneers:** In response to the swadeshi movement, many entrepreneurs set up leather factories, introduced chrome tanning, and competed successfully with their foreign counterparts in various parts of India as well as Bengal. The major swadeshi factories of Bengal were Tanning Co (1910) of Pabna, Dhaka Tannery Works of Dhaka, Swadeshi Shoe Co of Barisal, and the Berhampore Leather Mfg Co (1910) of Murshidabad. Later during the Non-Cooperation Movement by the Indian Congress, the industry got greater policy and technological support from the government. Large number of cobblers had training of techniques of making modern shoes, which boosted the production and ensured sustainability of these tanneries.

After the partition of Bengal in 1947, Aziz Tanneries, Dhaka Tanneries, Taj Tannery and Pak Shoe Industries (capacity 5,400 pairs per annum), Dhaka Boot Factory (capacity 7,700 pairs per annum) started their operation in Dhaka. In 1962, a multinational company named Bata Shoe Factory established a shoe factory at Tongi with the highest ever capacity. Another multinational company also named Eastern Progressive Shoe Industries (EPSI) established its production plant in 1967 and started exporting footwear to Russia, Czechoslovakia and England. These two multinational companies jointly own the majority share of footwear market. EPSI abandoned its operation after 1971 and thus Bata Shoe emerged as the leading player.

**Present Status:** An important feature of the leather sector is that it has been developed entirely by the private sector. All leather sector firms are owned by the private sector and a few units belong to multinational companies. In the 1970s, the leather industry was developed as a major export product with the generous support from the government in terms of cash incentive, tax holiday and liberal bank credit. In the 1970s, virtually the entire amount of leather exports comprised of wet blue. In the next decade, the sector advanced one step further - the production and export of crust/finished leather. The export of raw hide and skin was virtually stopped by 1990. Raw leather came under the prohibited list of exports in the Export Policy 1995-97.

Another notable positive development has been the increase in the growth of the footwear exports in the 1990s. The footwear export showed remarkable performance - footwear exports increased to over \$19 million in 1993-94 from only around \$ 2.5 million in 1990-91, and moved up to over \$51 million in 1999-2000. The major importing countries are Italy, Japan, Hong Kong, Spain, Germany, UK and USA. As of 2001, more than 30% of the leather is exported to Italy, followed by Hong Kong (26.97%) and Japan (7.77%). With regard to the export market of footwear, Japan is the largest importer of footwear from Bangladesh followed by UK and Italy. According to the Ministry of Finance, total export earnings from the leather sector increased from \$144 million to \$255.8 million in between 1991-92 and 2001-02.

The largest number of leather enterprises in Bangladesh are small in size - employing not more than 50 persons. Direct employment opportunities increased notably as the sector moved into footwear production. At present, about 30,000 persons are directly employed in the leather sector firms. Of the total labour in footwear factories, about two-third are women. Recently government asked the leather industries to relocate the plants in specified areas equipped with high tech effluent treatment plant to minimize the environmental and health hazards to neighbouring people.

Distribution of export oriented leather firms by location						
Type of firm	Inside EPZ		Outside EPZ			Total
	Dhaka	Chittagong	Dhaka	Chittagong	Khulna	
Leather processing	1	-	90	4	1	96
Footwear	3	1	13	9	-	26
Leather goods	1	-	7	1	-	9
Total	5	1	110	14	1	131

Source: GTZ Progress Website

**Present Trends:** A bright prospect is emerging for the leather industry. Until now, the industry has grown because of cheap labour cost, lenient environmental regulations and increasing production of livestock by the mass of poverty-prone households. Yet the country overwhelmingly depends on processed leather export to China, Italy and Japan where they are finally turned into leather products – footwear, bags, clothes and other clothing items. China is the world's largest manufacturer and exporter of footwear and leather goods. On 7 October 2006, EU imposed 10 to 16.5 percent antidumping duties on footwear made by China and Vietnam. This forced many Chinese and Taiwanese companies to consider for moving the production in other countries. In January 2007, Paolo footwear, a Chinese and Japanese footwear joint venture, invested around \$6.6 million in Karnaphuli EPZ, Chittagong. This factory is now on the process of importing and setting up machineries and supposedly started operation from June 2008. They already made an agreement with Apex, the largest leather processing house of the country, to supply the necessary processed leathers.

However, the other foreign footwear companies did not come to Bangladesh due to political reasons and lack of desired service facilities at Chittagong port. They shifted the production mostly to India. So it seems that the country lost the golden opportunity to attract FDI in footwear but in other way it finally produced a boon for the local entrepreneurs. The continuous appreciation of Indian rupees against US dollar in last year (2007) forced most of these factories in India to remain closed. Many of our local entrepreneurs - Akij group, Bay Leather, Leatherex Footwear, Crescent footwear, Dhaka Footwear, etc. – cashed this opportunity by establishing footwear units in 2007. This boosted the price of processed leather in the country which in turn stopped smuggling raw hides to India and made available to leather processing houses. Thus the international market force is positively affecting in shaping the leather industry of the country. International trade experts assume that this positive market force will continue for at least 5 to 8 years. So, it has now become the duty of the private sector, economists, trade experts and government to sit together and shape the requisite policy to foster the sector as the next success story for the country.

The leather sector is also in the process of shifting the industries from Hazaribagh, Dhaka to Savar. As per plan, the companies have to complete the move within the next two years. The industries, for smooth and speedy shifting, have been urging long for soft loans to the government for relocation purposes.

#### **4.7 Banks**

Banking is the business of providing financial services to consumers and businesses. The basic services a bank provides are opening accounts to store money and make payments; savings accounts and time deposits can be used to save money for future use; loans that consumers and businesses can use to purchase goods and services; and basic cash management services such as check cashing and foreign currency exchange.

**History:** The first bank in Bengal was Hindustan Bank established in 1700 at Calcutta. But the bank suffered great loss because of hostile activities perpetuated by the East India Company and the British rulers. The decline in banking brought some instability in the economy of that time and, upon quick realisation of the fact, the British set up the English Agency House. Established in 1784, the Bengal Bank was the first British-patronised modern bank in India. Dhaka Bank started to operate as a commercial bank in 1806. The Bengal Bank opened its first branch in Dhaka by purchasing Dhaka Bank in 1862. In 1873, it opened its two branches in Sirajganj and Chittagong. Another branch of Bengal Bank was opened in Chandpur in 1900. Six branches of Bengal Bank were in operation in the Bangladesh region until the partition of India in 1947 and these branches were located in Dhaka, Chittagong, Mymensingh, Rangpur, Chandpur and Narayanganj.

The three Presidential banks that followed the establishment of the Bengal Bank were the Bank of Calcutta (1806), Bank of Bombay (1840) and Bank of Madras (1843). Combining these three banks, the Imperial Bank of India was set up in 1921. The Reserve Bank of India came into existence in 1935. Other banking institutions established in East Bengal during the British period were the loan offices at Faridpur (1865), Bogra (1872), Barisal (1873), Mymensingh (1873), Nasirabad (1875), Jessore (1876), Munshiganj (1876), Dhaka (1878), Sylhet (1881), Pabna (1882), Kishorganj (1883), Noakhali (1885), Khulna (1887), Madaripur (1887), Tangail (1887), Nilphamari (1894) and Rangpur (1894). Major Indian banks of the period having branches in this territory were the National Bank of India (1864), Bengal Central Bank (1918), New Standard Bank





Bangladesh Bank

Kurigram Bank (1887), Kumarkhali Bank (1896), Mahaluxmi Bank, Chittagong (1910), Dinajpur Bank (1914), Comilla Banking Corporation (1914) and Comilla Union Bank (1922) - were established to serve the requirement of the local community. Some of these banks had their branches in Dhaka.

During the Pakistan regime, only two of the 36 private commercial banks are owned by Bangladeshi business groups. They are the Eastern Mercantile Bank (now Pubali Bank) and Eastern Banking Corporation (now Uttara Bank), established in 1959 and 1965 respectively. Both of the banks maintain their headquarters in Dhaka.

**Present Status:** Soon after independence, Bangladesh Bank, the central bank of the country, was set up under the Bangladesh Bank Order 1972. With many of its responsibilities, the Bangladesh Bank also has the responsibility of overseeing and regulating the country's banking system. For example, to conduct banking in Bangladesh, all banks have to obtain licenses from the Bangladesh Bank. IFIC was the first private sector bank owned by a local businessman in Bangladesh. It was established in 1976 by the Islam group, the then largest business house in Bangladesh. A number of private initiatives followed – Arab Bangladesh Bank in 1982, Islami Bank Bangladesh Ltd, United Commercial Bank, City Bank and National Bank in 1983, and Al Baraka Bank in 1987.

The government established Bangladesh Krishi Bank (1973) and Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank (established in 1987 with branches of Bangladesh Krishi Bank in Rajshahi division) to foster

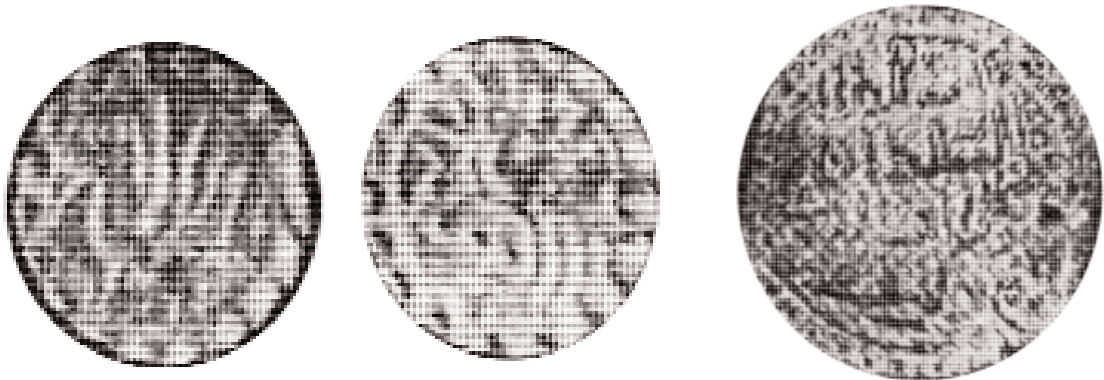
(1920), Imperial Bank of India (1921), Pioneer Bank (1923), Bank of Commerce (1929), United Industrial Bank (1940), Habib Bank (1941) and United Commercial Bank (1942). In 1901 there were only 25 bank branches, the number grew to 668 in 1946. Creation of Pakistan was a deterrent for this sector as was evidenced by the closure of bank branches which came down to 148 in 1950. The State Bank of Pakistan was established in 1948. Soon many Pakistanis began establishing private banks. Total number of commercial banks rose to 36. Of them, only two banks are owned by Bangladeshi business groups - the Eastern Mercantile Bank (now Pubali Bank) and Eastern Banking Corporation (now Uttara Bank). Many of these banks opened branch offices in Dhaka and Chittagong. As a result, in 1965 the number of branches rose again to 545. In subsequent years, these banks spread branches to other business centres of Bangladesh which increased the number of bank branches to 1,025 in 1970.

**Early Pioneers:** Apart from the branches of Indian and foreign banks, financial institutions and loan offices, a few localized banks -





Punch-marked Silver coins discovered at Wari-Bateswar



Gold coins of the Gupta era  
found at Mulchar, Bikrampur

Silver coin (1527) of Nasrat Shah  
found at Panchdona, Narshingdi



Silver coins (1605) found at Bhatpara, Narshingdi



Gold coin was in force in Dhaka during the Mughal period



A Gold coin with the portrait of Emperor Jahangir



A portrait of Queen Victoria on a Gold coin



The other side of the coin



Half Anna coin of East India Company minted in 1616



The other side of the coin



Coins of East India Company



Coins of the British-India era

Coins of the Pakistan era



Coins of Bangladesh



agricultural development in rural areas, Bangladesh Shilpa Bank (1972) to finance industrial development, and Employment Bank (1997) for supporting unemployed youths in their self-employment activities.

In 1991 Bangladesh Bank circulated a new Bank Companies Act with the direction and suggestion by the IMF and World Bank under financial sector reform program. Eastern Bank and National Credit and Commerce Bank got license under this new guideline in 1992 and 1993 respectively. The Bank Companies Act 1991 was further modified in 1995 and banks are asked to be registered with the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies under the Companies Act 1994, and collect Certificate of Incorporation. Moreover, to collect capital through public offerings of shares, intending banks have to obtain permission from the country's Securities and Exchange Commission and follow their suggestion in restructuring the financial accounting system. This facilitated the creation of more private banks in the next decade - Prime Bank (1995), South-East Bank (1995), Dhaka Bank (1995), Al-Arafah Islami Bank (1995), Social Investment Bank (1995), Premier Bank (1996), Dutch-Bangla Bank (1996), Mercantile Bank (1999), Standard Bank (1999), One Bank (1999), Export Import Bank (1999), Bangladesh Commerce Bank (1999), Mutual Trust Bank (1999), Trust Bank (1999), Bank Asia (1999) and First Security Bank (1999). The country had 6 nationalised commercial banks (NCB) until 1983, when one of them, the Rupali Bank was denationalised. Another government bank, the Pubali Bank, was denationalised in 1986. Recently Rupali Bank has also been denationalized and the remaining 3 NCBs are transformed into public limited companies. In addition to that, many foreign banks have branches in Bangladesh - Standard Chartered Bank, Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC), State Bank of India, Credit Agricole Indosuez, National Bank of Pakistan, Citibank NA, Habib Bank, Hanvit Bank, etc.

There is no independent merchant bank, investment bank or exchange bank in Bangladesh. However, some commercial banks carry out merchant banking in addition to their usual banking activities. The Securities and Exchange Commission of the country issued permission to 25 financial institutions to do merchant banking. Commercial and specialised banks invest their funds in different sectors of the economy. A total of 22 private leasing companies and financial institutions were given permission to conduct investment activities in various sectors of the economy. Some branches of both nationalised and private commercial banks have been permitted to conduct Foreign Exchange business under the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act 1947. Apart from the authorised dealers, more than 400 Money Changers throughout the country are engaged in the buying and selling of foreign exchange.

In 2005 the nationalized commercial banks (NCBs) held 37.4 percent of the total industry assets as against 39.6 percent in 2004. Evidently, NCBs' domination in this area is showing a declining trend, while Private Commercial Banks (PCB) share rose to 45.6 percent in 2005 as against 43.5 percent in 2004. The foreign commercial banks held 7.3 percent of the industry assets in 2005, 0.1 percentage point increase over the previous year. The Government owned development financial Institutions (DFIs) shares of assets remained unchanged at 9.7 percent in 2005.

**Present Trends:** The private banks attracted large number of customers with prompt service and introduction of various innovative savings schemes including instalment based savings plan, monthly profit-based deposit scheme, special deposit scheme, educational savings plan, variable term deposit scheme, etc. The private banks also offer competitive interest rate depending on time and deposited amount by depositors.



In terms of lending, the private banks make available the consumer loan and also simplified the loan application procedure. This encouraged a huge number of middle-class family to take loans from private banks. Another innovative approach by the private banks is making syndicate to provide large amount of loan to finance large industrial ventures.

Banking System Structure												
(Bilion Taka)												
Bank types	2005						2006					
	No. of banks	No. of branches	Total asset	% of industry assets	deposits	% of deposits	No. of banks	No. of branches	Total asset	% of industry assets	deposits	% of deposits
NCBs	4	3386	763.1	37.4	621.3	40.0	4	3384	786.7	32.7	654.1	35.2
DFIs	5	1340	197.2	9.7	89.5	5.8	5	1354	187.2	7.8	100.2	5.4
PCBs	30	1635	934.3	45.6	731.3	47.0	30	1776	1147.8	47.7	955.5	51.3
FCBs	9	41	148.2	7.3	112.6	7.2	9	48	284.9	11.8	150.8	8.1
Total	48	6402	2042.8	100.0	1554.7	100.0	48	6562	2406.7	100.0	1860.6	100.0
Source: Annual Report: 2006-07, Bangladesh Bank.												

Source: Annual Report: 2006-07, Bangladesh Bank.

Many of the private banks started on-line banking facility and one of them also enabled account balance enquiry through mobile SMS service. The private banks also popularized credit card and debit card usage by opening cash withdrawing outlets (ATM) at various commercially important locations. Some of them also introduced Islami banking service which is run according to the code of Sharia law. It encouraged a large number of customers to shift their account into such s system.

#### 4.8 Insurance

Insurance is a legal contract that protects people from the financial costs resulting from loss of life, loss of health, lawsuits, or property damage. Insurance provides a means for individuals and societies to cope with some of the risks faced in everyday life. People purchase contracts of insurance, called policies, from a variety of insurance organizations.

**History:** During British rule in India, some insurance companies started business in both life and general insurance scheme. Insurance business gained momentum in Bangladesh during the Pakistan period 1947-1971 – in total 49 insurance companies were operating. These companies were of various origins: British, Australian, Indian, West Pakistani and local. Of the 49, 10 insurance companies had their head offices in Bangladesh, the then East Pakistan, 27 in Pakistan, and the rest elsewhere in the world. Most of these companies operate with limited liability. Some companies were specialised in particular class of business, while others were offering services to multiple business and customers.

**Present Status:** The government of Bangladesh nationalised the insurance industry in 1972 by the Bangladesh Insurance (Nationalisation) Order 1972. By virtue of this order, except the postal life insurance and foreign life insurance companies, all insurance companies and organisations transacting insurance business in the country were placed in the public sector under five corporations. These corporations were: Jatiya Bima Corporation, Tista Bima Corporation, Karnafuli Bima Corporation, Rupsa Jiban Bima Corporation and Surma Jiban Bima Corporation.



Jiban Bima Bhaban

top outweighed the advantages of limited competition. Consequently, on 14 May 1973, a restructuring was made under the Insurance Corporations Act 1973. Following the Act, in place of five corporations the government formed two: Sadharan Bima Corporation for general business and Jiban Bima Corporation for life business. Accordingly, Jiban Bima Corporation took over the undertakings of Surma and Rupsa Jiban Bima Corporation, and Karnafuli and Tista Bima Corporation were integrated with Sadharan Bima Corporation. In that year, the government again decided to merge Bangladesh Jatiya Bima Corporation with the newly formed Sadharan Bima Corporation. So, after 1973, only Sadharan Bima Corporation became the only player in insurance business.

The monopoly of Sadharan Bima Corporation ended when the Insurance Corporations Act 1973 was amended in 1984 to allow insurance companies in the private sector. The new Act allowed floating of insurance companies, both life and general, in the private sector subject to certain restrictions regarding business operations and reinsurance. The Act, however, made it a requirement for the private sector insurance companies to obtain 100% reinsurance protection from the Sadharan Bima Corporation. This virtually turned Sadharan Bima Corporation into a reinsurance organisation, in addition to its usual activities as a direct insurer. The restrictions regarding business placement were considered not congenial to the development of private sector business in insurance. So, the government modified the system through promulgation of the Insurance Corporations (Amendment) Act 1990. The changes allowed private sector insurance companies to underwrite 50% of the insurance business with Sadharan Bima Corporation and to place up the rest 50% with any reinsurer of their choice, at home or abroad.

The Jatiya Bima Corporation was an apex corporation only to supervise and control the activities of the other insurance corporations. Tista and Karnafuli Bima Corporations offered general insurances, while Rupsa and Surma offered life insurance. The postal life insurance business and the life insurance business by foreign companies was still allowed but in a limited scale. American Life Insurance Company continued to operate in the life sector, while three other foreign life insurance companies continued to operate only for servicing their old policies issued during Pakistan days.

But the burden of administrative expenses incurred in maintaining two corporations on each front of life and general and an apex institution at the

The policy adopted in the 1980s paved the way for a number of insurers to emerge in the private sector. This resulted in a substantial growth of premium incomes, competition, improvement in services, and introduction of newer types of business in wider fields hitherto untapped. Prior to privatisation, the yearly gross premium volume of the country was approximately Tk. 900 million in general insurance businesses and approximately Tk. 800 million in life insurance business. In 2000, premium incomes increased to Tk. 4,000 million in general insurance business and Tk. 5,000 million in life insurance business.

Further liberalization of policies related to insurance companies in 2000<sup>10</sup>

The Section 27, Insurance (Amendment) Act 2000 restricted the mandatory investments limits of insurance companies in government securities and government approved securities to only 30% of their total investment funds. Earlier the insurance companies in Bangladesh could invest their insurance funds only in Government and Government approved securities. Usually, the insurance companies used to invest their funds in National Savings Certificates (NSCs). According to this new law, the insurance companies are permitted to invest up to 70% of their funds into any other investments. However, the Section 20B Trusts (Amendment) Act 2000 permits private pensions and provident funds to invest up to 25% in the capital market.

As of now, a total of 60 insurance companies are operating in Bangladesh - of these companies, 57 are private, two state-owned and one is foreign. Insurers of the country now conduct almost all types of general and life insurance, except crop insurance and export credit guarantee insurance, which are available only with the Sadharan Bima Corporation.

**Present Trends:** The private insurance companies have changed the scenario of insurance business just in one decade. Earlier only a few who lived in Dhaka and divisional headquarters know about the insurance policies. Now, the private insurance companies have increased their outreach at village level and are now providing door-to-door service to them. One will find many villagers who have bought insurance policies of private insurance companies which was unimaginable even a few years ago.

Besides the conventional insurance schemes, the private companies have customized the insurance policies based on customer's economic situation and their necessity. Some of them are offering Islamic insurance policies too. Each company employs a large number of insurance agents who persuade the customers to buy policies and collect monthly instalment fee. So, the industry in total employs around 60 thousand people as insurance agents, office administrators, risk assessors and business managers.

#### 4.9 Real Estate/Housing

Real Estate, in a broad definition, is land and everything made permanently a part thereof, and the nature and extent of one's interest therein. In law, the word real, as it relates to property, means land as distinguished from personal property; and estate is defined as the interest one has in property. In Bangladesh, this industry can be broadly classified into two types – (i) land development, and (ii) apartment construction.

**History:** Developments in the housing sector in Bangladesh between 1947 and 1971 may be characterised by a fast growth of urban residents and modern houses in towns with amenities like

<sup>10</sup> Regulating institutional investments for capital market development, Barrister Tureen Afroz, October 10, 2004. <http://www.thedailystar.net/law/2004/10/02/index.htm>



Zahirul Islam, a pioneer in real estate business

electricity and running water supply. In spite of urbanisation, the psychology of the people in general did not change much and most people continued to prefer living in individual houses rather than in flats of multi-storied buildings. Therefore, most housing development projects are focused into land development projects. The East Pakistan government took a few projects of developing land in the large cities, especially Dhaka and Chittagong, which resulted in organised residential areas for the urban elite. In 1952, the government enacted House Building Finance Corporation Act XVIII and soon established a public company to provide easy loans for purchase of lands for housing purposes and construction of residential buildings.

**Early Pioneers:** Eastern Housing Ltd. is the first private company in real estate business in Bangladesh. It was incorporated in 1964 as a private limited company. The first project undertaken in 1965 was to develop large part of Pallabi, Mirpur as a residential area. Soon another company, Free School Street Property, followed similar business but in a limited scale.

**Present Status:** After independence, Dhaka becomes the centre of economic activities. So, each year an increasing number of people migrated to Dhaka. Mass migration resulted in acute shortage of housing land and increasing of land prices in many folds. The cost of construction materials has also increased. Eastern Housing Ltd. took this opportunity to promote flat/apartment concepts for future housing. They erected several multi-storied apartments in various parts of Dhaka. It was a business success. Quickly other companies also entered in this business. During the 1970s there



Bangladesh House Building Finance Corporation





Dhaka Improvement Trust

were fewer than 5 companies engaged in this business. In 1988 there were 42 such developers working in Dhaka and now, as of 2006, there were about 260 companies engaged in this business. The trend of apartment as housing gained considerable momentum in the 1990s. However, land development projects were also continuing side by side with apartment business. Since land development requires large investment and provides return in long term, the large business houses have mostly invested in this business.

From a city of a half a million people in the year 1971, Dhaka now houses of around 13 million people and the number is growing everyday. So, there is much opportunity to grow in this sector. In last 20 years, some 56 thousands apartments were built and delivered by the real estate companies. Currently per annum outputs of apartment and land plot units are 5500-6500 and 4500-5500 respectively. Annual turnover of this sector is Tk. 1,250 crore and over 15 lakh people are directly employed in this sector. The sector's contribution to National GDP is 12-14%.

In 1973, the government set up a financial institution, Bangladesh House Building Finance Corporation (BHBFC), under President's Order No. 7 of 1973. Its sole objective is to provide credit facilities for construction, repair and renovation of dwelling houses and apartments in cities, towns and other urban areas. All inherited assets and liabilities of the erstwhile House Building Finance Corporation were vested in the reconstituted BHBFC. In 1973, the paid up capital of BHBFC was Tk 100 million, which increased to 972 million in 2000. However, many people avoid BHBFC because of its cumbersome rules, red-tapism and bribing practice. Therefore, a number of private



housing finance companies like Delta Brac Housing Finance Corporation Ltd. (DBH), National Housing Finance and Investment Limited (NHFIL), etc. entered in this sector in 1990s and the early 2000s. Their success encouraged the private banks to offer long term housing loans further accelerating the housing sector.

**REHAB:** With the number of companies increasing gradually, various problems concerning the housing sector cropped up requiring early solution. At this stage it was necessary to form a trade association of the real estate developers to protect the overall interests of the sector. To strengthen the role of the real estate sector Real Estate & Housing Association of Bangladesh (REHAB) was formed with only 11 members in 1991. The objective of REHAB was to promote the formal private sector Real Estate Development in Bangladesh.

The total number of present membership of REHAB stands at 361 developers. All major institutionalised developers are members of this organization. REHAB is also the "A Class"

member of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI). Since 2001, each year REHAB organizes colourful event 'REHAB Housing Fair' in Bangladesh for the member developers, financial institutions and building material providers. To further facilitate the growth of Real Estate Sector, REHAB organized housing fairs in UK and US for the expatriate Bangladeshis to buy apartments, land and commercial spaces in Bangladesh.

#### REHAB at a Glance

Year of Establishment	:	1991
No. of Member in 1991	:	11
No. of Member in 2008 (January)	:	361
No of Apt. units delivered by the Developer in last 20 years	:	56,000 (Approx.)
No. of Apt. units Delivered by REHAB Members per year (2004)	:	5500-6500 Units
No. of Plot units Delivered by the Developer per year	:	4500-5500 Units
Approx. turnover per year	:	Tk.12.50 Billion
Revenue to Govt:	:	Tk.1.00 Billion
<b>Direct Employment</b>		
Architects	:	400
Graduate Engineer	:	2000
Diploma Engineer	:	8000
Management Official	:	14000
Direct Labour (skilled & unskilled)	:	1.5 Million
Contribution to GDP	:	12 -14 %

Source: REHAB Website

**Present Trends:** Many of the land development projects that started during the last five to six years are now in standstill due to the controversial water body conservation act. There are great anomalies between the Dhaka master plan map and the water body conservation act. On the other hand, the government land development authority, RAJUK, acquired water bodies, filled those and developed model towns on them. This process of RAJUK is still ongoing but this was not challenged by the water conservation act, as it is a government authority. Lack of a comprehensive policy and guidelines about land development business have turned the sector into standstill.

Private land development companies have also advanced in designing the land development – they now design an entire gamut of housing including the development of apartment blocks, recreational facilities, schools, hospitals, parks, commercial and in-complex shopping centres. The land development companies no longer remained confined in Dhaka and Chittagong but increasingly spreading to almost every district in Bangladesh.

Apartment construction has achieved tremendous growth in last five years but slowed down in the recent year because of two reasons: (i) the highest ever but still growing price of iron rod, and (ii) changing socio-political and economic scenario in Bangladesh. The shocking news is that iron ore price is still increasing in the international market and analysts predict that this year price of iron ore will increase about 60% than last year. Secondly, the government has planned a new scheme titled 'Reinvestment Scheme in Housing Sector'. According to this policy, an applicant can apply for loan to the maximum amount of Tk 40 lakh for 5 to 15 years. Location of flats, prospective income from house rent, monthly income of applicants or guarantors, other incomes and social status of potential borrowers will be considered while sanctioning loans. The intending borrowers will have to make 20 percent down payment to buy apartments. Initially, the credit facility will be available for prospective flat buyers in Dhaka and Chittagong metropolitan areas. The government owned housing finance company BHBFC, public and private commercial banks, and other private housing financial institutions are disbursing this loan. The total amount of the three-year project is Tk 300 crore. Bangladesh Bank will channel Tk 100 crore each year in the next three years to the housing scheme.

#### 4.10 Telecom

Telecommunications devices and systems transmit electronic or optical signals across long distances. Telecommunications enable people around the world to contact one another, to access information instantly, and to communicate from remote areas. Telecommunications usually involve a sender of information and one or more recipients linked by a technology, such as a telephone system or mobile system that transmits information from one place to another. Now, it has become the key medium for broadcasting news, data, information and entertainment.

**Present Status:** private telecom sector has no long historical perspective in Bangladesh; rather it is a very new and booming sector. Private entrepreneurs were allowed in Bangladesh only to provide telephone and e-mail service as operators in 1989. Through that process, Bangladesh Rural Telecom Authority was the first private company to get license from the government in 1989 to operate and maintain digital phone exchanges in 200 upazilas. Sheba Telecom (Pvt) Ltd. (now Banglalink) was granted license in the same year to operate in the rural areas of 199 upazilas, which later, in 1996, extended to allow cellular phone services.

Pacific Bangladesh Telephone Ltd. is another private enterprise that got license in 1989 to operate cellular/mobile phone service and thus became the first company in mobile telecommunication.



Telephone old set

The company provides a full array of fix and mobile services using CDMA technology. However, because of high call costs, only the wealthy people can afford the service. Mobile telecommunication are within the reach of general people. The country opened the mobile communication sector to international investors in 1996 and permitted Grameen Phone and Aktel to operate. Increased competition decreased the cost of having a mobile phone connection as well as call charge. This has attracted large number of consumers to use mobile. The market has been growing rapidly and soon other international investors stepped in. Orascom and Warid entered in the market in 2004 and 2006 respectively.

Experiencing the success of private mobile operators, Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) in 2003 decided to open up fixed-line phones to private companies. Up to now, BTRC has issued licence to 15 private operators of which 11 are eligible to operate all over the country. They are Ranks Telecom Ltd, Bangla Phone Ltd, Tele Barta Ltd, GEP Telecom Ltd, Peoples Telecommunication and Information Service Ltd, One Tel Communication Ltd, Dhaka Telephone Company Ltd, Square Informatix Ltd, National Telecom Ltd, SA Telecom System Ltd and Nextel Telecom Ltd. The privatization program also started for international calls. In August 2007, BTRC announced a policy on international telecommunications service which allows the private sector to build international gateways to route overseas call to and from Bangladesh.

**Growth Trends<sup>11</sup>:** Bangladesh followed a sequential strategy in liberalising the mobile phone sector. During 1993-1996, mobile phone customers could not reap the benefits of competition as the market was monopolised by a single company, Pacific Bangladesh Telecom Ltd. Naturally, mobile phone charges were high in this period.

However, with the commissioning of mobile phone service by Grameen Phone Limited and Aktel in 1996, the situation started to improve in terms of price reduction and quality. The period 1997-2004 was characterized by Grameen Phone's dominance. Grameen Phone Limited quickly grabbed the majority market share because of its widespread social network (Grameen Phone is a sister organisation of Grameen Bank), and by dint of its high quality network and innovative marketing skills.

During 1997-2004, the outcome of competition was suboptimal due to the dominance of one company, but the arrival of Banglalink in the mobile phone market brought immense price competition. The intensity of competition came as a blessing for the customers. Call charges, which were once very high, went down significantly. The call charges now range between Tk.0.25-2.00/minute. Earlier this was in the range of Tk.5-8 before Banglalink's arrival in 2005.

Moreover, operators now provide a variety of services and promotional packages such as FNF scheme, off-peak rate, free talk time for new connection, loyalty discount on airtime, free sim

11 Liberalisation of the mobile phone sector in Bangladesh, Mohammad Abu Yusuf and Quamrul Alam, Date – 15 March, 2008. <http://www.thedailystar.net/story.php?id=11652>





Telephone Bhaban

replacement, club magnate service, "Zem Fun," "pulse billing," etc. Liberalisation of the sector greatly enhanced tele-density of the country. In 2008, the total tele-density (fixed + mobile phone) stood at 16%, which was only 0.30 in 1998 and 0.85 in 2005. The present tele-density is still very low compared with global average tele-density of 50 %.

Availability of the mobile phone has also forced the public sector fixed-telephony provider, BTTB, to adjust its pricing policy. Due to competitive pressures from mobile phones, BTTB recently lowered charges on its different services. The NWD charge has been halved to Tk 1.5 a minute (considering the entire Bangladesh as one zone). Besides, it has also reduced monthly line rent, reinstallation line charge, name and number charge. BTTB land phone users surrendered 40,000 lines in two years (The Daily Star, October 26; Dainik Nayadiganto, October 22). Indeed, the rise of mobile phone is eating away at BTTB's core business of fixed-line voice telephony.

Mobile phones have created entrepreneurship among the people. Grameen Phone's VPP brought revolutionary changes in the lives of rural people. Even the village women now can earn their livelihood through co-modification of a mobile phone. It has also mitigated the social costs by helping wage earners and others who work away from their relatives to be in touch with their beloved and relatives. A recent study reveals that the sector has created 240,000 jobs. The mobile phone sector also earns significant amount of Value Added Tax (VAT) for the government, generating Tk.1189.85 crore in FY 2006-07. On balance, the liberalisation of the mobile phone sector has contributed significantly to the socio-economic development of the country. Providing necessary interconnection facilities for mobile phone operators and addressing other problems of the sector are, therefore, of utmost importance.

The private fixed phone operators have started providing service from early 2007. However, most of their networks are still in the construction phase. Through an aggressive marketing strategy and competitive price, they already began replacing BTTB phones and in some cases mobile also in the phone booths and homes. Also, they are getting new customers who do not have phone in their house. They are also providing Internet service through the phone line to make the phone use worthy. It is estimated that these companies will be able to bring 300,000 subscribers under their network within 2009.

#### 4.11 Cement Industry

In the construction sector, cement usually refers to a finely powdered, manufactured substance consisting of gypsum plaster or portland cement that hardens and adheres after being mixed with water.

**History:** During the Pakistan era, most of the public investments in cement factories were made in West Pakistan. There were 19 cement factories in entire Pakistan of which only 3 fell in Bangladesh territory. At the primary stage cement was manufactured from imported clinkers but exploration of limestone in Sylhet shifted the industry into local manufacturing, using locally available raw materials.

**Early Pioneers:** Chhatak Cement Factory is the first cement factory and remained the largest for many years. It has integrated cement technology and used local limestone as raw material and natural gas as fuel. The total installed capacity was 270,000 tons a year.

**Present Status:** A faster growth in demand for cement has been observed since the mid-1980s, especially with the implementation of large infrastructure projects, increased pace of urbanisation, construction of apartment buildings and multi-storeyed shopping complexes in urban areas, and a



A cement factory

shift in the taste of moneyed rural people for modern houses. However, the cement industry did not developed because of government price control and unfavourable import duty on clinker. In 1990, the government withdrew the price control and set a favourable tax for importation of clinker. The entrepreneurs took this opportunity and heavily invested in setting cement plants. All these companies produce cements by grinding imported clinkers. The clinker is imported from India, Thailand, Malaysia and China.

In 1997, there were 10 cement manufacturing plants. The number doubled in 2000 and reached as many as 69 in 2005 with a total production capacity of 17 million tons. This shows the entrepreneur's increasing interest in the cement industry, and therefore they started setting up their own grinding mills in the hope of making profit. Hyundai was the first multinational company to start up a local factory primarily to fulfill the demand of Jamuna Bridge. Many multinational companies and entrepreneurs (Lafarge, Holcim, Heidelberg [Scancem], Cemex, etc.) also started setting up their plants in the country because of the favourable duty structure imposed by the government for local production. Some multinationals soon started to acquire other companies to ensure greater market share. Holcim acquired Hyundai cement (Bangladesh) Ltd. in 2000 and United Cement and Saiham Cement in 2004. Heidelberg cement acquired 51% stake in Chittagong Cement Clinker Grinding Co Ltd.

The industry moved to a new level when Lafarge Surma cement, the French company, started construction of 1.2 million tons per annum in a factory at Sunamgonj district in September 2003. The factory started producing cement clinkers in 2006. Thus local companies no longer required importing clinker from other countries. However, large investments turned the sector into a serious over supply problem. To utilize this excess capacity, industries turned to neighbouring countries, India and Sri Lanka, to export cement.

Production capacity, actual production and demand in the cement industry

Year	No. of plants	Production Capacity	Actual production	Demand
1997	10	1895	1013	3335
1998	13	2210	1240	3590
1999	15	2845	2085	4450
2000	20	4625	3580	5316
2001	50	9657	5005	5526
2002	61	13557	7281	5913
2003	65	13887	7384	6327
2004	68	15837		6770
2005	69	17037		7243

Source: 'Facing the Challenge', by G.N. Murad, August 2003, World Cement, Vol 33, p 53-59.

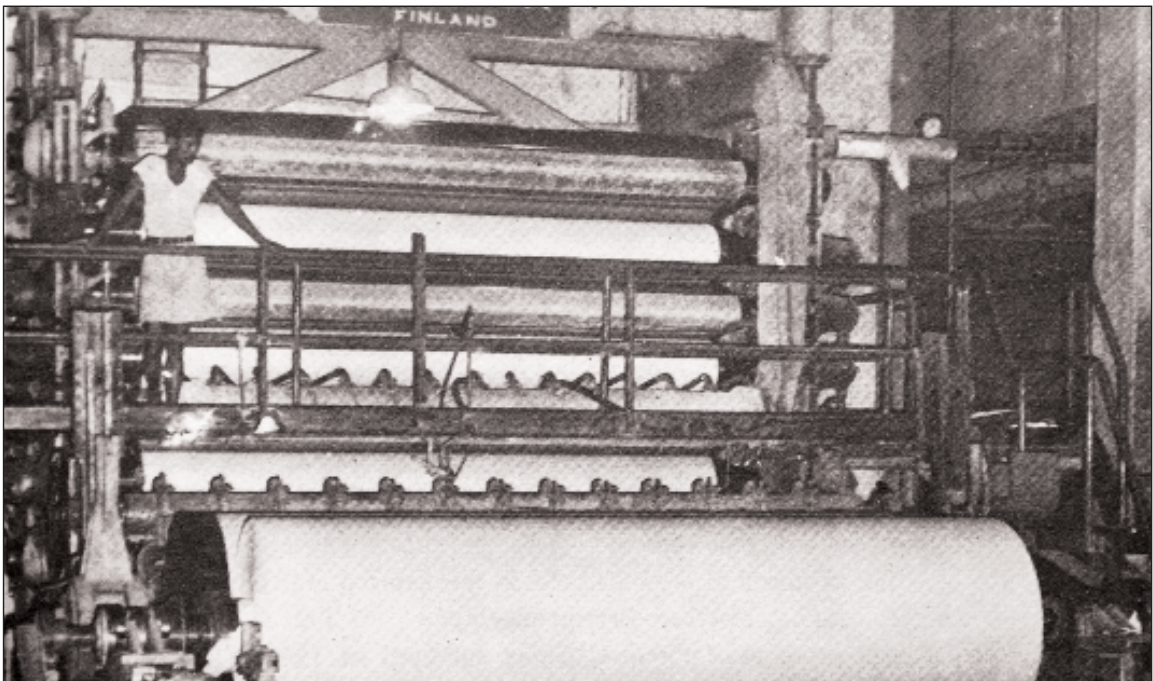
**Present trends:** Due to various non-tariff barriers, the cement industries face many difficulties to regularly export cement to India. So the oversupply problems generated a crisis in the cement market. Most of the companies hardly utilize 50 percent of their production capacities as the supply vastly exceeds the demand. This challenge, although have less impact on multinational companies, severely affected the local industries. However, the industry leaders hope that this crisis will be solved in the next 3 to 5 years as a sustainable economic growth will boost up demand to the full capacity level.

#### 4.12 Paper Industries

Paper is thin sheets of compressed vegetable cellulose fibers. It is used for writing and printing, for wrapping and packaging, and for a variety of special purposes ranging from the filtration of precipitates from solutions to the manufacture of certain types of building materials. Paper is a necessity in modern civilization, and the development of machinery for its high-speed production has been largely responsible for the increase in literacy and the raising of educational levels of people throughout the world.

**History:** Papermaking was a cottage industry in different parts of Bengal, especially in Patna, Rajshahi, Rangpur, Dinajpur, Dhaka and Tangail. They used to make paper from mesta (hibiscus conabinus) and jute by using indigenous skills. Several varieties of papers were known in this country. Most important among them were afsani and tulot. At that time, Patna was famous for papermaking and its paper was known as *Patnai*. When William Carey first set up a printing press at his mission in Serampore, he used *Patnai* paper. An indigenous paper making processes developed in and around Dhaka since the Mughal period. Tradition says the Mughal subedars brought some artisans to make papers. Dhaka's *Kagajitota* reveals this fact. Apart from this, the Aral of Dhaka district was famous for hand making paper till the end of the 19th century. During the British period, a few paper mills of high standard were established of which Titagarh was the most famous. But none of them were established in the territory of Bangladesh.

In the Pakistan period, three large paper making industries, Karnafuli Paper mills in Chittagong, Khulna Newsprint Mills in Khulna and North Bengal Paper Mills in Pabna, were set up in Bangladesh - all at government initiative. Later a pulp mill was set up in Sylhet. Private investment



Karnafuli Paper Mills



was also encouraged in various paper and paper-based products. This resulted in a total of 33 industrial enterprises in the paper sector up to 1970 in Bangladesh.

**Early Pioneers:** Khulna Newsprint Mills, the first newsprint mill in the country, was established in 1959 on the bank of river Bhairab at Khalishpur, Khulna. The mill produced newsprint by using gewa wood of the Sundarbans. It was set up at a cost of Tk. 120 million by the Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation (PIDC); its production capacity was 50,000



Khulna Newsprint Mills

ton per annum of which newsprint - 23000 tons, mechanical print papers - 17,000 tons and lightweight papers – 10,000 tons. At close to full capacity, the mill produced enough papers to meet the local demand. Soon it began exporting to West Pakistan. In 1965, PIDC again financed an expansion to add one paper manufacturing machine, one grinder and one turbine. This substantially increased paper production for export. At that time, export reached to 15000 ton per annum.

Karnafuli Paper Mills was the first paper manufacturing industry in Bangladesh. PIDC established the factory in 1951 at a cost of Tk 67.6 million at Chandraghona, Chittagong. At the time of its establishment, it was the biggest paper mill in Asia with annual capacity of 30,000 tons. However, due to management inefficiencies and technical difficulties, the capacity utilization went down after a few years of its operation. The Government sold it to Dawood Group of Pakistan which undertook a balancing, modernization and rationalization (BMR) program. The paper produced in the factory sold both in Bangladesh and Pakistan.

**Present Status:** In 1972, all the large paper mills were nationalized. Paper export to Pakistan is abandoned and the country becomes a surplus producer of paper. This resulted in significant reduction in sales at all the paper mills. Karnaphuli Paper Mills was the worst hit because the per unit production cost was highest in this factory but consumers are not ready to pay the premium price. On the other hand, the paper quality is not of that high standard for export to other countries. The stock of unsold paper piled up. The government, therefore, in 1979 approved a renovation plan of Tk. 240 million. The renovation work completed in 1984 and resulted in upgrading paper quality, improved capacity utilization, and reduced cost of production. The factory again became profitable in the very next year. In 1991, it fully recovered its past losses. It had a workforce of 4012 workers in that year.

Production in other paper mills also decreased but generated profit. At the end of the 1970s, scarcity of reed aroused, due to conversion of grassland to agricultural land, in Sylhet Pulp Mill and thereby the production dropped. Attempts were made to use jute fibre for making pulp in the mill, but it failed due to process difficulties. The mill began using bamboo and hardwood but the quality of produced pulp

was poor. This hampered production in North Bengal Paper Mills, which used this pulp as raw material, and the production cost also increased. Production in some other small mills was also hampered.

The price of raw materials, gewa wood bamboo and hard wood, increased steadily throughout the 1980s. Also, the production capacity of Khulna Newsprint Mills as well as other mills decreased over the time because of obsolescence of its equipment and machinery. Thus the production cost increased in all factories which resulted in the higher paper price. This severely hampered the companies, which lie in upper value chain and use product as raw materials. In the early 1990s, government decreased import tariff on paper and paper made products for increasing international competition. Within few months, imported newsprint of better quality but cheap in price was widely available in the country. In the late 1990s government implemented renovation plan in various paper mills to compete with the improved quality cheap paper but it was in vain as the scarcity of raw materials became acute. Also, the vertically integrated technology restricts the industries to become profitable using imported pulp. As a result, all the industries turned into sick industries.

With the opening of paper and the paper based market, the government also reduced duties on pulp import. Government also announced several fiscal incentives to facilitate private investment in this sector. Most private investment went in paper production using imported pulps while the remaining few produced paper from worn/second-hand papers. Within a few years, total output in private paper mills crossed the total output of public paper mills. More and more private investment followed as a tremendous export growth in RMG increased the demand of packaging papers.

**Present Trends:** The private paper industries usually manufacture writing and printing paper, coloured printing paper, blue match paper, cigarette and bidi paper, and brown wrapping paper for home, office and industrial purposes. Almost all of them import pulp from South East Asia, especially Indonesia. These companies also make use of recycled waste paper. The industry employs around 20 thousand people.

One of the pioneer paper companies in 1995 launched a paper tissue making industry in collaboration with a German firm. Since then two more companies started tissue manufacturing but in a limited scale. These plants also use imported raw material. Recently, the companies started to export Sanitary Napkins in the neighboring countries.

Since 1989, paper consumption has exceeded production. Imports of industrial paper have increased. The government sector pulp and paper mills are highly dependent on forest based fiber resources and on the other hand, the private sector paper and board mills depend on imported pulps. The forest based fiber resources are declining fast which demonstrates grim future of public sector paper companies. The public sector mills have registered loss due to a shortage of raw materials, irregular procurements, and low installed capacity. So, there is every possibility that they will be either closed down or sold out to private sectors.

On the other hand, demand of paper will increase tremendously due to increased necessity of the people in the near future. The domestic raw material availability is not at all sufficient to cope with current demand, not to speak of the future demand. The scientists and the government institutions have started working to make paper from jute. Up to now, the result is not satisfactory. The paper quality from jute is too low. So, the private sector is required to upgrade their capacity following the market trend. At the same time, they should engage themselves in the research process with a view to turning jute into quality paper and achieving self-sufficiency in future.

### 4.13 Jute

Jute, once called the golden fibre of Bangladesh, is used in the manufacture of twine, sacks, burlap, and cheap varieties of paper. Processing of jute fibres and transforming the fibres into the above mentioned items require extensive manual labour. Recently new technologies facilitated home textile and geo-textile production from jute. On the other hand, jute is the only crop that can be cultivated in the floodplains during rainy season. So, it has enormous economic importance on the economic and social life.

**History:** Jute industry played an important role in the economic development of Bengal. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Bengal could boast of only one manufacturing jute. It employed about half of the total industrial workforce of Bengal. All of these industries were built in the west part of Bengal while raw jute used to come from the east part of Bengal, now Bangladesh. So, after the partition in 1947, Bangladesh got none of the jute industries.

During the Pakistan regime, private investment is sought and facilitated to establish jute industry in Bangladesh. The Adamjee Jute Mills established in Narayanganj in 1951 by a entrepreneur



A.W. Adamjee digging out before erecting of the Adamjee Jute Mills in 1951



family, known as Adamjee, was the first jute mill in Bangladesh. The Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation (PIDC) facilitated necessary impetus for further private investment in this sector. As a result, within a very short time large number of jute mills were established. Of them, Bawa Jute Mills (with 112 looms and 1,460 spindles), Karim Jute Mills (with 250 looms and 3,660 spindles), Latif Bawany Jute Mills (with 488 looms and 7,420 spindles) are prominent. PIDC also financed in setting up several government owned jute industries.

**Early Pioneer:** Adamjee Jute Mill was set up in 1951. Adamjee Brothers owned 50% of the share while the rest by PIDC. The mill stands on 227 acres of land with 3000 looms and 31200 spindles. The production capacity of the mill was 117 tons of twist and yarn, 953 tons of Hessian and 4006 tons of sacking bag. This was to be the largest jute mill of its kind in the world employing over 25,000 workers. To house these workers, a massive housing complex was established which later became known as "Adamjee Nagar". The jute products produced in this mill was exported to over 50 countries, thus earning a significant amount of foreign exchange for the country. After the liberation war, the mill turned into abandoned property and was nationalized by the government.

**Present Status:** By virtue of its location, the jute industry in the public sector became the property of Bangladesh after independence in 1971. Pakistani mill owners (about 68% of the total loom strength) left the country, leaving the industry in disarray. Abandoned jute mills were subject to heavy looting. The new government of Bangladesh had to take up the responsibility of rebuilding the industry. By a nationalisation order all jute mills were nationalised in 1972.

Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) was formed to manage and look after all the 73 jute mills having 23,836 looms at that time. By December 1979, BJMC had 77 jute mills, two carpet backing mills, and two spare parts producing units. Immediately after liberation, it became very difficult to solve problem of financial hardship of the jute industry because financial institutions were not



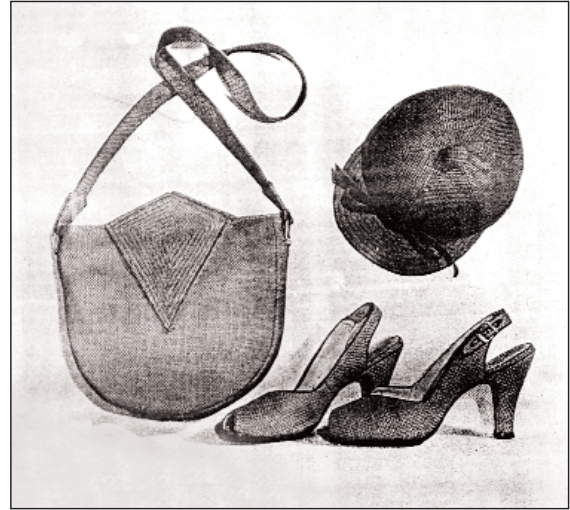
Dhaka Jute Mills

working well. The government offered cash subsidy to the industry, which amounted to Tk. 200 million annually. However, frequent power failures and power stoppages also compelled the industry to suffer heavy losses in terms of production and foreign exchange earnings. In addition to these problems, the polypropylene products start to substitute traditional jute products throughout the world as a cheap substitute.





*A worker at work*



*Jute products*

In 1980, six twine mills were disinvested to the private sector. Denationalisation of jute mills officially resorted to as the strategy in July 1982. The government ordered BJMC to complete the process by 16 December 1982, but only 10 mills could be handed over to Bangladeshi owners by that time. The valuation process and settlement of other organisational matters relating to handing over of the mills delayed the process. The World Bank continued to work closely with the government to restructure the jute sector, especially through denationalisation, merger, dissolution, and closure of jute mills. By 1998, BJMC had an accumulated loss of more than Tk. 28 billion and a debt of more than Tk. 11 billion. Therefore the government, with the advice by World Bank and also as loan conditionality, started to close down large jute mills. Adamjee Jute Mills was officially declared dead in 2002. In August 2007, total number of mills under BJMC was only 14.

The performance of the private sector jute industry is not encouraging, but they are diversifying into modern products demanded by the developed countries. These mills produce yarn and twine, carpet & rugs, wall covering, jute webbing, fabrics for shopping bags, caps, handicrafts, canvas, decorative fabrics, laminated cloth, safety fuse for explosives, geo jute and environment friendly bio-degradable sacking bag. At present there are 56 mills in the private sector with an installed capacity of 11700 looms. Around 13 thousand permanent and 18 thousand temporary laborers work in the private jute mills. In 2006, only 3400 looms were productive and produced 1.5 lakh ton jute products. Only 10 companies are now in running position. However, as demand of jute products are on the rise throughout the world, many believe the private enterprises will rewrite the history of the jute sector with success stories.

**Present Trends:** The once golden sector is again started to revive but at a much slower rate. The sector has diversified its product type from jute yarn and canvas to jute cloth, shoe sole, and complete shoes, geo textiles, etc. The recent closure of four government-owned jute mills spurred much debate. The wage of jute mill workers in India is almost double the payment of the jute mill workers in Bangladesh. India is importing quality raw jute from Bangladesh at a high cost. Then why the jute industry in India has been flourishing and our jute industry is dying? It is because the

jute industry in India are getting too much support from government - (i) 20% cash subsidy on capital investment, (ii) cash subsidy in the name of External Marketing Assistance (EAM) on export quantity in certain countries, (iii) Duty Entitlement of Pass Book (DEPB) Scheme which provides electricity and other utilities at less than the market rate, and (iv) cheap loan from Technology Up-gradation Scheme for modernizing machinery.

Therefore, in a well-thought-out decision, the present government decided to lease out eight state-owned jute mills to the private sector and foreign investors. Two jute mills in Chittagong have already leased to foreign companies. To many experts and analysts, this will provide the much necessary vigour and boost to the sector. This decision also came at the right time when many consumers in developed countries are spending more for environment friendly products. Recently some policy makers are in the opinion that government should prohibit raw jute export to ensure its availability at a cheap price for these mills.

#### 4.14 Cosmetics/Perfumery

Cosmetics is general term is applied to all preparations used externally to condition and beautify the body, by cleaning, colouring, softening, or protecting the skin, hair, nails, lips or eyes. Perfumery is included in cosmetics.

Cosmetics and perfumery are by no means used by women only. Grooming aids frequently used by men include powders, colognes and lotions, particularly alcohol-based after-shave lotions, oils, hair tonics and deodorants.

**History:** Perfumery was an important industry in Dhaka. There were several perfume manufacturers and sellers at Bonsibazar road, Dhaka. During the British period, Europeans began importing scents in India. Soon European scents replaced the local perfumes among the educated and elite class. The local perfume industry of Dhaka became extinct and did not revive later. However, Dhaka became the centre for manufacturing washing soaps. Most of these industries operate as cottage industry and around 100 such factories were operating during the 1940s.

After the partition of India in 1947, the Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation (PIDC) promoted private investment in this sector. Some large soap factories were set up such as Commander Soap Co., Kohinoor Chemicals, Sirco Soap Chemicals, etc. mostly by the Pakistani entrepreneurs. Within a few years, they began producing a whole range of toiletries: soaps, shampoos, conditioners, face washes, creams, etc. Lever Brothers Ltd., an international giant in toiletries, also took this opportunity and set up a cosmetics plant in Chittagong. The government owned 40% share of this venture.

**Early Pioneer:** The earliest toilet soap factory was the Boolbool Soap Factory at Gandaria established in Dhaka in 1903. It secured a gold



Some early cosmetic products



Cosmetics products

medal as the first prize at the Indian Industrial Exhibition of 1906-1907. The proprietors were Krisna Chandra Saha, Satya Mohan Das and Akshoy Kumar Das. It was managed by Sarojendra Guha, who was trained at the H. Soma Soap Factory in Simbasu, Tokyo.

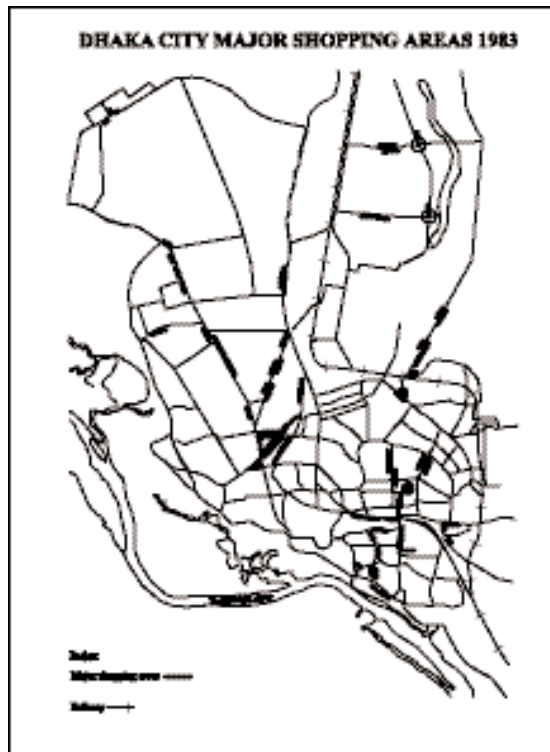
**Present Status:** In 1972, the government nationalized most of these abandoned industries and designated Bangladesh Chemical Corporation (BCIC) to run such factories. Through a World Bank sponsored program, the government implemented privatization program in the 1980s. However, few of them were privatized and later on the remaining ones were closed. Private investment started in the sector in the late 1980s and continued throughout the 1990s. Eventually, these private companies turned into dominant players in present time.

**Present Trends:** Five minutes of channel surfing between NTV, Channel-I, ATN and BTV will give you a glimpse into the large range of toiletry products produced by the local private industries. These industries produce almost all the daily basic necessities - shampoo, conditioner, face wash, face scrub, cream, lotion, toothpaste, vaseline, powder, shaving cream, etc.

The industry is working hard constantly for product quality improvement and at the same time aggressively advertising the toiletries in TV channels, newspapers, medias, billboards - every possible way. They learn that whatever good the product might be, if they want to convince people to buy it, they will have to put their product in advertising.

Local toiletries brand is now common and acquainted with everyone – Meril, Keya, Aromatic, Tibet, Cosco, to name a few. All of these brands have worked really hard to build consumer trust through producing good quality products. People no longer asked their relatives in abroad to buy expensive soaps and shampoos. Some of these brands are exported to neighbouring India and received wide consumer popularity. As a development, the Mumbai-based Marico Ltd has acquired the soap brand aromatic in 2005.





One of the commendable things about all these brands is that they have reached out and made themselves accessible to people in the remotest and least accessible parts of Bangladesh. Most of these brands have been able to establish strong consumer bases in rural Bangladesh. More importantly local brands are affordable, which is the biggest motivation behind consumer behaviour.

#### 4.15 Sugar Mills

Sugar is colorless, odorless and usually, crystallisable, and is more or less sweet in taste. In Bangladesh, sugar is obtained from sugarcane. Sugar processing begins when the cane plant arrives at the sugar mill. Rotating knives, shredders, and crushers extract the juice from the cane and create bagasse, a fiber that can be burned to heat the cane juice. Heating the juice evaporates off excess water and condenses the juice into a thick syrup. Sugar granules act as seed crystals when they are added to the syrup, making the dissolved sugar in the syrup crystalize. When

maximum amount of sugar has crystallized in the syrup, the mix is spun in a centrifuge, which separates the remaining syrup (now called molasses) from the raw sugar crystals.



Sugarcane plants



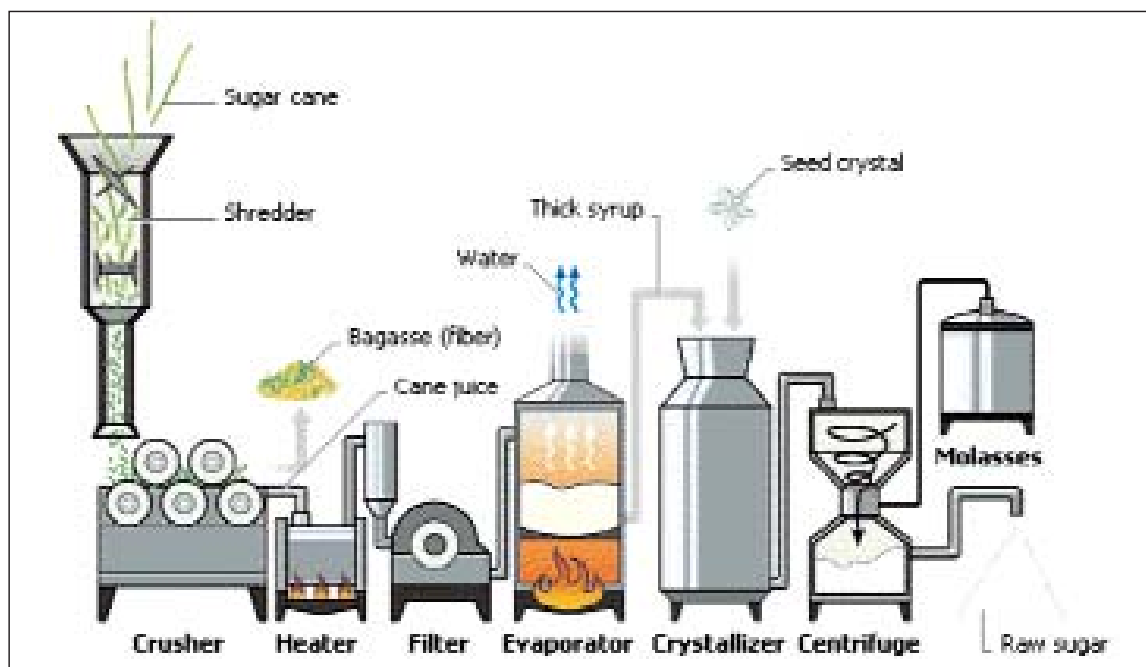


Mill Barrack, 1840

**History:** From time immemorial Bengal cultivates sugarcane for making gud. The East India Company exported large quantities of sugar from Bengal every year. The volume was 820,186 maunds (1 maund = 37.65 kg) in 1795 and 3,324,168 maunds in 1805. Later on, the sugar industry suffered seriously due to diversion of land to Jute. After the partition of India in 1947, Bangladesh inherited 10 sugar mills. The total cane crushing capacity of these mills was only 4,350 metric tons. The Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation established 5 new sugar mills as well as invested heavily in existing mills to increase production capacity.

In 1972, all the mills are handed over to Bangladesh Sugar Mills Corporation. Sugar production increased during the 1970s and the mills generated sufficient profit. In the mid-1980s, the cost of production increased and production capacity declined because of ageing machineries. The mills were still generating profit but under a heavy tariff wall. In the 1990s, the government reduced import duty on sugar in their effort to opening up the domestic market. Soon the mills started making loss. So, the government decided to privatize the mills and at the same time encouraged private investment to install new mills with modern machineries. In their effort, the government further reduced the import tariff on unrefined sugar. This encouraged some private groups to install sugar-processing plant using imported unrefined sugar as raw material. Up to now, about Tk 2,000 crore has been invested by the private sector in five big units - United Sugar, S Alam Sugar, Abdul Monem Sugar, City Sugar and Partex Sugar.

**Present Trends:** For the last couple of years, sugar price in the international market has been highly volatile. At the start of this fiscal year, 2007-08, the sugar price in the international market was less than mill gate price. And just after 8 months the price again starts climbing to a higher price than mill gate. The public sector industries, therefore, fell in a world of uncertainty. However, in-depth investigation reveals that recent price increase occurred because India permitted its companies to convert the surplus sugar into biofuel (ethanol). The recent trends in



The stages of processing sugarcane

some countries demonstrate that they depend on biofuel for future fuel security. So, it is expected that India will continue to do so in future. The result would be long-term good news for the public sector sugar companies.

However, increasing conversion of sugarcane and sugar into ethanol is bad news for the private sector sugar companies. This will increase their raw material cost and reduce availability. On the other hand, this year the government has fixed same tariff rate for refined and non-refined sugar. This forced the companies to close their industries for the entire year. The government took this step to restrain the inflation rate at the expense of these companies. Therefore, following the international trading and demand-supply pattern, these private companies need to persuade government to buy or take lease the public sugar mills as all the international estimations pictured higher price of sugar till 2010.

### III. Conclusion

The private sector in Bangladesh has already demonstrated its capability to create buoyancy in the economy - achieving a sustainable and rapid economic growth, alleviating pervasive poverty, enhancing productivity, improving services and ensuring efficient use of its scarce resources. These entrepreneurs have achieved success through their hard work and courageous risk taking ventures in a more globalised competitive market. They made significant achievements in all sectors - textiles, ready-made garments, knitwear, ceramics, cement, housing, construction, construction materials, frozen-food, poultry, fishing, light engineering, banking, insurance, micro-financing, packaging, cereals and vegetables production, pharmaceuticals, inland shipping, distribution system, road transports and fixed telephone. Besides investment in these traditional manufacturing and service sectors, private entrepreneurs are now increasingly penetrating into power, gas, fixed

telephone line, mineral resources, inner-city transport system, education and health services. In fact, the presence of the private sector is now observed in all sectors of the economy to fulfil its mandate of a prosperous and equitable nation building process.

The following table clearly establishes that the private sector has taken over the dominant role in the national economy in the areas of employment, investment, production, value addition, exports, banking, insurance, media, and is making speedy advance in electricity and gas production, education, and even in health services.

<b>Progressive Role of Private Sector: 1980 to 2004</b>								
	1980		1990		2000		2004	
	Public	Private	Public	Private	Public	Private	Public	Private
<b>Economic</b> (all figures in percentage)								
Employment	74	26	23	77	7	93	7	93
Investment	29	71	39	61	31	69	25	75
Fixed Assets	60	29	61	39	41	59	27	73
Value Addition	34	66	29	71	16	84	11	89
Exports	56	44	5	95	0.3	99.7	0.12	99.88
<b>Financial</b> (all figures in percentage)								
Banking (Assets)	100	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	52	48
Banking (Deposit)	100	0	67	33	61	39	50	50
Insurance (Asset)	100	0	75	25	65	35	50	50
Insurance (Premium)	100	0	80	20	65	35	30	70
<b>Infrastructure</b> (all figures in percentage)								
Electricity Production	100	0	100	0	72	28	52	48
Gas Production	100	0	100	0	75	25	65	35
Telephone (Fixed)	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0
Telephone (Mobile)	0	0	0	0	0	100	0	100
<b>Education</b> (all figures in numbers)								
Primary	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	37,677	39,132	37,671	49,066
Junior High	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	3,063	0	3,982
Secondary	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	317	12,340	317	13,087
College (Inter/Degree)	89	596	238	808	277	2,160	191	2,299
College (Master Degree)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	60	25
University	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	11	19	21	52
Medical College	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	13	19	13	14
<b>Health</b> (all figures in numbers)								
Hospital/clinics	512	164	608	267	660	613	672	1,005
Number of Beds	19,021	4,771	26,913	6,463	32,072	11,372	34,550	16,105
<b>Media</b> (all figures in numbers)								
Newspaper (Major)	3	12	3	20	1	25	0	30
TV Station	1	0	1	0	1	4	1	8
Radio Station	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1

Source: 'Entrepreneurs leading the Way' by Abdul Awal Mintoo, published in *The Daily Star* on 04 February 2006.

The private sector has suffered during the long period of strong government regulation in the 1970s and 1980s. This trend started to change after the 1991 democratic election. All the successive Governments initiated and continued to implement various sectoral reforms and trade liberalisation programs. This facilitated the private sectors significantly and economy achieved on average 5% GDP growth rate per annum. The Government also privatized much of its production-related and commercial entities and in the process of changing its role because only as a regulator and/or facilitator. However, there is still a long way to go in this ever increasing competitive world.

PRSP (Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper), formulated in 2005, has identified private sector growth as one of the key factors for employment creation and poverty reduction. To achieve this mandate, PRSP have planned various changes - more investment in infrastructures (physical, social and financial), improving the governance, formulating and implementing government policies for conducive business environment, various forms of government support to premature sectors, special emphasis to SMEs, meaningful reforms in public sector, and facilitate activities to promote productivity and investment. In November 2007, the Government formed the first-ever public-private business forum styled 'Bangladesh Better Business Forum' (BBBF) which will hopefully develop interaction between the business community and government high-ups and thereby initiate necessary changes and reforms in improving the business environment for private sector. It is expected that this forum will play a significant role in future private sector growth in the country.



### Appendices to Chapter Three

#### Appendix 3

#### Growth of Spinning and Weaving Capacity of the Large-scale Cotton Mills in Pre-liberation Bangladesh

Year	No. of Mills	No. of Spindle	No. of Looms
1948/49	---	99	2 (2)
1949/50	---	104	2 (2)
1950/51	---	108	3 (3)
1951/52	---	120	3 (3)
1952/53	---	138	3 (3)
1953/54	---	174	3 (3)
1954/55	---	219	3 (3)
1955/56	---	259	3 (3)
1956/57	---	295	3 (3)
1957/58	---	314	3 (3)
1958/59	16	346	3 (3)
1959/60	18	359	3 (3)
1960/61	20	364	3 (3)
1961/62	---	403	3 (3)
1962/63	25	492	3 (3)
1963/64	28	521	4 (4)
1964/65	29	617	5 (5)
1965/66	33	654	6 (3)
1966/67	38	661	7 (4)
1967/68	37	662	7 (4)
1968/69	42	731	7 (4)
1969/70	44	750	7 (3)
1970/71	44	750	7 (4)

Sources: GOP, CSO: *Monthly Bulletin*, various issues. Figures for 1948/49-1957/58 are averages of the respective calendar years. Figure in parentheses are number (in 000's) of working looms.

**Appendix 3.1**  
**Showing the growth of spinning and weaving capacity of the large-scale  
cotton mills in Bangladesh: Post-liberation period**

Year	No. of Mills	No. of Spindle	No. of Looms
1971/72	44	836	7 (3)
1972/73	45	858	7 (5)
1973/74	46	871	7 (5)
1974/75	48	810	7 (5)
1975/76	49	818	7 (5)
1976/77	49	839	6 (4)
1977/78	49	982	8 (5)
1978/79	49	994	7 (5)
1979/80	49	1,030	8 (5)
1980/81	56	1,059	8 (5)
1981/82	56	1,012	6 (5)
1982/83	56	1,014	6 (5)
1983/84	58	1,088	6 (5)
1984/85	58	1,025	6 (5)
1985/86	58	1,173	6 (5)
1986/87	59	1,064	6 (4)
1987/88	61	1,120	6 (4)
1988/89	63	1,217	6 (4)
1989/90	63	1,239	6 (4)

Source: GOB, BBS: *Monthly Bulletin*, various issues.

**Appendix 3.2**  
**Estimated handloom output in Bangladesh: 1955-56-1989/90**

(Million Linear Meters)

Year	Cotton Cloth	Non-Cotton Cloth	Total Cloth
1955/56	278.91	6.93	285.84
1956/57	323.56	7.40	330.96
1957/58	342.20	8.09	350.29
1958/59	327.10	7.64	334.74
1959/60	310.10	7.17	327.27
1960/61	331.45	7.81	339.26
1961/62	383.02	8.46	391.48
1962/63	360.76	7.98	368.74
1963/64	341.19	8.07	349.26
1964/65	359.47	8.15	367.62
1965/66	358.12	8.23	366.35
1966/67	355.13	8.23	363.46
1967/68	343.35	7.81	351.16
1968/69	396.79	8.51	405.30
1969/70	402.81	8.60	411.41
1970/71	338.43	7.38	345.81
1971/72	263.16	8.38	271.54
1972/73	355.55	10.20	365.75
1973/74	369.39	10.36	379.75
1974/75	296.70	8.79	305.49
1975/76	491.08	14.59	505.67
1976/77	431.97	12.87	444.84
1977/78	469.89	13.97	483.86
1978/79	483.53	15.12	498.65
1979/80	477.21	15.75	492.65
1980/81	489.80	18.07	507.87
1981/82	503.44	20.23	523.67
1982/83	514.99	22.83	537.82
1983/84	530.01	28.36	558.37
1984/85	542.69	34.77	577.46
1985/86	555.46	42.12	597.58
1986/87	592.70	52.51	645.21
1987/88	606.60	57.80	664.40
1988/89	620.88	63.21	684.16
1989/90	634.00	70.45	704.51

Source: Latif: 1989, pp. 38-41; and GOB, BBS: 1991, p. 38

**Appendix 3.3**  
**Occupational origin of the sample weavers in Dhaka districts: 1979-80**

% Distribution by Occupational Ori

Sample/size of unit	No. of Weavers	Family Tradition	Agri- culture	Petty Traders	Wage Earn
1-5 looms	143	65.0	30.1	1.4	3.5
6+ looms	19	89.5	0.0	5.3	5.2
All units:	162	67.9	26.5	1.9	3.7

Source: Sample Survey. I. RIS-1979/80

**Appendix 3.4**  
**BSCIC industrial estates by type, Dhaka region: 2005**

Name of Industrial Estate	Food	Textile	Forest	Paper	Leather	Chemicals	Glass and Ceramic	Engineering	Misc	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Electronics Complex Mirpur, Dhaka	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	6	---	6
Hoseiry Estate Narayangonj	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	188
Jamdani Industrial estate, N. ganj	---	24	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	24
Kantchpur, N. ganj	---	11	1	6	5	2	---	9	---	33
Narshingdi	2	9	---	2	---	9	---	6	---	28
Tongi	11	56	2	13	5	22	7	36	3	155
Konabari	17	37	1	7	12	28	3	39	8	152
Manikgonj	3	5	---	---	---	5	---	4	---	17
Munshigonj	4	6	---	---	---	5	---	3	---	18

Source: Products Directory, BSCIC, 2005

**Appendix 3.5**  
**Employment in the BSCIC Industrial Estate in 2005**

Name of Industrial Estate	Engaged in Productions		Total
	Directly	Indirectly	
Electronics Complex Mirpur, Dhaka	815	168	983
Hoseiry Estate, Narayangonj	12,057	1572	13629
Jamdani Industrial Estate, Rupganj	177	38	215
Kantchpur, Narayangonj	1248	592	1840
Narshingdi	1809	930	2739
Tongi, Gazipur	10702	1474	12176
Konabari, Joydebpur, Gazipur	3584	450	4034
Manikganj	610	85	695
Munshiganj	443	94	537

Source: BSCIC Reports.



**Appendix 3.6**  
**Main centres of handloom production, product type in each center, and the market places in Bangladesh: 1990**

Centres of production: Zone/District/Thana	% of Looms	Main Products	Primary Market Centres
<b>Zone I</b>			
<b>Dhaka-Comilla:</b>			
<b>Narsingdi Dist:</b>	<b>13.4</b>	Assorted type: coarse to medium <i>sari, lungi dhoti, gamcha, chaddar</i> , longcloth, markeen	Raipura, baburhat,
Raipura Narsingdi,	6.4		
Narsingdi Radhanagar	5.6		
Shibpur	0.7		
Polash	0.7		
<b>Narayanganj Dist:</b>	<b>11.6</b>	Assorted type: coarse to medium <i>saree, lungi, samcha, chaddar</i> , mosquito net, etc. and <i>jamadni saree</i>	Araihazar, Tarab Kanchan, Barodi Gaochia
Araihazar	7.4		
Rupaganj	2.9		
Baidder bazar	1.3		
<b>Dhaka Dist:</b>	<b>2.6</b>	Assorted type: coarse to medium <i>lungi, saree, Dhaka (for Benarassi) gamcha</i> , bedsheet, etc.	Barodi, Gaochia,
Dohar	1.1		
Nawabganj	0.8		
Mirpur	0.7		
<b>Brahmanbaria and Comilla Dist:</b>	<b>10.5</b>	Coarse to fine <i>lungi</i> Screen cloth, etc.	Ramchandrapur, Rupashdi, Batakandi, Machimnagar, Homna Bancharampur,
B. Rampur	5.9		
Nabinagar	0.8		
Daudkandi	0.6		
Homna	1.9		
Muradnagar	1.3		
<b>Zone II</b>			
<b>Pabna-Kustia:</b>			
<b>Serajganj Dist:</b>	<b>20.7</b>	Medium to superfine <i>Saree</i>	Enayetpur, Belkuchi Shahjadpur
Belkuchi	8.3		
Shahjadpur	8.0		
Sirajganj	2.1		
Ullapara	2.3		
<b>Pabna Dist:</b>	<b>5.7</b>	Medium to superfine <i>Saree and lungi</i>	Ataikula, Sujanagar,
Santhia	1.8		
Bera	1.5		
Pabna	1.3		
Sujanagar	1.1		
<b>Kushtia Dist:</b>	<b>4.6</b>	Sohagpur medium to superfine <i>lungi</i>	Kumarkhali, Khokshabari, Kushtia Korotia,
Kumarkhali	2.6		
Kushtia	1.1		
Khoksha	0.9		
<b>Zone III:</b>			
<b>Tangail</b>			
<b>Tangail Dist:</b>	<b>5.9</b>	Coarse to medium <i>saree, Lungi</i> , and Tangail <i>saree</i> ,	Bajitpur, Tangail, Kalihati
Kalihati	3.7		
Tangail	1.5		
Basail	0.7		

Source: BOB, BBS: 1991, pp. 112-192; and information gathered from field visits.

**Appendix 3.7**  
**The Top 14 Industrial Houses of Bangladesh in 1988**

	<i>Name of Group</i>	<i>Number of Year Companies Established</i>	<i>Annual* Turnover</i>	<i>Founder/ Chairman</i>	
Top 5	Zahurul Islam	24	1963	628.6a	Zahurul Islam
	Ispahani	23	Pre-1947	-b	M. M. (Sadri) Ispahani
	BEXIMCO	17	1966	524.3	A. S. F. Rahman
	Anwar	18	1971	-c	Muhammad Anwar Hossain
	A. K. Khan	15	1945	400.0	A.M. Zahiruddin Khan
Top 10	Muhammad Bhai Panther)	9	1956	705.5	Muhammad Bhai
	W. Rahman Jute	10	1885	2,510.0f	Latifur Rahman
	Apex	4	1972	650.0	Syed Manzur Elahi
	Pacific	5	1974	542.5	M. Morshed Khan
	Square	5	1958	503.1g	Samson Chowhury
Top 14	Elite ERBA	5	1954	473.9	Ramzul Seraj
	(Alpha Tobacco)	4	1969	385.9	Agha Ahmed Yusuf
	Karnaphuli	14	1954	350.0h	Hedayet hossain Chowdhury
	Kumudini	3	1933	340.0	Mrs. Joya Pati

Source: Based on an analysis of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Members Directory 1988.

Notes: \* Annual turnover of MCCI members' companies in Tk millions.

- a. Zahurul Islam was universally recognized in Bangladesh as the largest industrial group in the country in 1980s. This group made a fortune on government contracts during the Mujib period. Total assets of the group in 1974 were Tk. 500 million. No data of total assets is available for 1988.
- b. Unlike other large Pakistani houses, a major branch of the Ispahani family lived in East Pakistan and stayed behind after the 1971 war. The vast majority of Ispahani assets were located in the East. Informed estimates place the 1972 due of Ispahani assets at one-half the Rs. 154 million assets of 1968. Their payroll has dropped from 20,000 employees to 12,000 in Bangladesh today, which still makes them one of largest private-sector employers. They maintain a very low profile but enjoy considerable influence.
- c. Anwar Group is one of the leading business house of Dhaka. Textile, Bank, Spinning Mills, Real Estates, Cables are the main areas of their business. No data of total assets is available for 1988.

**Appendix 3.8**  
**Nationalised Organisations and Enterprises the Schedule (see Articles 4 and 5)**

(in lakhs of Tk.)

<b>Existing Bank</b>	<b>New Bank</b>	<b>Authorised Capital</b>	<b>Paid up Capital</b>
The National Bank of Pakistan	Sonali Bank	500	200
The Bank of Bahawalpur Ltd.			
The Premier Bank Ltd.			
The Habib Bank Ltd.	Agrani Bank	500	100
The Commerce Bank Ltd.			
The United Bank Ltd.	Janata Bank	500	150
The Union Bank Ltd.			
The Muslim Commercial Bank Ltd.	Rupali Bank	500	100
The Standard Bank Ltd.			
The Australasia Bank Ltd.			
The Eastern Mercantile Bank Ltd.	Pubali Bank	500	100
The Eastern Banking Corporation Ltd.	Uttara Bank	500	100

Source: Vide the Bangladesh Gazettes Extraordinary, Sunday, March 26. 1972.

**Appendix 3.9**  
**Showing the Weavers' Co-operative Societies in Bangladesh: 1960-61-89-90**

Year	No. of Central Society	No. of Primary Society	No. of members (000's)	Share Capital (000 Tk)	Working Capital (000 Tk)	Loan Issued (000 Tk)
1960/61	25	889	285	1,810	2,175	78
1961/62	24	881	174	2,030	5,248	2,835
1962/63	26	917	188	20,61	10,038	3,727
1963/64	28	962	190	1,876	9,498	1,806
1964/65	27	978	179	1,886	10,471	392
1965/66	27	925	163	1,993	10,669	372
1966/67	27	978	130	1,865	10,764	246
1967/68	27	1,001	174	1,969	9,877	199
1968/69	27	983	182	1,975	7,292	2,663
1969/70	28	1,143	190	1,952	12,615	225
1970/71	28	1,114	192	2,010	12,643	18
1971/72	28	1,191	200	1,946	12,880	126
1972/73	33	2,225	564	3,476	18,594	2,614
1973/74	41	3,056	814	5,965	23,409	286
1974/75	45	3,166	852	6,054	25,837	4,759
1975/76	44	3,106	643	6,696	15,527	1,354
1976/77	45	3,155	651	11,162	30,925	Nil
1977/78	48	3,158	613	11,194	34,480	94
1978/79	52	3,186	613	11,448	34,756	11
1979/80	52	3,254	636	13,550	37,294	2,641
1980/81	52	34,90	654	---	42,150	1,403
1981/82	53	3,337	635	15,614	45,189	---
1982/83	53	3,185	617	11,139	38,303	14
1983/84	54	3,171	577	11,321	37,910	1,222
1984/85	54	3,157	538	13,899	43,186	418
1985/86	54	2,888	549	13,711	18,035	230
1986/87	55	2,720	510	13,564	21,042	519
1987/88	55	2,712	541	13,733	21,525	210
1988/89	57	2,734	532	13,295	20,089	264
1989/90	56	2,303	457	12,444	14,529	268

Source: BOB, Department of Co-operatives.

**Appendix 3.10**  
**Number of Trade Unions and Members**

Years	Nos of Union	Nos of member
1971	1,160	4,50,606
1972	2,423	6,82,923
1973	3,079	8,59,725
1974	3,320	9,46,977
1975	3,161	9,21,152
1976	3,037	8,95,904
1977	3,005	8,73,128
1978	3,178	10,06,516
1979	3,357	10,41,080
1980	3,613	10,97,757
1981	3,533	11,27,508
1982	2,156	9,46,048
1983	2,126	9,47,281
1984	2,488	10,75,496
1985	2,593	10,90,228
1986	3,132	11,64,179
1987	3,387	11,95,704
1988	3,625	14,21,834
1989	3,908	15,17,467
1990	3,789	16,19,008
1991	3,956	16,41,915
1992	4,065	16,48,783
1993	4,138	16,74,945
1994	4,484	16,81,694
1995	4,796	17,20,679

Source: Chief Inspector of Factories



## Appendix 3.11

**A. First Schedule****(Industrial enterprises placed under Bangladesh Jute Industries Corporation)**

- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Adamjee Jute Mills Ltd.          | 40. National Jute Mills Ltd.              |
| 2. Afil Jute Mills Ltd.             | 41. Nawab Abdul Malek Jute Mills Ltd.     |
| 3. Ajax Jute Mills Ltd.             | 42. Nawab H. Askari Jute Mills Ltd.       |
| 4. A. K. Khan Jute Mills Ltd.       | 43. Nishat Jute Mills Ltd.                |
| 5. Aleem Jute Mills Ltd.            | 44. New Dacca Industries Ltd.             |
| 6. Alhaj Jute Mills Ltd.            | 45. Pak. (Bangladesh) Jute Mills Ltd.     |
| 7. Alijan Jute Mills Ltd.           | 46. Pakistan (Bangladesh) Fabric Co. Ltd. |
| 8. Allied Jute Mills Ltd.           | 47. People's Jute Mills Ltd.              |
| 9. Amin Jute Mills Ltd.             | 48. Pubali Jute Mills Ltd.                |
| 10. Anowara Jute Mills Ltd.         | 49. Purbachal Jute Mills Ltd.             |
| 11. A. R. Howlader Jute Mills Ltd.  | 50. R R. Jute Mills Ltd.                  |
| 12. Ashraf Jute Mills Ltd.          | 51. Sarwar Jute Mills Ltd.                |
| 13. Bawa Jute Mills Ltd.            | 52. Sattar Jute Mills Ltd.                |
| 14. Broad Burlap Industries Ltd.    | 53. S. K. M. Jute Mills Ltd.              |
| 15. Carpeting Jute Mills Ltd.       | 54. Sonali Jute Mills Ltd.                |
| 16. Chandpur Jute Mills Ltd.        | 55. Star Jute Mills Ltd.                  |
| 17. Chittagong Jute Mills Ltd.      | 56. Star Alkaid Jute Mills Ltd.           |
| 18. Co-operative Jute Mills Ltd.    | 57. Sultana Jute Mills Ltd.               |
| 19. Crescent Jute Mills Ltd.        | 58. Taj Jute Backing Co, Ltd.             |
| 20. Delta Jute Mills Ltd.           | 59. United Jute Mills Ltd.                |
| 21. Dacca Jute Mills Ltd.           | 60. Victory Jute Products Ltd.            |
| 22. Dawood Jute Mills Ltd.          | 61. W. Rahman Jute Mills Ltd.             |
| 23. Eastern Jute Mills Ltd.         | 62. Daulatpur Jute Mills Ltd.             |
| 24. Fauji Chatkal Jute Mills Ltd.   | 63. Mymensingh Jute Mills Ltd.            |
| 25. Gul Ahmed Jute Mills Ltd.       | 64. Nabarun Jute Mills Ltd.               |
| 26. Hafez Jute Mills Ltd.           | 65. Platinum Jubilee Jute Mills Ltd.      |
| 27. Hamedia Jute Mills Ltd.         | 66. Qaumi Jute Mills Ltd.                 |
| 28. Hussain Jute Mills Ltd.         | 67. Mashriqui Jute Mills Ltd.             |
| 29. Jabbar Jute Mills Ltd.          | 68. Associate Bagg. Co. Ltd.              |
| 30. Janata Jute Mills Ltd.          | 69. Bangladesh Fabric Co. Ltd.            |
| 31. Jessore Jute Mills Ltd.         | 70. Sonar Bangladesh Jute Mills Ltd.      |
| 32. Karim Jute Mills Ltd.           | 71. Gawsia Jute Mills Ltd.                |
| 33. Kohinoor Jute Mills Ltd.        | 72. N. Askari Jute Mills Ltd.             |
| 34. Latif Bawany Jute Mills Ltd.    | 73. Transocean Fibre Processors Ltd.      |
| 35. Maqbular Rahman Jute Mills Ltd. | 74. Amin Old Field Co. Ltd.               |
| 36. M. M. Jute Mills Ltd.           | 75. N. A. Malek Jute Mills Ltd.           |
| 37. Mohsen Jute Mills Ltd.          | 76. M. R. Jute Mills Ltd.``               |
| 38. Meghna Jute Mills Ltd.          | 77. Banani Jute Mills Ltd.                |
| 39. Munawar Jute Mills Ltd.         | 78. M/s Mills Furnishing Ltd.             |

**B. Second schedule****(Industrial enterprises placed under Bangladesh Cotton Mills Corporation)**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Adarsha Cotton Spinning and Weaving Mills Ltd. | 38. Mainamati Textile Mills Ltd.                 |
| 2. Ahmed Bawany Textile Mills Ltd.                | 39. Meghna Textile Mills Ltd.                    |
| 3. Ahmed Silk Mills Ltd.                          | 40. Metex Cotton Limited.                        |
| 4. Al-Haj Textile Mills Ltd.                      | 41. Mohini Mills Ltd.                            |
| 5. Amin Textile Limited.                          | 42. Monnoo Textile Mills Ltd.                    |
| 6. Ashraf Textile Mills Ltd.                      | 43. Moula Textile Mills Ltd.                     |
| 7. Asiatic Cotton Mills Ltd.                      | 44. Muslin Cotton Mills Ltd.                     |
| 8. Bengal Textile Mills Ltd.                      | 45. National Cotton Mills Ltd.                   |
| 9. Bogra Cotton Spinning Co, Ltd.                 | 46. N. H. Textile Mills Ltd.                     |
| 10. Calico Cotton Mills Ltd.                      | 47. Olympia Textile Mills Ltd.                   |
| 11. Chand Textile Mills Ltd.                      | 48. Orient Textile Mills Ltd.                    |
| 12. Chisty Textile Mills Ltd.                     | 49. Pahartali Textile and Hosiery Mills.         |
| 13. Chittagong Textile Mills Ltd.                 | 50. Paruma Textile Mills Ltd.                    |
| 14. Chittaranjan Cotton Mills Ltd.                | 51. Pylon Industries Ltd.                        |
| 15. Cotton Textile Crafts Ltd.                    | 52. Quaderia Textile Mills Ltd.                  |
| 16. Dacca Cotton Mills Ltd.                       | 53. Quasem Cotton mills Ltd.                     |
| 17. Dacca Dyeing and Manufacturing Co, Ltd.       | 54. Rahman Textile Mills Ltd.                    |
| 18. Dhakeswari Cotton Mills Ltd. No. 1            | 55. Raz Textile Mills Ltd.                       |
| 19. Dost Textile Mills Ltd.                       | 56. R. R. Textile Mills Ltd.                     |
| 20. Eagle Star Textile Mills Ltd.                 | 57. Rupali Noor Textile Mill Ltd.                |
| 21. Elahi Cotton Mills Ltd.                       | 58. Rupali Nylon Ltd.                            |
| 22. E. P. Textile Mills Ltd.                      | 59. Satrang Textile Mills Ltd.                   |
| 23. Fine Cotton Mills Ltd.                        | 60. Serajganj Spinning and Cotton Mills Limited. |
| 24. Gawsia Cotton Spinning Mills Ltd.             | 61. Sharmin Textile Mills Ltd.                   |
| 25. Goalundo Textile Mills Ltd.                   | 62. Tamizuddin Textile Mills Ltd.                |
| 26. Habibur Rahman Textile Mills Ltd.             | 63. Tangail Cotton mills Limited.                |
| 27. Halima Textile Limited                        | 64. Zeenat Taxtile Mills Ltd.                    |
| 28. Ibrahim Cotton Mills Ltd.                     | 65. Afsar Cotton Mills Limited.                  |
| 29. Jaba Textile Mills Ltd.                       | 66. Bangladesh Textile Mills Limited.            |
| 30. Jalil Textile Mills Ltd.                      | 67. Dhakeswari Cotton Mills limited No. 2        |
| 31. Jess Blanket Manufacturing Co. Ltd.           | 68. Eastern Textile Mills                        |
| 32. Karim Silk Mills Ltd.                         | 69. Mohammadi Calendering & Printing Mills Ltd.  |
| 33. Khulna Textile Mills Ltd.                     | 70. Nylon Industries Ltd.                        |
| 34. Kohinoor Spinning Mills Ltd.                  | 71. Valika Woolen Mills Co. (Chittagong) Ltd.    |
| 35. Kokil Textile Mills Ltd.                      | 72. Alauddin and Taiera Textile Mills Ltd.       |
| 36. Kushtia Textile Mills Ltd.                    | 73. Zaritex Limited.                             |
| 37. Luxmi Narayan Cotton Mills Ltd.               | 74. Zofine Fabrics Limited.                      |

**C. Third schedule****Industrial enterprise placed under Bangladesh Sugar Mills Corporation**

- |                                  |                                  |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Faridpur Sugar Mills.         | 9. Rajshahi Sugar Mills Ltd.     |
| 2. Jaipurhat Sugar Mills Ltd.    | 10. Rangpur Sugar Mills Ltd.     |
| 3. Kushtia Sugar Mills Ltd.      | 11. Shyampur Sugar Mills Ltd.    |
| 4. Kaliachapra Sugar Mills Ltd.  | 12. Setabganj Sugar Mills Ltd.   |
| 5. Mobarakganj Sugar Mills Ltd.  | 13. Thakurgaon Sugar Mills Ltd.  |
| 6. National Sugar Mills Ltd.     | 14. Zeal Bangla sugar Mills Ltd. |
| 7. North Bengal Sugar Mills Ltd. | 15. Desh bandhu sugar Mills Ltd. |
| 8. Panchagarh Sugar Mills Ltd.   | 16. Faridpur Sugar Mills Ltd.    |

Source : Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Ministry of Law and Parliamentary Affairs (Law Division) President's Order No. 28 of 1972. Vide the Bangladesh Gazette. Extraordinary, Sunday March 26. 1972

**D. Schedule**

1. The Chalna Lighterage Limited
2. The Orient Water Transport
3. The Pakbay Company Limited
4. The Pakistan Flotilla Company Limited
5. The Shohagpur Transport Service Limited
6. The United Shipping Lines Limited

Source : Government of the People's Republic, of Bangladesh. Ministry of Law and Parliamentary Affairs (Law Division) President's order No. 28 of 1972 vide the Bangladesh Gazette. Extraordinary, Sunday March 26. 1972.

**E. Schedule****Part- A****Name of Insurer**

1. Alpha Insurance Co. Ltd.
2. American International Insurance Co. Ltd.
3. Central Insurance Co. Ltd.
4. Commercial Union Assurance Co, Ltd.
5. Co-operative Insurance Society of Bangladesh Ltd.
6. Bengal Life and General Insurance. Co. Ltd.
7. Eastern General Insurance Co. Ltd.
8. Eastern Insurance Co.
9. East Pakistan Co-operative Insurance Society Ltd.
10. Eastern Federal Union Insurance Co, Ltd.
11. Homeland Insurance Co, Ltd.
12. International General.
13. Indus Assurance Co., Ltd.
14. Pakistan General Insurance Co., Ltd.
15. Pakistan Mutual Insurance Co., Ltd.
16. Pioneer Insurance Co., Ltd.
17. Premier Insurance Co., Ltd.
18. Queensland Insurance Co., Ltd.
19. Sterling Insurance Co., Ltd.
20. United Insurance Co., Ltd.
21. Universal Life and General Insurance Co., Ltd.

**PART -B**

1. Adamjee Insurance Co., Ltd.
2. Crescent Star Insurance Co., Ltd.
3. Eagle Star Insurance Co.,

4. Eastern Mercantile Insurance Co., Ltd.
5. Federal Life and General Insurance Co., Ltd.
6. Great Eastern Insurance Co., Ltd.
7. Habib Insurance Co., Ltd.
8. Janata Insurance Co., Ltd.
9. Khyber Insurance Co., Ltd.
10. Mercantile Fire and General Insurance Co., Ltd.
11. Muslim Insurance Co., Ltd.
12. National Insurance Co., Ltd.
13. National Security Insurance Co., Ltd.
14. New Jubilee Insurance Co., Ltd.
15. Norwich Union Fire Insurance Society Ltd.
16. Pakistan Guarantee Insurance Co., Ltd.
17. Popular Insurance Co., Ltd.
18. Royal Exchange Assurance.
19. Royal Insurance Co., Ltd.
20. Standard Insurance Co., Ltd.
21. Union Insurance Co., Ltd.

**PART - C**

1. Asian Mutual Insurance Co., Ltd.
2. Central Life Insurance Co., Ltd.
3. Co-operative Insurance Society of Bangladesh Ltd.
4. Eastern Federal Union Insurance Co., Ltd.
5. Eastern Life Insurance Co., Ltd.
6. Eastern Mercantile Insurance Co., Ltd.
7. Federal Life and General Insurance Co., Ltd.
8. Janata Insurance Co., Ltd.
9. National Security Insurance Co., Ltd.
10. Oriental Mutual Insurance Co., Ltd.
11. Pakistan Guarantee Insurance Co., Ltd.
12. Pakistan General Insurance Co., Ltd.
13. Pioneer Insurance Co., Ltd.
14. Union Insurance Co., Ltd.
15. Standard Insurance Co., Ltd.
16. Universal Life and General Insurance Co., Ltd.

**PART -D**

1. Adamjee Insurance Co., Ltd
2. East Rengal Mutual Insurance Co., Ltd.
3. East Pakistan Co-operative Insurance Society Ltd.
4. Great Eastern Insurance Co., Ltd.
5. Habib Insurance Co., Ltd.
6. Homeland Insurance Co., Ltd.
7. International General Insurance Co., Ltd.
8. Ideal Life Assurance Co., Ltd.
9. Khyber Insurance Co., Ltd.
10. Mercantile Mutual Insurance Co., Ltd.
11. Muslim Insurance Co., Ltd.
12. National Insurance Co., Ltd.
13. New Jubilee Insurance Co., Ltd.
14. Pakistan Mutual Insurance Co., Ltd.
15. Popular Insurance Co., Ltd.
16. Premier Insurance Co., Ltd.
17. United Insurance Co., Ltd.



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**REBOLIC CARBOLIC POWDER,**

1 lb. 8 d. each.      50 lbs. 10 s. each.  
 4 lb. each.      100 lbs. 18 s. each.  
 10 lbs. 18 s. each.      250 lbs. 35 s. each.  
 25 lbs. 35 s. each.      500 lbs. 65 s. each.  
 1000 lbs. 125 s. each.

This powder is used for disinfecting all kinds of surfaces, and is especially adapted for use in hospitals, prisons, and other places where a high degree of cleanliness is required. It is also used for disinfecting the air, and for the treatment of various diseases.


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## NOTICE

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Tenders are called for the erection of 17 Temporary Barracks, each 30 feet long by 15 feet wide, within the cantonment at Dacca.

Plans and Specifications can be seen on application at the Undersigned's office.

Tenders endorsed "Tender for Temporary Barracks" will be received by the Undersigned up to 12 o'clock on the 18th Instant.

The Undersigned does not bind himself to accept the lowest or any Tender.

J. W. JOHNSON, C. E.,  
Officiating Executive Engineer,  
Dacca Division

13. 5. 1876

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## NOTICE

Reduction in Price. Rangoon Kerosine Oil in cases of two tins each. Rs. 12. 8 per case.

Dacca Agency, Bengal Times Office.

6. 1. 1877

## FOR SALE

16,00 Maunds, or Ferrains of Lime (burnt in March, 1877). At Rupees 54 per 100 Ferrains, which are equal to 277 Cubic Feet.

Also any quantity of Sylhet Lime stone, at Rs. 35 per 100 Maunds.

Apply to Daboo Dhurmo Narain Bhattacharya,  
Offg. Supt. for Messrs. H. INGLIS & Co.,  
Chittuck, Sylhet.

Terms Cash, and delivery given at Chittuck only.

8. 12. 1877

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## NOTICE

The Bengal Times is filed in the Reference and Indian Intelligence Department, in the Indian Court, International Exhibition, South Kensington, London.



# 4

## Major Shifts in the Industrial and Commercial Life of Dhaka

Mizanur Rahman Shelley

Significant shifts in the industrial and commercial life of Dhaka seemed to have been generally caused by co-incident rise, decline and resurgence of the political and administrative importance of the city. Sometime these shifts were also occasioned by changing patterns of global, regional and local commerce and industry.

Dhaka came into focus as a noteworthy urban habitat during the Mughal period but its importance can be traced back to earlier times. *Rajtarangini* mentions Dhaka as a 'frontier forward watch-station'. The Allahabad pillar inscription of Samudra Gupta (4th Century A.D.) also alludes to Dhaka as 'DAVAKA' as an eastern frontier kingdom.<sup>1</sup>

Among the pre-Mughal relics found in Dhaka are two mosques, one in the heart of the town and the other in the Mirpur suburbs. Joao De Barros recognized the significance of Dhaka and included it in his map drawn in 1550 A.D.<sup>2</sup>

There are references in the history of earlier times to trade and commerce in Dhaka but these are scanty and without details. As part of Bengal, however, Dhaka can be assumed to have the same system of money. As elsewhere in the territory, before the advent of the minted metallic pieces as medium of exchange in the 3rd Century B.C., barter was the dominant system. Punch-marked coins began to be used from the 3rd century B.C. Excavations at 'Mahastangar' and more recently at 'Wari-Bateswar' indicate that monetised economy became the order of the day in the early periods of the history of Bengal and Dhaka. It is also likely that cowries formed the medium of exchange as early as the 3rd century B.C.<sup>3</sup>

During the imperial age of Gupta's, especially the 5th and the first part of the 6th century A.D. Gupta Gold Coins were in use in several areas of Bengal that came under the domination of the Empire. Trade and commerce displayed more complexity along with an evolving monetary system with international connections during the period 750 to 1200 A.D. Discovery of coins of the Abbasid Caliphs Harun-ur-Rashid (8th century A.D.) and Mustain Billah (12th century) from excavations at Paharpur and Mainamati not only provides evidence of trade and commercial contacts of Bengal with Arabia but also indicates that Dhaka being located between two habitats had its share in the international trade and commercial transactions.<sup>4</sup>

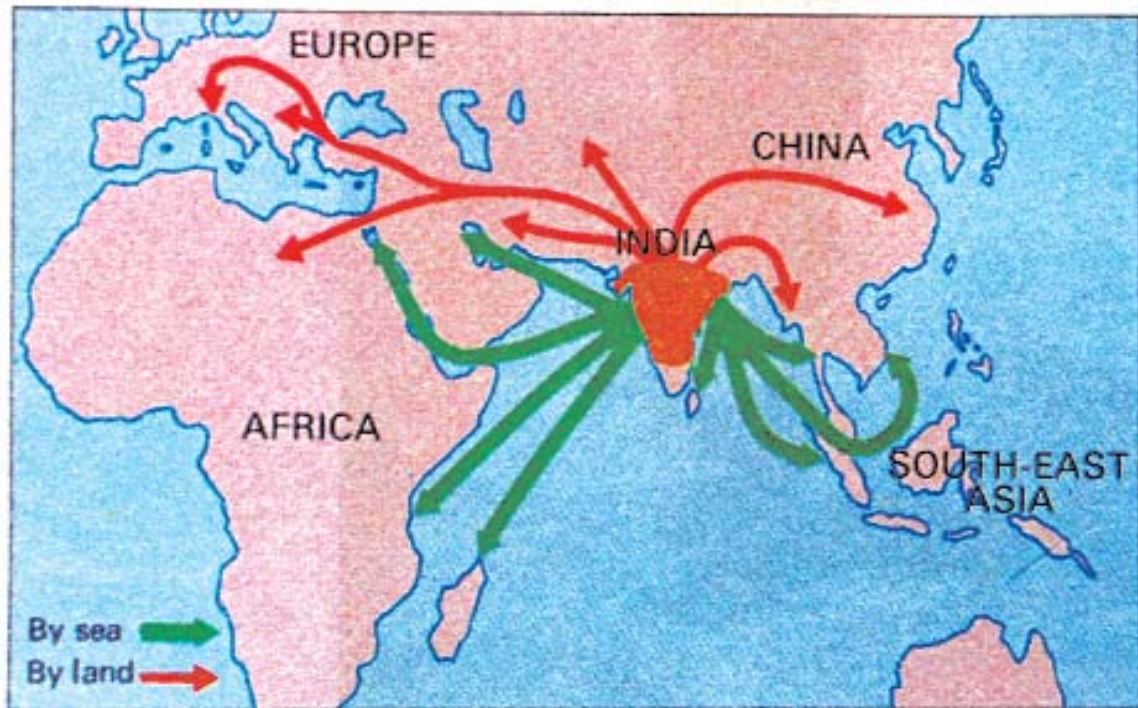
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1 *BANGLAPEDIA*, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, Dhaka, 2003, Vol. 3, p. 296.

2 *BANGLAPEDIA*, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, Dhaka, 2003, Vol. 3, p. 296.

3 *BANGLAPEDIA*, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, Dhaka, 2003, Vol. 10, p. 186.

4 *BANGLAPEDIA*, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, Dhaka, 2003, Vol. 10, p.187.



This map shows how far merchants travelled in the time of Asoka. They went by sea and over land

### Medieval Period

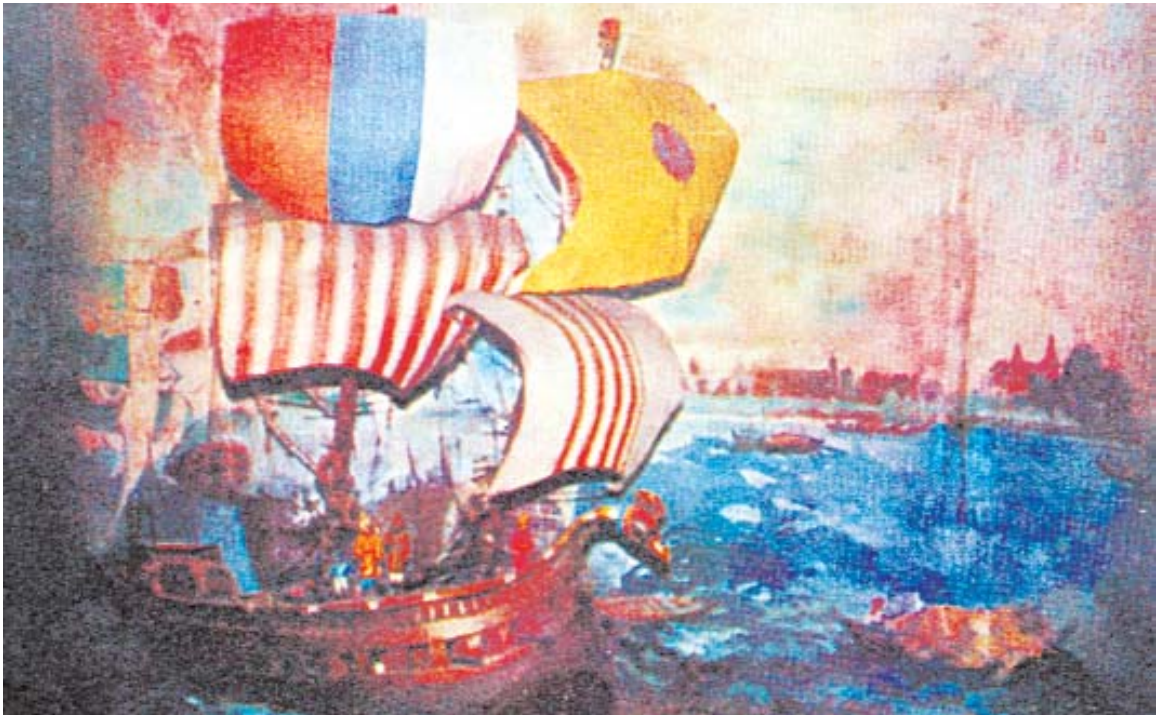
Evolution of patterns of trade, commerce and industry in Dhaka during the pre-Mughal Medieval period took place in the broader context of conditions and developments in Bengal as a whole. Textiles constituted a significant product of the area at the beginning of encounter with the Muslims in the 10th century. Following conquest of Bengal by Ikhtiar Uddin Mohammed Bin Bakhtiar Khilji (1195 A.D.) the volume and range of textile production and export registered a dramatic rise. The central place occupied by Bengali cotton was noted by the Italian explorer Marco-Polo during the late 13th century. The Arab globetrotter Ibne Batuta in 1345 expressed high admiration for the fine Muslins of Bengal. During that time the most prominent centers of cotton production were located around Dhaka.

At around this time a vibrant class of enterprisers made their mark in Bengal, especially in and around Dhaka. Handicrafts, textile weaving, milk products, jewellery constituted the major areas of their enterprise. The products they made were often featured by admirable craftsmanship.

### Dhaka as Provincial Capital: Impact on Commerce and Industry

Dhaka emerged as a thriving commercial and industrial center after the Mughal rulers shifted the capital of Bengal from Rajmahal to Dhaka (1608 A.D). The newly acquired political and administrative significance of the city enhanced its trade, commerce and industry and it soon turned into an important commercial and entrepreneurial center for South and South East Asia. The entire period was one of continuous economic growth and prosperity for the whole of the territory of Bengal in general and Dhaka in particular.





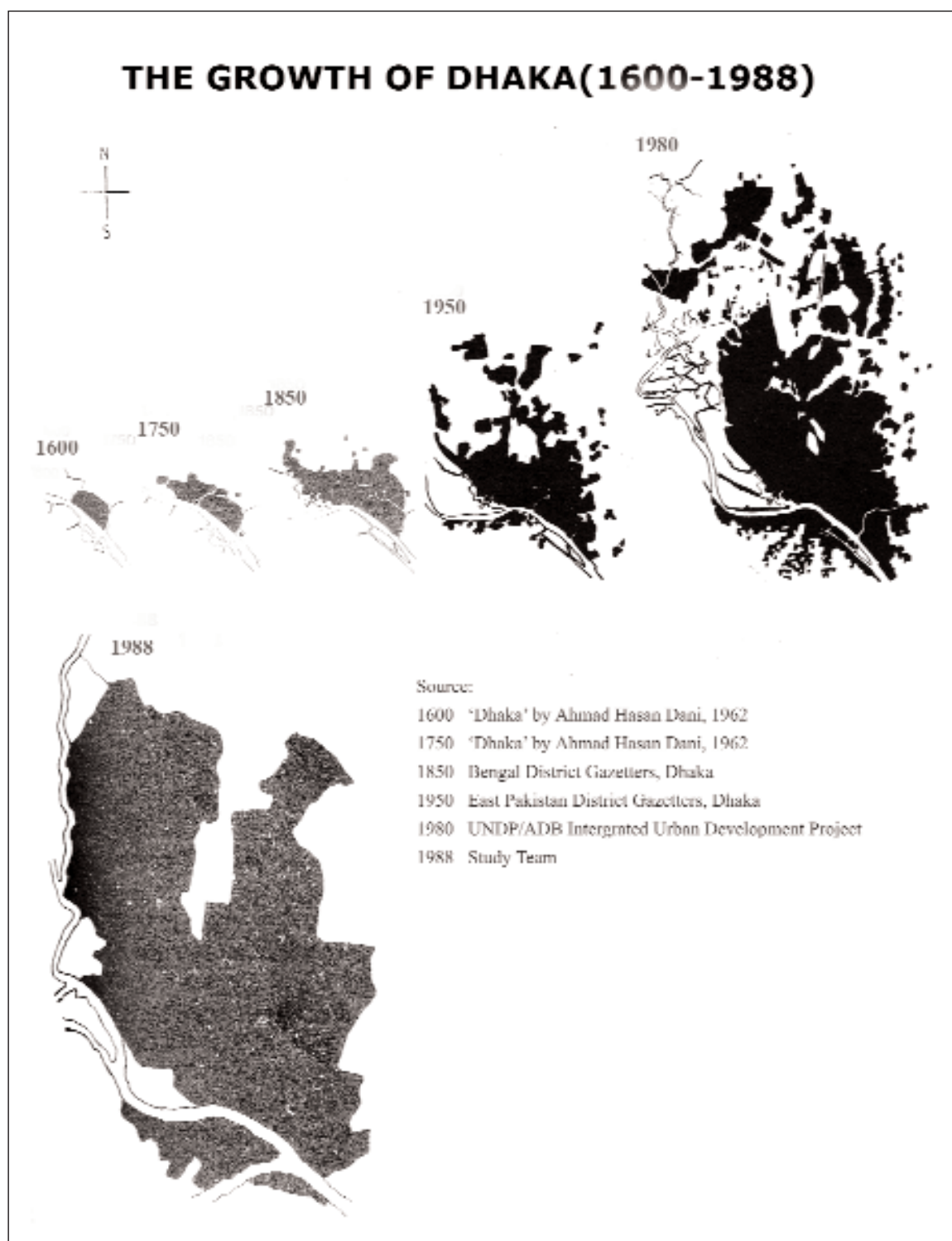
Fleets of Subedar Islam Khan as seen by an artist

During the Mughal period Dhaka was both a center of trade and commerce, and an important manufacturing town.<sup>5</sup> A center of conjunction and a *Shah Bandar* or Imperial Customs House, it attracted merchants and traders, Indian and foreign. As the provincial capital and revenue headquarters the city also drew great *shroffs* (bankers), who handled the revenue, acted as army paymasters, dealt in *hundis* (letters of credit) on a nationwide scale, changed coins, provided insurance, and sometimes engaged in commercial activities on their own accounts. *Poddars* and *mahajans* (small bankers), moneychangers and moneylenders also contributed to the growth of trade, commerce and manufactures.<sup>6</sup>

Francois Bernier, the French traveler and physician to the Great Mughal Aurangzeb (1659-1666) described Bengal as the most fertile of the Provinces of the Mughal Empire in South Asia. He described the wealth and prosperity of Bengal as incomparable. He wrote that there were very few lands more fertile than Bengal. According to Bernier Bengal was more fertile than even Egypt. Like Egypt, Bengal produced rice and wheat in plenty and in addition grew what Egypt did not; Cotton, Silk and Indigo.

5 See Imperial Gazetteer of India – Eastern Bengal & Assam, 312, Source: 'DHAKA: A Study in Urban History & Development 1840-1921' by Prof. Sharif Uddin Ahmed, Academic Press & Publishers Library, Dhaka, 2004.

6 For details on the role of these bankers & money lenders in the country's trade & commerce, see K. M. Mohsin, *A Bengal District in Transition – Murshidabad, 1765-1793*, Ch. V, Source: DHAKA: A Study in Urban History & Development 1840-1921 by Prof. Sharif Uddin Ahmed, APPL, Dhaka, 2004 p. 94.



Bernier wrote that the surplus rice from Bengal used to be transported to South India, Sri Lanka and Maldives. According to his testimony, during the 17th century, sugar from Bengal (Bangladesh and West Bengal) was exported not only to southern India but also to Arabia, Mesopotamia and Persia. Moreover, wrote Bernier, so many varieties of cotton and silk clothes were produced in Bengal that one would as well call it the very reservoir of clothing. Bengal, according to Bernier, was not only the pool and sources of cloths for all South Asia (India) but for entire Europe. Bengal was matchless in the production of fine cotton and silk cloth. It was also the prime source of saltpeter, chili, opium, wax and butter.

Another French traveler Tavernier who was in India and Bengal during 1640-1667 also wrote: '(Bengal) also abounds in sugar, so that it furnishes with it the Kingdoms of Golkonda and Karnates ...As to the commodities of great value, and which draw the commerce of strangers thither (to Bengal) I know not whether there be a country in the world that affords more and greater variety: for besides sugar ... there is store of cottons and silks, that it may be said that Bengal is, as it were, the general magazine thereof, not only for Hindustan but also for all the circumjacent kingdoms and for Europe itself ... Butter is to be had there in great plenty ... In a word, Bengal is a country abounding in all things; and it is for this very reason that so many Portuguese, Mesticks and other Christians are fled thither....'<sup>7</sup>

As the testimony of the foreign travelers underscore cotton, textiles and rice along with other commercial products were Bengal's principal produce and export. The more significant centers of cotton and textile production were located around Dhaka.

### **Foreign Trading Houses: The beginnings**

Both Bernier and Tavernier noted the great attraction that Bengal's plenty and prosperity held out for foreign traders and businessmen. They also described the influx of traders and entrepreneurs of various nationalities to Bengal. It is interesting to note here that an English trading agency was set up in Dhaka in 1669 in a number of cottages in the Tejgaon suburb of Dhaka. The French, however, had come to Bengal earlier. Despite their earlier entry into the province, they followed the British in Dhaka and established their factory in the city from 1726. In 1740, the Naye-Nazim of Dhaka Nawazish Mohammed Khan accorded permission to the French to set up a *Gunj* (Market) in Dhaka. Around the same period the Dutch East India Company opened their agency in Tejgaon. They shifted their establishment to their own building in the Mitford hospital grounds during the middle of the 18th century. This came to be known as the 'Kothi Olandaz' (Factory of the Hollanders). The Portuguese also joined the process of trade and industry in Dhaka by establishing their factory in Sangattola, Banglabazar in 1770.

### **The link between rise, decline and resurgence of Dhaka and its commercial fortunes: The case of Muslins or Mull-Mull of Dhaka**

The close and intimate dependence of commercial and industrial prosperity and politico-administrative importance of Dhaka is amply borne out by the rise and decline of Dhaka's famous produce Muslin. This fine textile constituted the centerpiece of Dhaka's commerce and industry from the ancient times to the last days of the Mughals and even beyond. As Syed Muhammed Taifoor elaborately notes in his *Glimpses of Old Dhaka*, "The port of Sonargaon attained its importance due to the fact that the world-famous Muslin (mull-mull) of Dhaka used to be shipped to all parts of the

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7 Profile of Bangladesh by Dr. Mizanur Rahman Shelley, pp. 1-2.

civilized world from this port-town. (See Table) Among other commodities, saltpetre and borax were heavily booked from this place. Thus, for centuries Sonargaon remained celebrated as the commercial, cultural and educational centre for the Muslims of the Middle and Far Eastern countries”.<sup>8</sup>

He adds, “The origin of the Muslin industry of Dhaka goes back to time immemorial and it is claimed by some that Muslin fabric had been in use for the outer covering of the mummies of Pharaohs of Egypt. As the distribution centre of this fabric, two very important towns grew up in Asia. One of them was Mosul in Iraq and the other was Musulipatam in Madras, both of which derived their names from Muslin. The manufacture of plain Muslins and of various kinds of mixed silk, tassar and cotton for export to Persia, Ethiopia, Egypt, Turkey, Italy, Provence (SE of France) and Spain afforded ample employment to quite a large number of people. It may be mentioned here that owing to the virtual collapse of this industry, the population of Dhaka city dwindled from 2 lacs in 1800 to 68 thousand in 1838.”<sup>9</sup>

As the author further notes, Muslin retained its importance even during the early British colonial rule in the sub-continent. As he writes, “In 1666 Muslins appeared in the markets of England for the first time. It seems that in 1787, long after the establishment of British domination, Muslins worth 50 lac of rupees were exported from Dhaka to European countries; yet by 1817 it completely disappeared from the British markets. Until 1813 cotton goods of Dhaka were sold in the British markets at a price, which was 60 to 75 per cent lower than that of the fabricated goods of Britain. The British, therefore, had to impose 70 to 80 per cent duty upon our cotton goods. This amounted to positive prohibition of the industry. In 1840 Dr. Taylor wrote, “Even in the present day, notwithstanding the great perfection which the weaving art has attained, the fabric (Muslins) is unrivalled in transparency, beauty and delicacy of texture and excel the most finished productions of the looms of any country of the world”. Even as late as 1851, when some specimens of Dhaka Muslins were placed in a London exhibition, they evoked unanimous appreciation of the whole English press.”<sup>10</sup>

### **Decline of Dhaka and the collapse of its Textile Industry**

As Dhaka lost its political and administrative significance during the early and mid-19th century its textile industry experienced gradual collapse. Import of machine-manufactured cotton products from Great Britain dealt a severe blow to Dhaka’s cotton industry. Historian Sharif Uddin Ahmed notes, “In 1836, the Board of Customs, Salt and Opium, was found pleading for the abolition of town and transit duties in Dhaka in order to reduce the economic pressure under which it was sinking.”<sup>11</sup>

The decay and decline of its trade, commerce and industry notwithstanding Dhaka’s importance as regional, commercial center and inland port remained unaffected. Despite inadequate tapping of the rich resources of the area, the territories in and around Dhaka retained their significance as focal points of the hinterland rich with plentiful agricultural products. The regional importance of Dhaka as a trading centre was noted by Taylor in his list of imports and exports drawn up in 1860. He observed that Dhaka and Narayanganj were thriving markets for the produce of adjacent districts. Taylor’s description of the details reiterate the importance of Dhaka and throws light on the pattern

8 Syed Muhammed Taifoor, *Glimpses of Old Dhaka*, Lulu, Leila & Malka Banus, Dacca, 1956, pp. 36-38.

9 *Ibid*, p.36-38; also see, appendix.

10 *Ibid*, p. 36-308.

11 *Dhaka: A Study in Urban History and Development 1840-1921* by Prof. Sharif Uddin Ahmed in his book, p. 4





Chakbazaar in 1880

of trade and industry in the city during the middle of the 19th century. He wrote, “grain and oilseeds are imported from Sylhet, Mymensing and Tipperah and salt from Chittagong and Bulloah to the latter mart for transmission to different parts of the country, no single item dominated Dhaka’s commerce as cotton-goods once did.”<sup>12</sup>

Encouraging trends for recovery and development of Dhaka’s commercial and industrial fortunes could be discerned even during the period of decline extending up to 1850s. Inland transit duties and town duties were abolished in 1836 and this significant policy measure stimulated a gradual trend of resurgence. In 1840, the population of Dhaka increased to 68,000 making it one of the more populous urban centres in Bengal. Traveling traders and salesmen swelled the rank of city dwellers. Visiting labourers, and farmers mingled with the settlers and increased the commercial significance of Dhaka. Though Chauk Bazar, the main trading centre since the Mughal period retained its prominence, other busy markets grew in Banglabazar, Nawabpur, Islampur and Urdu Bazar. “...hundreds of wholesale dealers, retailers and small shopkeepers had their shops and *golas* (warehouses), while others for want of room set themselves up on the roads leading to the river ghats on the Buriganga.”<sup>13</sup> Villagers from the surrounding areas brought rice, pulses, oil, ghee and vegetables and fish to sell in the city. These they usually exchanged for salt, spices, cloth and other such items. The supply of milk to residents and producers of sweetmeats came largely from the Mirpur area “whither the *goalas* (milkmen) of Dhaka traveled almost daily to buy milk from the villagers.”<sup>14</sup>

12 Taylor, Dacca 184-5, Source: *Dhaka: A Study in Urban History and Development 1840-1921*, Sharif Uddin Ahmed, APPL, Dhaka, 2004, p. 95.

13 C.J.C. Davidson, ‘Dacca in 1840’, *BPP*, XLII, p.38; also J.H. Stocquelor, *The Handbook of India*, 487.

14 *DP*, 16 Magh 1270 (January 1864), Source: *Dhaka: A Study in Urban History & Development 1840-1921*, Sharif Uddin Ahmed, APPL, Dhaka, 2004, p. 96.

Since there was a substantial community of Britons, Greeks, Armenians and Frenchmen, officials, indigo planters, merchants, agents, and their families- in and around Dhaka city, merchants began to import European goods early in this period. The Armenian traders of Dhaka were among those pioneers who first imported and sold European goods. The shop of G. M. Shircore and Sons in 1857 was a storehouse for varieties of European goods ranging from “Wines, Spirits, Cigars, Ham, Bacon, Cabin Biscuits, Lozenges, Candles, Patent Lamps and Wicks, Reading Lamps, Shoes, Dolls and Toys, Table Cutlery, Honey Soap, Essence, Shaving Soap, Fancy Note Papers' and stationery, 'Saucepans and Fryingpans, Traveling Bags, Bathing Towels, Toilet-Glasses, Umbrellas, Fancy Walking Sticks' and so to 'Pigou's Gunpowder' and shots of various numbers.”<sup>15</sup> Indian merchants such as Roop Chand De and Co., Ganga Charan Das & Co., Doss Co. became established in the 1860s in Patuatuli, Babu Bazar and Nalgola respectively and N. K. Chattopadhyaya and Co. in the 1870s in Babu Bazar followed in their wake. Besides selling European goods such as shoes, dresses for children, buttons, socks and stockings, perfumes, patent medicines and umbrellas, these stores also sold articles of local manufacture.<sup>16</sup>

The trade in European goods became a new source of wealth for Dhaka. Many merchants earned considerable profits out of these transactions. The availability of these fashionable commodities enhanced the importance of the city as the chief emporium in East Bengal for both foreign and local goods. In his diary Lt. Colonel C.J.C. Davidson of the Bengal Engineers noted in 1840, “Dacca has now only three manufactures worthy of name but these are very curious” those mentioned were violins, shell-ornaments and idols. At this time rings and bracelets made from conch shells became a major product of Dhaka. They formed one of its principal exports.

Dhaka's craftsmen became famous for their fine filigree designed bracelets. There were more than 300 goldsmiths and silversmiths in the city. There was also some horn and ivory carving, soap and paper making, and of course boat building, a major industry throughout the Mughal period”.<sup>17</sup>

“...The fine embroidered work, mainly for Indian courts, of which Taylor gives a very full account, was a typical luxury handicraft industry. This work was done in numerous homes upon the putting-out system. Merchants provided the designs stamped fabric and embroidery silks to be worked on at home by Muslim women. The thread used was the fine product of Hindu weavers. There was also much cloth produced of a more ordinary quality, but this, as the Commissioner of Dhaka, John Dunbar, in a most valuable report on the means of saving the Dhaka industry noted, was woven almost entirely of imported English thread and served a regional market. There was also a declining trade to the Middle East in mixed fabric woven with an English thread warp and a weft of ‘muga’ and ‘tussar’ silk from Sylhet and Assam. Besides its own factories the city also acted as a distributing centre for coarse cloth woven in Faridpur, Tippera and in the Noakhali districts.”<sup>18</sup>

Import of cloth from Great Britain seriously challenged the weaving industry in Bengal in general and Dhaka in particular. Weaving still maintained a shaky existence. Cheaply priced yarn from Britain emaciated the local spinning industry which had earlier provided a lot of employment.

15 Advertisement in *The Dacca News*, 21 February 1857; Source: *ibid*, p. 96.

16. New Calcutta Directory, 1862, see Mofussil Directory; also advertisements in *Dhaka Prokash*, 25 Asarh 1273 (8 July 1866); 6 Aswin 1280 (21 September 1873) Source: *ibid*, p. 96.

17 Yahindra Mohan Roy, *Dhakar Itihas*, 175.

18 *Dhaka: A Study in Urban History & Development 1840-192*, Sharif Uddin Ahmed, APPL, Dhaka, pp. 98, 99.

### Commercial Revival: Leather

While yarn and cloth industry declined at this time, there was gradual and strong growth in another area: cow and buffalo hides and goatskins. The Armenian, Iranian and Kashmiri Muslim businessmen of Dhaka got involved in this sector from the close of the 18th century. The beginnings were made in the southern town of Barisal but soon Dhaka turned into a significant center for trade in hides and skins which were mainly exported to Britain. Earlier part of the 19th century witnessed the remarkable growth and development of the fortunes of persons engaged in hides and skin trade. More prominent among these businessmen was Khawja Alimullah, father of Nawab Abdul Ghani. His earnings from the business were reported to run into millions of rupees. As Prof. Sharif Uddin Ahmed wrote, "...From the purchase and rough curing of raw hides to the establishment of tanneries, and a handicraft shoe industry was but a few steps and Dhaka might have emerged as a centre of thriving leather industry (like Leicester in England). The pioneer traders in hides and skins, after pocketing their fat profits, chose instead to invest their wealth in zamindaris (acquisition of large land holding) and other properties which offered secure returns and social respectability. By the 1850s, most of those prominent Armenian, Iranian and Kashmiri merchants who had been the pioneers of the trade had given up the business to become big and powerful landlords."<sup>19</sup>



Hazaribagh Tannery Zone

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid, p. 99.



### Impact of the Crimean War

European traders and planters played a significant role in the commercial development of Dhaka even before the 1850s. They promoted the farming of safflower for producing yellow dyes for export to Europe. Later, the local businessmen also got involved in this business. As noted by the Dhaka News in 1856 the average yield of the safflower crop increased from 4,000 maunds (146 M/Ton) in 1830s to 10,000 maunds (364 M/ton) in mid-1840s.<sup>20</sup>

The Crimean War in 1850s marked the beginning of revival of Dhaka's commercial and industrial fortune. The speed of development increased by the 1870s. The importance of the impact of the Crimean War on the economy was underscored by the editorial of the Dhaka News entitled '1856', "Russian flax being no longer available to Britain, the paper stated a substitute was required. And hence arose a great demand for Jute and Sunn Hemp. British shoemakers even preferred 'light and cheap East India hides' to 'expensive and difficult-to-work' Russian Hides. A great demand for Rice [from Bengal] has lately sprung up. This we believe is caused in part by the rapid growth of the Australian colonies."<sup>21</sup>

Dhaka benefited most from the enhanced demand for rice, jute, hides, oil-seeds and other products both in the sub-continent and abroad because most of these products were produced in East Bengal in the centre of which Dhaka was located. A new age of great commercial and industrial expansion in the whole of Bengal in general and East Bengal and Dhaka in particular was brought forth by several developments. Among these were the mechanization and modernization of river transport with the introduction of steamer services, installation and expansion of telegraph communication, the construction of Bengal Railways and the first stimulating phase of investment in tea plantations in Assam and East Bengal.

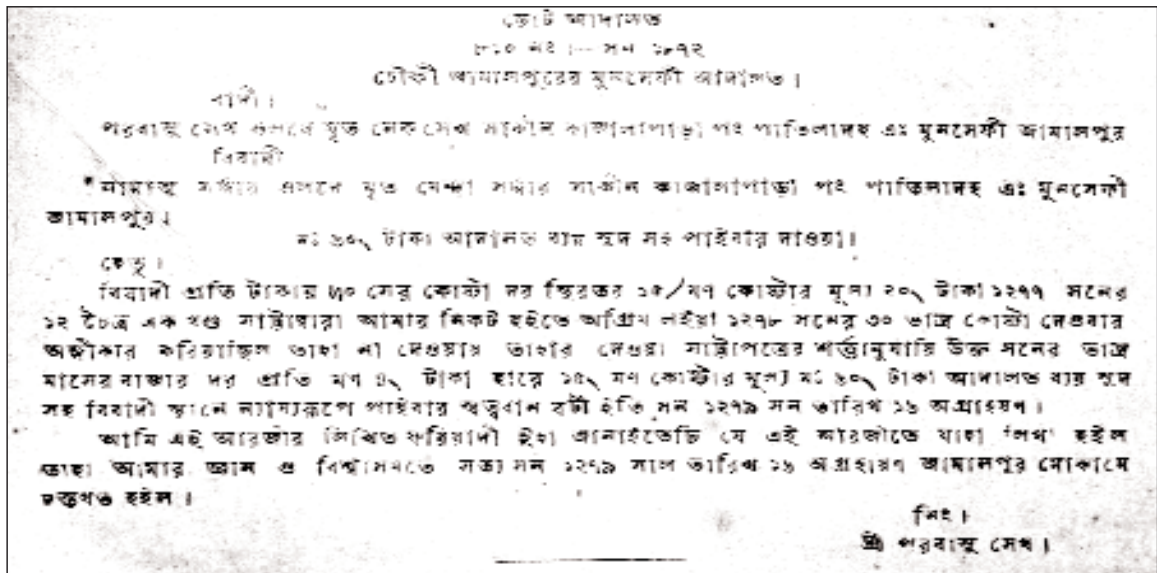
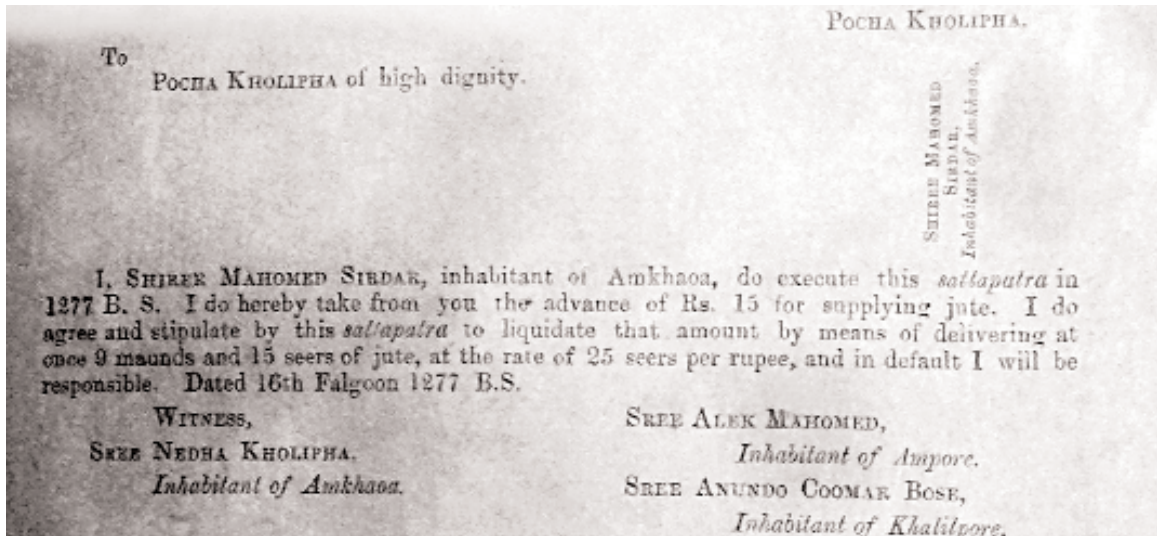
### The Rise of Jute

The item of key significance in the commercial resurgence of Dhaka was jute. As a natural fiber jute was grown in Bengal from very early times. The villagers had been using jute for producing twist and rope, sacking cloth, gunny bags, sails and beddings. The East India Company appreciated the uses of jute as early as 1795. But the fiber could not yet become commercially prominent because of stiff competition from finer hemp grown in Russia. However, some 500 maunds (8 M/Ton) of jute were shipped to Dundee in 1828. The decision of the Netherlands government in 1838 to use jute for making coffee bags for export to the Dutch East Indies provided great stimulus to the commercial possibilities of Bengal's Jute. As already noted, the Crimean War snapped the supply of flax from Russia and gave enhanced impetus to the expanding use of Jute. All these had a positive impact on trade of jute centering round Dhaka from 1853. The city was a source of supply of increasing export of Jute to Britain. Greater encouragement to the growing of jute was provided after the installation of jute mills in and around Kolkata. East Bengali farmers started to divert greater areas of land from rice and other food grains to jute cultivation. Consequently, the districts of Dhaka, Mymensingh, Faridpur and Tippera were transformed into jute territory.

20 Dhaka Commissioner's Report, 2 May 1844, Sadr Board of Revenue Proceedings, LXXXVI, 15, 4 June 1844, 2. cited in Prof. Sharif Uddin Ahmed's *Dhaka: A Study in Urban History*, APPL, Dhaka, 2004, p. 101.

21 *The Dacca News*, 27 December 1856. Cited: *ibid*, p. 101.





Facsimile of a contract both in Bangla and English entered into at Jamalpore, Dacca Division for delivery jute in 1873

Simultaneously a class of jute shippers, composed of local traders and agents from Kolkata mills, grew and flourished in Dhaka. The quantity of jute shipped and its price registered an impressive rise. Dhaka benefited from the enhanced prosperity.

The Magistrate-Collector of Dhaka in 1877, estimating the output at 43,636 metric tonnes and the price at three rupees and seven annas, of which the cultivator received three rupees and the traders and brokers the remainder, argued that the returns from jute alone had been enough to pay the whole rental of the district, and still left a surplus of eight hundred thousand to 1.3 million rupees. He also pointed out that agricultural prosperity had at once pushed up demand throughout East

Bengal for salt, better quality food and cloth, metal utensils and ornaments. The merchants and artisans of Dhaka soon set about meeting this gradually increasing demand.<sup>22</sup>

The existing structure of railway and steamer services encouraged a very rapid growth in trade and made Dhaka the commercial capital of East Bengal. Moreover in time, river links were opened up between Dhaka - Narayanganj and Chittagong as an alternative port for the export of jute, rice, oil-seed and tea.<sup>23</sup>

As noted earlier, the rapid expansion of mechanized river transport, railway and telegraph systems helped Dhaka connect itself more effectively with adjoining areas such as Narayanganj and Mymensingh and other distant places. These developments were instrumental in the revival of the commercial and industrial significance of the city from the 1870s. Thus, on 13 August 1874, the reputed Allahabad daily *The pioneer*, reported an address of welcome for the Viceroy Lord Northbrook which said that Dhaka not only had a glorious past, but it was also currently the educational, intellectual and commercial capital of Eastern Bengal.<sup>24</sup>

During this period trade and commerce thrived in the city. By 1876-77, Dhaka and Narayanganj registered trade transactions to the tune of 36.7 million rupees. In comparison, the competing trading centres of Chittagong and Murshidabad registered figures of 7.7 million and 17.6 million rupees respectively.

A substantial part of this trade was with Kolkata, the total value of goods moving down to that port city in 1878-9 being some 3.2 million, while imports from the metropolis were valued at 5.8 million of rupees.<sup>25</sup> The size of the latter figure is a clear indication of the importance of Dhaka as a distribution point for the whole region; for many of the imported goods were, of course, re-exported. The Sanitary Commissioner for Bengal, a vigilant observer, commented in 1877, 'the jute trade has within recent times revived the fortune of this city, making it a thriving and busy commercial town and the centre of all the trade of Eastern Bengal'.<sup>26</sup> The prosperity brought to East Bengal by the jute trade simultaneously pushed up the rural demand for consumer goods which the merchants and traders of Dhaka were quick to supply.

Most of the trade was controlled and distributed by Dhaka's wholesale traders; lower down the scale were the retail traders from neighboring districts who came to the city to make their purchases, and then distribute these throughout the countryside. Though trade drew its strength largely from the countryside, it also led to economic renewal within the city itself.

As Prof. Sharif Uddin Ahmed further analyzed, the departure of the important European merchants, bankers and financiers from Dhaka during the late 18th and early 19th century created opportunities for local traders and businessmen to take over the city's commerce. However, a small group of immigrant merchants - Armenian, Greeks, Kashmiris, Iranian, Punjabis and the up-country Marwaris who had settled in Dhaka also continued to play an important role. The large part

22 'Dhaka: A Study in Urban History & Development 1840-1921' by Sharif Uddin Ahmed, APPL, Dhaka, 2004, p. 102.

23 *Ibid.*, p. 103.

24 Cited: *Ibid.*, p. 4-5.

25 Details of this import-export trade with Kolkata, see *Report on the Internal Trade of Bengal 1878-9*, Source: 'Dhaka: A Study in Urban History & Development 1840-1921' by Sharif Uddin Ahmed, APPL, Dhaka, 2004, p. 104.

26 Annual Report of the Sanitary Commissioner for Bengal, for 1877, Appendix VI, p LXVIII ] Cited in 'Dhaka: A Study in Urban History & Development 1840-1921' by Sharif Uddin Ahmed, APPL, Dhaka, 2004, p.105.

of local business community happened to be Hindus who by 1830s had occupied the positions of major actors in shop keeping, wholesale and retail dealing of food grains including rice, oil and oil-seeds. They also formed the majority of moneylenders, dealers in coins, brokers and petty traders. The latter half of the 19th century witnessed the expansion and rise of this mainly Hindu business class in Dhaka. Following the Crimean War these Hindu businessmen drawn mainly from the three castes of Subarna-baniks, Shahas and Basaks slowly extended their domination over the commerce and finance of Dhaka.

Taylor observed that there were only four or five Muslims and about the same number of Christian merchants in the city.<sup>27</sup> Prof. Ahmed notes that Taylor might not have got the correct picture and, “...this becomes apparent from the account of Henry Walters who in 1830 wrote that the number of Muslim merchant families in the city stood at 126 besides another 1,080 families of Muslim shopkeepers.”<sup>28</sup> There were no reasons for a fall from 126 to 5 Muslim merchants in a space of less than ten years. Nevertheless, it is the case that there were only a handful of big Muslim merchants in Dhaka at the start of this period.

Although in this scenario Muslim role in Dhaka’s business was that of a minor partner, the place occupied by the ‘Kuttis’, early inhabitants of Dhaka, was interestingly significant. They had established a virtual monopoly in retail business in rice by the close of the 19th century. As Professor Shaif Uddin Ahmed further writes, “...so great was their power, that they could easily raise the price of rice or create a scarcity by hoarding. They regularly profited from any shortfall in the harvest or threat of scarcity.”<sup>29</sup>

### Finance and Banking in Dhaka: The Beginnings

An important shift in the commercial life of Dhaka occurred during the latter part of the 19th century with the inception of local business in finance and banking. The seeds of the business were planted by a prominent merchant Mathuranath. After his death his sons Swarup Chandra Das and Madhusudan Das started the Swarup Charndra Madhusudan Podder House and soon transformed it into the largest native financial concern in Dhaka. This house faced stiff competition from 1862 when a branch of the Bank of Bengal was opened in Dhaka. It gradually expanded its activities in remittance, encashment and grant of bank drafts and bills of exchange. Consequently, the Podder House concentrated on money lending business.



Podder's House

27 Taylor, *Dacca*, 186, Cited: *ibid*, p. 107.

28 Walters, *Census of the City of Dacca*, Asiatic Researches, XVII (1832), Statement 2.] Cited: *ibid*, p. 108.

29 *The Bengal Times*, March 1878, 189; Cited: *ibid* p. 108 .



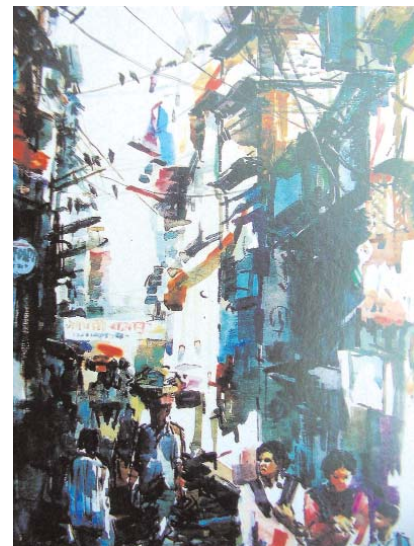
The first modern bank in the city was established mainly by the Europeans as early as 1846 in the form of Dhaka Bank – a joint stock company. The absentee shareholders folded up the Dhaka Bank in 1856. However, the shareholders who lived in Dhaka took a decision to establish a new bank. But, as noted earlier, the Bank of Bengal set up a branch in Dhaka in 1862 and bought the Dhaka Bank and merged it into the Bank of Bengal. “From 1862, moreover, the Bank of Bengal provided general treasury and banking services to the Government of Bengal, and hence, the new Dhaka branch acted as government treasurer for the whole of East Bengal. The presence of this bank in Dhaka transformed the city into the financial centre of East Bengal.”<sup>30</sup>

Despite the rise and spread of modern European style banking with the enhanced operations of the Bank of Bengal, local traders unable to meet the standards demanded by this institution continued to depend on indigenous money lenders. To help these traders - a group of entrepreneurs, established in 1878, a joint stock company with a capital of rupees 100,000.00. “With the restoration of Dhaka’s position as a major centre of regional administration, trade and commerce, the city’s population swelled: by 1881 it stood at about 80,210.<sup>31</sup> This rise in population further stimulated the growth of Dhaka’s markets. Old *bazaars* were restored to life; many new shops were opened and business became diversified and brisk. If the city’s own handicraft production had been hard hit by British competition, the import of British cotton yarn served to cut costs for the local weavers; and as a westernized middle class developed, and wealthy zamindars aped English fashions, Dhaka became a distributing centre for western goods such as Lancashire textiles, Belgian glass, wines, spirits and the like.”<sup>32</sup>

### Shifts in Indigenous Industry and Commerce

Despite the inroad and gradually increasing prominence of European products in Dhaka’s market the indigenous commercial and industrial merchandise retained their place. Among such native goods the more important ones were conch shell products, horn and ivory carving and jewelry.

The conch shell industry, a traditional preserve of the native Hindu population, received stimulus for expansion during the latter half of the 19th century. Bracelets and rings made from conch shells constituted major export items of the city. The conch shell craftsmen known as “Shankaris” (derived from ‘Shanka’ the Bengali word for conch shell) had a monopoly over the manufacture and marketing of the conch shell products. They continued to reside in their first settlement in Dhaka, the Shankari Bazar. Married Hindu women, whose husbands are alive, traditionally wear bangles made of ‘Shakha’ as a mark of their status. The demand from this class remained constant and kept the conch shell industry of Dhaka



Shankari Bazar

30 G. P. Symes-Scutt, *The History of the Bank of Bengal*, p. 158, Cited in: ‘Dhaka: A Study in Urban History’ APPL, Dhaka, 2004, p.118.

31 Sharif Uddin Ahmed p. 96. For details see ‘Dhaka: A Study in Urban History & Development 1840-1921’, Ch. V.

32 *Ibid*, pp. 96-97.



vibrant despite pressure of competition from other jewelleryes. This competition caused the decline in demand for conch shell products excepting the bangles. The prosperity in the economy of Bengal brought by the rising jute industry increased the demand of Bengali women for more pricey ornaments such as those made from gold and silver.

Consequently, at this time the business of gold and silversmiths and jewellers thrived in the city. “Dhaka’s craftsmen being famous for their fine filigree designed bracelets there were above 300 goldsmiths and silversmiths in the city. There was also some horn and ivory carving, soap and paper making, and of course boat-building, a major industry through Mughal period.”<sup>33</sup>

### Boat Building

The Dhaka district’s riverine nature made it a natural abode of the boat building industry. The district, especially the Dhaka city, constituted the hub of boat building activities from distant past. It reached a peak during the Mughal times. As the District Gazetteer notes, “Dacca became famous for luxury boats. The royal barges which were presented to the Emperor of Delhi were built by the Dacca boat builders. Emperor Jahangir greatly admired the houseboats made in Dacca and mentioned these in his ‘Tuzuk’. The green boats of the present day are poor replicas of the old time barges. However, these green boats are made nowhere else in the province except at Dacca.”<sup>34</sup>

Renewal of commercial and trading activities of the city and surrounding regions from the mid-19th century provided strong fillip to the boat building industry. The necessity of transporting



Boat Building

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* p. 98.

<sup>34</sup> *The East Pakistan District Gazetteers, Dacca*, Government of East Pakistan, 1969, p. 202.

commodities to Kolkata increased the demand for boats, especially barges. The demand was enhanced by the requirements of export of jute. However, the speedy installation and expansion of railways and introduction and spread of modern steamers offered stiff competition to the boat building industry and caused its reduction.

However, the dwarfing of the boat building industry had a positive impact on the growth and expansion of general carpentry. "...As prosperity and population returned to the city, the Saha businessmen of Farashgonj turned their attention to trade in timber and wooden furniture as the demand increased".<sup>35</sup>

### **Impact of political development in the Sub-continent and Bengal: (1900-1947)**

As noted in the foregoing account and analyses of the major shifts in Dhaka's commercial and industrial life, the city's rise and decline in political and administrative status strongly tended to shape the shifts. Although Dhaka gradually registered economic revival during the latter half of the 19th century under British colonial rule, it was handed a potentially great opportunity to rise and prosper between 1905 and 1911 when it was made the capital of the newly created province of East Bengal and Assam. For historical and political reasons this fortune of the city was short-lived. The partition of Bengal was annulled in 1911 in consequence of determined resistance by the Hindu elite of Bengal.

In order to understand this and subsequent socio-political happenings leading to the independence of the sub-continent and its partition in 1947 one needs to take a close look at the political developments in Bengal in particular and the sub-continent in general.

"The absence of a strong and influential Bengali Muslim middle class in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it has been justifiably argued, was instrumental in excluding the Muslims from the nineteenth century Calcutta-centric Bengali literary and cultural renaissance and the embryonic Bengali nationalist movement that found a focal point in the 1905 partition of the British Indian province of Bengal.

Lord Curzon's partition of Bengal, avowedly for reasons of administrative expediency, severed West Bengal from East Bengal, the former's economic hinterland. It also made the eastern half Muslim-dominated at least in numerical terms. The Bengali bourgeois class, at that time overwhelmingly Hindu, made it a 'national' objective to undo the partition. They succeeded. This 1905 partition was annulled in 1911; largely as a result of intense and partly terrorist Hindu agitation based on interest and perhaps still more on an extremely powerful sentiment for Bengal as a single motherland.

Thus the movement, led and dominated by the Hindus, left the Bengali Muslims untouched. By the early twentieth century the Muslims made a limited entry into Bengal politics. Muslim leaders such as A.K. Fazlul Haq and H. S. Suhrawardy drew support from the embryonic Muslim middle class and in thirties highlighted the inherent divergence of outlook and interests between the Muslims and the Hindus of Bengal in the economic and social fields.



Logo of the Eastern Bengal and Assam

35 'Dhaka: A Study in Urban History & Development 1840-1921', Prof. S.U. Ahmed, APPL, Dhaka, 2004, p.121.



Dhaka Well Comes Lord Curzon in 1904

Meanwhile, on the All India level, the Indian National Congress led by Gandhi was struggling for Indian independence. Gandhi transformed the Congress into a mass organisation. A cardinal cannon of his programme for mass mobilisation was appeal to Hindu cult and civilization. This served to sharpen the edge of Muslim separatism in India. The Muslim separatists movement humbly began in Dhaka in 1906 under the leadership of the All India Muslim League. It gained tremendous momentum by the forties. The failure of the Congress to convince Muslims of its secular character led to the emergence of what has been called Muslim nationalism and the Muslim League exploited it. Indians in general wanted freedom; the Muslims wanted self-assertion. In the last days of the British Raj ... the struggle was three sided and the creation of Pakistan was its most extraordinary result.

The 'Pakistan idea' received its first formal expression in a Resolution adopted by the Muslim League in its annual session in Lahore in 1940. The Lahore Resolution (popularly known as the 'Pakistan Resolution') demanded *inter alia* that the 'North-western and Eastern zones of India' where 'the Muslims are numerically in a majority' 'should be grouped to constitute *independent states* in which the constituent units should be autonomous and sovereign'.

Seven years on, Pakistan came into existence, but not in full accordance with the Lahore Resolution. During these years Hindu-Muslim antagonism in India reached its peak. Communal violence assumed the proportion of Civil War. The British as well as the combatants agreed that partition was the only practicable way out. The partition of the sub-continent was accompanied by partitions of the two large, 'mixed' provinces, the Punjab and Bengal.





Protest against the visit of Lord Curzon to Dacca in 1904

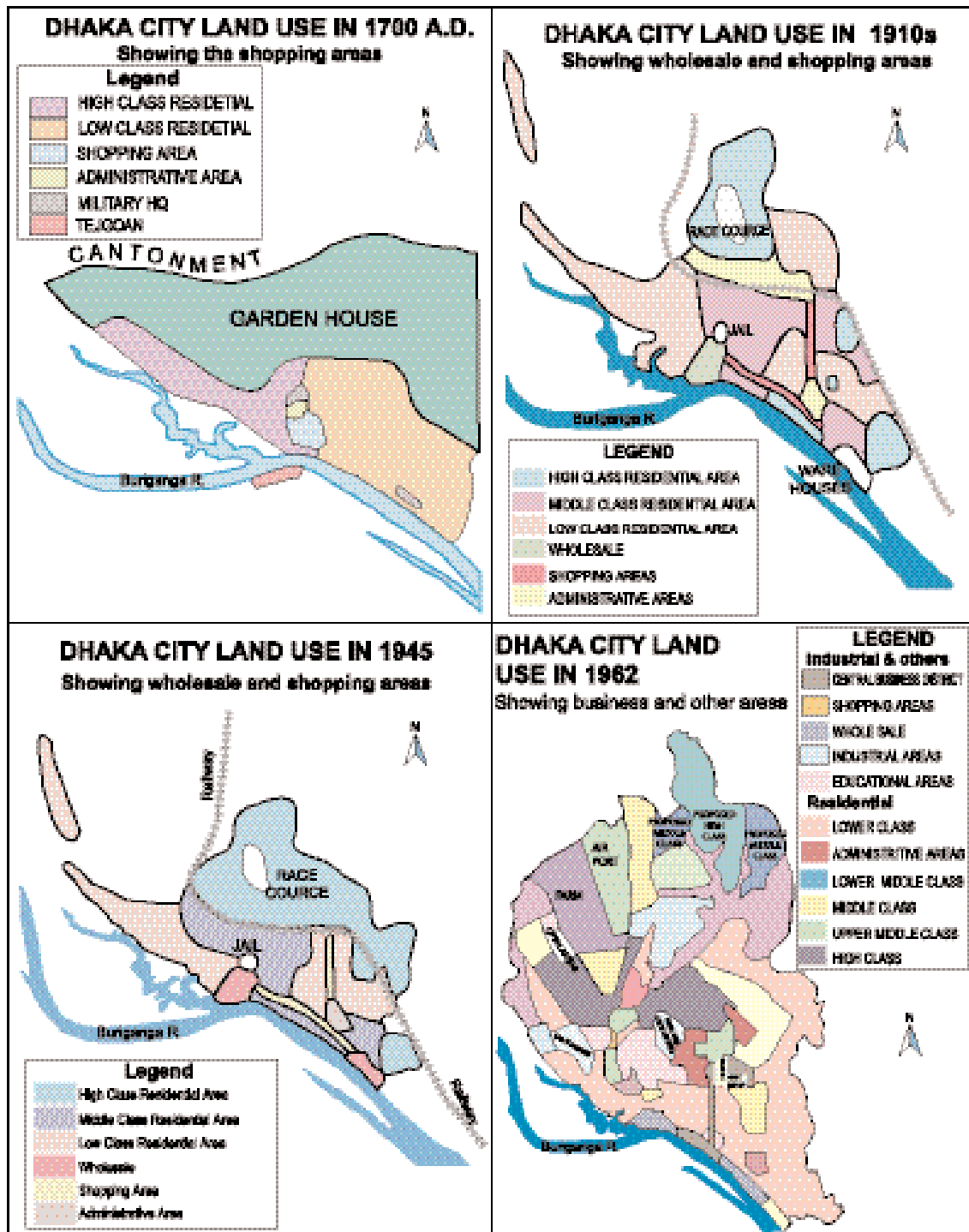
The Bengali Muslim elite, consisting of a thin aristocratic stratum and a small English educated middle class sided clearly with the Muslim separatists of other regions of India. In Bengal, before the 1947 Partition, the landlords were Hindus, the tenants and cultivators Muslims. The money-leaders were Hindus and the debtors Muslim. Trade, commerce, industry and administration so far as these were in the hands of the natives were monopolistic preserves of the Hindus. The vocal elements among the Bengali Muslims 'raised these points tellingly'. As a result, in the elections to the Provincial Legislative Assembly in 1946, the Muslim League captured 96.7 per cent of the 'Muslim' seats. In spite of this, an influential section of the Bengali Muslim leadership under the guidance of H.S. Suhrawardy, at that time Prime Minister of Bengal, tried in 1947 to keep intact the unity of Bengal. With the help of some Hindu leaders they put forth the idea of a 'sovereign Bengal' existing outside Pakistan and India. The Congress as well as the majority of Bengali Hindu leaders and legislators did not support the idea and it was dropped. Thus 'the Hindus and Congress decided upon the partition of Bengal which their forbears so bitterly opposed'. Thus after the partition of 1947 West Bengal remained in India while East Bengal became part of Pakistan with Dhaka as the provincial capital.<sup>36</sup>

### **Shifts in commercial and industrial life of Dhaka from 1947-1971**

The period between 1947 and 1971 constituted a significant chapter in the evolution of commercial and industrial life in the Dhaka city. With the end of the British imperial and colonial rule and the partition of the sub-continent in 1947 the postcolonial states of India and Pakistan were born.

<sup>36</sup> For details, see *Bangladesh - Origin and Prospects*, Mizanur Rahman Shelley, *Contemporary Review*, London, 1973.





Adapted from Nazrul Islam, Dhaka: From City to Megacity

Dhaka was transformed into the capital of East Bengal (later East Pakistan) and regained its importance in political and administrative terms. In consequence, the commercial and industrial life of the city underwent titanic changes and encountered significant developments.

Partition of Bengal in 1947 led to mass exodus of Hindus – especially high cast Hindus to India and of Bengali and non-Bengali Muslims to East Bengal/Pakistan. As a result there was a great shift in the communal balance of the country's population. The Dhaka city also became predominantly Muslim. The period of Hindu dominance in terms of population and political and business leadership which was the mark of the British colonial times ended. Muslims who constituted the dominant majority during Mughal period regained their status. The wheel had turned full circle.

Significant changes occurred in the life of the city during twenty-four years of Pakistan. The population increased manifold. Its composition also became different and varied with the influx of non-Bengali immigrants, especially Muslims from Bihar and other Muslim minority states of northern India. In addition, administrators, members of the armed forces and entrepreneurs, traders and businessmen from the western wing also came to Dhaka to pursue their professional and business activities.

### **East-West imbalance in Pakistan and Shifts in Dhaka's Commercial and Industrial Life**

Significant shifts in commercial and industrial life of the city reflected its development as the capital of the most populous province of Pakistan. 'Pakistan', observed Morgenthau in 1956, 'is not a nation and hardly a state'.<sup>37</sup> It was indeed a curious phenomenon. Its two parts were geographically separated by a thousand miles of hostile territory. Fifty-five per cent of its population inhabited the smaller Eastern Wing (55,000 square miles). The rest lived in the larger territory of the Western part (308,273 square miles). West Pakistan produced wheat and cotton and a relatively smaller quantity of rice most of which the West Pakistanis sent out, as wheat was their staple food. By contrast, East Bengal's principal products were rice, the staple diet of the population, jute (which became the principal foreign exchange earner of undivided Pakistan) and tea.

There were important ethno-cultural differences between the two wings. West Pakistan was virtually an extension of the Near Eastern and Central Asia tracing the origins of its culture to Near Eastern civilizations.<sup>38</sup> The people of the four provinces of the region spoke different languages but were not generally opposed to the adoption of Urdu- a variant of Hindustani- as *the lingua franca* of Pakistan.

Bengalis, on the other hand, identified their territory closely with South and South-East Asia. They were proud of their language and culture. They resisted all attempts by the non-Bengali dominated ruling elite of Pakistan to impose Urdu as the sole national language. Almost an expression of Hegelian dialectic, Pakistan of 1947 contained in itself the seeds of its own destruction.

The non-Bengali ruling elite at first principally refugee and then West Pakistani (mainly Punjabi), worked to bring forth a colonial framework in Pakistan. West Pakistan became the metropolitan territory and East Bengal the colony. The political and administrative capital (first in Karachi and from 1960 in Rawalpindi-Islamabad), the headquarters of the three armed forces and the financial

37 Hans J. Morgenthau, *Military Illusions*, *The New Republic* (Washington D.C.), March, 19, 1956, pp. 14-16, quoted in *Bangladesh Documents*, Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, 1971, p. 4.

capital (Karachi, headquarters of the State Bank and Money Market, throughout) were all in West Pakistan.

West Pakistanis dominated the civil and defence services as well as the commercial and industrial sectors. East Bengal's only strength was in her numbers. If a real federal democratic system had been in operation this numerical superiority might have been meaningful. As it was, Pakistan was a federation only in hope. In the early 'parliamentary' period (1947 to October, 1958) the non-Bengali dominated executive ruled supreme in the absence of an operational constitution. In the second period of Pakistan's short political history, a military dictatorship ran the country. From 1958 to March 1969 President Ayub administered the land with the help of a West-Pakistani civilian-military elite. During the third and last period (March 1969 to 1971) another military dictator ruled as the presiding officer of the same elite.

This political and administrative domination of East Bengal went hand in hand with economic exploitation. By 1969-70 the per capita income of West Pakistan was 61% higher than that of the East. The peak central government expenditure in the East was 36% of the total in 1965-66 to 1969 to 1970. The East's share in private investments was less than 25%. In addition, there was a net transfer of resources from the East to the West as the former's foreign exchange earnings were diverted to the latter to meet its import needs.



Envelope and Stamp in Urdu



Dhaka's Newmarket

According to official reports, East Pakistan had transferred approximately 2.6 billion dollars to West Pakistan over the period 1948-49 to 1968-69.<sup>39</sup>

One of the major effects of imbalance of economic development between West Pakistan and East Pakistan (East Bengal) was reflected in the swift decline of the East wing's and by implication Dhaka's textile production and trade.

Despite exploitation of East Pakistan by vested interests centered in West Pakistan and resultant imbalance in economic development, the Eastern wing achieved some economic progress. In consequence of the partition of Bengal in 1947 and the creation of the province of East Bengal as the eastern wing of Pakistan significant stimulus was provided to the trade, commerce and industry of the region. Dhaka as the new provincial capital experienced a vibrant season of economic renewal. Its trade, commerce and industry also received considerable impetus. The city's communication with port city of Chittagong and the inland river port of Naryanganj and other significant centers of trade and commerce developed considerably.

There was revival of financial and banking activities in the city. From 1947 to the end of the 60s 13 local banks and 5 foreign banks and 4 insurance companies carried on and expanded their operations in Dhaka. Many government offices, including those relating to trade and commerce, were set up. A number of shopping centers (for example New Market) and food markets were established in the city. These were in addition to the traditional markets of old Dhaka. Most of the big importers had also set up their local offices, if not their head offices, in Dhaka.

### Reduction of Textile Manufactures

As the East Pakistan District Gazetteer notes, despite various difficulties elsewhere in Bengal during the early 20th century "the great tradition of the weavers of the (Dacca) district did not die out. The weavers of Dacca stuck fast to their looms and continued their ancestral profession by producing *dhuties*, *sarees* and other clothes to satisfy the needs of the poorer classes..., "...Finer handloom fabrics were still manufactured by comparatively more expert hands but their market was very limited owing to high prices". "...there were sufficient production in Bombay mills to meet to a large extent the local demand. In the Dacca district the Dhakeswari Cotton Mill was established on the bank of the Sitalakhya in 1927. Immediately after this the Chittaranjan Cotton Mill was established in 1929, the Luxmi Narayan Cotton Mill in 1932, the Bandhab Sugar and Cotton Mill in 1936 and the Dacca Cotton Mill in 1938, the Dakeshwari opened a second mill in 1937."<sup>40</sup> All these mills were started, managed and controlled by Hindus. With the creation of Pakistan there was a flight of Hindu capital from the province and these mills fell on very bad days. The management of these mills had started shifting their capital long before 1947 at the prospect of the creation of Pakistan. The Government had to step in to save these mills from total ruin. Besides seven mills, thirteen new mills were established in the district after independence (1947). It is interesting to note that in spite of cotton no more remaining a product of the region, these cotton mills were set up in Eastern Bengal, especially near and around Dhaka in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

38 Wheeler, R.E.M., *Five Thousand Years of Pakistan*, Lahore: University Press, 1951.

39 Bangladesh-Origin and Prospects by Mizanur Rahman Shelley, *Contemporary Review*, London, 1973.

40 *East Pakistan District Gazetteers*, Dacca, East Pakistan Govt. Press, Dacca, 1969, p. 197.



The flight of the largely Hindu-dominated capital and management during the immediate pre and post 1947 period caused a decline in the textile production of the province and also of Dhaka. The market began to be dominated by textile and cotton products imported by businessmen of West Pakistan. Al-Haj Anwar Hussain, reputed pioneer of cotton and textile business in Pakistan and later Bangladesh, recalls in his biography '*Amar Jibon: Anwar Hussain*', the changing fortune of this sector in post-1947 Dhaka. He recounts the sadness of the experience of finding during his visit to West Pakistan in 1956 how cities and business in that wing had prospered at the cost of East Pakistan. He also speaks of his determination that led him to enter into the cotton and textile business by opening offices in the western wing.<sup>41</sup>

Despite the successful inroad made by a few enterprising Bengali businessmen such as Al-Haj Anwar Hussain textile largely turned into and remained the preserve of non-Bengali entrepreneurs and businessmen in post-1947 East Bengal. They filled the gap created by the departure of the Hindu capitalist and enterprisers. Of the 20 textile mills most of the new ones were owned and managed by them. By the 1960s a few Bengali entrepreneurs succeeded in setting up mills. Among these were Anwar Silk Mills Limited, Kamal Textiles Limited, Shajahan Weaving Limited, Kashem Textile Mills Limited etc. A number of these were established in or around Dhaka.

### Hosiery

Hosiery products became prominent as a feature of Dhaka's industrial and commercial life from the beginning of the 20th century. Most of these units located in Dhaka and Narayanganj were owned and operated by Hindu owners and managers. During the 1920s and 1930s however, the hosiery products of hand-driven machines of Dhaka lost market to superior quality machine-driven products from Calcutta. Pabna products also offered stiff competition. However, as the East Pakistan District Gazetteers notes, after 1947 partition Dhaka again came into its own and the industry was located at Narayanganj. By 1969, there were "186 hosiery factories mostly located at Narayanganj, some of them being in Dacca city and other places near about."<sup>42</sup>

### Handloom manufactures

Handloom has been playing a prominent role in textile related commerce and industry of Dhaka for a considerable period of time. During the 24 years of Pakistan the tradition of handloom products continued strong. "There are weavers in every village (of East Bengal), who produce *lungis* (kits), *saris*, *chintz*, *shirtings* and *gamchas* (used as towels) in big quantities of various qualities in their looms with the help of all the members of the family. Besides *jamdani* and other varieties of finer grades of *sarees*, *Daccai sarees* of ordinary make enjoy wide popularity and have a good market throughout the province. The principal mart of these handloom products is Baburhat in Narayanganj Subdivision of the river Meghna, which is often referred to as the Manchester of East Pakistan. ...Besides Baburhat, every *hat* (market) in the Dacca district is a cloth mart, big or small, and is frequented by cloth dealers. The weavers get their supply of yarn from the local cotton and spinning mills through the approved dealers."<sup>43</sup>

41 *Amar Jibon: Anwar Hussain* APPL, Dhaka, 2008.

42 *East Pakistan District Gazetteers*, Dacca, East Pakistan Govt. Press, Dacca, 1969, p. 197.

43 *Ibid.* p. 199.



Baburhat, a famous cloth market of Bangladesh

During this period Dhaka city and its outskirts witnessed the growth and development of a large number of handloom factories manufacturing *Benarasi* silk brocades and art silk fabrics. By the end of the 1960s there were as many as seven such factories in and around Dhaka.

In spite of the rise and expansion of various textile manufacturing and industrial units, including hosiery and handlooms in and around Dhaka during the years 1947-71, this sub-sector did not gain great prominence until later. It was only after the emergence of sovereign and independent Bangladesh in 1971 that the textile industry along with garment manufacturing units became a prominent feature of industrial and commercial life of Dhaka. The story of their emergence and rise belongs to a latter section of this analysis.

### **The Rise of Jute in the Commerce and Industry of Dhaka**

The post-partition years were marked by the remarkable ascendancy of jute in the commercial and industrial life of East Bengal/Pakistan. As a top manager of the jute industry of the 1960s aptly observed, "Jute is the world's most important natural fiber and is ranked as the second largest fiber, its annual production being surpassed only by cotton. Its importance as a foreign exchange earner to Pakistan is very great and greater is its bearing on East Pakistan. It is a part and parcel of East Pakistan's economy, its tragedies and its happiness. It is called the cash crop of the cultivators because whenever they need cash, they take out a portion of their jute and sell. The jute fiber is used for packing cereals, sugar, coffee, oilseeds, fertilizers, cement, chemicals and many other things which are transported from place to place in jute bags. Jute cloth is used as a backing of linoleum, carpets, furniture and covers for wool, cotton and other fibers. The relative extensive use of jute fabric was due to cheapness and ready availability of its products which is even today unrivalled in the field of heavy packing fabric. Though many new fibers are grown all over the world as substitutes for jute, they have made a very little headway."<sup>44</sup>

44 Jute and Jute Industry, A. Currim, *Jute: the Golden Fiber*, Ed. Serajul Islam Choudhury, PIDC, Narayanganj.



Golden Fibre of Bangladesh

The development of Jute trade and industry in East Bengal was the direct consequence of the political happenings manifest in the partition of the sub-continent at independence in 1947 and the birth of the new post-colonial state of Pakistan. Dhaka and adjacent areas, especially the river port of Narayanganj greatly benefited from the rapid growth and development of trade and industry centering round jute.

Prior to 1947, despite being the principal source of quality jute, East Bengal did not have any share in industrial processing of the product. All jute mills and most baling presses were located in what became post-partition India especially West Bengal - the capital of erstwhile undivided Bengal-Kalkota or its suburbs. By 1960s the total number of jute mills in India was 109 with about 68,945 looms of which 97 were located in West Bengal with 65,595 looms. Business in raw jute was also dominated by persons hailing from outside East Bengal. Their business headquarters were also principally situated in and around Kolkata.

As an observer writing in the 1960s remarked, "Though East Pakistan produces 75 per cent of the world's jute and about 90 per cent of the best quality fibre, yet up to the time of partition not a single loom had been installed in the land of the Golden Fibre, as a result of which, the poor jute grower suffered heavily. He was a victim of price fluctuations which deprived him of the reasonable quid pro quo for his product. Hence, the establishment of baling presses and jute mills with a view to ensuring reasonable price to the grower, creating opportunities for increased employment and enhancing the country's foreign exchange earnings by the manufacture and export of finished goods in preference to the export of raw jute only became the most pressing problem of the day.

Immediately after partition concentrated efforts could not be directed towards this end due to various reasons, although, the Adamjees and the Ispahanis started preparing the ground. However, the jute industry was given top priority in the Six-Year National Development Plan and an initial target of 6,000 looms was decided upon for implementation by 1957, when the Pakistan Industrial



Rally Brothers Office at Narayanganj

Development Corporation was set up; it too gave the jute industry top priority in its plan because of its importance to the country's economy.

The period between December 1951 when the first unit of the Adamjee Jute Mills went into production and September 1956 when no less than 7,750 looms had been installed or were under installation of which about 5,600 looms were in operation forms a glorious chapter in the history of industrialisation. The private enterprise remarkably co-operated with the public. Of the total capital of Rs. 22 crores so far invested in jute industry the share of private enterprises is no less than Rs. 14 crores i.e. 63½ percent.”<sup>45</sup> By 1960 about 12000 looms were established in and around Dhaka district.

East Pakistan (East Bengal), as a whole, benefited to a great extent from the vigorous industrialization in jute. Dhaka, the new provincial capital and Narayanganj its principal river port became major beneficiaries of this unprecedented development process. By the end of 1960s there were nine jute mills in the greater Dhaka district located at Narayanganj and Tongi. These included the largest jute mill in Asia, the Adamjee Jute Mills, Bawa Jute Mills, Latif Bawany Jute Mills, Karim Jute Mills, Dacca Jute Mills, Nishat Jute Mills, Victory Jute Mills, Pak Jute Mills and United Jute Mills. These had a total 5370 looms. There were also 17 pucca jute balers in the district - 14 at Narayanganj and 3 at Dhaka.

There were significant developments in jute trade also. In consequence of a virtual trade war between the new born states of India and Pakistan over jute export in 1949, eminent journalist, editor of the erstwhile Pakistan Observer Mr. Abdus Salam, noted, “a class of genuine Pakistani firms and individuals, emerged in the field of jute trade”. Mr. Salam records, “...Formerly it was dominated by British and foreign firms including Marwaris. Both the exporters and the brokers were

45 PIDC and Jute Industry, Abdul Quddus, *Jute: the Golden Fiber*, Ed. Serajul Islam Choudhury, PIDC, Narayanganj, p. 177.



mostly non-Pakistanis. At present the largest single exporter is a Pakistani firm of Narayanganj, Messrs. M.M. Ispahani Ltd., followed closely by Messrs. Ralli Bros., which is a British concern. The few Indian Marwaris remaining in the field have taken in Pakistani partners, and thus while the trade has not been deprived of the experience and financial strength of old operators, new Pakistani blood is being injected into it and experience and knowledge are being gathered by the operators of tomorrow. A sudden and disastrous break with the past is thus being avoided.

For, this trade is a very highly specialised one. There are more than two-dozen varieties of jute depending on its colour, texture, luster etc. one has to have a life time of experience to be able to determine at a glance the categorisation of jute.”<sup>46</sup>

Trade and industry that thrived during the post-1947 period gave a new vigorous shape and content to the commerce and industry not only of Dhaka but its adjacent towns such as Narayanganj. As noted by a contemporary observer Narayanganj throughout 1940s, ‘50s and ‘60s held a command position in the transaction of jute: “The river port of Narayanganj, eight miles to the south of Dacca, at the confluence of the Dhaleswari, Sitalkhyia and Buriganga, is most suitably situated to control the internal jute trade of East Pakistan. About 50 per cent of the raw jute of the province passes through this port; and the trade of fully 80 per cent of raw jute produced in the province is controlled by the mercantile firms situated at Narayanganj. Jute and jute alone has given this town an importance as a river port second to none in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent. No other commercial centre in the world handles as great a proportion of a primary commodity as Narayanganj handles jute.

The town, like Dacca of which it can be considered a suburb has actually been built on a marsh and for months during the rainy season the houses and the roads seem to float in a lake. It is in the heart of the jute-growing country with easy access by river to all the principal internal markets.

Only a few miles away, are the mighty Padma and the Meghna connected to it by the tributaries and river branches, the Dhaleswari, the Sitalakhyia and the Buriganga.”<sup>47</sup>

### **Leather in the Commercial and Industrial life of Dhaka: 1947-1971**

Trade and industry in leather registered growth and development during the Pakistan era in East Bengal. Although Dhaka city had a notable tradition of business in this sphere the dominant process was of trade rather than industry during the British colonial period. At partition there were two leather works in East Bengal. “There was no big refinery here and the refinery work was manual in nature. After the partition, most of the *Muhajir* leather traders from north India and Calcutta came to Dhaka. As they were rehabilitated at Hazaribagh, leather industry developed over here. There was, as such, no factory in this region in the ‘40s for refining hides into leather. ...Initially the Muhajirs coming from India and some business people from West Pakistan played the pioneering role for setting up this industry, but later some local traders also came forward to the industry. By 1960 at least 26 tannery plants were established in Dhaka. Most of the leather produced in these plants used to be exported from here to different countries and West Pakistan.”<sup>48</sup>

46 Narayanganj – The Hub of Jute Trade, Abdus Salam, Editor, The Pakistan Observer, *Jute: the Golden Fiber*, Ed. Sirajul Islam Choudhury p.132.

47 *Ibid*, p. 131.

48 Tofail Ahmed, *Dhaka's Commercial Crafts*, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, Dhaka, p 20.

A number of shoe factories were also established. The major one was the Bata Shoe Factory in Tongi which started production in 1962. Twenty more smaller shoe factories were also in operation. Leather continued to remain a notable item of export from East Pakistan. In post-liberation Bangladesh leather constituted a major export item. Dhaka and its adjacent areas received significant commercial and industrial growth and prosperity from leather.

### **Other aspects of shifting commercial and industrial life of Dhaka**

The growth and development of various other commercial and industrial activities went hand in hand with the growth of Dhaka as the provincial capital of East Pakistan (1947-71). Among the noteworthy ones were pharmaceuticals, glass, safety match, iron and steel, brick and tiles, oil mills, chemical, rubber, plastic, beverage, cold drinks, canned foods, tobacco, printing and small scale enterprises.

Before the emergence of Pakistan the only glass industry in East Bengal was the Hardeo Glass Factory in Dhaka established in the 1920s. By the end of the 1960s there were as many as 11 glass factories in and around Dhaka. Before 1947 there was no pharmaceutical industry in Dhaka. Manufacture of chemical and pharmaceutical products emerged as a growing industry in East Bengal after the establishment of Pakistan. By the end of the 1960s a number of chemical and pharmaceuticals units were operating in Dhaka, seven of these manufactured pharmaceutical products and drugs while three produced chemical products.

Safety match industry was also a development of the Pakistani period. Seven match factories were engaged in production in the Dhaka district by the close of the 1960s.

Prior to 1947 only one private iron industry, namely the Sarma Iron Works and the East Bengal Railway Workshop were operational in Dhaka. By 1960s Dhaka district had as many as 6 iron and steel processing industries.

There were 3 oil mills in Dhaka before 1947. These were Jadunath Basak and Brothers, Dulichand Omraolal and Swaika Oil Mills. All three were owned by Marwaris. Dulichand Omraolal and Swaika Oil Mills continued business even after the emergence of Pakistan. The few other mills that grew in the pre-Pakistan era closed down because their proprietors migrated to India. Non-Bengali Muslims who emigrated from India filled the gap. Before the beginning of the 1970s Dhaka and adjacent areas saw the growth and development of as many as 15 oil mills. These contributed to the growth and expansion of the economy of the city and the province.

The development of rubber industry in East Pakistan and Dhaka was a post-partition phenomenon. After 1947 as many as 7 rubber industries became operational in the Dhaka district.



O. Takeda and Hariprova, owners of Bulbul Shop Factory, founded in 1903

Similarly, plastic industry got of to a start in Dhaka following the emergence of Pakistan. Household goods and furniture made of plastic became popular. By the end of 1960s Dhaka had as many as 16 plastic industrial units producing a wide range of goods including plastic bangles, toys, buttons, drinking glasses, water carriers, plastic containers and others.

Beverage, cold drink and canned foods industry also made a vigorous beginning in Dhaka in the post-1947 period. As many as 10 units were established to produce these items.

Small scale and cottage industries ranging from textile, metal work, jewellery and wood works had registered a decline during the latter part of the British colonial rule because of competition from imports and lack of state patronage. Following partition government made efforts to revive these industries. The East Pakistan Small Industries Corporation (EPSIC) was established in 1957 to achieve this objective. Smooth supply of raw materials and provision of loans under the auspices of EPSIC gave a fillip to small scale and cottage industries in East Pakistan. Many units were established in and around Dhaka and contributed vigorously to the growth of small scale and cottage enterprises in the area and increased overall economic prosperity.

The film industry in East Pakistan received early and strong stimulus with the setting up of the Film Development Corporation (FDC) in 1957 by an Act of the government. Dhaka quickly developed into a important center of film production. This helped enrich the economy and culture of the city in particular and the province of East Pakistan in general.



Film Development Corporation



Tobacco industry, including the indigenous cigarette – ‘biri’ industry– also grew in and around Dhaka. The post-partition period also witnessed considerable growth and expansion of the printing industry in Dhaka. Within a few years as many as 70 printing presses were established by private enterprise in the Dhaka city and Narayanganj town. These were in addition to the Government Press of Pakistan, the East Pakistan Government Press and Co-operative press.

All told the shifts in Dhaka’s commercial and industrial life during the years following the emergence of Pakistan reflected a process of gradual economic development. As a result of Dhaka’s elevation to the rank of a provincial capital in 1947, the city grew in population and prosperity. However, there was an innate imbalance in the process. Commerce and industry in Dhaka in particular and in East Pakistan in general tended to be dominated by non-Bengali Muslims - both West Pakistanis and immigrants from India. This was a reflection of the East-West imbalance in economic life and development of Pakistan.

### **Bengali Struggle for Rights and the Liberation of Bangladesh**

Over the years, and perhaps especially in the second half of the 1960s, there was a growing sense of political and economic injustice among the people of East Pakistan.<sup>49</sup> As a result, the Bengalis sought to bring about a radical transformation of political and economic power within Pakistan. They found their leader in Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who articulated Bengali aspirations in his Six Point Programme for autonomy. The programme, which was presented publicly in February 1966, outlined a situation of maximum political, economic and administrative autonomy for the Eastern Wing within a confederal Pakistan.

The Bengalis found constitutional and democratic scope for voicing their total support for this programme in the general elections-- the first and last in undivided Pakistan-- of December 1970. These elections were held under the auspices of the military regime of General Yahya Khan who had taken over from President Ayub in March 1969, in the wake of civil uprisings in both wings of the country. Yahya declared his intention to transfer power peacefully to the elected representatives of the people. His scheme recognised the numerical preponderance of Bengalis in Pakistan. Sheikh Mujib’s Awami League scored a resounding victory in the election of December 1970, capturing 167 of the 169 seats earmarked for East Bengal. Thus the Awami League had an absolute majority in the proposed all Pakistan Parliament of 313 members.

Six-point Programme	
1	The constitution should provide for a Federation of Pakistan in its true sense on the Lahore Resolution and the parliamentary form of government with supremacy of a Legislature directly elected on the basis of universal adult franchise.
2	The federal government should deal with only two subjects: Defence and Foreign Affairs, and all other residuary subjects shall be vested in the federating states.
3	Two separate, but freely convertible currencies for two wings should be introduced; or if this is not feasible, there should be one currency for the whole country, but effective constitutional provisions should be introduced to stop the flight of capital from East to West Pakistan. Furthermore, a separate Banking Reserve should be established and separate fiscal and monetary policy be adopted for East Pakistan.
4	The power of taxation and revenue collection shall be vested in the federating units and the federal centre will have no such power. The federation will be entitled to a share in the state taxes to meet its expenditures.
5	There should be two separate accounts for the foreign exchange earnings of the two wings ; the foreign exchange requirements of the federal government should be met by the two wings equally or in a ratio to be fixed; indigenous products should move free of duty between the two wings, and the constitution should empower the units to establish trade links with foreign countries.
6	East Pakistan should have a separate militia or paramilitary force.

49 Peter Lyon, Bangladesh, *World Survey* (London), No.49, January, 1973, p. 9.



Nevertheless Yahya and his West Pakistani military-bureaucratic advisers refused to hand over power to Mujib, on the plea that he had not obtained the support of West Pakistani Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party which had won majority electoral support in West Pakistan, though less decisively than had the Awami League in the East.

This attitude held through the course of an unsuccessful talk in Dacca in March 1971, between Yahya-Bhutto on one hand and Mujib on the other. In the end the military junta opted for armed action and on the night of March 25, 1971, struck. Sheikh Mujib was taken prisoner in his Dacca residence and a reign of terror was unleashed by the Pakistani army on the unprepared and unarmed Bengalis.

Unprepared and ill-equipped as they were, the Bengalis (Bengali elements of the Pakistan armed forces then posted in the East, Bengali men of the Para-military East Pakistan Rifles, armed police and some students in the lead) fought back, soon organised an 'exile' government and a guerrilla force, the *Mukti Bahini*. They found, in neighboring India, help and sanctuary. They continued to fight the immensely better equipped and trained Pakistani forces. In the meantime the repressions of the Pakistani military authorities pushed many millions of Bengali refugees across the border into India. Technically this had the effect of drawing India directly into the struggle. The final struggle, however, triggered off by the Pakistani rulers. On December 3, 1971, the Pakistani Air Force carried out raids on air bases in Northern India, and thus started the 'Bangladesh' War between India and Pakistan. The twelve-day war produced the decisive defeat of the Pakistani army in the East which surrendered to the joint command of the Allied Indian and Bengali Liberation Forces on 16 December in Dhaka. Bangladesh stood liberated.

### **Renewal: Dhaka's emergence and development as national capital and transformation of its commercial and Industrial life**

The sanguinary birth of sovereign and independent Bangladesh through the glorious war of liberation resulted in the emergence of Dhaka as the capital of the newborn nation-state. The city acquired unprecedented and rapid, though gradual, significance as the administrative, financial, commercial and industrial capital of a populous country. The close of 1971 was, therefore, a defining juncture in four century-old chequered history of Dhaka.

The newborn state and its capital took some time to revive normal life overcoming the shock, grief and devastation of the war of liberation. The tragic loss of millions of lives and the depredations caused by the occupation army created grave problems. Relief and rehabilitation operations had to be conducted on a gigantic scale. Apart from the heavy loss of life and property the great problems of rehabilitating some 10 million returning refugees from neighbouring India had to be tackled in a short time. There was also the problem of numerous internally displaced persons. In addition, the nation had to face the onerous task of creating and strengthening a national govt. and rebuilding damaged infrastructure including roads, highways, bridges and industries.

As the task of nation-building and state-building went on with the process of economy-building in the newly created state, policies changed and evolved. Transformation of policies impacted on the commercial and industrial life of the country in general and Dhaka in particular. Significant shifts occurred in the patterns of commercial and industrial life with the passage of years.

In the immediate post-liberation period, until 1976, the government was committed to an avowedly socialist economy. Economic development, therefore, followed strategies shaped by socialist thinking. The socialist approach coupled with the need of managing and running commercial and



Jatiya Smritisaudha

state policy “socialism” was replaced by “social justice”. Increasing emphasis was given to the role of private sector in business and industry and the trend for privatization of state owned enterprises gradually became strong.

Open market friendly environment was initiated by legislations and strategies put in place by the close of 1970s. The 1982 industrial policy further underscored these pro-market developments. As pointed out in another chapter of this volume, “The policy reforms in the 1980s included mainly the withdrawal of food and agricultural subsidies, privatization of selected state-owned enterprises, partial financial liberalization, and withdrawal of quantitative import restrictions. For example – in total 1076 state-owned enterprises were handed over to private owners in the first half of 1980s.”

The end of the bi-polar world with the collapse of the erstwhile Soviet Union and the retreat of socialism in Europe heralded epoch-making transformation of global politics and economy. In the political sphere the wave of pluralistic, multiparty democracy swept the world. It was accompanied, in the economic sphere, by the triumphant march of open market or market-friendly economy worldwide.

These titanic developments in politics and economy had significant impact on further strengthening of the role of the private sector and privatization in the economic, commercial and industrial life of Bangladesh. Competitive trade received policy encouragement. By the beginning of the 1990s globalization became a part of the national economic process in Bangladesh.

Industrialization efforts included investment in balancing, modernization and reconstruction, creation of new industrial estates and export processing zones, promotion of private investment and attraction of foreign direct investment. Special incentives were also introduced for export-oriented

industrial units abandoned by non-Bengali owners and operators led to large scale nationalization of industries and enterprises including some owned by Bengalis. Private sector investment was fixed at a relatively low level and industry went under the control of the government. All major industries including jute, textile, sugar, fertilizer, steel, shipbuilding, etc. were taken over as public sector enterprises. The State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) turned into loss-making units on account of incompetent management, heavy bureaucratization and wastage of resources.

These negative developments and the political changeover of August 1975 (which ended the immediate post-liberation ruling party’s tenure) together led to a significant policy shift in the economic, commercial and industrial life of the nation.

Beginning with 1976 the socialist approach was gradually abandoned. The directive principle of

sectors in terms of tax break, cash incentives and importation of raw materials without import duty under bonded warehouse system. These policies spurred private investment in ready-made garments (RMG) sector in 1990s and made it the largest industrial sector within the next decade.

In post-liberation Bangladesh, especially from the late 1970s, gradual shift towards open-market economy brought forth positive growth and development of commerce and industry. The country developed and prospered though not on the scale for which it had the potential. There was adjustment as some of the sectors and sub-sectors in commerce and industry such as jute declined and others, including new ones such as readymade garments, pharmaceuticals and frozen food registered impressive rise. The most significant impact of these developments was on the city of Dhaka. These resulted in the growth of the national capital as a thriving center of business and industry creating new patterns in its commercial and industrial life.

The most significant change was in the composition of leaders and participants in commerce and industry. For the first time in many centuries Bengalis of Bangladesh, who are predominantly Muslim, came to dominate these areas. The business and industrial elite of Dhaka in the post-liberation period is overwhelmingly composed of Muslim Bengalis. They also comprised the most numerous actors in trade, commerce and industry of the city.

### **Impact of Change and Adjustment in Economy: Decline of Jute**

Sectoral and sub-sectoral changes and adjustments were faithfully reflected in the redrawing of commercial and industrial map of Dhaka.

Jute, which thrived as trade and industry during the twenty-four years of Pakistan, (1947-1971) went into stiff decline during the post-liberation period. Stiff competition from synthetic products in the international market, faulty policies, inadequate management, especially of state owned jute mills and other factors, led to the decay and decline of jute industry and trade in the whole of Bangladesh. Disinvestment of loss-making units did not succeed in producing desired results. Private sector ownership and management of disinvested jute mills also failed to meet the challenges. The largest jute mill of Asia, the Adamjee Jute Mills near Dhaka, was also closed down in June 2002. Jute no more retained its central position in the commerce and industry of Dhaka city. However, some private sector jute mills in Bangladesh and around Dhaka are engaged in diversifying their products in tune with modern demands of international market.

### **The Emergence and Rise of new Industries: Ready Made Garments (RMG)**

The amazing rise of the ready-made garment (RMG) industries has been one of the most significant developments in the economic life of Bangladesh and its capital, Dhaka. Before liberation there were some 7 factories in East Pakistan, especially in Dhaka which catered to the domestic demands for ready-made apparels. A few of these sent their products to West Pakistan from which modest international exports took place.

However, the RMG industry in Bangladesh as an export-oriented industry emerged in the late 1970s. This happened largely on account of international inclination to relocate RMG production units from high wages to low-wages countries. The significance of the sector vastly increased because of its rising contribution to employment creation, foreign exchange earnings and its enhanced share in the GDP.



BGMEA Bhaban

The tremendous growth and expansion of the RMG industry is clearly manifest in the fact that while in 1977-78 only 9 industries exported products worth US \$ 1.00 million, by 2006 some 3,100 units achieved a total of US\$ 7.9 billion in export earnings.

By the beginning of 1980s RMG replaced jute and jute goods as top export earner of the country and contributed more than 50% of the total export earnings. “Bangladesh is now one of the twelve largest apparel exporters of the world, the sixth largest supplier in the US market and the fifth largest supplier of T-Shirts in the EU market.”<sup>50</sup>

RMG not only contribute 9.5% to GDP and 27.8% to manufacturing sector but also accounts for 76% of the total export earnings of Bangladesh. It is also one of the largest employment generators providing jobs to 3.00 million. Moreover, 80% of those employed in RMG industries are women. This has positive impact on women’s emancipation and the process of gender equity.

Of the 3,100 RMG industries a very large number is located in and around Dhaka city and areas of the greater Dhaka district. The effects of the growth, expansion and development of this industry, therefore, have been very great on the commercial, industrial and social life of Dhaka. Hundreds of thousands of women workers in the RMG industries have positively contributed to the development of women in Dhaka, as also in the whole of the country. Their self perception and others perception as gainfully employed citizens have led to improvement of the status and lot of women, especially those belonging the working classes. The demands for clothing and cosmetics generated by these earning women have also provided positive stimulus to the further development of the textiles, garments and cosmetics industries in Dhaka and elsewhere.

50 BANGLAPEDIA, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, Dhaka, 2003, Vol. 4, p. 328.



Another positive outcome of the flourishing of the RMG sub-sector is the emergence of a new entrepreneurial class featured by energy, vigour and skill. It is encouraging to note that a number of these entrepreneurs are women. The entrepreneurs of the RMG sector, over the years, have acquired considerable skill in international business dealings. Most of these persons are based in Dhaka and their role in the commercial, industrial and social life of the city has been significant. Many of them have also invested in other business including textile, trade and industry and financial institutions thus contributing substantively to the development of national economy.

### **Textiles**

As noted earlier, in the pre and post-1947 period, the territories now constituting Bangladesh witnessed growth and expansion of textile industries. Many of the industries were located in Dhaka and adjacent areas. In post-liberation Bangladesh there was, in the beginning, a relative decline in this sphere. Nationalization of textile mills produced negative results. However, following policy shifts during the late 1970s and early '80s state-owned spinning mills were denationalized after 1982. The government's decision not to invest in this sector also provided considerable stimulus to the role of the private sector in this field.

Further, successful entrepreneurs in the RMG sector saw great business opportunities in textiles because of increasing demands in the domestic market. The pressure of the international community to increase the share of cloth for producing RMGs for export also strengthened the urge of the private sector to create backward linkage. As a result of this a considerable number of spinning and composite mills were established by private sector entrepreneurs. Many of these big industrial units are located in and around Dhaka. Their impact on the commercial and industrial life of the city is becoming increasingly prominent. In years to come the expansion and development of the textile industry is likely to influence the shape of shifting commercial and industrial tone and tenor of the city.

### **Pharmaceuticals**

Another area where growth and development have been phenomenal in post-liberation Bangladesh is pharmaceuticals. It is a hi-tech sector, which is not only meeting local demands but also registering notable increase in exports. One hundred and sixty-six licensed pharmaceutical manufacturers were in operation in 1981. The industry at that time was under the dominance of eight multinationals, which produced about 75 percent of the products. By contrast twenty-five medium sized local companies supplied 15 percent of the market. The rest 10 percent was contributed by one hundred and thirty-three small local companies.

The scenario changed drastically after the promulgation of the Drug (Control) Ordinance in 1982. The new legislation banned the production of numerous harmful, unnecessary products and stopped the import of some finished products in the field of pharmaceuticals. As a result the indigenous companies were freed from unfair competition both from imports and multinationals located in the country. Their scope for investment increased and the pharmaceutical industries of Bangladesh received a powerful fillip for growth and development. The outcome of this desirable development is manifest. Local production now meets 95 percent of the demands for medicines. By 2000 the market share of the local companies increased from 25 percent to 70 percent and that of multinational companies reduced to 25 percent.

A positive reflection of the development of this sector is found in the increasing exports of pharmaceutical products from Bangladesh. Many countries including some in Europe are now importing Bangladeshi products. The largest importers are Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Vietnam, Philippines and some African countries.

There are now eighty pharmaceutical industries in Bangladesh of which seventy-three are located in and around Dhaka. Together they contributed to the tremendous increase of the business. Thus, while in 1981 the value of locally produced medicines stood at Taka 1.10 billion (US \$ 40 million at current rate of exchange), it rose by 2001 to Taka 20.75 billion (US \$346 million).

Two public sector companies in this field are also located in Dhaka - the Dhaka headquarters and branch of Essential Drugs Company Limited and the Institute of Public Health.

The fast growing pharmaceutical industries in and around Dhaka contribute significantly to the strength and prosperity of commercial and industrial life of the city. These provide considerable opportunities for jobs requiring specialization and skill to the inhabitants of Dhaka and adjacent areas.

### Housing and Real Estate

The impact of the rapid and amazing rise of private sector real estate and housing enterprises has been phenomenal on the commercial and industrial life of Dhaka. The city's emergence as the national capital of a sovereign and independent country in 1971 caused a tremendous increase in its population as well as business and industry. While in 1971 the population of Dhaka stood at some half a million, by 2007 it grew to more than 10 million making it the 22nd largest city in the world. With increasing urbanization, in present day Bangladesh, 25% of the population - some 35 million reside in urban areas. This figure is likely to rise to 34% i.e. 75 million by 2015. Estimated future demands for housing in Bangladesh shows an annual requirement of 4 million units. This requirement for urban areas is estimated to vary from 0.3 to 0.55 million units a year.

In response to the growing demands for shelters of the urban population the private sector moved into place and soon expanded scale and strength. The beginnings were made during the 1970s when there were five companies in the real estate business; in 1988 there were forty-two such developers in Dhaka. By 2007 around 285 enterprises are busy supplying the needs of an expanding clientele. Together these entrepreneurs have delivered some 50,000 units over a period of 20 years. The approximate yearly turnover in this sector is Taka 12.50 billion (US \$184 million).

**Table-1**

Number of real estate companies & developers by 1970s	5
Number of real estate companies & developers by 1988	42
Year of founding of the Real Estate & Housing Association of Bangladesh [REHAB]	1991
No of REHAB Members in the year 1991	11
No of REHAB Members by 2007	285
No of Apt. Units Delivered by the Developers in last 20 years	50,000 (App.)
No of Apt. Units Delivered by the Developers per year (2004)	5000-6000 units
No of Plot Units Delivered by the Developers per year	4000-5000 units.
Approx. turnover per year	Tk. 12.50 billion
Contribution revenue to Govt.	Tk. 1.00 billion
Percentage of Contribution to GDP	12% - 14%
Employment in real estate development or related activities most of which are concentrated in and around Dhaka	1.5-2.00 million

Source: *Global Bangladesh*, Vol. 1, Issue 3, February 2007, 4440 Old Columbia Pike, Annandale, Virginia, USA (w.ww.Gbangladesh.com)

The vigour and energy of the private sector real estate entrepreneurs have caused the remarkable vertical growth and expansion of buildings and houses of Dhaka as also of some other major cities. The skyline of Dhaka has undergone an unprecedented transformation. It has significantly stimulated the growth and development of ancillary industries e.g. manufacturing of cement, tiles, rod, pipes and fitting, sanitary wares, electrical cables and apparatus and furniture. The rise and development of private sector real estate business have contributed greatly to the increase in the prosperity of commercial and industrial life of Dhaka.

### **Banks, Financial Institutions and Insurance Companies: Their impact on Dhaka**

As in other economic sectors and sub-sectors so also in banking, finance and insurance the transformation of Dhaka into a national capital in 1971 brought about epoch making changes.

In the immediate post-liberation period, in tune with socialist agenda of the government of the day, all banks and insurance companies were nationalized. Before 1971, there were only 2 banks owned by Bengali entrepreneurs in East Pakistan - the Eastern Mercantile Bank and the Eastern Banking Corporation. Along with the other bigger banks inherited from the Pakistan days these two banks were also taken over by the government and named Pubali and Uttara Banks. In all six nationalized commercial banks and five state-owned specialized banks and the state-owned life insurance corporation (Jibon Bima) and general insurance corporation (Shadharan Bima) operated with their headquarters in Dhaka. Some foreign banks continued to carry on business.

Policy shift beginning in the late 1970s and fully realized during the '80s resulted gradually in the de-nationalization of the Pubali and Uttara banks and the steady growth and development of private sector banks, non-banking financial institutions and insurance companies.

By 2007, there were 4 nationalized commercial banks, 5 state-owned specialized banks, 30 domestic private commercial banks and 9 foreign commercial banks. Excepting the Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank (RAKUB - Agricultural development bank) all the others have their headquarters in Dhaka. In addition, more than 30 leasing and finance companies known as non-banking financial institutions also grew and expanded their business in the Dhaka city and adjacent areas especially during the 1980s and 1990s. Private insurance companies also grew in number and strength and positively contributed to the commercial and industrial progress of Dhaka in particular and the country in general.

### **Health services**

The private sector has emerged as a significant player in providing health and medical services to the society. Their rise is reflected in their growing numbers and their contribution to the economy. Most of these private sector hospitals, clinics and diagnostic centers are located in and around Dhaka and they not only provide valuable service to the city dwellers but also contribute significantly to the commercial development of Dhaka. By 2007 some 85 private hospitals, clinics and diagnostic centres were operating in and around Dhaka city.

**Table-2**  
**Hospitals, Clinics and Diagnostic Centers**

Name	Public	Private
General Hospitals	8	8
Specialized Heart Hospitals	1	32
Childrens' Hospitals	1	4
Clinics	0	1
Dental Hospitals	1	27
Orthopedic Hospitals	1	6
E.N.T. Hospitals	0	3
Kidney Hospitals	0	8
Diagnostic Centers	4	2

Source: [www.bdtradeinfo.com](http://www.bdtradeinfo.com) (Bangladesh Trade Info)

### Markets and Shopping Malls

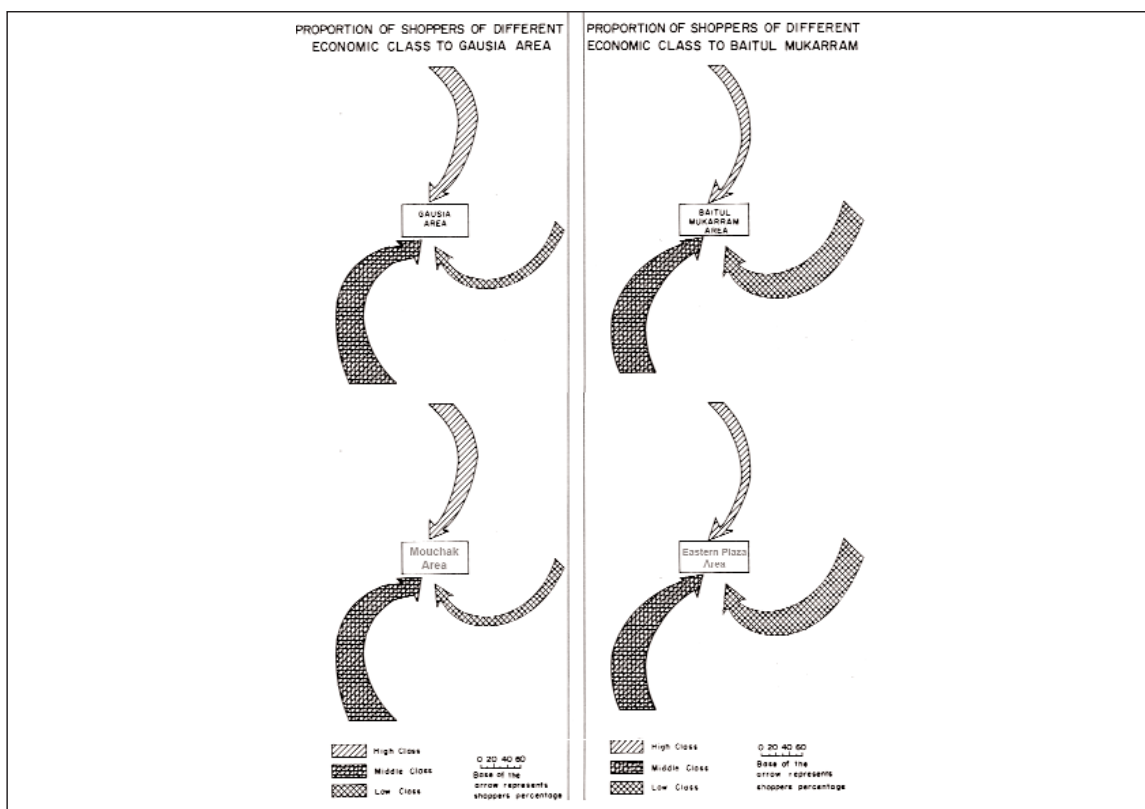
Along with the rise and expansion of the role of private business in other sectors and sub-sectors since liberation and especially after the policy shifts of the 1970s and '80s, there has been a tremendous growth of private sector and state-of-the-art shopping malls.

Their expansion and development have been relatively more significant in Dhaka. This is borne out by the available statistics in this regard. By the year 2007, besides some ten super markets established in the Dhaka city, seven chain shopping malls were also in operation.

**Table-3**  
**Markets and Shopping Malls**

Name	Number
Public Markets	15
Private Markets	75
Shopping Malls	100
Shopping Malls (Chain Store)	7

Source: [www.bdtradeinfo.com](http://www.bdtradeinfo.com) (Online Business Directory of Bangladesh)



Proportion of Shoppers at Shopping Malls

### Hotels, Telephones and T.V. Channels

Growing number of hotels, public and private sector telephones including mobile phones and T.V. channels leading to cable operations have added further prosperity and variety to Dhaka's commercial and industrial life. The importance of remarkable growth in these areas of economic activity of the country and its capital is borne out by the relevant statistics:





Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel



Sheraton Hotel



Hotel Purbani

**Hotel:** While there was only one star hotel in 1971 - Dhaka Inter Continental Hotel, by 2007, 17 star hotels were operational in the city. In addition hundreds of budget hotels are also in business in Dhaka. Before liberation in 1971 Bangladesh was served in the area of telecommunication by the state-owned Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB), through land phones. The scenario changed in great measure by 2007. Several private operators including mobile telephone companies emerged and rapidly expended their markets. The figures speak for themselves.

Table-4

Name	Public	Private	Subscribers
Telephone Companies (PSTN)	1	11	01.19 ml
Mobile Telephone Companies	1	6	34.37 ml
T.V. Channel	2	9	---

Source: [www.btrc.gov.bd](http://www.btrc.gov.bd) (Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission), [www.bdtradeinfo.com](http://www.bdtradeinfo.com) (Online Business Directory of Bangladesh)

**Television:** Similarly there was virtual revolutionary changes in television services. Prior to liberation there was only one state-owned television corporation which after 1971 was transformed into state-owned Bangladesh Television (BTV).

By early 1990s the skies of Bangladesh were slowly opening up. Foreign TV programs began to be received through satellite by Bangladeshi audience. From the mid-1990s a number of private TV channels were permitted to operate. The statistics below show the present position in TV and cable operations in Bangladesh, centering in Dhaka.

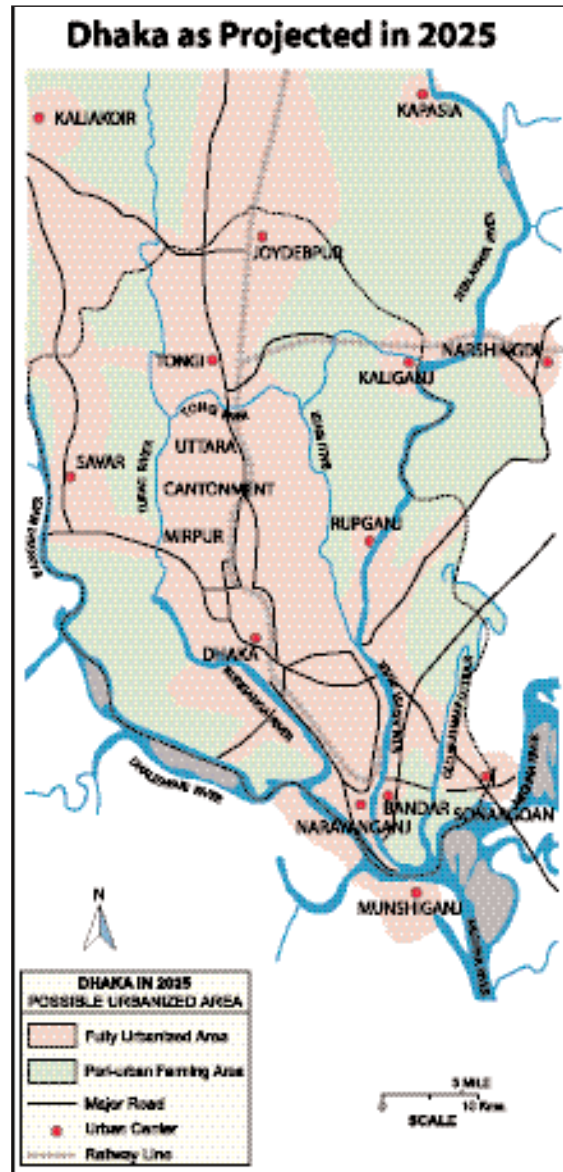
### Dhaka: The Present and the Future

Commerce and industry in Dhaka have evolved to achieve unprecedented growth and development during the post liberation years. The city's commercial and industrial life has changed beyond recognition. Great shifts in the patterns of commercial and industrial life of the city have resulted in its transformation into a thriving centre of economic development. The attraction of Dhaka's growing prosperity and increasing business and employment opportunities has caused tremendous expansion in its size and population. The trend towards further increase is also strong. This is a cause for concern for the future of this mega city. If farsighted planning and regulatory activities are not in place early, the city may face great dangers from congestion, increasing traffic jams, air and water pollution, environmental degradation and intolerable pressure on utilities such as power, gas, water, waste and sewage disposal services. If timely steps are not taken Dhaka may choke itself to death. In that case all its industrial and commercial achievements will come to naught.

Road transport has registered great rise and expansion during 36 years of Bangladesh. Millions of passengers and great quantities of commodities are now carried by buses and trucks to different corners of Bangladesh. This is in addition to the services rendered by railways and water transports. Dhaka has been and still remains the capital of road transport of the entire country. Most of the private companies operating road transports have their headquarters in Dhaka and contribute significantly to the commercial strength of the city.

Despite their increasing importance in stimulating commerce, industry and economy of the capital city, growing number of vehicles put tremendous pressure on the inadequate roads of the city. The problem of traffic jams and pollution caused by the very large number of transports need to be tackled with appropriate planning and effective management and control measures.

However, the society and the government are showing increasing awareness of the great and complex problems confronting Dhaka. Plans have been drawn and efforts are being undertaken to control air and water pollution and arrest environmental degeneration. Steps have also been initiated to relocate industries such as leather and textiles which lead to pollution. These are being shifted from heavily populated areas in the city to other locations. Pollution control and environmental friendly measures are now legally binding for industrial units. Such steps, if taken constantly and consistently, may help to save Dhaka and retain its status as a thriving commercial and industrial centre in years to come.





**Some old business tradition dying out in modern time**



A fisherman with his catch of the day



A steetside photographer awaiting clients



Old movie, recalls the pre-cinema days



Money exchanger alike the old podders of Dhaka



**Bengal's village economic life in the eyes of artist**



Villagers are on the way to bazar with their products



A grocery shop in a village *hat*

## Appendices to Chapter Four

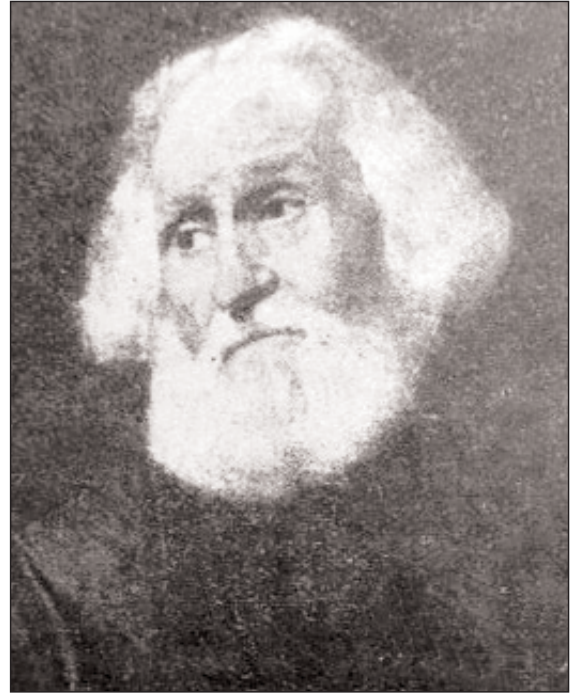
### Appendix 4

#### Economic Activities in Bengal over the Ages

Period	Social /Principal Economic Group	State of Trade and Commerce
<b>Pre- Historic</b>	Austrics entered into Bengal through Indo-China via Assam valley. They knew farming and developed weaving	They introduced weaving first with Karpus cotton in Bengal.
<b>Pre-Maurya Era</b> 2500, B .C.-500 B.C.	Farmer, Weaver, Potter, Carpenter, Blacksmith developed	Trade with Asiria, Greece and Rome
<b>Maurya Era</b> 500 B C- 200 A.D.	Farmers, Charpenters, Goldsmiths, Ivory Craftsmen and Sea trader developed	Trade with Greece, Rome, Malay, Ceylon Indo-China linked with Europe through Red Sea
<b>Gupta Era</b> 100 B.C.- 650 A.D.	Carpus producer Jewellers Caravan traders developed	Trade with Arab, Persia, Rome, Greece, Egypt, South Asian countries.
<b>Pala Era</b> 750 A.D. -1100 A.D.	Sugar producers, Salt producers, Traders (Baisya) class developed. Sea-going vessels makers developed	Trade with Khorasan, Eden, Jeddah (Arab), Persia, Turkey, India, China
<b>Sena Era</b> 1100 A.D. –1200 A.D.	Sea-going Business	Sea-going was banned in the ‘Manusanghita’. Numbers of Muslim Traders increased. Hindu traders concentrated to indigenous business and Sea-going business declined
<b>Sultani Era</b> 1175 A.D.- 1526 A.D.	Turned into an agro-based Economy. Commodity prices reduced. Silver and Gold coins mint developed.	‘Moor’ and Arabian traders spread over Asia including Sonargaon & other Places. Arabian traders confronted the Portuguese
<b>Mughal Era</b> 1527- A.D.	Indigenous Industries developed. Weaver and other craftsmanship developed.	European traders started business at Dhaka. Portuguese invaded Bengal. Developed <i>Ganges</i> and business marth Hindu Saha traders developed
<b>East India Company</b> 1765- A.D.	Benias, podders, Dalals Banker Company, Agents paikers, Mahajan, Arathdar, AGENCY Houses whole saler, retailer, shopkeeper etc. and Landed Aristocracy developed.	European companies got trade facilities in Bengal as well as India. Company’s residents developed. Dhaka’s, Muslin Baftas, Indigo, Salt, Saflower, san-Hemp were exported. Apart from Europe and Asia, Intra-province & intra-district business developed considerably.



Hieun Tsang



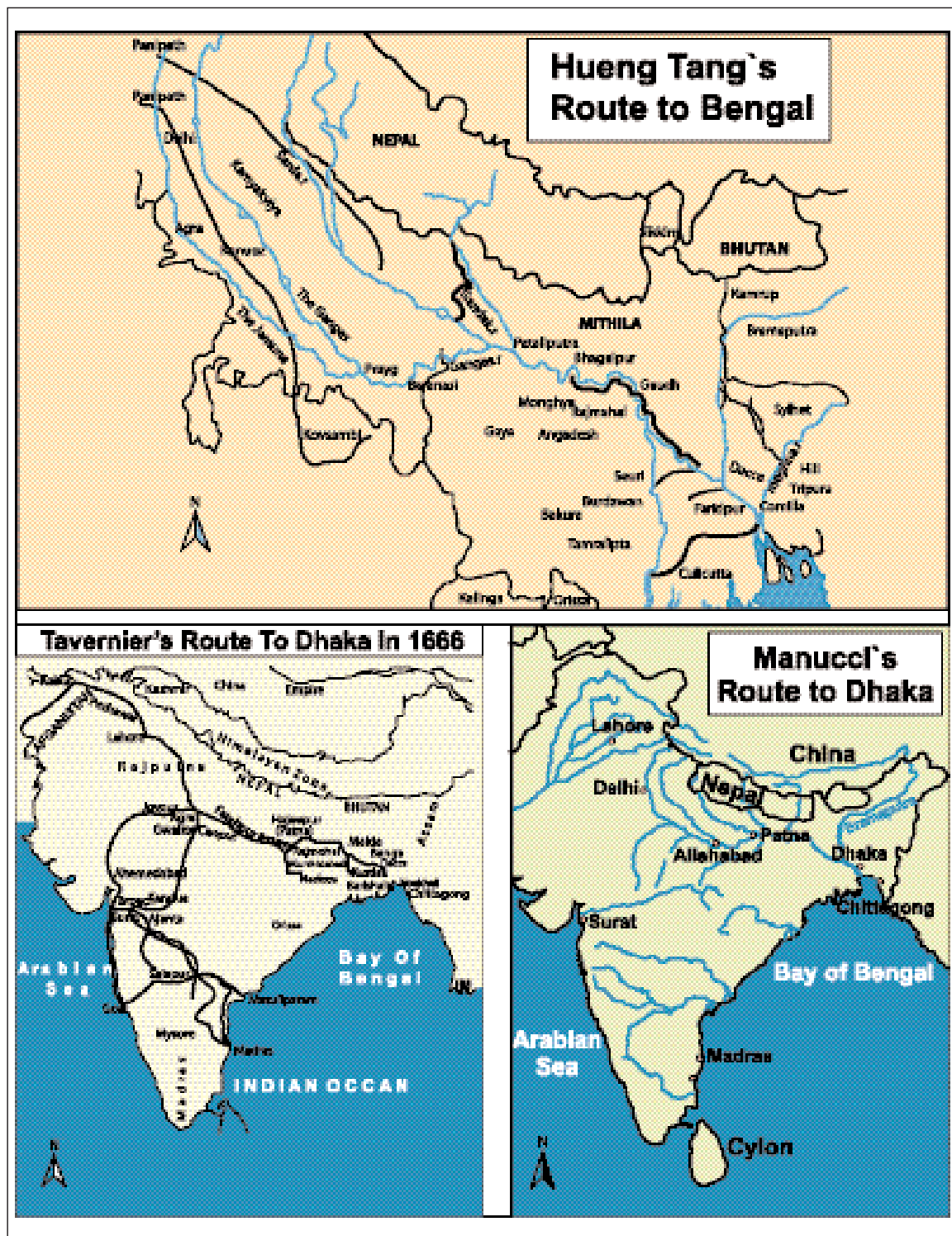
Marco Polo



Tavernier, visited Dhaka and introduced jute to Europe



Ibn Battuta





**Annexure 4.1**  
**Dhaka's trade, commerce and economic conditions as**  
**viewed by the foreign travellers**

Traveller's name	Time visited	Place visited	Trade & commerce/economic life
Megasthenes' Account of India	322-295 B.C. During the era of Chandra Gupta Maurya	Pataliputra <sup>1</sup> & other places	Mentioned trade & commerce of India with China and Central Asia
Hiuen Tsang's Account	630-645 A.D. During Harsha Vardana	Tamralipta, Dabac <sup>2</sup> , Mainamoti Saptagram	Mentioned 'Dabac' (Dacca) as a prosperous city (Dacca) naval port, left an account on social and life of places he visited.
Marco Polo <sup>3</sup>	1272 A.D.	Southern India but referred to Bengal	'People used to live on trade & craftsmanship. Bengal exports sugar.
Ibn Battuta	1346 A.D. During Fakruddin Mubarak Shah	Reached Sylhet via Dhaka. Stayed at Sonargaon for sometime	Made an account on commodity prices. i.e. 15 munds of rice per. one rupee, 8 fowls for one ana. 12 seers of oil per rupee etc.
Mahauan	1407 A.D. During Giasuddin Azam Shah	Sonargaon	'Country is very wealthy. From Che-ti-kiang (Chittagong) after advancement of 500 lee (250 kilo) by small boat, <i>so-na-ehl-king</i> (Sonargaon) is found. Silver coins used, which are known as ' <i>Tangka</i> '. But they use <i>kao-li-on</i> (Cowries) in this country. Six kinds of <i>cirpus</i> made cloths are being produced. The king sends big ships for trading outside. The rich used to build ships in which they carry on trade with foreign countries.' Shops are located on the two sides of the Sonargaon's royal streets.
Varthema <sup>4</sup> (Italian merchant)	1505 A.D. During Husain Shah	'Bengala' and Sonargaon	Varthema observed that it (Bengala) was one of the finest cities he had ever visited and it had great export trade in cotton and silk-stuffs.
John Silvia Alauddin Husain Shah Barbosa	1518 A.D. 1518 A.D.	Dhaka, Chittagong, Sonargaon 'Bengala' <sup>5</sup>	'Dacca and Sreepur became a potential trade centre for the Portuguese businessmen.'
Ralph Fitch	1583 A.D. During Jahangir	Baccola, Sreepur (Fringe Bazar) <sup>6</sup>	Referred to the city of <i>Bangala</i> as a great seaport with a very good harbour. According to him, this city was inhabited mostly by Muslims, many of whom were great merchants and owned large ships. "Sreepur is a seaport. <i>Sinergaon</i> (Sonargaon) is a town six leagues from Sreepur, where there is the best and finest cloth made in India. They live on rice, milk and fruits..." About Sonargaon Ralph Fitch says: 'Great store of cotton cloth goeth from hence and much rice wherewith they serve all India, Ceilon (Cylon) Pegu, Malacca, Sumatra and many other places.'

<sup>1</sup> Pataliputra was the capital of Chandragupta Maurya (322-298 B. C.). It was perhaps the largest town in the East at that time and overseas trade with outside India was made through this city. Municipal Commissioners were in charge of industry, oversee markets prices, weights and measures, the collection of *Octroi* duties etc. We are not sure whether any part of the then Dacca region included in the Maurya empire. But we assume that the business of this part of eastern India, for a longtime, was operated through this ancient city.

<sup>2</sup> As per historians *Dabacis*, identical with modern Dacca.

<sup>3</sup> Marcopolo found maritime traders, who had their hides and Skins business with Egypt.

<sup>4</sup> Ludovic Di Varthema was born in Bologna in 1478. Varthema met an Arab merchant who had traded much with Italy, and who could speak Italian. To this Arab merchant he confided his great desire to travel to India and see the land from which came spices and Jewels. For details of his visit to India as well as Dhaka, see Sir Harry Johnston, *Pioneers in India*, London.

<sup>5</sup> The location of 'Bengala' is yet to ascertain. But some writers are of opinion that 'Bengala' is identical with present Sonargaon. Varthema, Barbosa, Purchas, Mandelslo, Peter Heylyn also mentioned 'Bengala' as the great business centre, which is very similar to the description of sonargaon, made by the Falph Fitch. For details, see *Dhaka Review and Sammilan*, Baishak, 1322, B.S.

<sup>6</sup> Sreepur (now eroded by river) was the Capital of Chand Roy, also a port city, where Portuguese were rehabilitated by Shaista Khan in the 17th century. Portuguese were popularly known as 'Fringeers' in the Dhaka areas.

Pelsaert <sup>7</sup>	During Jahangir	Dhaka	Zaminders were rich and ryots were very poor. Shopkeepers were bound to sale commodities at a half price. Tanti, tailors, goldsmiths, paper manufactures were mentioned by him.
Mirza Nathan <sup>8</sup>	1608 A. D. During Subedar Islam Khan	Dhaka	A companion of Islam Khan. Left an account namely- <i>Baharistan-i-Ghaybi</i> on Dhaka's social and economic life. He collected one lac gold coins from the <i>paicars</i> of Dhaka overnight.
S. Herbert	1630 A. D. During Subedar Kashim Khan	Sonargaon, Bakla, Sreepur, Chittagong	He mentioned Sonargaon, Bakla, Sreepur and Chittagong as prosperous city.
Sabastian Manrique	1640 A. D. During Shah Suja	Dhaka	'Dacca' is the chief city of Bengal. Populous and principal trade centre. Consisted of many Bazars, coins are weighed instead of counting 100. Overseas bound ships are engaged in trade. About 4000 rupees are being received from betel-nut only. Rice, sugar, oil, cotton cloths, papers are exported. Muslin of fine quality is produced. It is a gainful business.
F. Bernier (A French Physician)	1645-46 A. D.	Sylhet and Sonargaon	Bengal produces rice, cotton, silk and sugar abundantly. Big merchant usually do not invest sufficiently. He found fine muslin, brocket, silk in Mughal Court.
Peter Helen	1657 A. D. During Shah Suja	Sonargaon	Described as a beautiful Island and a trade centre.
J. B. Tavernier <sup>9</sup>	1663 A. D. During Shaista khan	Dhaka	'Dhaka's Muslin, cotton clothes are exported abroad. '(Dhaka) Inhabited for the most part by carpenters or sutars, who build galley and other small boats. Dutch merchants purchase these boats and operate business.' He introduced jute in Europe. He traded precious stones at Dhaka.
Nicola Manucci (Italian traveller)	1663 A.D. During Mir Jumla	Dhaka	Met Mir Jumla. Noticed Thomas Parrate, a naval architect at his Court.
Thomas Bowri <sup>10</sup>	During Shaista Khan	Dhaka	'(Dhaka) Consisted of Huge buildings and populated by many of people by class and group.' English Factory was established in 1666.'
M. Vincent	1678 A. D.	Dhaka	Obtained the Prince's order for free trade in Bengal and left Dhaka.
William Hedges <sup>11</sup>	1682 A. D.	Dhaka	Tried to obtain permission for trading, free of custom duties. Left a diary on his Dhaka visit.
Sir Charles D'oily <sup>12</sup>	1808-1812	Worked as Collector of Dhaka	Left an account and a Panorama on Dhaka. Mentioned that 'there are every essential commodities in and even luxurios items are available. Commodity quality is also good.'

7 A Dutch merchant, who visited Dacca during the Emperor Jahangir.

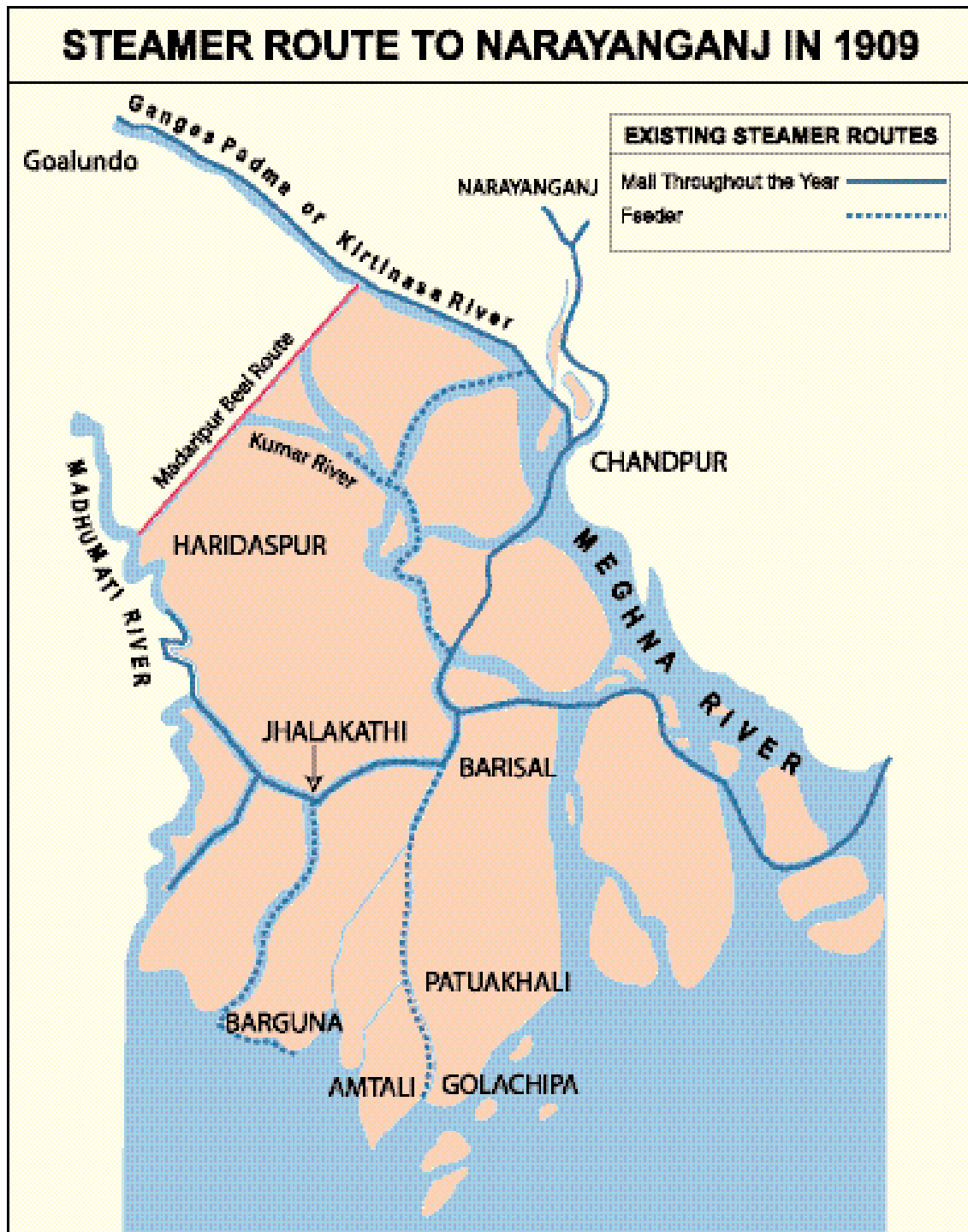
8 Original name was Alauddin Isfahan. His *Baharistan-i-Ghaibi* is an important primary source for the reconstruction of the history of Bengal and an eye-witness of many events, wrote from personal observation.

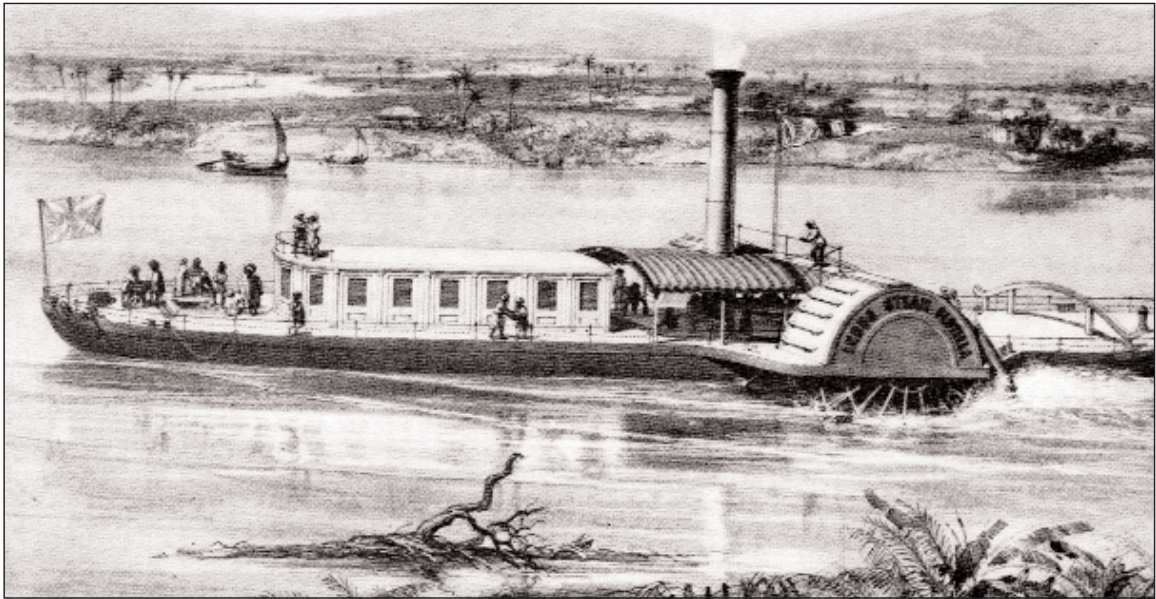
9 Tavernier was born in Paris. He came to Dacca in 1663. Tavernier was a famous precious stone trader. In *Dacca* he met Nawab Shaista Khan and he was able to sell out some valuable precious stones. Jute and jute manufactures were not yet an exportable commodity in the 16th century. It was Tavernier, who introduced jute fibre in France in the 17th century. It made in those days coarse gunny bags for wrapping up merchandise.

10 Thomas Bowri is an English traveller who visited Dhaka during the shaista Khan. Thomas Bowri has given a price list of essentials- for details, see *A Geographical Account of the Countries Round the Bay of Bengal*. London, 1891.

11 Willam Hedges was the first Governor or agent of the East India Co., who came to India in 1682. He used to look after the business affairs of the East India Company in Bengal. His diary gives a detailed of the Shaista Khan in Dacca. For details, See *The Dacca Review*, May, 1918.

12 Sir Charles D'oily (1781-1845) came to India as a servant of the East India Company in 1798. He served as the Collector of Dhaka from 1808 to 1812. He worked as the Commercial Resident of Patna; senior member of the Customs, Salt, Opium and Marine Board. During his stay at Dhaka, he sketched 19 architectural remains of the different parts of Dhaka city which was published in the name and style 'Antiquities of Dacca'. This book contains an article 'Some accounts of the city of Dacca'.





The Paddle Steamer Free, was acquired by the AR & T Company in 1881 for service in the Assam line



Dhaka-Goalando steamer service



**Appendix 4.2**  
**Steamer Service on the river routes in Bengal and Assam**

Stations	Frequency of Services (in a month)	Connecting Stations
1. Narayanganj	232	Calcutta, Chandpur, Goalundo, Khulna, Lakhipur, Dhaka Ghat, Dilalpur
2. Khulna	192	Narayanganj, Chandpur, Boalmari, Luckepass, Magura, Bharamganga, Satkhira.
3. Goalundo	178	Narayanganj, <i>Dacca</i> , Chandpur, Serajganj, Gauhati, Jagannathganj.
4. Barisal	118	Chittagong, Patuakhali, Bhowaniganga, Noakhali Bazar, Pudda Jn.
5. Calcutta	108	Dibrugarh, Silchar, Narayanganj, <i>Dacca</i> , Chandpur, Kamalaghat, Bholaganj.
6. Patuakhali	90	Barisal, Amtali, Golachipa
7. Chandpur	76	Calcutta, Narayanganj, Goalundo, Khulna.
8. Markuli Jn.	60	Sylhet, Chhatak.
9. Silchar	46	Calcutta, Alynee
10. Dibrugarh	44	Calcutta, Sadiya
11. Serajganj	38	Goalundo, Nalinbazar
12. Sylhet	38	Markuli Jn, Karimganj.
13. Gauhati	34	Goalundo, Nowgong.

Source: S. K. Muns, *Geography of Transportation In Eastern India Under the British Raj*, Calcutta, 1980.

**Appendix 4.3**  
**Rail and River-borne trade of Assam with other Provinces**

(in thousands of rupees)

Articles	Year:	1890-1	1900-1	1903-4
Exports Tea		3,39,74	4,46,66	5,51,81
Oilseeds		36,08	25,90	35,51
Rice (Unhusked)		32,74	31,36	42,18
Coal & Coke		10,58	9,50	15,49
Jute		8,52	15,10	17,99
Stone and lime		6,83	6,51	2,91
Imports Cotton Piecegoods		86,77	86,66	89,56
Metals		27,14	39,68	28,83
Salt		20,55	20,65	14,45
Sugar		10,24	22,14	28,10

Source: S. K. Muns, *Geography of Transportation In Eastern India Under the British Raj*, Calcutta, 1980

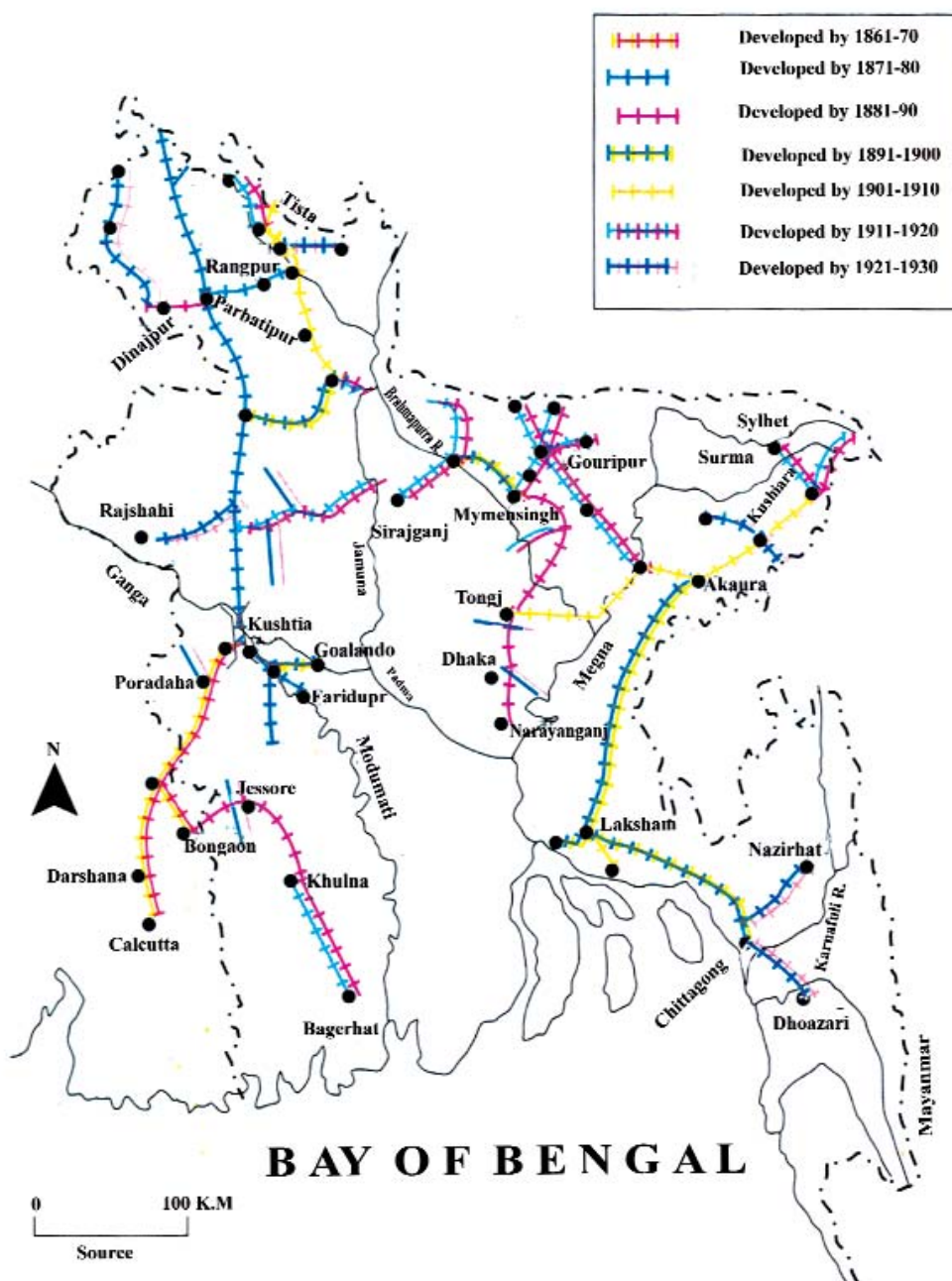
**Annexure 4.4**  
**Item wise Export from Naranganj in 1876-77**

(in pound)

Item	Amount in Rs.
Jute	4,78,000
Rice	1,41,000
Cloths	76,000
Salt	67,000
Tobacco	34,000
Raw cotton	31,000

Source: *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol-X, 1886

## Railway Expansion in East Bengal in 1930



## Appendix 4.5

**Table- a: Dhaka-Mymensing State Railway's income: 1887-1890**

Year	Munds	Tk.
1887-88	18,51,797	2,01,73,309
1888-89	12,51,524	1,85,49,753
1889-90	28,08,416	2,80,79,239

Source: Bangladesh Administration Reports of the respective years.

**Table- b: Dhaka-Mymensing State Railway's income: 1895-1900**

Year	Tk.
1895-96	5,25,339
1896-97	4,93,205
1897-98	5,56,220
1898-99	5,59,347
1899-1900	5,76,790

Source: Bengal Administration Report (Respectively).

## Appendix 4.6

**Table- A: Dhaka's outgoing business with other districts: 1895-1900***(in munds)*

Railway		Other means by steamer, Boat and Cart	
1895-96	1899-1900	1895-96	1899-1900
5,31,4,013	5,71,5,900	4,26,4844	6,61,4,709

**Table-b: Dhaka's incoming business with other Districts 1895-1900**

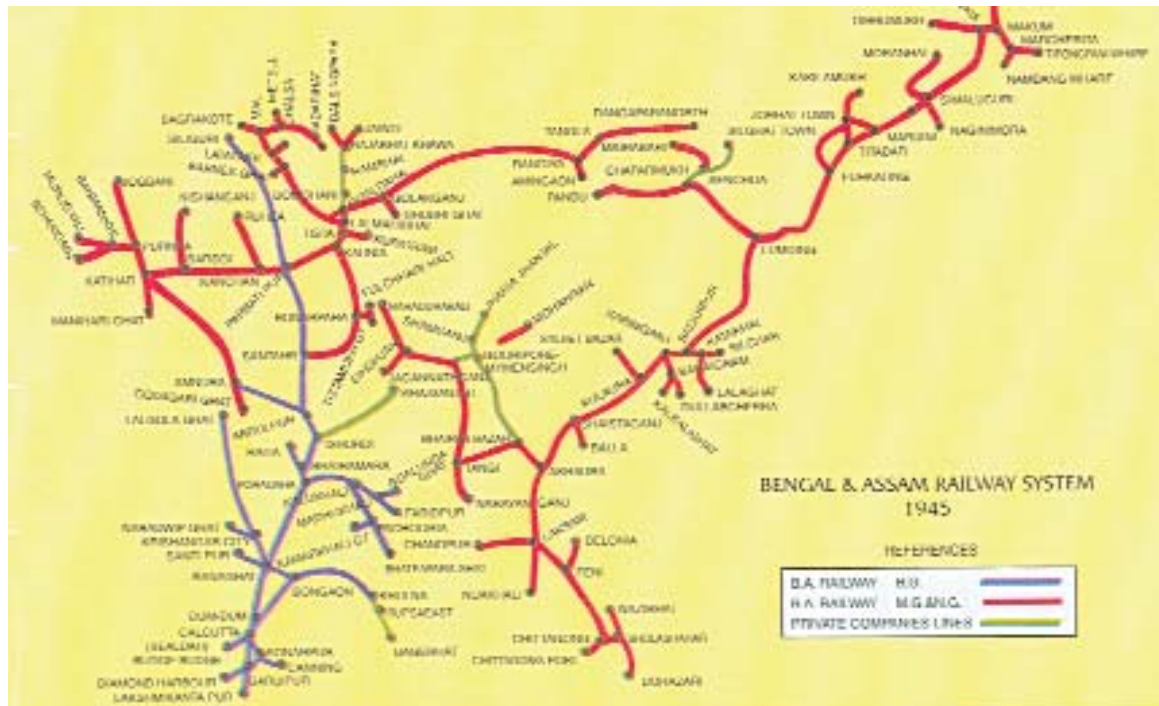
Railway		Other means by steamer, Boat and Cart	
1895-96	1899-1900	1895-96	1899-1900
65,8,406	15,31,929	16,93,097	8,40,511

**Appendix 4.7**  
**East Bengal Railway's Income: 1888-1923**

Year	Total Mileage	Total income
1888	673.21	55,25,424
1889	746.40	61,91,625
1890	763.90	60,70,323
1891	776.57	65,32,100
1892	812.35	62,33,727
1893	812.71	66,35,138
1894	812.96	83,53,559
1895	813.65	89,74,474
1896	814.39	90,02,286
1897	817.88	80,66,993
1898	827.37	83,35,064
1899	832.18	83,01,083
1900	843.04	92,46,424
1901	854.39	83,08,281
1902	898.18	91,48,340
1903	897.87	88,57,094
1904	971.31	88,23,372
1905	1234.98	96,19,904
1906	1271.29	1,06,08,661
1907	1273.61	1,03,15,781
1908	1274.47	81,99,105
1909	1503.09	97,10,666
1910	1507.73	1,16,98,257
1911	1509.62	1,17,55,233
1912	1569.83	1,39,40,67
1913 1st 3 months	1571.68	34,79,977
1913-14	1581.43	1,66,52,046
1914-15	1639.05	1,14,97,734
1915-16	1638.91	1,37,75,40
1916-17	1627.88	1,68,75,25
1917-18	1582.08	1,46,36,653
1918-19	1581.17	1,62,26,313
1919-20	1632.79	1,43,63,57
1920-21	1631.77	1,65,96,829
1921-22	1629.70	61,09,959
1922-23	1621.74	80,78,580

Source: *History of Indian Railways Constructed and in Progress*, 1923.





#### Appendix 4.8

**Table-A: East Bengal Railway's Paddy And Rice Transportation: 1908-1915**

Year	Paddy		Rice	
	Quantity (Tons)	Amount	Quantity (Tons)	Amount
1908	1,58,844	5,07,469	1,42,373	4,28,943
1909	2,42,372	10,68,666	1,72,491	7,44,985
1910	1,69,881	4,39,687	1,41,913	4,64,994
1911	1,62,745	4,20,402	1,62,819	5,58,587
1912	2,09,134	6,59,274	2,01,268	8,51,215
1913-14	2,36,524	7,42,800	2,23,233	6,60,592
1914-15	2,68,408	10,27,460	1,76,330	5,28,064

Source: Dinak Shohani Kabir, *History of Eastern Bengal Railway 1862-1947*, APPL, Dhaka

**Table- B: Assam Bengal Railway's Rice Transportation: 1908-1915**

Year	Paddy		Rice	
	Quantity (Tons)	Amount	Quantity (Tons)	Amount
1908	58,450	3,03,499	11,428	40,701
1909	35,167	2,02,461	24,551	90,683
1910	34,698	1,93,083	21,050	67,586
1911	44,186	1,89,369	8,876	24,586
1912	55,699	2,46,594	68,794	3,22,242
1913-14	1,24,222	5,40,227	61,216	2,18,012
1914-15	93,490	4,74,676	58,881	2,17,297

Source: Dinak Shohani Kabir, *History of Eastern Bengal Railway 1862-1947*, APPL, Dhaka

**Appendix 4.9**  
**Passenger and Freight Carried by Bangladesh Railway (1972-2006)**

FY	Total freight carried (m ton)	Ton km	(in thousand)	
			Passenger (No)	Passenger km
1972-73	2830	408105	63655	1739701
1973-74	2768	368603	72936	2070205
1974-75	2894	381152	82634	2523813
1975-76	3333	456851	93819	2772445
1976-77	3110	435692	94449	2879330
1977-78	3510	480742	96207	3110429
1978-79	3184	512275	89755	3003308
1979-80	3131	522711	88545	3180716
1980-81	2937	481080	89297	3229557
1981-82	3179	516448	90353	3334025
1982-83	2998	813870	105639	6427128
1983-84	2939	778627	98872	6283508
1984-85	3009	812897	90323	6031352
1985-86	2341	612225	82002	6005263
1986-87	1900	581828	723117	6024206
1987-88	2518	678267	53003	5052182
1988-89	2495	665939	50797	4336313
1989-90	2410	663478	55381	5069567
1990-91	2517	650993	48387	4586855
1991-92	2506	718388	52295	5347775
1992-93	2395	641441	50278	5111881
1993-94	2469	640810	44515	4570076
1994-95	2729	759778	39645	4037208
1995-96	2551	689023	32710	3333245
1996-97	2936	782429	37494	3753614
1997-98	3038	803849	38300	3855499
1998-99	3418	896397	37239	3678262
1999-00	2889	777161	38634	3940688
2000-01	3465	937877	41212	4209186
2001-02	3667	951821	38716	3971842
2002-03	3666	951987	39162	4024206
2003-04	3473	895500	43435	4341470
2004-05	3206	816818	42254	6164133
2005-06	2852	728571	43354	4081346
(Provisional)				

Source: Bangladesh Railway.

## Appendix 4.10

**Table-a: Cotton Textile (large-scale) Statistics in Bangladesh: Pre-liberation Period***(Yarn: Million Kgs; Cloth: Million Linear Metres)*

Year	No. of Mills	Total Yarn Production	Production Surplus Yarn	Yarn Consumed by the mills	Production of Cloth
1948/49	---	7.12	1.04	6.08	45.86
1949/50	---	7.20	1.24	5.96	45.03
1950/51	---	7.55	0.98	6.57	49.61
1951/52	---	8.48	0.80	7.68	57.84
1952/53	---	8.89	1.14	7.75	58.54
1953/54	---	8.96	1.57	7.39	55.83
1954/55	---	9.81	2.13	7.68	57.97
1955/56	---	11.51	3.90	7.61	57.52
1956/57	---	13.97	6.88	7.09	54.25
1957/58	---	16.69	10.58	6.11	55.75
1958/59	16	19.08	13.66	5.42	52.91
1959/60	18	22.35	17.72	4.63	56.92
1960/61	-	21.58	18.21	3.37	63.50
1961/62	20	24.47	18.80	5.67	61.38
1962/63	25	24.61	19.16	5.45	50.41
1963/64	28	28.95	23.61	5.34	44.15
1964/65	29	29.00	24.00	5.00	44.60
1965/66	33	33.14	28.57	4.57	36.59
1966/67	38	33.75	25.86	7.89	50.31
1967/68	37	35.17	27.85	7.32	50.32
1968/69	42	43.44	35.11	8.33	55.64
1969/70	44	47.97	39.58	8.39	54.09
1970/71	44	37.10	30.28	6.82	48.22

Source: GOP, CSO: *Monthly Bulletin*, various issues. Figures for 1948/49 to 1957/58 are averages of the respective calendar years.**Table-b: Cotton Textile (large-scale) Statistics in Bangladesh: Post-Liberation Period**

1948/49	---	7.12	1.04	6.08	45.86
1949/50	---	7.20	1.24	5.96	45.03
1950/51	---	7.55	0.98	6.57	49.61
1951/52	---	8.48	0.80	7.68	57.84
1952/53	---	8.89	1.14	7.75	58.54
1953/54	---	8.96	1.57	7.39	55.83
1954/55	---	9.81	2.13	7.68	57.97
1955/56	---	11.51	3.90	7.61	57.52
1956/57	---	13.97	6.88	7.09	54.25
1957/58	---	16.69	10.58	6.11	55.75
1958/59	16	19.08	13.66	5.42	52.91
1959/60	18	22.35	17.72	4.63	56.92
1960/61	---	21.58	18.21	3.37	63.50
1961/62	20	24.47	18.80	5.67	61.38
1962/63	25	24.61	19.16	5.45	50.41
1963/64	28	28.95	23.61	5.34	44.15
1964/65	29	29.00	24.00	5.00	44.60
1965/66	33	33.14	28.57	4.57	36.59
1966/67	38	33.75	25.86	7.89	50.31
1967/68	37	35.17	27.85	7.32	50.32
1968/69	42	43.44	35.11	8.33	55.64
1969/70	44	47.97	39.58	8.39	54.09
1970/71	44	37.10	30.28	6.82	48.22

Source: BOB, BBS: *Monthly bulletin*, various issues.

**Appendix 4.11**  
**Production of Major Industrial Goods in Bangladesh (1996-2006)**

Products	Unit	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	200-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Jute goods	‘000’ mt.	405.00	411.00	367.93	339.00	335.00	352.00	320.00	285.00	275.45	255.22
Cotton Yarn*	Million Kg.	50.16	52.88	54.80	58.54	60.82	65.58	69.84	84.57	105.57	120.90
Mill-made cloth*	million Metre	10.90	10.26	10.57	12.41	14.73	16.14	18.03	26.30	32.87	38.06
Paper	‘000’ mt.	67.52	45.91	59.86	54.98	51.16	40.37	30.26	28.92	25.90	25.70
Petroleum Products	‘000’ mt	1309.85	1173.32	996.24	1381.60	1350.42	1331.11	1455.00	1390.81	1226.00	1339.65
Fertilizer	‘000’ mt.	1772.66	2030.67	1799.36	1904.02	2073.45	1753.53	2263.52	2198.73	2102.36	1926.67
Cement	‘000’ mt.	610.51	542.82	15.14.00	1868.00	2340.19	2514.30	2564.69	2594.89	2942.69	3210.76
Sugar	‘000’ mt.	135.32	166.46	152.98	123.43	97.82	284.33	177.40	119.15	106.65	133.30
Readymade Garments	Million dozen	53.45	65.59	64.79	66.64	71.48	77.06	82.83	90.32	92.32	108.82
	million Tk.	94657	129002	143208	154436	181313	179381	188654	208604	221335	275205
MS Rod	‘000’ mt.	151.53	157.34	135.56	140.31	155.40	162.77	168.98	172.28	195.09	208.29
Tea	‘000’ mt.	54.06	53.52	43.74	50.60	53.13	55.92	55.46	56.18	56.74	54.86
Beverage	million dozen bottle	9.49	10.52	11.05	13.29	17.02	19.87	21.15	21.82	23.74	28.70
Soap and detergent	‘000’ mt.	51.05	48.09	48.94	39.71	41.00	24.44	45.98	48.50	52.74	57.26
Leather and Finished leather	million sq. metre	11.95	12.12	16.21	18.31	19.66	17.35	15.05	7.17	16.33	8.12

Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.

\* Cotton and yarn produced in large-scale mills under BTMC and BTMA.

P= PROVISIONAL



**Appendix 4.12**  
**Dhaka District's Share of National Manufacturing: 1976-77**

Industry	Dhaka as proportion of Establishments %	Bangladesh Employment %
Foodstuffs	28	13
Beverages	50	32
Tobacco	52	43
Textiles	71	50
Footwear	80	84
Wood and cork	86	32
Furniture	95	97
Paper products	71	14
Printing	93	96
Leather goods	91	82
Rubber products	100	100
Chemicals	70	59
Petroleum & coal	-	-
Non-metallic minerals	87	70
Basic metals	67	35
Metal products (excl machinery)	66	67
Machinery (excl electrical)	77	66
Electrical Machinery	75	72
Transport equipment	79	60
Miscellaneous manufactures	80	67
Total		47

Source: Census of Manufacturing Industry, GOB, 1976-77.

## Appendix 4.13

## Dhaka city main occupations (thana-wise) in 1985

Thana*	Commerce	Industry	Weaving	Construction	Labourer	Service	Transport	House Renting out	Other
Mirpur	21.26	3.09	1.12	---	2.13	37.41	11.20	1.77	20.95
Mohammedpur	22.11	1.95	---	---	2.95	32.91	16.29	2.85	---
Motijheel	23.91	---	---	---	1.19	51.30	5.27	3.16	14.02
Pallabi	31.16	4.09	3.12	---	---	28.39	8.00	1.77	---
Kafrul	34.65	---	---	2.09	3.87	29.78	5.20	3.78	---
Badda	33.78	---	1.57	3.70	3.27	28.00	---	3.24	---
Demra	24.28	2.33	---	3.03	2.20	33.99	14.88	1.90	---
Dhanmondi	27.60	2.32	---	2.71	---	41.68	6.33	4.61	---
Ramna	22.77	1.19	---	2.80	---	50.43	7.81	3.85	---
Tejgaon	22.35	3.07	---	2.06	1.07	49.84	5.26	2.44	---
Sabujbagh	21.72	1.12	---	3.39	1.82	35.66	16.58	2.83	---
Sutrapur	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Kamrangirchar	38.73	---	---	---	2.28	27.93	2.07	2.01	---
Khilgaon	32.78	2.80	---	3.20	5.23	33.68	8.20	1.88	---
Kotwali	49.38	2.18	---	1.03	2.05	31.20	1.98	2.64	---
Lalbagh	32.41	2.85	---	2.55	---	29.82	11.21	1.71	---
Gulshan	21.59	1.76	---	5.57	7.57	7.67	40.92	9.23	2.15

Source: Bangladesh Population Census, Dhaka SMA, 1985

\* Based on old Thanas

## Appendix 4.14

## Occupation and Employment in Dhaka in 1990

Households Heads (n=336)

<b>a. Self-employed</b>		
i. Rickshaw pulling		38.4%
ii. Petty trading		12.4%
iii. Cart pulling		3.3%
iv. Paper collection		0.9%
v. Kabiraj		0.6%
vi. Others		1.8%
	<i>Sub-total:</i>	57.3%
<b>b. Wage-employment</b>		
i. Casual day labourer		24.3%
ii. Service in government semi-government offices		9.6%
iii. Driver		2.4%
iv. Industrial labourer		0.9%
v. Hotel boy		0.6%
	<i>Sub-Total:</i>	37.8%
<b>c. Unemployed</b>		
i. Beggar		3.3%
ii. Old age/unemployed		1.5%
	<i>Sub-total:</i>	4.8%

Source: Kamal Siddiqui, Social Formation in Dhaka City, 1990

**Appendix 4.15****Use of Privately owned Land Showing Shops and Factories in Dhaka City in 1980**

Type of Use	Percentage of total privately owned holdings
Residence	87.64
Shop	4.91
Office	1.21
Factory	1.89
Vacant	1.19
Others	3.16
All Uses	100.00

Source: Ministry of Lands, GOB, 1982

**Appendix 4.16****Land use Pattern for Privately Owned Land In and Around Dhaka City in 1990**

Name of Tehsil	Industrial/ Commercial	Residential Land	Agricultural	Total
Gulshan **	32.00	2513.00	16378.00	18923.00
Tejgaon*	260.00	542.00	29.00	831.00
Mohammadpur**	26.00	738.00	1267.00	2031.00
Mirpur**	258.00	1696.00	9242.00	11196.00
Demra	259.00	2405.00	10462.00	13126.00
Lalbagh	320.00	929.00	---	1249.00
Sutrapur	208.00	486.00	---	694.00
Motijheel	52.00	777.00	---	829.00
Kotwali	107.00	171.00	---	278.00
Dhanmondi	254.00	1153.00	---	1407.00
Ramna	32.00	636.00	---	668.00
Total	1808.00 (3.5%)	12046.00 (23.5%)	37388.00 (37%)	51242.00

Source: Dhaka Collectorate, 1989. Also see Kamal Siddiqui and other social formation in Dhaka city, UPL, 1990.

\*\* A considerable part of the Tehsil is not included in the city area.

\* A small part is not included in the city area.

**Appendix 4.17**  
**Industries of Dhaka city in the 1980s**

Industry	Number
1. Food production/Processing	100
2. Cigarettes	3
3. Cold storage	21
4. Paper based products	78
5. Printing	190
6. Leather tanning	96
7. Leather Products	61
8. Rubber goods, tyre & tubes	61
9. Cosmetics	37
10. Plastic/Polythene/PVC products	170
11. Drugs & Pharmaceuticals	105
12. Soaps & Detergents	56
13. Insecticides/pesticides	5
14. Other chemicals	79
15. Light consumer goods	105
16. Ceramics/brick fields	10
17. Electronics & electric goods	94
18. Alumunium based products	59
19. Toys	5
20. Textiles & Jute mills manufacturing parts and accessories	41
21. Agricultural machines & tools	12
22. Other machinery (excluding electrical)	96
23. Ship related industries	55
24. Automobile engineering	10
25. Other transport related industries	20
26. Photographics	14
27. Furniture	94
28. Metal products	143
29. Foundry & re-rolling	32
30. Others (including handlooms)	143
Total	2004

Source: Department of Industries, GOB, 1981.



**Appendix 4.18**  
**Gross fixed assets of business groups in Bangladesh in 1984-85**

*(in Tk. million)*

No. Group	All Manu- fracturing Firms	Manufacturing	Trade*	Construction and Real Estate	Other**
1. Zahurul Islam	235.97	7	2	8	4
2. BEXIMCO	235.23	6	1	1	2
3. Quasem	207.23	4	2	0	1
4. Hussain	172.81	2	1	0	0
5. Monno	168.18	5	1	0	1
6. Ispahani	165.97	7	2	3	2
7. ERBA (Agha Yusuf)	165.94	4	3	0	2
8. Panther (Md. Bhai)	163.68	5	1	0	1
9. Islam	146.37	3	0	0	1
10. A. K. Khan	134.26	4	1	0	2
11. Bhuiya	121.03	3	0	0	0
12. Phoenix	113.53	8	2	0	2
13. Bengal	62.27	3	1	2	2
14. Bhaiya	56.02	2	0	0	0
15. Raj	54.34	2	0	0	0
16. Apex	52.86	2	0	0	0
17. Pacific	50.94	2	2	0	0
18. Aziz Sattar	42.25	4	0	0	0
19. A. R. A	38.55	2	0	0	0
20. Haque	37.75	2	1	0	0
21. Tajma	35.32	2	0	0	0
22. Anowar	28.31	7	0	0	0
23. Mohsen	24.73	3	2	0	5
24. Rahim	22.21	3	0	0	0
25. Elite	13.12	3	1	0	0
26. Karnaphuli	9.45	2	4	0	1
27. Uttara	5.55	2	1	0	1

Source: Mostafa, 1988, 'A Study of the Organization of Business Groups with a Focus on Bangladesh'. Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Cornell University, pp. 89 and 98.

\* Export-import firms, indenting firms and dealerships

\*\* Includes shipping, tea garden, etc.

**Appendix 4.19**  
**Showing the businessmen, industrialists and other occupations among the**  
**legislators**

(Elected in 1954, 1970, 1973, 1979, 1991, 1996 and 2001 in the Jatiya Sangsad of Bangladesh)

Occupation	1954		1970		1973		1979		1991		1996		2001	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Lawyers	116	55	79	29	75	26	78	23	56	19	47	15	24	12
Businessmen & Industrialists	11	4	72	27	67	24	91	28	160	53	152	48	118	58
Former army officers now businessmen	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	17	6	18	6	2	1
Landlords	56	19	12	5	50	18	40	12	12	4	22	7	1	---
Retired Civil Servants	---	---	7	3	2	1	---	---	6	2	6	2	5	2
Doctors	12	4	20	7	15	5	13	4	8	3	15	5	10	5
Teachers	16	5	25	9	28	10	20	6	28	9	12	4	21	10
Religious leaders	21	7	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Journalists	11	4	---	---	---	---	Eng-5, Un-4, CA- 3, Tu-6		6	2	6	2	3	1
Politicians	---	---	14	5	35	12	---	---	6	2	8	3	7	3
House-wives	---	---	---	---	---	---	19	6	---	---	17	5	---	---
Other	7	2	5	2	11	4	40	121	1	1	30	9	14	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>327</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>99</b>

Source: Talukder Maniruzzaman, "The Fall of Military Dictator: 1991 Elections and the Prospect of Civilian Rule in Bangladesh", Pacific Affairs, Vol. 65 No. 2 (Summer 1992), p. 215; Rounaq Jahan, Bangladesh Politics: Problems and issues, (Dhaka: UPL, 1980), P. 99 and 148; \*For 1996 and 2001 some confidential documents have been consulted in the JS library. Total percentage exceeds or declines 100 because of rounding.

**Appendix 4.20**  
**Trends in Cottage and Factory Organization: 1947-90**

Year	No. of Units (in 000's)		Percentage (%)		Annual Compound Growth Rates (%)	
	Cottage	Factory	Cottage	Factory	Cottage	Factory
1947	---	1.2	---	---	---	---
1956	---	3.0	---	---	---	1.1
1962	155.4	4.9	97.0	3.0	---	8.7
1990	147.7	15.8	90.3	9.7	(-) 0.2	4.3

Sources and notes: 1. GOEP, EPSIC: 1963, p. 10; 2. GOEP, EPSIC: 1964, p. 46-47; 3. GOB, BBS: 1991, pp. 17 and 55-56. Factories for the years 1947-62 relate to the units of 10+ workers, and that for the other years are the units of 6+ 100m.

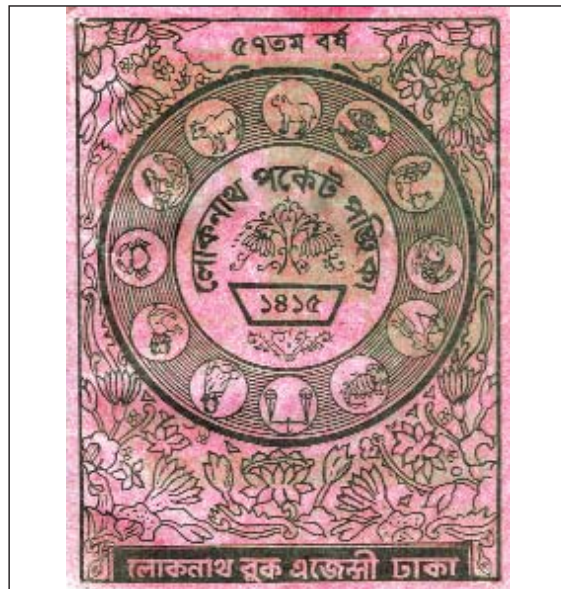
**Appendix 4.21**  
**Some Population Characteristics of Dhaka City (1951-1981)**

Year	Dhaka city Population	Bangladesh urban Population	Bangladesh total population	Dhaka city population as % of BD urban population	Bangladesh urban population as % of BD total national population
1951	276033	1820000	41932000	15.17	4.34
1961	556712	2641000	50841000	13.96	5.19
1974	1955951	6272000	71478000	31.19	8.78
1981	2930170	13228000	87120000	22.15	15.18

Year	Population density per sq km.	Sex ratio	Literacy rate (both sex)	Household size	Dhaka city population growth rate (per annum) %
1951	17763	165	NA	6.4	1951-61 2.9
1961	9180	145	39.8	5.6	1961-74 10.2
1974	18880	140	37.2	6.1	1974-81 8.1
1981	15320	141	45.8	6.0	

Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 1987

### Some essential things for Businessmen



Loknath Pocket Panjika



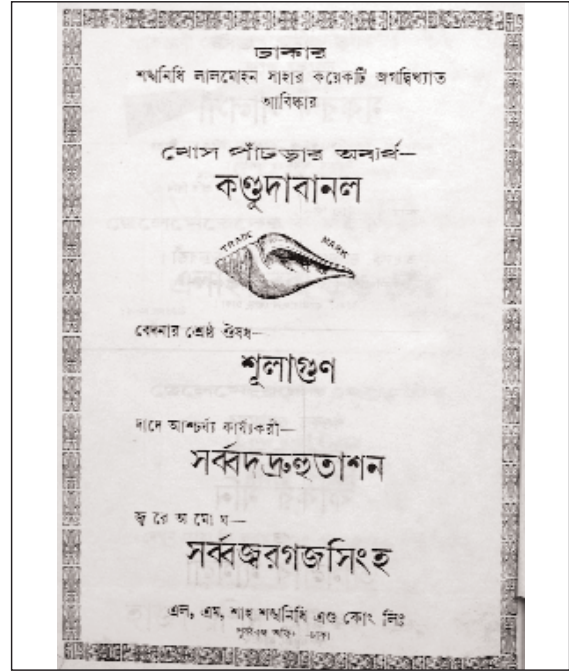
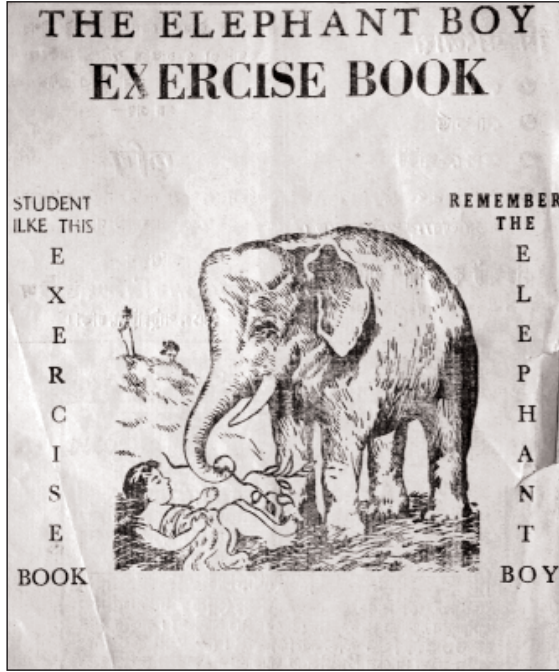
Mohammadi Pocket Panjika




An invitation card on Shuva Halkhata




Some lost products of Dhaka






**বায়ুধনুর বর্ণসম্মেলন**

কাপড় সূতা ও সিল্ক উজ্জ্বল  
ও পাক্সা রং করার জন্য—



**বায়ুধনু মাঝান**

বর্তমান যুগের অভিনব আবিষ্কার;  
বিভিন্ন রং এর কেক সর্বত্র পাওয়া যায়।



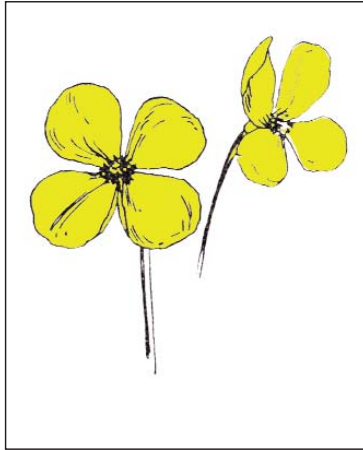
**লোকনাথ কেমিক্যাল**

ঢাকা • কলিকাতা

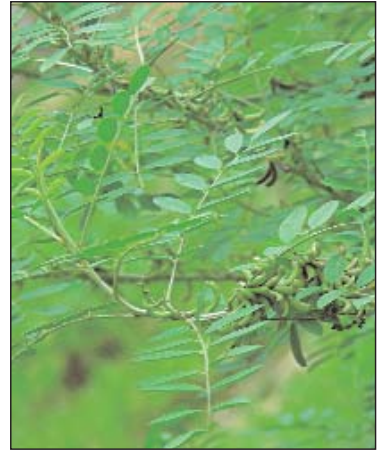
**Some products exported in the 19th century**



Cotton



Kusumfool



Indigo



Lacca



Jute



Tea

## Evaluation of some Artisans, Craftsmen and Professional Classes of Dhaka City and their settlements

Sharif uddin Ahmed

There are few cities in the world which were chosen as capitals, then abandoned and again selected as capitals, Dhaka is one such capital city of the world. Thus Dhaka was and still is a capital city. Being the capital, Dhaka was and is the center of all administrative activities. But it was and is also a great center of trade, commerce, finance, manufactures and industries. As a result many different business professionals or occupational groups lived here and are still living carrying out their traditional occupations for centuries.<sup>1</sup> Over the centuries many businesses and occupations have, however, changed their characters, some of these have become extinct. Others are continuing in different shapes and forms. In this article an attempt has been made to identify and describe some of the artisans, craftsmen and professional classes that once lived or are till living in the city. At the same time an attempt has been made also to evaluate their contribution to the growth and development of Dhaka as a center of trade, commerce and manufactures. However, we have not included some insignificant groups although they formed part of the city's professional groups in our discussion. While describing these professional groups references have sometimes been made to their counterparts who lived or still live in the rural areas of the districts of greater Dhaka.

Before the foundation of the capital, Dhaka was not a very significant place. It became somewhat important with the establishment of a *thana* or military outpost by the Mughals in their pursuit to conquer the eastern parts of Bengal. But the place rose to prominence when it was made the capital of Bengal *Subah* or province by the Mughal *Subedar* or Viceroy Islam Khan Chisti in 1608 (by another reckoning 1610). Thereafter, the city's size and population increased substantially. It is estimated that about 50,000 government officials-civil and military, came to Dhaka along with Islam Khan Chisti. This huge number of people required accommodation, food and other supplies. This resulted in the establishment of several *Mahallas* or districts in the city as well as construction of houses. There also followed the arrival of various traders, professionals and artisans to serve the city and its inhabitants. They settled down as compact groups in various parts of Dhaka thereby leading to the expansion of the new capital.

With the military activities slowing down after the conquest of East Bengal, Dhaka became more involved with the peace time activities like administration, trade, commerce and the construction

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<sup>1</sup> For Dhaka's professional and occupational groups, see J. Taylor, *Topography of Dacca*, 1840; also see Sharif uddin Ahmed, *Dhaka: A Study in Urban History and Development*, APPL, 2003, pp-19-24.

of houses and places. The presence of the *Subedar* and high civil and military officials made Dhaka a place of great consumption. The traders, merchants, artisans and craftsmen supplied the need of the city and its inhabitants. Moreover, the presence of the *Shah Bandar* or Royal Port made Dhaka the center of national and international trade. As a result a huge number of traders, merchants both local and foreign, manufacturers, artisans and craftsmen settled down contributing to the trade, commerce and manufactures of Dhaka. The presence of these traders, manufacturers, artisans and professionals made Dhaka a great center of trade, commerce and manufactures. Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the trade and commerce of Dhaka flourished though a decline set in towards the end of the eighteenth century with the changes in the political life of the country. The first half of the nineteenth century saw a steep decline in the commercial life of the city.

Some revival took place towards the second half of the 19th century with the rise of jute trade. But from the beginning of the twentieth century the trade and commerce of the city began to flourish again which has since then been continuing at a rapid pace. Throughout the history of the capital city of Dhaka, artisans, professionals, occupational groups and individual businessmen and organised groups of traders have contributed tremendously to the economic prosperity of the place as well as its hinterland. During this long period there has taken place many changes in the nature of trade and commerce resulting in the decline or rise in the fortune of many traders, professions or artisans.

In this article we have given a brief account of some groups of professionals and artisans as well as individual and organised groups of merchants who had been associated with the commercial life of the city. We have also discussed some of the old financial institutions which had close link with the trade of the city. The principal aim of this article is to provide a glimpse of the commercial life of Dhaka since it became a capital in the early 17th century.

**Arang:** Literary means a *bazar*, a market where all kinds of merchandise were bought and sold. However, in Dhaka as for that matter in the whole of Bengal it acquired a special meaning with the commercial activities of the English East India Company. The Company set up buying houses in important commercial centres of the country which were known as 'Factories'. These factories were eventually called *Arangs*.<sup>2</sup> The persons whether Europeans or local men in charge of the factories were called "Factors." The local men in charge of the factories were also called *gomastas*. The task of the factors was to ask the artisans specially the weavers to come and settle near the factories and work for them. Such artisans or weavers had to produce goods according to the specifications and patterns supplied by the factors. They could work either on contract basis or as free artisans. The factories thus eventually became centres of manufactures and began to be called *Arangs* which gave the places some special status than ordinary market places. *Arangs* thus became centres of manufacturing and selling products on the spot. With the company's trading activities gradually coming to close, *Arangs* lost their special status. Now a days the term *Arang* is applied to denote a shopping centre, a departmental store, a shop and so on.

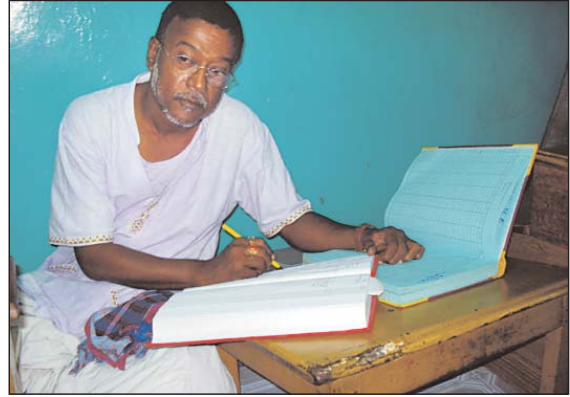


A Gomasta of a factory

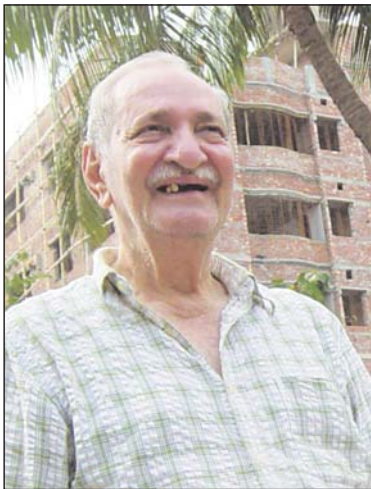
2 For *Arang* of the East India Company, see Map page 22. For details of Dhaka Factory Correspondence and Factory Accounts, also see Anisuzzaman, *Factory Correspondence and Other Bengali Documents in the India Office Library and Records*, Oriental Documents, N, (London) 1981.



**Aratdar:** Aratdar plays a pivotal role in the trade of the city of Dhaka. He is a person who owns warehouses where he keeps agricultural products from the petty traders living far away and sells them at an appropriate time so that the traders get a reasonably good profit. For his trouble he gets a commission. The terms of transaction are usually fixed ahead. Usually an aratdar is not a very big businessman but of medium stature, and his clients are also small businessmen and petty traders. This transaction requires a good deal of faith and good relationships between the two parties. Rice is the principal item sold through the *aratdar*.<sup>3</sup> Dhaka's main Arats are located at Sowarighat, Badamtali, Shayambazar, Moulavi Bazar and Kawran Bazar areas.



Aratdar at work



The lone Armenian in Dhaka who was a jute merchant earlier

**Armenians:** This group of central Asian people have played a significant role in the development of trade and commerce of Dhaka as well as in the physical expansion of the city. Armenia in the central Asia was conquered by the Safavi rulers of Persia in the sixteenth century. From then on the Armenians began to migrate to different parts of the world. Many of them settled down in Ispahan and new Jalfa in Iran. From these two cities of Persia many Armenian trading families came to India and settled down in various parts of the subcontinent including Bengal. Initially they carried out their trade in Bengal on behalf of their 'Persian masters' but later on started their own business settling down in various parts of Bengal.<sup>4</sup> The Armenians began to come to Dhaka probably from the late the seventeenth century and contributed vastly to the trade and commerce, especially in export trade of Dhaka. Soon they formed themselves into a community settling down in a place since known as Armanitola.

They traded in various country goods and their commercial activities flourished much in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In the mid nineteenth century they began to trade in European goods and finally in Jute. Their Jute trade flourished very much and they became a very wealthy community of Dhaka. But their trading activities came to an end with the departure of the British, and there is no more Armenian community in Dhaka.

3 Dhaka's Nawab, Armenians and some Civilians of East India Company like Richard Barwel had their salt business in Dhaka. During the prosperous time of this business, Dhaka had many *Arats* at the River side. Salt was an exportable item to Bihar, Assam and other destinations. Apart from Dhaka city, Narayanganj, Baburhat and Mirkadim had got many local *Arats* of salt.

4 Armenians initially started their business in Dhaka with the help of local traders. The areas of their business were mainly Salt, Hide, Jute and Betel-nut. Armenians of Dhaka developed a healthy business at Dhaka with the co-operation of English and local entrepreneurs. Many of them later stepped in to the Zamindari-business. According to Taylor, 'There appears to be 40 families of Armenians within the city of Dhaka. These Armenians settled about the time when the company acquired *Dewani* in 1765. Many of them carried on extensive trade in both salt and betel-nuts and held Zemindaries'. (Taylor, *Topography of Dacca*, 1840).

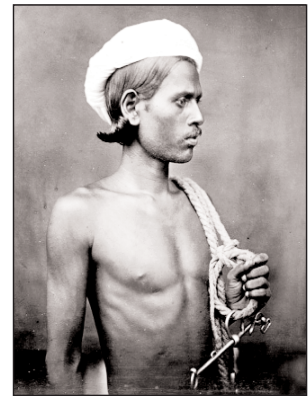
**Banik:** Baniks belong to a Hindu sub-caste and are generally traders and merchants. Their trade and business were of various kinds like trade in gold (Suvarna Banik) and in perfume (Gandha Banik).



Banians

**Banians:** The term is originated from the Sanskrit word *Banik* which means a merchant.<sup>5</sup> However, the word *Banian* has a special meaning and was referred to a person who was engaged to work as a broker or agent of an European merchant in the 18th and 19th century Bengal. Banians played a very important role in the export trade of Dhaka. They acted as 'interpreters, intermediaries, negotiators' of the European merchants. They used to buy goods on behalf of the European merchants and more then often provided capital for them. For their services the Banians used to get a commission 'usually two percent on the total value of goods transacted.' The Banians were extremely useful before the foundation of the Agency Houses, Banks and other modern instruments of trade and commerce. It is said that by the 1850s their usefulness came to an end.

**Coolie:** The term *Coolie* or *Cooly* used for labourers engaged in "transportation, earth work, highway building, timber movement etc. is said to have derived from 'Kol' an important branch of the Austric race in Bengal." In Dhaka, in the 1830s there were 461 houses of Muslim coolies and 48 houses of Hindu coolies. However, with the decline of trade and commerce the number of coolies living in the city declined. Later with the recovery of trade and the arrival of steamers and railway the demand for coolie labour increased. Moreover, coolies in the later 19th century came also from other areas like Bihar, Orissa and Chota Nagpur.<sup>6</sup> In the steamer and railway coolies worked as persons carrying luggages of the passengers. They however were also employed in many other trading and shopping concerns to unload and load goods. At present the coolies who are employed in various places are all Bangladeshis.

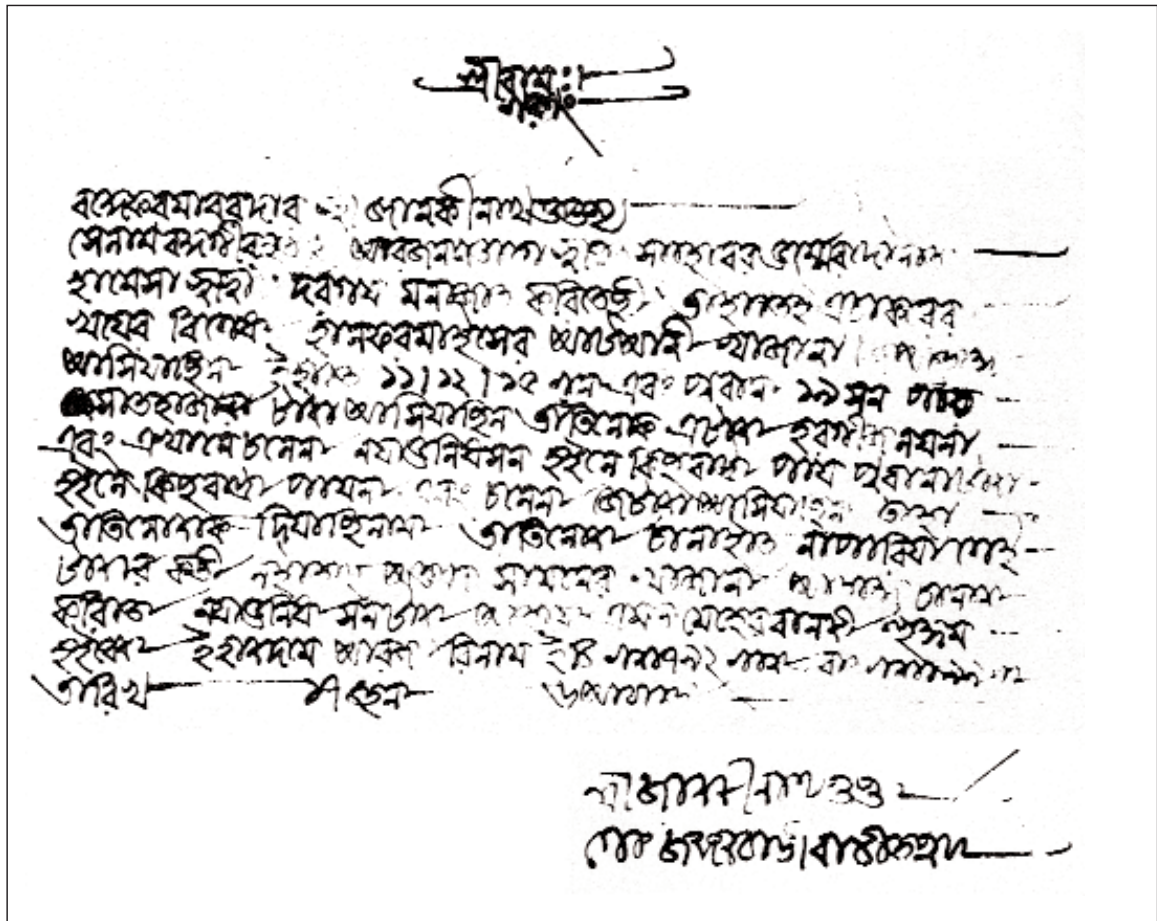


A coolie in 1882

**Dadan:** *Dadan* is a Persian word which means advance. It was a mode of operation through which the English East India company obtained the local products in Dhaka and elsewhere in the 18th century. The system through which the East India Company obtained goods through *Dadan* was known as *Dadani* system. Under it the Company advanced money to 'local merchants to procure goods from the market on its behalf.' The local merchants who were called *Dadni*-merchants in their turn either directly procured goods from the market or made advances to the actual manufacturers of goods who delivered the goods according to the time fixed and according to some specifications. Sometimes the *Dadni* merchants engaged the middlemen known as *Dalals* or

5 Hobson-Jobson refers a Hindu trader, and especially of the province of Gujarat; many of which class have for ages been settled in Arabian ports and known by this name. In Bengal including Kolkata and Dhaka it is specially applied to the native brokers attached to the houses of business.

6 Like Dhaka, the Coolies of Assam and Sylhet also were from upper Indian provinces. Once the Railway Coolies of Chittagong, Chandpur, Dhaka and Steamer Coolies of Narayanganj, Goalandoghat were well-organised under the banner of different trade organisations. They usually work under a *Sardar*, who maintains discipline among them.



Facsimile of Dadan Agreement

*Paikars* with whom they shared the commission to obtain goods. Later the *Dadni* system was abandoned because the *Dadni* merchants often failed to fulfill their contracts or misappropriated the *Dadan*. In the circumstances the East India Company resolved to procure the local goods through their own officials.

**Dalals:** *Dalals* were brokers in the cloth business. During the hey days of the textile business their numbers in Dhaka city were considerable. Their transaction with the English East India was most important.

**Darji:** *Darji* <sup>7</sup> or tailor was a very important professional group who were “engaged in cutting and sewing cloths as well as repairing dresses”. The modern day factory made ready made garments have reduced the importance of the *Darji* but they are still in much demand for varieties of sewing and repairing works.

7 The *Ramayana* mentioned of sewing cloths. Krishna Das Kabiraj denotes: ‘kṛetmī e’; wṛṇṭq ‘wṛṇṭebō’ Mukunda Ram in his *Chandi Mangala* also says: ‘Kṛṇṭq Kṛco tṛṇṭo ‘i Rṛi Nṛv’

'Tailoring was introduced by Muslims as because of the fact that Muslim males and females required sewed outfit.' According to a census carried out in 1830 there were 188 houses of Muslim *Darjis* in the city of Dhaka.<sup>8</sup> At this point of time there was no *Darji* from the Hindus. Later however the Hindus also took up this occupation. In the old days before the arrival of sewing machine the *Darjis* worked 'manually with scissors, needles and threads'. They sewed varieties of cloths and dresses like shirts, lungis, *payajamas* and trousers and blouses. Despite the arrival of ready made garments the *Darjis*' business is still lucrative specially during the various festival periods. In the old part of Dhaka, a *Darji* is also sometime called 'Khalipa'. The Aristocrat families of Dhaka had their own *Darjis* to get their tailoring.

**Darogah:** The term *Darogah* basically refers to a person in charge of a place or office. The Mughal rulers in India used it to denote 'a provincial governor, head of a department, head of city management, chief of police and so on'. It is, perhaps, Man Singh who first introduced a daroga at Dhaka. Wilson defines the word thus: 'The chief native officer in various departments under the native government, a superintendent, a manager but in later times he is specially the head of a police, customs, or excise station.' In the manufacturing and commercial history of the city of Dhaka the term *Darogah* was referred to a person who was in charge of procuring the finest muslin cloths for the royal households or other grandees. His full title was *Darogah-i-malbus Khas wa tant Khana*. He lived in the city of Dhaka and maintained a network of looms at different manufacturing places where weavers were employed to produce cloth according to specified 'standards of fineness and texture.' The weavers manufactured the finest cloths for Mughal imperial household and the Nawab of Bengal Household. They worked in places called the 'malbus khas kuti' and were of the Karkhana or factory types. The duty of the *Darogah-i-malbus Khas* was to see that the cloths known as malbus khas and sarkar-i-ali were manufactured according to specification and designs so that the Emperor or the Nawab was not cheated in any way. There were many weavers in Dhaka city who were also employed to manufacture cloths for the Emperor and the Nawab. The *Darogah-i-malbus Khas* also supervised their works. The tradition of procuring the finest muslin cloths for the Emperor and the Nawab came to an end in the 1760s after the acquisition of the Diwani or the civil administration by the East India Company in 1765. About this time the post of *Darogah-i-malbus khas of tant khana* was also abolished.

**Dhunari:** A carder of cotton who is occupationally skilled in making quilts, pillows and mattresses. In the old days he used to hawk from door to door to do the work. Cotton-ginning is an ancient profession but the making of quilts, pillows, mattresses and cushions became popular probably from the medieval period by their extensive use during the time of the Turkish, Afghan and Mughal rulers of the country. 'The main instrument of the *dhunari* is his *dhunat* a designed bow made of bamboo or cane or wood. The extreme ends of the bow are clinched by a tough string made from dried cow sinews. *dhunari* cleans and thrashes the cotton by dropping it on the vibrating string. A measured vibration is created by striking the string with a wooden maku or handle. After processing the cotton, *dhunari* proceeds to shaping and shewing the object according to a prescribed design. In the past the *dhunaris* used to do bulk of their work during the winter'. During the rest of the year they used to work as *Bhisti* or water-carriers or *pankha-coolies*. Now a days they mainly work for the capitalist shopkeepers as labourers.

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8 The Census of 1901 shows 372 *Darjis* in the Dhaka district.





Dhaka's Dhunari in 1860

Courtesy: British Library

The Dhaka dhunaris who were Muslims were said to have come from Bihar. In the 1880s as James Wise observed a dhuniya or *dhunari* could prepare eight sers (16lbs) of the best cotton and from ten to twelve sers of the common in a day.

### **The Dutch/ The Dutch East India Company**

The Dutch came to Dhaka in the 1650s as merchants of the Dutch East India Company, and established their 'factory' at Tejgaon but later moved to where the Mitford Hospital and Sir Salimullah Medical College now stand.

The Dutch East India Company had been trading with Bengal from the 1630s and their principal business was to buy cotton textiles, silk and saltpeter for export to Europe as well as to the far east. The trade in cotton textiles was specially profitable and since Dhaka was one of the major centres of manufacturing textiles it was quite natural that they would extend their trading activities here also.

The Dutch in their trading activities had to face competition from the other European Companies. It seems that for some period their trade in Bengal as a whole prospered but their trading activities in Dhaka did not flourish much. Neither they could organise their business here upon any elaborate scale. They bought the Dhaka goods especially the cotton textiles through their local agents. In 1747, they exported cotton goods from Dhaka amounting 1 lakh rupees. It was not much compared to what other European companies exported.

Details of their trading and other activities in Dhaka are not known, and their business with Dhaka came to an end in the late eighteenth century like their entire trade with India greatly declined about the same period. The Dutch had their factory and other properties like the vegetable gardens which were surrendered to the English in 1781. Taylor refers that there were at least 32 households of Dutches at Dhaka in 1783. The Dutch Factory Chief Mr. D'langhit died at Dhaka in 1775 and he

was buried at the Christian cemetery of Narinda. All the Dutch properties in Dhaka were formally transferred to the English East India Company in 1834.

### The English

Before the arrival of the Englishmen as members of an organised trading company, a few individuals came to Dhaka by the middle of the 17th century.

One James Hart came to Dhaka long before the establishment of the English Factory in Dhaka. He was a businessman and established his business firm at Tejgaon. But his business did not flourish, and later he handed over his land and other properties to the English Factory. He probably came to Dhaka in the 1650s.

Another English man who came to Dhaka before the establishment of the English Factory was Thomas Pratt. He was employed by Subehdar Mir Jumla but in what capacity is not known.<sup>9</sup> Later on he acted as the Dhaka agent of the East India Company for procuring goods for them.

Meanwhile the Court of Directors of the English East India Company in London were informed by their officials at Hughli that the establishment of a factory at Dhaka would be profitable. Upon receiving such information from Bengal, the Directors gave their agents in Bengal liberty in 1658 to send some able persons to Dhaka to carry on the Company's business especially the purchase of famous Dhaka textiles. Backed by this order the English established a factory at Dhaka in 1669. John March and John Smith were appointed to conduct Dhaka trade.



A Factor with his *hukodar* at leisure time

Thus started the significant trade connection between Dhaka and Britain in the Mughal period. The English, as was expected, exported a substantial amount of fine Dhaka cloths every year contributing to the prosperity of Dhaka textiles business. The history of trade link between Britain and Dhaka had many ups and downs. Thus when the English in Bengal under Job Charnock in 1690 started a war with the Mughal authorities the Dhaka business was closed. Afterwards the Factory was re-established in 1723 during the rule of Murshid Quli Khan. From then on the English carried on brisk business all the way through to the time when they themselves became the masters of the country in the 1750s. For example, in 1744-45 the Company exported Dhaka muslins to Europe amounting Rs. 5,66,328 and the servants of the Company as private merchants Rs. 1,33,069.

After taking over the political control of the country, the English East India Company carried on flourishing business in Dhaka as expected but it was often based upon oppressive measures. Later with the abolition of the Company's monopoly in Bengal trade in 1813 the Dhaka Factory was wound up. Its place was taken over by free merchants, and Britons have business ties with Dhaka ever since then.

<sup>9</sup> Nicholas Manucci, an Italian traveler visited Dhaka in 1663 and he met Thomas Pratt at Dhaka. Pratt held an important position and he was socially important one among the dignitaries of the then Dhaka city.

### The French

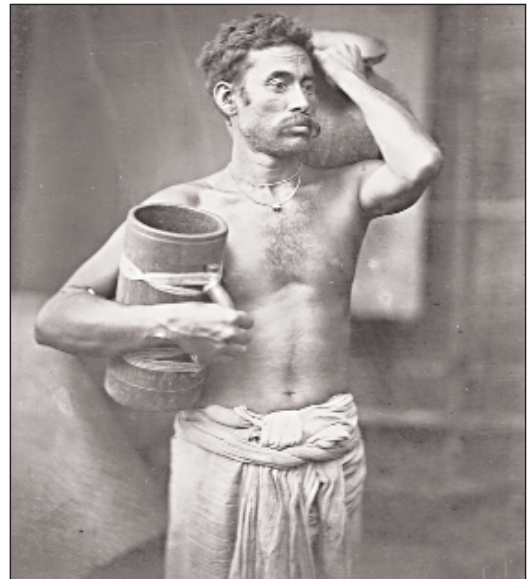
The French as individual merchants and as members of the French East India Company came to Dhaka for commercial purposes in the late 17th century. The boats of the French East India Company first came to Dhaka in 1682. The French East India Company had already established a good network of business activities in southern India and Bengal. The Company built its factory in Dhaka both at Tejgaon and at a location on the bank of the Buriganga where the Ahsan Manjil is now situated. One M. Gregory was the Chief of the French factory in Dhaka in 1690. The principal trading activity of both the individual French merchants and the French East India Company was the purchase of textiles from Dhaka and its neighborhood. Their trade flourished particularly from the 1730s with the coming of Dupleix as the Director of the Company.

The French East India Company not only carried on a profitable trade but it competed with the English and other European Companies. It acquired considerable property in the City of Dhaka including a large block of land in the eastern limits of the city which later came to be known as Frenchganj or Farashganj<sup>10</sup> (The area is now better known by this name). In 1747 the French East India Company and French individual merchants shipped to Europe Dhaka cotton goods worth 3 lakhs of rupees.

However, the French commercial activities came to an end with their defeat at the hands of the English in the struggle for political hegemony in Bengal. After the battle of Plassey their trade sharply declined and their factory was taken over by the English in 1774.

**Gharami:** Gharami is a professional class of artisan who makes a *ghar* or traditional house. The traditional house has bamboo walls and a thatched roof. Until the twentieth century most of the houses of the ordinary people of Dhaka were thatched huts built by the gharamis. These thatched houses were of different sizes and designs. The gharamis made these as works of art. These houses have become rarer now-a-days as most of the houses are now brick-built. With the construction of brick built houses the demand for gharamis declined. With the declining demand the professional class of gharami has also disappeared.

**Goalas:** Goalas or milkmen formed a considerable section of occupational groups and were probably one of the earliest inhabitants of Dhaka city. They kept cows and supplied cow milk to the inhabitants of Dhaka.<sup>11</sup> Besides supplying milk they also made



Dhaka's Goala in 1860

10 The Naib-i-Nazim of Dhaka, Nowaz Mohammed Khan permitted the French traders to set up a Ganj or Bazar at the site where Farashganj is now situated. From then onward, this place became an important business centre of Dhaka.

11 Dhaka's Goalas had their own *Bathan* in the char areas of Dhaka rivers, where they kept their cows for grazing purposes. The Goalas of Mirpur and Rayerbazar got their reputations in the late nineteenth century. Their productions were sold at different Dhaka Milk Araths. see Chapter 6.

*Ghi* or clarified butter from milk and other milk products like curdled milk (*Dahi*), Curds (*Chana*), Khirsa and *Pati-khirsa* or ripe plantains with milk etc. The sweetmeat makers of Dhaka depended heavily upon the Goalas for the supply of milk. According to a census carried out in 1830, there were 382 houses of Hindu Goalas in the city of Dhaka. The area where they lived as a compact group was known as Goalnagar or the abode of the milkmen. There were some Muslim milkmen as well.

Nowadays the milk is supplied by various groups of people including the big dairy firms from outside the city.

**Greeks:** The Greek Diaspora in the eighteenth century saw many of them coming from as far a place as Greece, Eastern Europe and central Asia to Dhaka. It is known that about 200 or more Greeks<sup>12</sup> lived in Dhaka and Narayanganj between 1770 and 1800. The number was undoubtedly huge, and most of these Greeks were merchants who came to Dhaka to carry out trade and commerce.

Like the other European merchant groups, the Greeks in Dhaka started trading in famous Dhaka textiles. They used to export the Dhaka cloth to 'Europe and the Levant via Basra.' They were however soon ousted from this trade in the early 19th century by the competition of the English East India Company. Thereafter they began to trade in other local products like salt and started the business of manufacturing *chunam* or lime. In these trades they excelled.

Although their numbers gradually declined but throughout the nineteenth century the Greeks were an influential community in Dhaka. Later on with the booming of the jute trade many started trade in jute. But the most famous Greek Company which traded in jute in Dhaka and Narayanganj was the Ralli Brothers from London. They were one of the biggest exporters of jute to Europe and USA. The business of the Ralli Brothers continued up to the 1950s. At present there is no significant Greek presence in Dhaka.

**Indigo planters:** The manufacture of indigo became a very lucrative business in the 19th century and many indigo merchants, mostly Europeans lived in the city of Dhaka. Indigo-businessmen were also indigo planters as the production of indigo was done by the same group of people. Indigo was even grown in those days in the outskirts of the city as in Nilkhet. There were several indigo plantations in the district of Dhaka and many of their owners lived in the city. At one time these indigo planters formed a substantial group of Europeans who controlled the indigo trade in



A *Nayeb* and a *Jamadar* in an indigo factory

<sup>12</sup> Taylor mentioned 12 Greek families in 1840. 'The Greek established themselves in the city after the Armenians. Alexis Argyree, the founder of the Greek Community in Calcutta, died here (Dhaka) in 1777, and left considerable property, which was divided among his sons, who took up their abode in Dacca and Backergunge. Like the Armenians, the Greeks were Chiefly engaged in inland trade, and there are a few who still deal extensively in salt at Naraingonge.' (Toylor, *Topography of Dacca*, pp. 254-55).



East Bengal. These Europeans were from Scotland, England, France, Belgium and Holland. The indigo planters brought out the first newspaper of Dhaka called the 'Dacca News' as their mouthpiece. The indigo plantation and indigo business came to an end in the 1860s because of the oppressive nature associated with its production and merchandise. B.C. Allen mentioned that there were 33 Indigo factories in the district.<sup>13</sup>

**Kahar:** It is originated from the Sanskrit word 'Kaharak'. Kahars were the bearers of palanquins. Before the advent of modern transport system they were in great demand as carriers of palanquins. The palanquin has 'two edges in each of its sides. Two, four, six, eight, twelve or even sixteen *kahars* bear it in turn.' The number of *Kahar* bearing a palanquin depended more upon the status of the passenger than anything else.<sup>14</sup> Usually in the palanquin bride and bridegroom were carried. Often the rich *Zamindars* or members of their families traveled by palanquins. Now a days palanquins are rarely used. The Muslim counterpart of *Kahars* were known as *doli-walas*, *dolias* or *sawari-walas*.<sup>15</sup>



Kahar

13 B.C. Allen, *District Gazetteers, Dacca*, 1912 also see Chapter 6.

14 *Dhakar Bibaran* refers 4917 *Behars* or *Pulki* bearers and 2393 persons were dependent on them.

15 *Banglapedia*, Vol-5, p. 444.

**Kalu (Oil-pressurer):** *Kalu* or *Kolu* were once a very thriving occupational group who extracted edible oils from oilseeds. *Kalus* were both Muslims and Hindus. They used a variety of devices to extract oils. In the city of Dhaka once there was a community of Muslim *Kolus* whose chief was called *Paramanik*. Now a days with the coming of the mechanical mills the traditional mills of the *Kolus* cannot compete and gradually *Kolus* are giving up their traditional occupation for other jobs. In 1901, the number of *Kalus* in the Dhaka district were 456.<sup>16</sup>

**Kamar:** Taylor observed that there were substantial groups of *Kamars* or blacksmiths in the city of Dhaka. These *Kamars* were a occupational group who manufactured iron implements. They were also known as *Karmakars*. They were Hindus and belonged to the pure Sudra caste. In the 1880s there were 200 houses of *Kamars* in the city of Dhaka but they were not all of them engaged in making iron implements. Many of them had become gold and silversmiths.



Kamar

The implements which the *Kamars* made were 'da (billhook), kodal (spade), kural (axe), shabal (pickaxe), boti (fish cutting instrument), perek (nails), churi (knife), chimta (longs), hata (spoon) etc'. They also made many agricultural equipments like plough, sickle, hoe, spike etc. Likewise they also made carpenter's equipments like saw, adzes, chisel, plane, handy hammer and file. Although the occupation still exists but many *Kamars* have now switched over to other professions.

**Majhee:** *Majhees* or boatmen were an integral part of the trade and commerce of Dhaka until the middle of the 19th century. The city as it was surrounded on all sides by big or small rivers, canals



Majhee

<sup>16</sup> See Census of 1901.



and rivulets the boats were important modes of transport to bring and dispatch goods of all kinds. They were also carriers of passengers.<sup>17</sup> There were substantial numbers of *majhees* who lived in Dhaka and were connected with the commerce of the city. Sometimes these *majhees* brought goods to Dhaka from as far places as Bihar and Tirhut. Besides plying the boats on hire the *majhees* sometimes themselves got involved in the shipment of goods as partners. In Dhaka the carpenters manufactured varieties of boats suitable for carrying goods. With the coming of steam launches, steamers and railways the monopoly of boats as transport for carrying goods gradually came to an end. Still the *majhees* even now continue to engage in the import and export of goods from Dhaka city using their boats. In 1910 the number of Dhaka *majhees* were 2179.<sup>18</sup> Once the *majhees* of the *Kheya nouka* were called 'Patnee'.

**Moyra:** Originally a Hindu caste who were involved in sweetmeat making. In the old days there were substantial group of Hindu *moyras* in the city of Dhaka. They used to make sweetmeats and other items from milk, flour, molasses and sugarcane. They made products like *channa* or posset, *ghee* or clarified butter, and varieties of sweetmeats like *rasogolla*, *swandesh*, *jilapi*, *matichur*, *mihidana*, *khaja*, *barfi*, *halua* etc. Traditionally the people of Dhaka are very fond of sweetmeats and no social event could be completed without entertaining the guests with the famous sweetmeats of Dhaka. Now-a-days sweetmeat making has become the profession of many different people including Muslims. Nevertheless Dhaka has not lost its fame as the great centre of sweetmeat making.<sup>19</sup> The census of 1901 shows 2380 *Moyras* in the Dhaka district.



Moyra

17 For carrying passengers, a special type of boat *Gaina* was used in the Dhaka region and its *Majhees* were also picked up from Vikrampur. These *Gaina* boats were operated for intra-district and inter-district passengers transportations. In 1900s, Dhaka's intra-district routes operated by the *Gaina* boat *majhees* were from Dhaka to Manikganj, Dhamrai, Taltala, Bahar, Louhagonj, Sreenagar, Kalocopa, Nawabganj, Hasnabad, Kaligunj, Serajdikhan, Mirkadim, Tangibari, Hasara, Shologhar, Kalma, Fatulla, Demra, Fulbaria, Savar, Singair, Goaland, Char Nawabgonj, Kaligonj, Murapara, Daud Kandi, Chaensindur, Kamlaghat etc. The *Majhees* of goods-carrying boats were picked up from different places for different types of boat. For Dhaka palwars, most of the *majhees* were from Faridpur and Vikrampur. For carrying Exportable & Importable items, *majhees* and boats were hired from Goalandeghat and Narayanganj. For carrying goods to the North Bengal destinations, *majhees* of Sirajgonj, Bairab and Bajitpur were chosen for their reputation in transporting the bulk quantity of goods. In carrying of rice, the *balam* boats and *majhees* of Barisal were reputed all over the Bengal. In the beginning of the twentieth century, the main concentrations of the Dhaka's *majhees* were at Lalkulhighat, Farashgonjghat, Chandnighat, Baburbazarghat, Koilaghat, Kawraid and Narayanganjghat. For Dhaka's Kheyaghat, see Chapter Appendix.

18 Kedarnath Majumdar, *Dhakar Bibaran*, 1910, p. 238.

19 For Sweetmeat, see Chapter 6 of this book.

**Muchi:** Traditionally *muchis* are a Hindu caste who work as shoe-makers, cobblers, shoe-shiners, and skin tanners. In the caste hierarchy the *muchis* belong to a very low level but they were a significant occupational group for the people wore shoes and sandals of various types from the ancient time. With the founding of the capital in Dhaka in the early 17th century the *muchis* came to the city and settled down in Dhaka. The city became famous for shoemaking from the Mughal time. The fame continued till the coming of European shoes in the 19th century. In the old days *muchis* were extensively involved in shoemaking, repairing and shoe-shinning. But now-a-days their profession has become insignificant as shoes are manufactured mechanically. In 1910s, there were 326 *Muchis* or *Chamars* in the city of Dhaka.<sup>20</sup>

**Patial:** This was a group of low caste Hindus who made mats. The raw material for manufacturing mats was plant *Mathara* (*Maranta dichotoma*). Mats were generally coarse, dark-coloured and thick and hence called *Mota-pati* as opposed to the finer variety produced in Sylhet known as *Sital-pati*. In Dhaka the *pati* or the mat was solely manufactured by hand. The head of this caste was called *Pradhan* or *Matbar* and the caste was exclusively Vaishnava.

**Patua:** A *patua* is a folk painter who draws images serving folk beliefs. The occupation was in the past quite profitable and the locality in the city of Dhaka where *patuas* used to live is still known as *Patuatuli* or the quarters of the *Patuas*. Their drawings were known as *pata* paintings. Usually they draw on a piece of cloth with the images of Hindu gods and goddesses and also Muslim *pirs* and *fakirs*. There was a large customer among the Hindus who bought these paintings of Hindu gods and goddesses for worship.



Patua

**Poddar:** *Poddars* were a caste of professionals who handled money in connection with trade-collecting and remitting money. In Dhaka they belonged to the Subarna Banik caste and their numbers were considerable in the 19th century. Dhaka's *Poddars* were initially engaged in bartering coins of different sorts but after the introduction of regular banking System they shifted their business in lending money to the goldsmiths and *shakharies* of Dhaka. In Dhaka, they are still called *Swarna Poddar* and are in the business. The *Poddars* used to deal with the petty traders of Dhaka, while the Muslim *shroffs* used to handle the money and revenue affairs of the imperial side (also see *shroffs*).

**Saha:** *Sahas* are a Hindu trading caste who use the surname *Saha*. They actually belong to the Sunri caste. In Dhaka they were a most enterprising and prosperous community and carried on various trades and businesses. They were cloth merchants, salt traders, wood dealers as well as bankers. In Dhaka they were usually called 'Amda-wallah' or traders who imported goods wholesale and sold them to petty dealers by retail. With their increased business prosperity they adopted various surnames other than *Saha* like *Poddar*, *Roy Choudhury*, *Choudhury*, *Sikder*, *Sarkar*, *Bhowmick*, *Das*, *Mallick* and *Majumder*.

20 Kedarnath Majumder, *Ibid*.



The Sahas as business community contributed much to the economic, social and cultural developments of the city of Dhaka in the 19th and 20th centuries.<sup>21</sup> However, with the partition of India in 1947, most of the Saha business community gradually left for India.

**Shankari:** *Shankari* or shell-cutters are one of the most notable occupational groups living in the city of Dhaka. The place where they live is known as 'Shankari Bazar' or 'Shankaripatti' where they are living for the last four hundred years. It is said that when Islam Khan founded his capital in Dhaka, *Shankaris* were induced to leave their old settlement in Vikrampur and come to Dhaka by the offer of rent-free land in the new city. They did come and settled down in Dhaka; but owing to the small size of the rent-free land, they adopted a very peculiar style of architecture, building two-storied houses with a frontage of six-feet and a depth of at least thirty. Be that as it may, they soon made Dhaka an important centre of shell-manufactures



Shankari at work in 1860

and their products were sold throughout Bengal and beyond. During the Mughal times the *Shankaris* had a brisk trade, bringing raw shells from south India and manufacturing finished products like bracelets, earrings, rings etc. During the early years of the British rule when all the manufacturers of Dhaka generally declined, the conch-shell industry was the only one, which not only survived but flourished. That the industry never declined to any great extent and that it further expanded with the revival of Dhaka's commerce was due to the assured marketability of the *shankas* or shell bracelets. 'Every Hindu female of Bengal puts on those *shankas* which are indispensable to her so long as her husband is alive. Shaka is indispensably a necessity for a *Hindu Sadhava*, she breaks it off when her husband dies.' It was this demand from almost all over Bengal that had kept the industry alive. Later, however, their other products suffered a decline. The jute-induced prosperity of East Bengal in the latter half of the 19th century led to a fall in the demand for shell ornaments other than *shankas*: women then wanted more valuable ornaments of gold and silver. That trend still continues but *Shankaris* have also struggled to keep with the time. Besides the *shankas* they now a days produce many more articles, which have some market.<sup>22</sup>

**Shroffs, Sarraf:** The term *shroffs* or *sarraf* is derived from the Arabic word *Shroffs* which means a money changer, a banker, coin-sorter, creditor etc. The *shroffs* were Muslims and they played a very important role in the trading and commercial history of Dhaka during the Mughal and post-Mughal days. Even in 1830 there were 32 houses of *shroffs* in Dhaka city. Initially they were the

21 For origin and settlement of *Sahas*. See Chapter Appendix.

22 Also see Chapter 6.

people who examined the purity of coins and ascertained the amount of discount or *Batta* on them before these were handed over to the government treasury. For their trouble they were given a commission. Later the *shroffs* moved to various kinds of activities connected with trade, commerce, finance and land revenue system of the country. The *shroffs*' activities resulted from the Mughal currency system and Bengal's favorable balance of payment. There came in the country huge amount of bullion brought by the Europeans in connection with their trade in Bengal. The bullions were generally turned into coins. Coins were also minted in various *Takshals* or mints as in Dhaka. As all gold and silver currencies were legal tenders such currencies also came from other provinces. As a result there were in vogue various currencies in the country, which required adjustments or examination because all of them were not of equal value intrinsically. The standard currency of Bengal was called *Sicca Rupee*. It carried full value up to three years from the date of its coining. Afterwards it was regarded as *Sanaut* or debased coin.

In short all currencies had to be adjusted with the *Sicca Rupee*. It was the task of the *shroff* to ascertain the level of depreciation in all the non-sicca rupees and the amount of *batta* to be levied upon them for their exchange with *sicca-rupees*. The *shroff* also purchased *Sanaut* rupees for sicca-rupees, and later took the *Sanaut* rupees to the mint for re-coining. The *shroffs* made considerable profits from their currency handling. They soon however extended their activities to other fields as financiers, bankers and creditors especially in the collection of land revenues from the zamindars. They also acted as army paymasters, dealt in *hundis* (letters of credit), provided insurance, and sometimes engaged in commercial activities on their own. The fortune of the *shroffs* dwindled with the currency reform in the mid nineteenth century along with the introduction of modern banking system and token currencies.

**Sutar, Sutradhara (Chuttar):** The *Sutars*, *Sutradharas* or *Chuttars* were Hindu carpenters who formed a substantial group of wood-workers in the city of Dhaka. James Wise noted that in the 1890s there were about one hundred and fifty houses of *Sutradharas*. The quarter in which they lived was known as *Sutrapur*. The *Sutradharas* of Dhaka made varieties of wood-works including boats, furniture and all kinds of agricultural implements. They were known for their 'ingenuity and artistic bend of mind.' The Dhaka *Sutradharas* were quite famous and their wood designs were mostly marked in *palanka*, door and windows, boats, room partitions, household furniture, temple walls etc. As per Kedernath, there were about ten thousands *sutars* in the district.<sup>23</sup>



Sutar

23 The major folk of *sutar* were living at Savar (1744 nos), Raipura (1145 nos), and at Manikganj. (Kedarnath Majumder, *Dhakar Bibaran*, 1910).

With the development of modern furniture industry using modern equipment the traditional carpenters had faced tough time and at present either work for business entrepreneurs or have moved to new jobs.

**Swarnakars:** *Swarnakars* or goldsmiths and silversmiths formed one of the most valuable Hindu artisan groups of Dhaka city. They used to make varieties of gold and silver ornaments such as bangle (*churi*), armlet (*bajuband*), necklace (*har*), ornament for the neck (*hansuli*), earring (*dul*), ear ornament (*kanpasha*), nose-ring (*nolok*), anklet (*mal*) etc. The *Dhaka swarnakars* were quite famous and had brisk business in the past. Their trade particularly flourished in the 19th and early 20th centuries. They lived in the Kamarnagar, Bongaon and Amligola



Swarnakars

mahallas of the city. Dhaka goldsmiths were particularly known for their ability 'to make ornaments with small quantity of gold and make them light.' The most famous among them in the 19th century were the houses of Luckman Karmakar and Jaganath Karmakar whose customers included 'the Rajas and Maharajas of Bengal.' Silversmiths acquired a similar fame though their specialties were the *Singhasans* or thrones of deities and *Taktanamas* or bedsteads used for marriage or religious processions besides more usual household articles such as betel and pan boxes, and scent bottles. It is claimed that the European ladies even preferred the beautifully ornamented bracelet, rings, brooches, safety-pins and flowers of gold and silver of Dhaka to those prepared by the Kolkata swarnakars. Things have greatly changed in the last few decades and swarnakars are not as busy as in the past. 'The development of modern jewellery, imitation ornaments and the introduction of machinery in ornament making have squeezed the working scope of swarnakars.' Moreover, jewellery making is no more an exclusive trade of the Hindu swarnakars as many Muslims have now adopted this as profession.<sup>24</sup>

**Tanti:** *Tanti* or the weavers of Dhaka formed the most important occupational group whose handloom products earned enormous fame and wealth for the city of Dhaka. They worked with their 'indigenous weaving machines run by hand and foot.' After the foundation of the capital in Dhaka they moved to the city and established their abodes in an area which is called 'Tantibazar' ever since. Later some of them moved to other places like Nawabpur. They manufactured varieties of textile fabrics but their fame was chiefly associated with the production of the famous Dhaka muslin. James Wise remarked that in this connection they received 'great encouragement from the Mughal viceroys, and ladies of the Delhi Court, who obtained their beautiful muslins from Dacca'.<sup>25</sup> As a

24 Also see Jewellery industry in Dhaka, Chapter 6.

25 James Wise, *Notes*, p. 380.





Tanti

result the *tantis* of Dhaka city grew into a very rich and prosperous group of people. With few exceptions they were all *Vaishnavas*. The muslins were famous for their 'fineness of texture, beauty of design, intricacy of weave, lightness of weight, and durability.' There were many varieties of muslins which were known by different names like *tanzeb*, *sarband*, *badan*, *khos*, *elebellay*, *sharbati*, *tarangam*, *kumish*, *turya*, *nayansukh*, *charkona*, *malmal*, *jamdani*, *addi*, *shabnam* and *aberawan*. Of these the finest fabrics were reserved for the Mughal Emperor and the Nawab of Bengal. The other fine muslins

were exported by the various European trading companies. In 1747 the muslins amounting Rs 28 lakhs and 50 thousands were exported from Dhaka of which the share of Dhaka city was considerable. During the Mughal period both Hindus and Muslims were involved in this profession. The heyday of Dhaka's cotton fabrics came to an end by the early 19th century with the coming of the mill-made cheap cloths from Britain and the imposition of many discriminatory laws against the export of Dhaka cloths. The *tantis* of Dhaka however continued their manufacture of coarse cloth for domestic consumption. As late as in 1846 there were in the city of Dhaka about 1500 looms in production. Now a days weaving as a cottage industry has almost come to an end in the city though it is still flourishing in some of the surrounding districts.

**Conclusion:** Dhaka had been a traditional city until the middle of the 20th century. Hence trade, commerce and manufactures of the city were carried out in the traditional manner. Moreover, many occupations were based upon religion or caste system. Thus most of the artisans and craftsmen of Dhaka carried out their works as family occupations. Although this system had some merits as skills were learnt through family connection and was improved from generation to generation. But the system did not allow any mobility. Nor did it allow any breakthrough in the art or skill. Thus they faced tremendous challenges when scientific development and machines intervened in the mode of production.

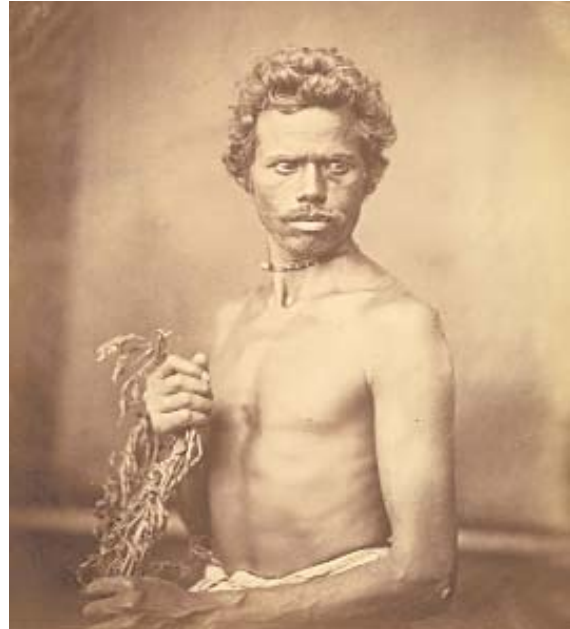
Although industrialization came quite late in Dhaka but when it did come it threatened and gradually ousted the age old means of production. Thus from the middle of the 20th century many of the hereditary occupations lost their ground, and people were forced to take other jobs. Some of the traditional occupations still exist but these are in a vulnerable state and would not continue much longer. Dhaka to-day is witnessing the tremendous impact of commercialization and industrialization, and very soon the nature of occupations of the inhabitants would be totally different from what it was a hundred years ago.



Some professional groups of Dhaka in the 1860s



A street hawker selling his goods in 1860

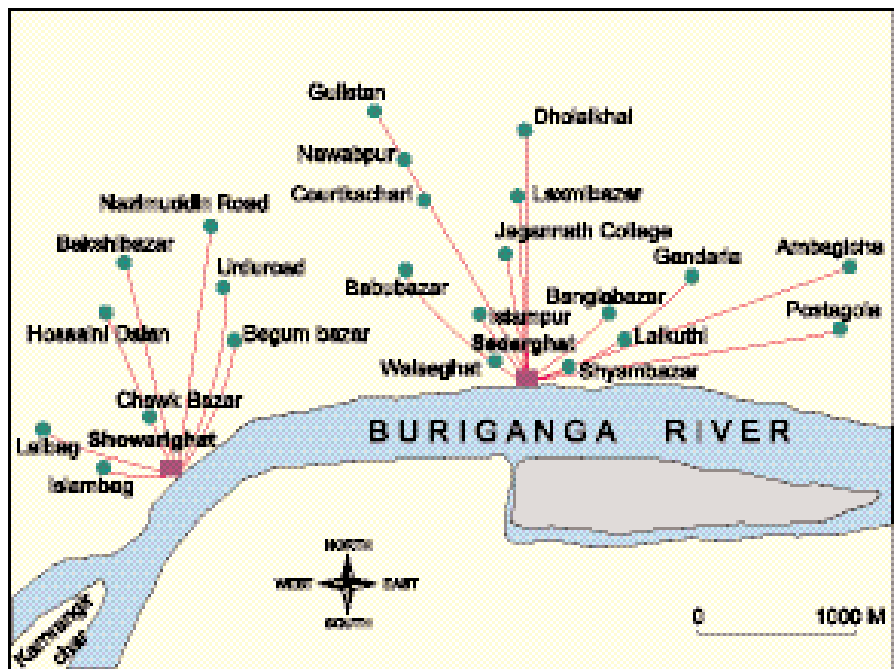
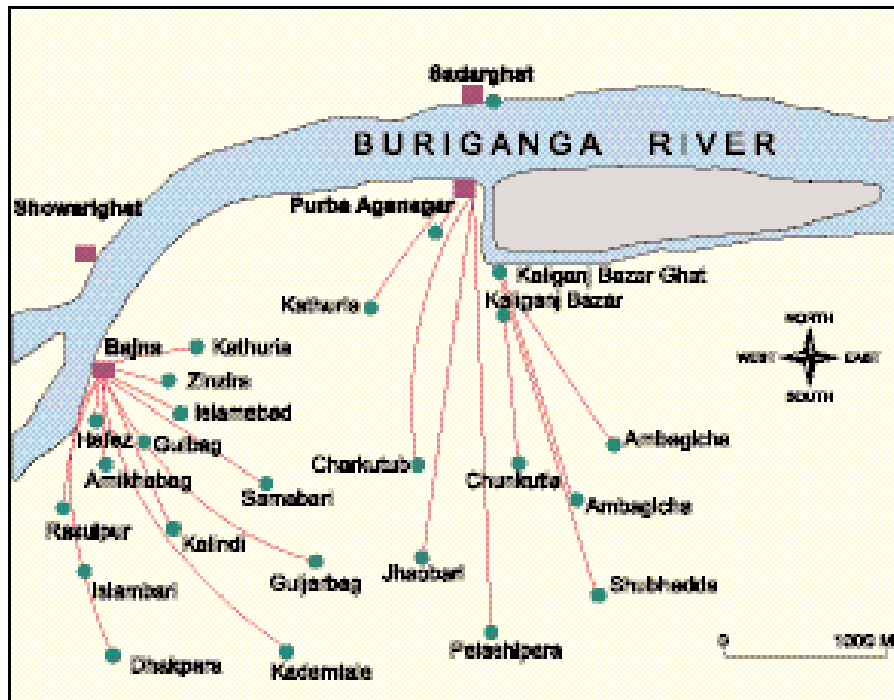


Dhaka's *Kaibarta* in the mid 19th century

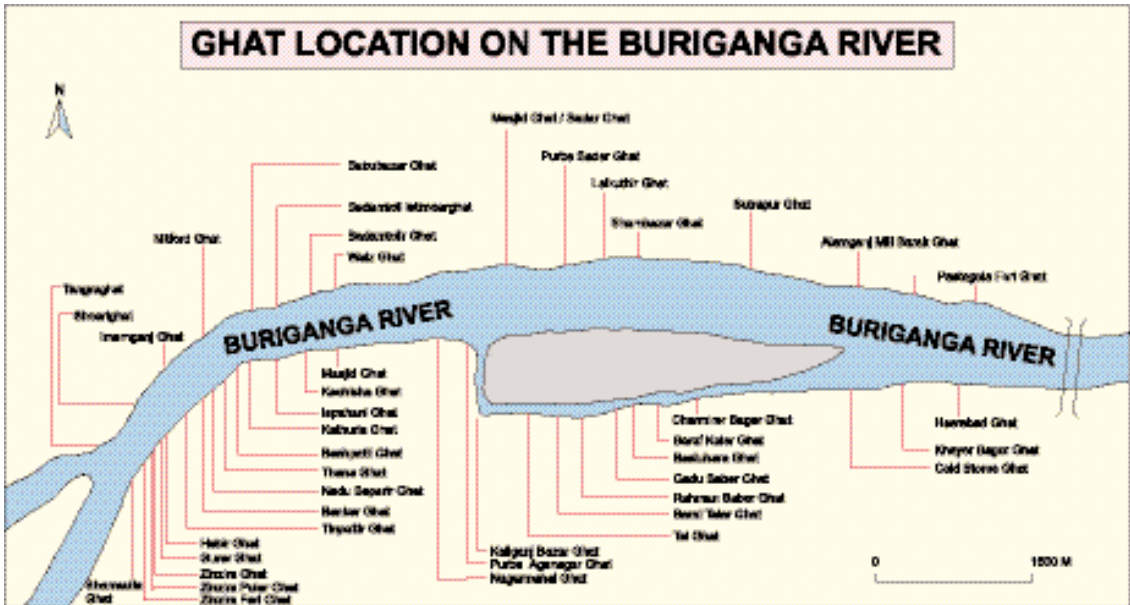
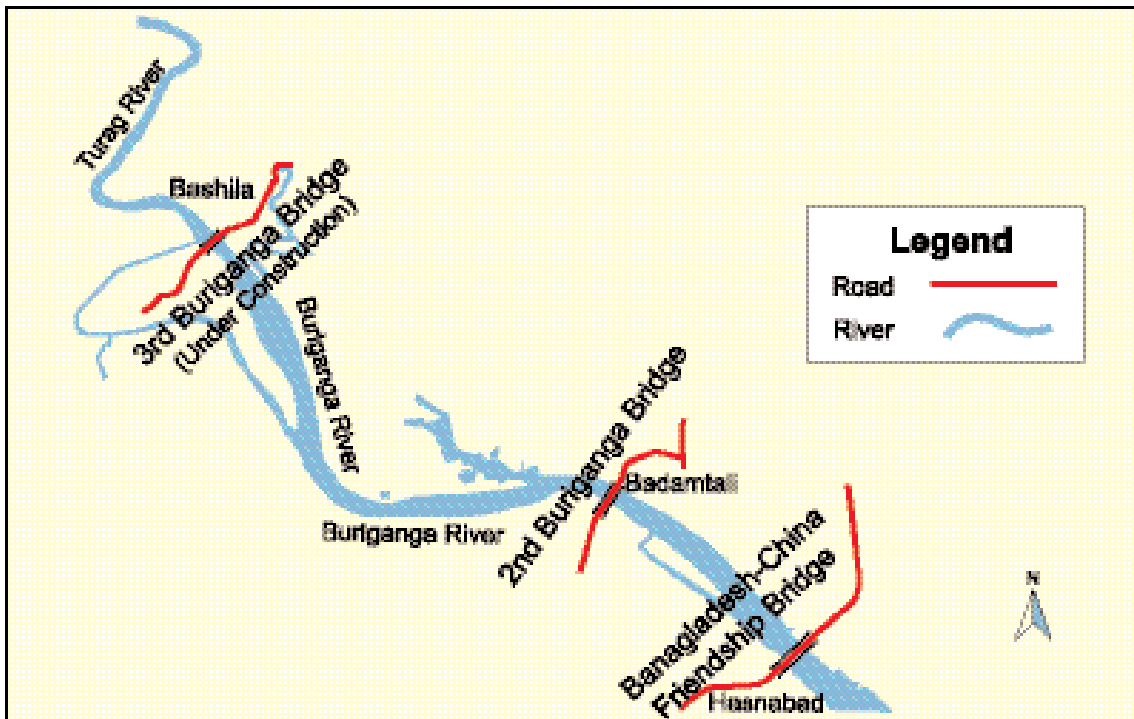


Darwash or Bajnadar

Courtesy: British Library



Adapted from Nazrul Islam, Nagarayane Bangladesh

Adapted from Nazrul Islam- *Nagarayane Bangladesh*

Buriganga Bridge, symbol of economic growth and business development

**Appendices to Chapter Five**  
**Appendix 5**  
**Ghat-wise Daily Passenger Turn-over at Buriganga River\***

Name of Ghat and Destination	Number of Boats operated	Frequency	Average passenger	Total daily passenger
Hasnabad Ghat → <i>Postagola Ferrighat *</i>	14	20	2	560
Mirerbager Ghat → <i>Postagola Gudara Ghat</i>	12	18	2	432
Cold storage ghat → <i>Almgonj Mill Barrak Ghat</i>	16	20	4	1,280
Char Mirerbager Ghat → <i>Sutrapur Ghat</i>	18	20	15	5,400
Ice Mill Ghat → <i>Shyambazar Ghat</i>	25	20	15	7,500
Bashtuhara Ghat → <i>Shyambazar Ghat</i>	10	20	15	3,000
Nadu saber Ghat → <i>Shyambazar Ghat</i>	25	14	20	7,000
Rahman Saber Ghat → <i>Mshjid Ghat / Sadarghat</i>	35	24	10	8,400
Baraitlar Ghat → <i>Lal Kutir Ghat</i>	10	23	15	3,450
Telghat → <i>Purba Sadarghat</i>	50	15	30	22,500
Kaligonj Bazar Ghat → <i>Sadarghat / Mashjdghat</i>	80	12	5	4,800
Purba Aganagar Ghat → <i>Sadarghat/ Mashjdghat</i>	70	12	2	1,680
Nagarmahal Ghat → <i>Wiseghat</i>	40	18	3	3,240
Mashjdghat → <i>Badamtalir Ghat</i>	25	20	2	1,000
Kechisa ghat → <i>Badamtali Steamer Ghat/ Babu Bazar</i>	55	20	2	2,200
Ispahnighat → <i>Babubazar</i>	85	22	4	7,480
Kathuriaghat → <i>Babu Bazar Midford Ghat</i>	65	18	15	17,550
Banshpattighat → <i>Midford Ghat</i>	10	15	2	300
Thana Ghat <i>Midfordghat</i>	70	25	4	7,000
Banshpattighat → <i>Midford Ghat</i>	20	30	2	1,200
Nadu Beparirghat → <i>Midford Ghat</i>	100	20	3	6,000
Bankerghat → <i>Imamgonj Ghat</i>	53	20	3	3,180
Tin Pattir Ghat → <i>Soarighat</i>	15	15	2	450
Habirghat → <i>Soarighat</i>	For Transportation of Commodities only			
Ghrerghat → <i>Soarighat</i>	25	15	3	1,125
Zinzira ghat → <i>Soarighat</i>	15	20	10	3,000
Zinzira Ferryghat → <i>Soarighat</i>	40	25	2	2,000
Zinzira puler Ghat → <i>Soarighat/ Tengra Ghat</i>	35	15	3	1,575
Shamsulla Ghat → <i>Soarighat</i>	35	25	2	1,750
	1053			1,22,052

Source: Nazrul Islam and Md. Abdul Baqee: *Nagarayane Bangladesh*, 1996, pp. 157-158

\* Names in Italic form are the place of destination.



**Appendix 5.1**  
**Passenger of Buriganga Ferrighat by Profession in 1996\***

Profession/ Trade	From Kaligonj Bazar Ghat to Sadarghat		Zinzira Ghat to Soarighat	
	Nos	%	Nos	%
Factory workers	108	10.8	357	31.9
Day Labourer	98	10.5	145	13.0
Shopkeeper/workers	145	14.9	159	14.2
Service	189	17.4	122	10.9
Businessmen	117	12.0	161	14.4
Student	218	24.3	89	8.0
Others	100	10.2	85	7.6

Source: Nazrul Islam Md. Abdul Baquee, *ibid.* 1996, p 160.

\* These figures have declined considerably after the building of the Chaina-Bangladesh Maitri Setu-2 (*Buriganga Setu*) in the recent year.

**Appendix 5.2**  
**Occupational Distribution of the Muslims of Dhaka in 1830**

Occupation	Number of Houses	Total Inhabitants
Zamindar	74	1,065
Service	2,067	9,065
Physician	9	45
<i>Mullah</i> (Priests)	23	99
Merchant	126	286
<i>Grihasta</i> (land and property owners)	1,070	3,879
Baker	16	34
Bricklayer	117	475
Bangle-seller	42	204
<i>Coolie</i>	461	1,678
Fishermen	90	329
Grave digger	11	36
<i>Jardozi</i> (Embroiderer)	107	426
<i>Kashdadoz</i> (Kassida Embroiders)	89	123
Ivory-seller	56	180
<i>Kutti</i> (Corn Thrasher)	2,055	8,742
Oilman	16	114
Shoe seller	63	76
Shopkeeper	1,080	4,020
Tailor	188	855
Tanner	103	369
Trader	121	472
Washer men	14	67
Water-carrier	10	49
Weaver	18	65
Total	8,026	32,753

Source: H. Walter, *Census of the City of Dacca*, Asiatic Researches, XVII, 546-8.

**Appendix 5.3**  
**Occupation and Caste Distribution of the Hindus of Dhaka in 1830**

Occupation and Caste	Number of House	Total Inhabitants
<i>Zamindar</i>		
Baidya	1	3
Baisya	2	15
Khettri	6	42
Saha	1	90
Kayastha	13	147
Tanti	1	7
<i>Service</i>		
Baisya	4	23
Banian	112	531
Brahmin	103	543
Chandal	12	70
Garuriya	2	8
Jant	1	3
Kahar	8	23
Kundu	9	34
Khettri	182	523
Kurmi	5	13
Saha	195	974
Kayashtha	500	2,557
Toyepal	11	29
<i>Physician</i>		
Baidya	48	215
Barber	13	37
Brahmin	2	47
Chandal	1	3
Khettri	1	1
Saha	1	4
Kayastha	3	11
<i>Jajman</i>		
Brahmin	107	426
<i>Shopkeeper</i>		
Baisya	11	221
Banian	128	617
Brahmin	7	11
Gunri	6	27
Kundu	20	80
Khettri	118	349
Kayastha	878	2,643
Saha	646	2,187
Tambuli	1	3
Tanti	1	11
Toyepal	103	509

Occupation and Caste	Number of House	Total Inhabitants
<i>Merchant</i>		
Brahmin	6	29
Khettri	54	138
<i>Trader</i>		
khettri	2	7
Saha	5	31
Tanti	89	288
Toyepal	4	23
<i>Shroff</i>		
Saha	29	54
Tanti	3	21
<i>Milkman</i>		
Gowala	382	2,055
<i>Thread-maker</i>		
Brahmin	1	14
Chandal	2	77
Kayastha	3	7
Tanti	12	22
<i>Weaver</i>		
Jogi	1	4
Saha	9	36
Tanti	376	2,392
Toyepal	35	155
Embroidered		
Sudra	2	2
Washerman-		
Dhobi	188	810
<i>Cloth-seller</i>		
Toyepal	19	111
<i>Currier</i>		
Chamar	175	943
<i>Coolie</i>		
Kundu	42	235
Khettri	6	10
<i>Potter</i>		
Kumar	143	665
<i>Sweeper</i>		
Dome	2	8
Mehter	27	103
Total	4,8800	21,008
Total number of Hindu householders:		7,327
Total number of Hindu inhabitants:		31,429

Source: H. Walter, *Census of the City of Dacca*, 1830; Sharif uddin Ahmed, *A Study in Urban History and Development, 1840-1921*.

## Appendix 5.4

**The Origin of Saha, a trading class of Bengal as described in the 'Kulapanjika'**

Saha an important trading class of Dhaka as well as East Bengal came to Dhaka region during the Sena Era. A *Kulpanjika* refers that being allured by the wealth of East Bengal this trading class (Sahas) settled in the Ganjes along the River banks. The *Kulapanjika* says:

(1)

ðet½tZ EelPv fig km" mçPti |  
 Ggb tmvbi e½ Qvto tKvb gp\  
 Pti i mthvM" fig AtbK cibe |  
 mKtj GKtI Zvrv fivM Kwi j e\  
 AbS+ emYR" fvj Puj te GLvtb |  
 tgvKvg embtq tgriv \_vKKe GLvtb\  
 tm Kvi tY mevu Avmqv evm vtb |  
 mKtj i v v mY AS+½MtY\  
 j Bqv Kwi j hvIv cpt e½t tk |  
 t tki gvqtZ mte Kvb j th tktI\O

Under the able leadership of one 'Subahu,' the trading class left their birth place towards the East Bengal by boat. The tradition further says:

ðb½i Zij qv gwiS wkKj Luj j |  
 Rq M½v Rq ewj evntZ j vMj \  
 GBi fç mvZ w b w½v Pvj vBj |  
 M½tZ Avmqv AbKj evqtcj \  
 Qwvj nvtZi wo hZ gvj -vMY |  
 ev vg j vMvtg Zte Kwi j Mgb\  
 evqteM Pti tbsKv Zi ½ fiv qv |  
 mevú KuntQ mveavb gwiS fvgv\  
 evj K ewj Kv Avi hZK i gbx |  
 fqtZ AvKj Zvi v Kwi tQ Agvb\  
 GB gZ KZ w tb M½v GovBj |  
 Avmqv cÜvi gvtS i kb w j \  
 telMeZx cÜv b x AwZ fq½i |  
 f wLqv mevi A½ Kutç \_i \_i ||  
 DEvj Zi ½ thb mMi mgvb |  
 Kj ktā eww j mevKvi KvY ||

The *Kulapanjika* denotes that how these Sahas got settled at Dhaka region and developed business relation with Dhaka, Srihatta (Sylhet), Gour and other places. As soon as their number had been increased, they largely concentrated in the *bandors* and *ganjes*, situated on the River banks of the Padma, Megna, Jumuna, Ishamati, Buriganga and Dhaleswari and carried on their usual business. As per *Kulapanjika*:

OG cKvti ek RwiZ ewnwj j kvLv |  
 wZb vtb wZb wPw ntq tMj tj Lv |  
 GKlvbv i vMlj b ØxvKvO wOR avtg |  
 Avi Lvbv cvvBtj b ØkñEØ tgvKvtg\  
 Avi wPw cvvBj tMvDo bMt |  
 mevú i cñ h\_v e'emvq Kti \  
 AZtci eüw b nBtj b MZ |  
 bvbv vtb mrvv RwiZ nBj we-Z\  
 tg tg msL v ewx nBj mrvv |  
 emYR" mMg h\_v b b x avi \  
 tmB me vtb mte emwZ Kwi j |  
 tgNbv hgpbv cÜv Zxi th QvBj \  
 epwM½v ümMi Avi BvgZx |  
 gnvb> v atj kj x P> bv cñZ\  
 GBi fç mvú mrvv \_vK vtb vtb |  
 L> Aw tePv tKbv Kti b hZtb\O



# 6

## Trade and Commerce as Narrated by the Elderly Entrepreneurs and a Peep into the Traditional Business of Dhaka

Delwar Hassan

### Introduction

In presenting Dhaka's commercial history in its proper perspective, efforts have been made to present in this section the viewpoints expressed by the elderly entrepreneurs who, with their vast experiences along with will and wisdom, have led successfully their commercial and industrial ventures to a wider scale. The elderly business personalities, undoubtedly, have had to overcome many odds to reach the pinnacle of success in their respective fields, having rich contributions to the country's economy as well. In collecting information as much as possible, initiatives were taken accordingly, but time constraints allowed only a few of them to be interviewed. Hence, many aspects of traditional businesses of the past could not be viewed or assessed. However, attempts have been made to project those through separate articles in the second part of this chapter. The oral history recorded here is the basis; the first of its kind on Dhaka's commercial importance will undoubtedly help future work in this area.

### 1

#### Yahya Ahmed Bawany

The phase of business development by non-Bengali Muslims started in a large scale since the First World War. Many of them initiated their ventures in business with the increase of price of various commodities including jute during the war period. The businesses owned by the Aga Khans, Memons, Ismailias, Borahs, Dawoods and Adamjees expanded widely in a bigger way. "Even the traditions of Muslim society worked against industrial progress. Muslims had habitually invested in land and trade, not in industry or banking." With a deviation from this trend in the 1930s, commercial concerns of the non-Bengali Muslim businessmen developed mainly centering round the port cities like Bombay, Karachi, Calcutta, Rangoon and Chittagong in this region.<sup>1</sup> Major business groups like the Memons and the Ismailias mainly extended their businesses to

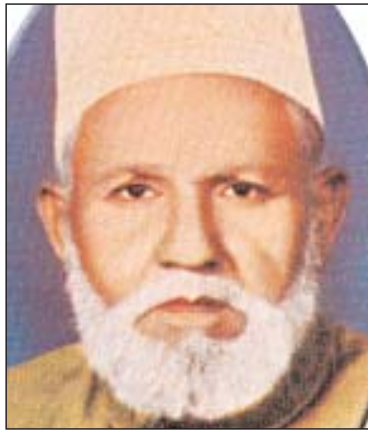


Yahya Ahmed Bawany

<sup>1</sup> Iftikhar-ul-Awwal, State and Industry, in Sirajul Islam (ed.) *History of Bangladesh*, Vol-2, ASOB, 1993, p. 437.

different trading centres of the sub-continent. Adamjees and Bawanys belonging to the Memons' group were among others who, out of Calcutta, got them established in Rangoon in the beginning of the last century. Ispahanis also had their business in Rangoon but owing to some internal disturbance in the 1930s, they shifted their business to Calcutta.

After the creation of Pakistan in 1947, Adamjees and Bawanys shifted their business to Dhaka and Chittagong from Rangoon. They started their business in East Bengal in the fifties of the last century and within a decade by the sixties they turned to be leading ones. During that time, the Ispahani group came to East Bengal from Calcutta. Though the Ispahanis had their 'Orient Airways' and commercial office in Dhaka, the main businesses were centered in Chittagong.<sup>2</sup> Besides Adamjee, Bawany, Ispahani, Dawood, Karim, Bohra, the Ismailia community and other non-Bengali groups exerted their influence in the field of trade and commerce of East Bengal.



Latif Bawany

Out of these big business groups, the Memons group was the majority in East Bengal. After the invasion of Burma by Japan during the Second World War, the businessmen belonging to the Memons group left Rangoon in an adverse situation.<sup>3</sup> Bawany was also one of the mainstream business groups. Ancestors of the Bawany family were inhabitants of Jetpur, Kathiawar in India. Ahmed Bawany, Abdul Latif Ibrahim Bawany, Yahya Ahmed Bawany, Abdul Gani Jiani, Moosa Soobasha and N.M. Sovas are among the main businessmen of this family. They were, so far, involved with 19 industrial enterprises in East Bengal including textile and jute mills, tea garden, factory producing spares, match factory and chemicals. The businessmen belonging to this group were very influential.<sup>4</sup> In the sixties, there was a business house of the Bawany group, 'Al-Bawany Chamber'.

The head office of this chamber was located in Dhaka and there were branch offices in Chittagong, Khulna and Karachi.<sup>5</sup> Most of the businesses of Ahmed Bawany<sup>6</sup>, Abdul Latif Ibrahim Bawany and Yahya Ahmed Bawany were located in East Bengal. After the 1971 liberation war, the mills and factories and business concerns of the Bawany group were nationalised like all others owned by the non-Bengalis. But later on in the changed circumstances, they got back some of their concerns. An elderly alive member of this family, Yahya Ahmed Bawany, was involved in the past with both the Narayanganj Chamber of Commerce and the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce. He was President of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry in 1961-62 and President of the Narayanganj Chamber of Commerce and Industry in 1965.<sup>7</sup>

2 Mirza M. Ispahani and Mirza Ahmed Ispahani were the principal directors of the Ispahani groups. Their businesses operated in Calcutta were shifted to Chittagong instead of Dhaka.

3 Y.A. Bawany mentioned in an interview with the writer that the main reason for shifting business was to come to a Muslim country and Jinnah also inspired them to serve the newly born Pakistan.

4 Wilber Donald, N. *Pakistan, Its People, Its Society, Its Culture*, (New Haven, 1964), p. 94.

5 Tawhar Ali Khan, *Biographical Encyclopedia of Pakistan* (Lahore, 1970) p. 137.

6 Ahmed Bawany was the founder of this Bawany Group; *Ahmed Violin Hosiery Works* at Burma and *Ahmed Bawany Jute Mills* in Pakistan were established after his name.

7 Apart from this, he was also the member of some sub-Committees i.e. Finance and Chamber Development sub-committee; Chambers representative to the Advisory Council for the Ministry of Commerce.

The editor of the *Commercial History of Dhaka* came across with Mr. Yahya Ahmed Bawany in Dhaka on the eve of publication of the book. During the talks with him, came up all the relevant issues regarding their business activities, the prevailing condition of trade and commerce, his various involvements with the chamber vis-à-vis commercial ventures in different fields besides the socio-economic condition of that period. Summary of the interview is included in the article.

Talking about his ancestors, Mr. Bawany said that he hailed from a family that had been involved in business from generation to generation. They were established businessmen since his father Ahmed Bawany's time. His grandfather, in fact, started the business of the family in 1885 with 'Ghani' (Oil crushing) business. Much before the partition of India, they were the established businessmen in Burma. They had hosiery business there called Ahmed Violin Hosiery Works. There were other businesses apart from this. They, too, had cloth business in Bombay and Calcutta besides Rangoon. Replying to a question about the business condition during his time in Rangoon, Mr. Bawany said that their business in Rangoon was good. "During the Second World War, we experienced both good and bad over there," he remarked adding "despite all these, our business was going on there smoothly." Japan conquered Burma during the Second World War. He was asked whether such a situation created any hindrances to business. He replied, "War, undoubtedly, created an unusual situation. In terms of business, those who were involved then in the supply of ammunition and other goods, had obviously heyday and those who were concerned for the supply of foodgrains, had faced disruptions as there were restrictions on the movement of commercial transports."<sup>8</sup> Asked to comment whether the non-Bengali Muslim business groups had to quit Rangoon due to adverse situation posed by the war as viewed by some, he said that the situation was not like that.<sup>9</sup> There might be some situation for both good and bad in that context. But his family's decision of coming to East Bengal was emotionally changed with the strong national and religious feelings. "Pakistan is a Muslim country and our prime desire was to do business and serve the country. The then political leadership also gave a call to build up industries and develop businesses in the newly created Pakistan. In reply to a question whether he meant Mr.



At a gathering (from left) Y. A. Bawany, Nurul Huda, Abu Sayeed Chowdhury and Insurance personality Golam Maula

He was asked whether such a situation created any hindrances to business. He replied, "War, undoubtedly, created an unusual situation. In terms of business, those who were involved then in the supply of ammunition and other goods, had obviously heyday and those who were concerned for the supply of foodgrains, had faced disruptions as there were restrictions on the movement of commercial transports."<sup>8</sup> Asked to comment whether the non-Bengali Muslim business groups had to quit Rangoon due to adverse situation posed by the war as viewed by some, he said that the situation was not like that.<sup>9</sup> There might be some situation for both good and bad in that context. But his family's decision of coming to East Bengal was emotionally changed with the strong national and religious feelings. "Pakistan is a Muslim country and our prime desire was to do business and serve the country. The then political leadership also gave a call to build up industries and develop businesses in the newly created Pakistan. In reply to a question whether he meant Mr.

<sup>8</sup> This was made in order to stop food-staff supply to the Japanese troops whose advancement was feared.

<sup>9</sup> Ispahani group had shifted their business to Calcutta in the 1930s.

Jinnah, he said Mr. Jinnah was then the national leader of Pakistan. It was quite natural for him to give a call for development of the country.<sup>10</sup>

The British along with the Indian leadership thought that East Bengal would be crippled and economically backward. “We attached much significance to the fact that we were shifting to a Muslim country”, the 85 year-old Mr. Bawany said when asked why they had taken such a risky decision of coming to East Bengal at that time. Besides, Chittagong, Narayangonj and Dhaka are geographically adjacent to Rangoon in the region. We had no commercial connection with Karachi during the period before 1947 though we had some trade relations at that time with Bombay and Calcutta. “Many of the known businessmen of Chittagong were acquainted with us”. Citing examples, he named A. K. Khan’s family, especially his father-in-law Abdul Bari Choudhury’s family who had big business in Rangoon that was linked with, both historically and commercially for long, Chittagong and its port.



The leader of the US Trade and Investment Mission who visited the Chamber is addressing the members in 1968

Replying to a question when and how they decided to come to a backward place like East Bengal in terms of infrastructural facilities when the wealthy non-Bengali businessmen largely shifted to West Pakistan, Mr. Bawany said: “We spontaneously and independently took the decision of coming over here. And we were not alone. There were Adamjees and other business groups also. We had mutual discussions among ourselves and took the decision of coming to East Bengal. Accordingly we intimated our desire to the then Pakistani leaders, particularly the East Bengal

10 Mr. Jinnah, the then Governor General of Pakistan, visited East Bengal in 1948 and made a speech at the Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry, where he urged the Muslim business community to come forward in building the newly born Pakistan. Also see Jamil-uddin Ahmed (ed.), *Speeches and Writings of Mr. Jinnah*, Vol-2, Lahore, 1952.



government". In this regard he mentioned the names of the families of Adamjee<sup>11</sup>, Dada Bhai<sup>12</sup>, Tavanee<sup>13</sup>, and Sattar Ahmed<sup>14</sup> among others who are remarkable. He also mentioned that Abdus Sattar Abdul Aziz of the Karim Jute Mills Group settled in Dhaka. In this regard he said that business families like Abdul Gani Giani of Bawa Jute Mills<sup>15</sup>, Abdus Sattar Bara<sup>16</sup>, Mohammad Ali Rangoonwala,<sup>17</sup> Abdus Sattar of 'Mohajeer Soap Works' and others were among those who also came from the place of his ancestral home at Kathiwar, Jetpur and developed their business concerns in the Dhaka and Narayanganj regions. Replying to another question whether there was any preference officially for the 'Muhajirs' by the PIDC (Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation), Mr. Bawany said that there was no such preference as the official patronization was very much liberal at that time. After its creation, EPIDC started working solely for the industrial development of East Pakistan. There was a dearth of initiatives among the Bengali Muslims here for any big industrial venture during that period and most of them remained confined within small and middle scale business concerns. There was an exception in case of one or two persons like A.K. Khan of Chittagong, etc.<sup>18</sup> About the successful initiators of industrial ventures here in this region, he said that the textile sector was the first main big industrial move and there was no participation of the local Muslims in it as such. Europeans and 'Marawaris' were already in the jute sector here in the days before 1947.<sup>19</sup> After the partition of India, both the *Mohajeers* and local entrepreneurs came forward with investments in the sector. Though the European investment started declining after 1947, the *Marwaris* remained in the business. After the sixties of the last century, *Marwaris* businesses also started declining.<sup>20</sup> And the non-Bengali investors made their entry to a great extent. In reply to a question whether there was any discriminatory policy in industrialisation for which the locals could not move ahead, the elderly industrialist said that there was lack of initiatives to undertake commercial and industrial ventures locally here in East Pakistan. There was lack of capital and experience, too. The *Mohajeers*, on the other hand, taking the risk quickly, jumped to such ventures. Moreover, many of them had previous experiences of doing business elsewhere. In this regard he said that the then local administration sympathetically dealt with the problems of the *Mohajeers* coming from India after the partition.<sup>21</sup> After the creation of Pakistan, some non-Bengali

11 A.W. Adamjee, the founder of the Adamjee Group, had their food grain business, Rice and Match Factory in Rangoon. They shifted in the 1950's and established Adamjee Jute Mills in 1952 in Narayanganj (Adamjeenagar).

12 Trade name is *Dadajee Dada Bhai and Co.*, founded by Abdullah Bayet, who settled in Chittagong in 1949.

13 Arif Tavani migrated from Burma and founded Mirpur Ceramic Works Ltd. at Mirpur.

14 Originally from Kathiwar, India, they had their business at Bombay, Madras and in Rangoon. Migrated to Pakistan and established Karim Jute Mills, Dacca Jute Mills and Satter Match Works in the 1950s.

15 Founded 'VHA Ghani' at Narayanganj in the 1950s.

16 Abdus Sattar Bara founded the 'Colour Chemical Company' in Dhaka. Earlier, he had his business in Calcutta.

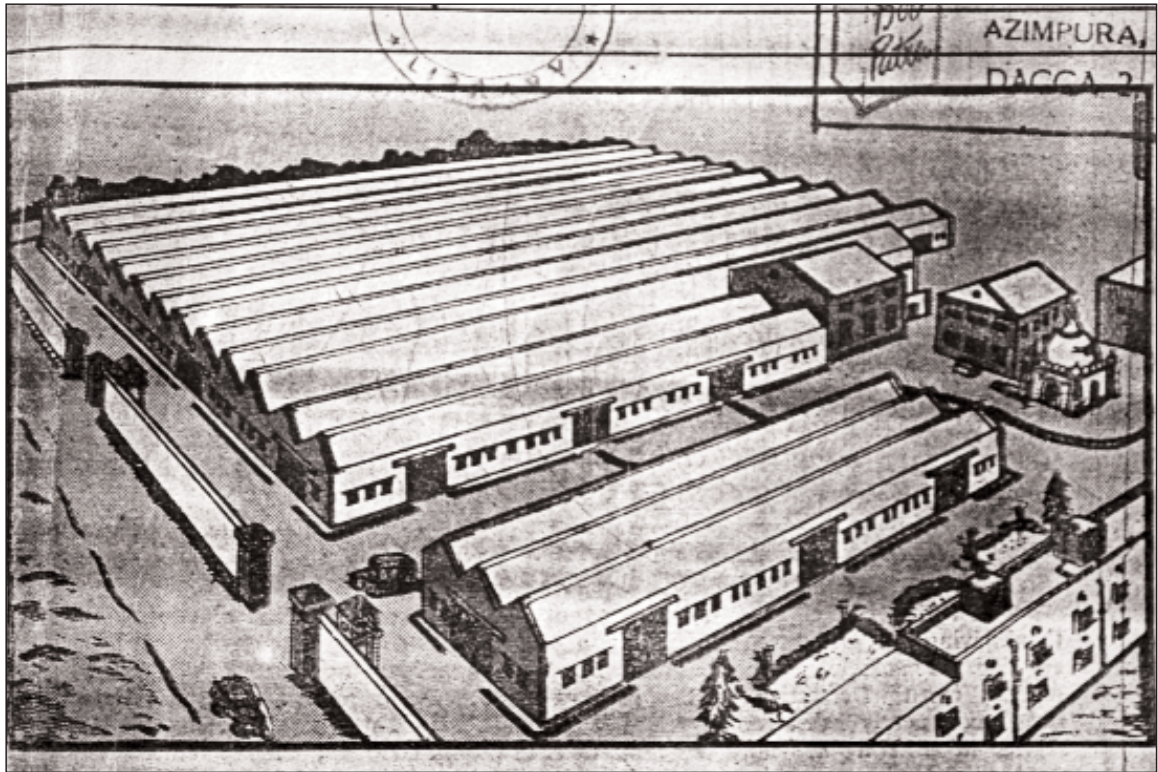
17 Mohammad Ali Rangoonwala was son of the famous businessman V. M. Ghani; they established the National Bank of Pakistan and were promoter of Insurance Company.

18 Apart from A. K. Khan, more Bengalis were in business with reputation.

19 Among others, Chand Jute Trading Co. (Estd. 1908), Bangshilal Madenlal, Chand Lal Kishen Lal (1932) Goalram Krishen, East Bengal Jute Bailing, etc. were mentionable in Jute business before 1947.

20 The Enemy Property Act, 1965 was enacted in 1965, and the property and business houses of the Marwaris went under the Govt. control, or they sold it out.

21 After partition in 1947, S. Rahmatullah, ICS, was the first Collector and District Magistrate of Dhaka, who hailed from Bihar. Aziz Ahmed, ICS, also Urdu Speaking, was the Chief Secretary of East Bengal, was equally sympathetic to the displaced non-Bengalis and came forward to rehabilitate them. Besides Golam Ahmed Madani, ICS, of Uttar Pradesh also work out some rehabilitation plan i.e. Mohammedpur and Mirpur colonies for the Mohajeers.



Model of Bawani Jute Mills

business groups arranged the money with which the salary of the government employees was made in the initial period. The Adamjee was the first to make such arrangement.<sup>22</sup>

Referring to the PIDC, Mr. Bawany said that it was set up in 1952.<sup>23</sup> Its first chairman was Golam Faruq, who later on became Governor of East Pakistan.<sup>24</sup> About the role of PIDC, he said that its purpose was good but it could not come out of the bureaucratic tangle. PIDC came with many offers.<sup>25</sup> In the industrial sector, out of 6,000 looms, the Adamjee got 3,000 looms. East Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation (EPIDC) was created specially for the development of East

22 For details, see ANM Hafizullah, *Dhushar Smriti*, Dhaka, 2003.

23 PIDC started its functioning from 12 January 1952. By 1955, the total expenditure of approx. Rs. 560 millions of which PIDC's share was about Rs. 260 millions, private capital Rs. 150 millions, the World Bank loan Rs. 50 millions and foreign aid under the Foreign Operations Administration of the United States, the Colombo Plan and the United Nations' agencies about Rs. 70 million. See *Pakistan, 1954-55*, Pakistan Publications, Karachi, 1956, pp. 96-97.

24 Ghulam Faruque was from Peshwar district and entered Govt. service in 1921. After partition, he held the position of secretary, Ministry of Industries, Govt. of Pakistan, 1948-49; Chairman, Pakistan Jute Board and Cotton Board, 1949-52; Chairman, PIDC in 1952 and became the Governor of East Pakistan in 1962. As per Major S.G. Jhilani, he had a good relation with non-Bengali entrepreneurs like Adamjee, Ispahani, etc. See Major (Retd.) S. G. Jhilani, *Bangabhabaner panero Governors* translated by Mustafa Doulat (Soukhin Prakashani, 1995) p. 35.

25 By January 1958, PIDC invested 178 million of rupees in Public Limited Companies while 1189.80 million was invested in different projects of Pakistan. For details, See W. N. Peach, M. Uzair and G. W. Rucher: *Basic Data of the Economy of Pakistan* (Oxford University Press, 1954) pp. 96-97.

Pakistan, as there were no large mills and factories here.<sup>26</sup> For long East Pakistan remained rather the source of raw materials for other regions. There were resources, but no industries developed here. When his attention was drawn to the remark made by Professor Nafis Ahmed in his book that East Bengal 'served as the hinterland for building up the industries, wealth and prosperity of Calcutta', Mr. Bawany said that Professor Nafis made the remark for such reasons very rightly as modern industries did not grow in East Bengal before 1947. President Ayub Khan had 'keen interest' in creating the EPIDC. He realised that the disparity if continued between the two wings, it would fuel further the discontent in



A view of the DCCI Executive Committee in 1968

East Bengal. About the beneficiaries of the EPIDC, he said that the local people were certainly the beneficiaries. In this regard he mentioned the name of the governor of the State Bank of Pakistan Abdur Racheed<sup>27</sup> and Nurul Islam, who were from East Bengal and played significant role in this regard. Particularly the scheme of providing loan was 'simple and industry-friendly'. About a question on industrial relations in the fifties and the sixties, he said in the fifties, the trade unions started to grow. The trade unions in the textile mills were recognised since the British days.<sup>28</sup> The mills and factories run in accordance with the existing labour laws of the country. But many of those laws required amendment as they were of the old British period.<sup>29</sup> The complicated labour disputes were usually resolved through either bilateral or tri-lateral negotiations and, if not, finally with the help of the labour court. Asked about reasons of the '1954 violence in Adamjee' – whether it was political or something else- he said 'no'. It was not political but a 'circumstantial one'. There might be exaggeration on the part of someone. When the Adamjees started mills there were no skilled manpower in this country. As a result, experienced Biharis from Calcutta were employed at the Mill No-1 and at Mill No-2, half of the workforce was taken from Biharis and the rest were local. The problem first started here. No owner wanted to see violence in his industrial concern. No businessman or industrialist would be so foolish as to go for any political concession to anyone at the cost of his own assets.

Besides the Adamjees, Bawanys and Ispahanis were not from West Pakistan. They came from Rangoon and India to East Pakistan for doing business. Replying to a question to what extent the

26 EPIDC was established in 1962. The corporation was entrusted with the responsibility of promoting and facilitating the industrialization of the province.

27 Abdur Racheed hailed from Dhaka District and he was the first Bengali Governor of State Bank of Pakistan.

28 For numbers of trade unions, See aappendix of this book.

29 Among these Laws, Factories Act, Shops and Establishment Acts were amended to cope with the situation.



labour laws of this country were helpful for industrialization, he said that those were enacted for the balanced growth of industries and welfare of all involved in it. He elaborated that it was both industry-friendly and worker-friendly. What is important is its proper application and misuse. About his own impression about the attitude of non-Bengali Biharis who came to East Bengal, Mr. Bawany said that they were usually hot tempered; earlier they too were neglected over there, so they lacked tolerance. Whether he faced any competition ever here, he said: 'No, as such, nothing. About the growing capitalists among the Bengalis, he named A.K. Khan of Chittagong,<sup>30</sup> Gul Bakhs Bhuiyan<sup>31</sup>, Fakir Chand<sup>32</sup>, Afeel Group<sup>33</sup>, Ashraf Group<sup>34</sup>, Bhandari,<sup>35</sup> Islam Group,<sup>36</sup> Anwar Group<sup>37</sup> and Beximco are doing well among others that in Dhaka. Regarding cooperation for doing business here, Mr. Bawany said: 'Fazlur Rahman, once commerce minister, extended all cooperation to us.<sup>38</sup> He encouraged me to go for import business. His son Salman F. Rahman once expressed his keen interest to me to learn business. We had excellent relations at family level. We worked together at the DCCI with Nurul Huda of this family.<sup>39</sup> Nurul Huda, (father of former minister Nazmul Huda), succeeded me as DCCI president for the next term'. Talking about his role as DCCI president in 1961-62, Mr. Bawany said, 'DCCI tried to grow as a responsible organisation during that time. We were active and assertive for the country's smooth trade and for country's industrial policy. Sakhwat Hossain, previous president of DCCI, was a member of the committee. Draft Rules and Regulation of the DCCI were framed then. The remarkable development during my term was the expansion of bilateral trade with socialist countries like Russia following a delegation's tour'. "You, too, were president of the Narayanganj Chamber of Commerce and Industry.<sup>40</sup> Tell us about your role there in this regard." In reply to such a question he said, "I have had relations with that chamber since the fifties. I was president of the Narayanganj Chamber of

30 A.K. Khan was the Minister for Industry and Power from 1958 to 1962. He entered into the business before 1947. His father-in-law, Abdul Bari Chudhury, had founded 'Bengal-Burma Steam Navigation Co. in Rangoon. A K. Khan founded Chittagong Textile Mills, Eastern Mercantile Bank and Pakistan Steam Navigation Co. during the Pakistan era.

31 Gul Bhksh Bhuiyan was born at Rupgonj, Dhaka in 1913. He started foodgrain business in 1943. In the 1950s he started yarn business at Narayanganj. Established Gausia Jute Mills (1965) and Muslin Cotton Mills Ltd (1968).

32 Fakir Chand was born in 1903. His father Alijan Bepari was a trader at Rahmatganj. Established a Bidi Factory at Islampur in 1935. He started Amardesh and Fakir Chand Bidi Factory in 1945 and founded Chand Textile Mills (1960), Chand Textile Mills Ltd. (1965), Alijan Jute Mills (1965) Dacca Automatic Bricks (1967), etc.

33 Afeel Group belongs to Afiluddin Co. owns 'Afiluddin Brothers', 'Afeel Jute Mills', Doulatpur Jute Press, Chalna Navigation, E. B. Jute Industries, etc.

34 Ashraf Group belongs to Mr. Ashraf Uddin, Hajee Abdul Wohab and Hajee Abdus Sabur. They started Ashraf Textile Mills Ltd. at Monnu Nagar, Tongi in the 1960s.

35 Bhandari Group belongs to Habibur Rahman and Mujibur Rahman Bhandari of Bogra.

36 Islam Group belongs to Islam Brothers and Co. i.e. Nazrul Islam, Zahirul Islam, Wajedul Islam, Azharul Islam and other partners. They owned 14 companies before the rearrangement of their ownership.

37 Anwar Group belongs to Alhaj Anwar Hossain, who presently owns 13 business establishments.

38 Fazlur Rahman was born at Shinepukur, Dhaka. He was Revenue Minister in 1946. After partition, Fazlur Rahman became the Education, Commerce and Rehabilitation Minister (1948-51) in the Liaquat Ali Khan Cabinet; Commerce, Education and Law Minister (1951-1953) in the Nazimuddin Cabinet and Commerce, Finance, Law Minister in the I.I. Chundrigarh Cabinet.

39 Nurul Huda was born in a respectable Muslim family of Shinepukur, Dhaka and was cousin of Fazlur Rahman. Mr. Huda was the president of DCCI in 1962.

40 Narayanganj Chamber of Commerce was established in 1904 and Mr. Bawany was its president in 1965. He was representing Aesons Limited, a concern of Bawany Group.



Commerce and Industries in 1965. Before me, M. Elahi of Amin Jute Bailing Co. was president and A.A Khalon of Pakbay Company Ltd. Dhaka served as president. I tried my best to protect the interest of the business people. Two severe cyclones swept over the country during that period. Beside, the Indo-Pak war broke out on 6 September 1965. The chamber and the businessmen involved with it then donated about Rs. 50 lakh. In the industrial sector, the rising trend in production was well maintained during 1964-65. The index of industrial production, which had risen by 13.6 per cent to 153.2 in 1963-64, was provisionally estimated to have gone up to 164.5. Almost all the sectors were good; especially tea, vegetable oil, paperboard and steel re-rolling, etc. were comparatively in better position’.

About the export trade, Mr. Bawany said that export was also good, and it was possible to achieve more than the previous targets. The second five-year plan was just then concluded. And about the achievement of the targets, he said that the second five-year plan was successfully implemented during that period. So far I can recall, the GNP increased to 28 per cent exceeding the target fixed at 24-25 per cent. Regarding the government’s trade policy, he said that it was a liberal trade policy where monetary and fiscal relaxation were ensured; import, too, was a liberal one. The list of the exportable items under the export bonus scheme was enlarged. The export credit guarantee scheme was extended. Asked about the role of EPIDC in the sixties, he said, ‘The EPIDC has played an important role in East Pakistan since its inception. So far, it did a commendable job by combining public and private capital to promote industrial growth in East Pakistan’. About the situation regarding employer-labour relation, Mr. Bawany said: ‘I mentioned earlier in this regard. In the fifties, the labour politics was communist-influenced to a great extent.<sup>41</sup> But in the sixties, one national perception was gradually molded. In the second half of 1964, management-labour relations were far from happy. Frequent strikes in our major industries resulted in tremendous losses in production and workers, earning. A similar situation prevailed in the textile industry. All this in our view stemmed for inter-union rivalry’.<sup>42</sup>

In reply to a question whether the disputes were solved with the help of labour laws, he said that so far he could recall, the labour laws were amended. At least six new labour laws were passed by the provincial legislature by 1965.<sup>43</sup>

Replying to another question on the condition of jute trading, Mr. Bawany said jute was then called the ‘golden fiber’ not only because of its value but also because of its gold earning capacity. It was the biggest single foreign exchange earner for Pakistan and constituted the backbone of the country’s economy. At that time raw jute accounted for 40 per cent of total export and jute manufactures contributed another 15 per cent. Thus the prosperity of East Pakistan depended to a large extent on this fiber. Almost everybody in E. P. was directly or indirectly concerned with ups and downs of the sector.<sup>44</sup>

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41 For details of labour politics and labour movement, see Kamruddin Ahmad, *Labour Movement in East Pakistan*, Dhaka, 1969.

42 For stoppage of work in East Bengal.

43 These are: The Factories Act, 1934 (Amended), The Workmen’s Compensation Act, 1923 (Amended). The Payment of Wages Act, 1936; The Industrial Relations Ordinance, 1969, The East Pakistan Factories Act, 1965, The Industrial and Commercial Employment (Standing Orders) Ordinance, 1960, etc.

44 As chamber president, Mr. Bawany’s outlook towards jute policy was clearly mentioned in his presidential speech made on 3 January 1966. See Annual Report, Narayanganj Chamber of Commerce, pp. 5-14.

The Jute mill industry suffered a great set back in 1964-65 due to protracted strikes in the mills, reduced production. Asked whether there were any other problems, he replied that there were some problems usually common in the industrial sector. The industries continued to be handicapped due to lack of foreign exchange required for the purpose of importing machinery and for balancing and modernisation, etc. At that time suddenly electricity rate was increased. Instead of giving relief to the industries, the East Pakistan WAPDA had increased power rates by 38 per cent from 8 paisa to 11.37 Paisa and then further increased to 12.62 Paisa. Various representations were made to the then WAPDA pointing out the importance of cheap electricity for industrial development but it was in vain till 1965. Titas Gas, perhaps, reduced the rate to this effect. About the ports used for exporting, Chittagong Port was the lifeblood of exporting in the fifties. In the sixties, Chalna Port started getting importance particularly for export of jute. According to him, 63% of Pakistan's largest foreign exchange earner, jute was exported through the Chalna Port that was a preferred port of the jute shippers.

Asked to comment whether there was any other remarkable commercial development, he said, "Yes, there was. And it was in the field of telephone. Direct dialing between Dhaka-Narayanganj and Khulna was introduced. PIA also played a good role in introducing the inter-wing services. The number of daily flights was increased from 8 to 11-12."

Replying to a question about commercial importance of Dhaka, Mr. Bawany said many things were heard about the economic condition of East Pakistan even before the partition. But after the partition, the business groups came from India and Rangoon along with the business groups from West Pakistan amply improved the economic importance of this place. Dhaka was a provincial capital at that time. Thereafter Dhaka and its surrounding areas and Narayanganj started to grow as strong commercial and industrial centres.

Replying to another question whether there was any congenial industrial policy, he said there was no industrial policy as such when investment started coming in from abroad. In the first week of December 1947, the first Pakistan Industrial Conference was held.<sup>45</sup> Its aims and objectives, broadly, were to improve the standard of living of the people by harnessing the natural resources, providing them with gainful and legitimate employment and assuring freedom from want, equality of opportunity, dignity of labour and equitable distribution of wealth. PIDC came much later. And those who came first took the risk spontaneously.

In reply to a question whether there was any better prospect for them, he said that those who invested, coming from outside, had experiences in business. They had the belief that there would be better prospect. About the commercial importance of Narayanganj in the fifties and sixties, he observed that Narayanganj was one of the early trading centres. Before 1947, business of jute and textile developed here. Many foreign companies did business in Narayanganj.<sup>46</sup> Regarding a question who came forward in establishing business in Narayanganj after 1947, Mr. Bawany said that after the partition the Bawany Group along with Adamjee, Ispahani, Dawood and many others came here and started business in jute and other commodities. R.P. Saha, among the Bengalis, bought the jute business of prominent English trader, George Anderson.

45 For details, see Dr. A.M. Malik, *Labour Problems and Policy in Pakistan*, (Pakistan Labour Publications, 1954) also see Dr. Ali Raza, *The Industrial Relations System of Pakistan*, Bureau of Labour Publication, 1963.

46 Among the foreign companies Ralli Brothers, David Company, R. Sim Co., Bard Co, Lendale and Clarke, James Finley, M. Sharkies & sons, George Enderson & Co, etc. were famous for their volume of business.

Replying to another question, what are the businesses developed at Narayanganj during this time, he said that businesses like jute bailing<sup>47</sup>, jute broker<sup>48</sup>, cotton mill, hosiery and textile businesses developed. Who became prominent in business in Narayanganj in the period between 1947 and 1970, in reply to such a question Mr. Bawany said that the numbers were many. Among them were Ispahani, Rally Brothers, Tolaram, Lazarous, Gajraj, Pannalal, R. Sim & C., Sattar & Company, Kafiluddin, Kumudini, Crescent Jute, etc. were important to mention. Even a good number of Bengali businessmen with small capital came in and contributed to the growth of business. Asked, as there were many *Marwari* businessmen at Narayanganj, whether they had any conflict with the non-Bengali Muslims in business, he stated that there could be competition, but as such, there was no enmity in business. After 1947, the investors who came later had one kind of commercial competition with the *Marwaris*. After, 1965 Indo-Pak war, there occurred a change in industrial policy. With the enactment of the Enemy Property Act, the properties belonging to the Hindu Marwaris were declared ‘enemy property’.<sup>49</sup> As a result, all the business concerns along with properties came under the Enemy Property Management Board. That might have paved some temporary facilities to the Muslim businessmen.

- Q: We are turning to a different chapter now. How do you assess Nawab Sir Salimullah?
- A: He was a ‘people’s leader’ of Dhaka in a true sense of the term. He used to give preferences to the cause of the Muslims.
- Q: About A.K. Fazlul Huq?
- A: He was too a ‘people’s leader’ of East Bengal. Bengali people can really be proud of him as he himself pioneered the cause of Bengali nationalism.
- Q: How do you see the contribution of H.S. Suhrawardy?
- A: He was a dreamer of democracy and worked to protect interests of the Bengalis and the non-Bengalis both. He believed in equality for all in industrial policy.
- Q: How about Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman?
- A: He was truly a patriot and his mission in life was to protect interest of Bengalis and their progress besides establishing democracy. He was a great leader of his time.
- Q: Khawaja Nazimuddin?
- A: He was a ‘gentleman in politics’ for which he had to pay sometime. He had his own perception about language and he was criticised as it was against people’s will. We were very close to many of the Khawaja family due to our business relations. Many of them also worked in our establishments.

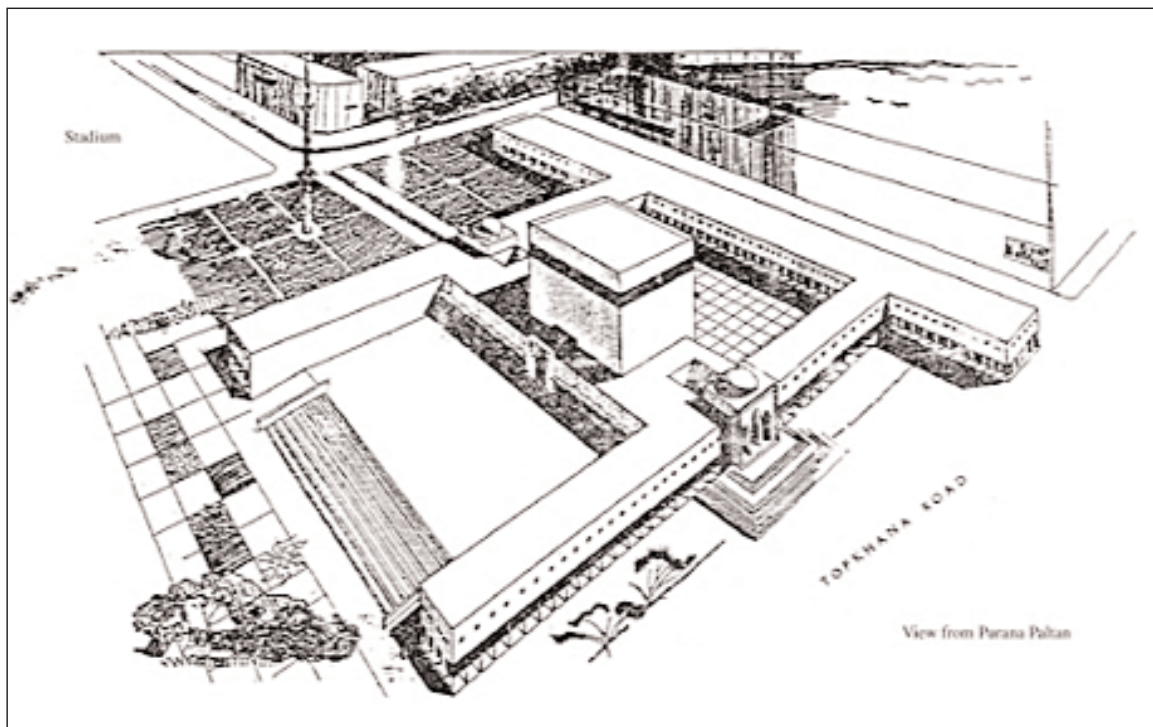
Regarding a question about what happened to his business after the nationalisation policy in 1972, he replied that it was known to all. Along with others, his business establishments were also nationalised. That policy was applicable for the citizens of Pakistan only. Most of their shareholders were foreign citizens. So it was not proper to nationalise those shares. Replying to the question whether he got back those properties, he said, “We had to resort to the legal battle. Still there are some issues yet to be settled by the court of law. Despite all these, our business has survived in Bangladesh till now. The success story of our family business for its being involved with the history of East Bengal is a significant chapter.” Replying to another question how he saw

47 For Jute Balers in Narayanganj in the 1960s, see S. N. H. Rizvi *Dacca District Gazetteer*, 1969, p. 204.

48 For Jute Brokers, see Jute, (ed.), Sirajul Islam Chowdhury, 1958.

49 For details, see Sakuntala Sen, *Inside Pakistan* (Calcutta, Compass Publication, 1964); and Amitava Gupta, *Purva Pakistan*, (Calcutta, 1969. also see Muhammad Ghulam Kabir, *Minority Politics in Bangladesh*, Dacca, 1980).

the relationship between business and politics, Mr. Bawany said that there should be no direct link between the two. But the reality was that businessmen, many a time, took advantage from the politicians in power and the politicians in power also sought help, in return, from the businessmen. Asked about his feeling regarding the golden jubilee anniversary of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Mr. Bawany said: “I feel delighted to see the 50th anniversary of the Dhaka Chamber in my lifetime. I wish the Dhaka Chamber to complete its thousand years.” And about his impression about the people of this country, he said; “They are excellent people. I have been with them since 1948-49. They are laborious too, and have been striving hard to change their fortune. The new generations are doing well in business. Many of them have stepped into the business. I am happy to say now that they have already established themselves as dignified businessmen. The business relations exist here with a touch of love, for which I frequently come over here as Dhaka attracts me even at this 85 years of my age.” About his comment on writing the ‘Commercial History of Dhaka’, he remarked, “Undoubtedly it’s a noble venture. I had the opportunity to work as the third president of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry and later on of the Narayanganj Chamber of Commerce and Industry in the sixties of the last century. So, I am proud of the efforts now being made for publishing ‘Commercial History of Dhaka’. I congratulate all involved. Fortunately it is my pleasure to see that this publication is going to be made during the presidentship of Mr. Hossain Khaled, a dynamic young business leader of this time. I also recall his father Anwar’s leadership, who is also a trusted friend of mine and contributed a lot to the development of DCCI. I sincerely hope that DCCI will go a long way under his able leadership”.



Model of Baitul Mukarram Mosque which was built by the Bawani Group



## 2

**Choudhury Tanbir Ahmed Siddiky**

Choudhury Tanbir Ahmed Siddiky was born in an aristocrat family of Dhaka district.<sup>1</sup> According to available information his 17th generation has been living here in Dhaka. After completing his studies, he started his career as a lawyer in 1964 and later became involved in business. He was one of the directors of the then National Bank of Pakistan in 1967-70. He was President of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry in 1976-78. He was also President of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce in 1979. Later he joined the then government as Minister for Commerce. He was also the Member of Parliament from one of the Dhaka constituencies. Apart from his political career, he is now Chairman of a private company, 'Baliadi Siddiky of Commerce and Industries'.

On the eve of compiling the 'Commercial History of Dhaka', Choudhury Tanbir Ahmed Siddiky was interviewed as one of the business leaders of Dhaka. Following are some excerpts of the interview:

Replying to a question how he looks at Dhaka's business tradition given the involvement of his family with the trade for several generations, Mr. Siddiky said, 'Dhaka's development has been interlinked with the ups and downs in trade here. Trade and commerce of Dhaka withstood all and continued to move ahead despite adverse situations.'<sup>2</sup> 'Our achievement and development always depended on trade or, as matter of fact, on economic issues. I believe the prosperity of a nation is interlinked with the prosperity of trade and industry. From that point of view, Dhaka's trade and industry played a significant role'. In this regard he expressed his satisfaction at the DCCI's move for publication of a book like *Commercial History of Dhaka*, which he said is the demand of the day now.



Choudhury Tanbir Ahmed Siddiky

In reply to a question on the DCCI's role in commerce and industry in the country, he said, 'the business community speaks through their platform or organisation and the DCCI always played its role of providing that platform'. Talking about the period when he held the top post of DCCI, Mr. Siddiky said during his tenure there were number of suggestions and recommendations made on behalf of the Chamber for inclusion in the annual budget for the 1977-78 fiscal year. Talking specifically about the suggestions and recommendations put forward to the government from the Chamber, he mentioned the following: 1. Exemption of customs duties on the import of raw materials by the industrial importers under Wage Earners' Scheme should be continued for the sake of industrial growth, 2. Various concessions for private limited companies, and 3. The rationalisation of the wealth tax structure and also other aspects to this effect.

1 Choudhury Tanbir Ahmed comes from a well-known Zamindar family of Baliadi, Dhaka. His father Khanbahadur Labiuddin Ahmed Siddiky was a famous businessman, who had their business in Dhaka. The famous 'Baliadi House' belongs to this family. They have been associated with Zamindary and businesses and possess an office in Dilkhusa area of Dhaka, the business mirth of the city.

2 Dhaka lost her status as capitalship in 1704 and 1911 respectively. In spite of that Dhaka did not lose her tradition as a business centre, though many of the Bengal city had been lost her glories as soon as her political status as capital was seiged.



The leader of the USA Trade and Investment Mission who visited the Chamber are seen along the DCCI members in 1968

Talking about the Chamber's role in import policy during his term, he said that he and others of the Chamber tried their best to influence the government for an import policy that was favorable for the businessmen's interest. 'We had succeeded to a great extent', he remarked adding that the efforts were made for expanding country's trade and industry. Replying to the question on what issues they stressed upon most, he said that the DCCI had then pressed for issues like import of oil seeds, import under commercial license, import under Wage Earners' Scheme, import of second-hand cloth under W.E.S., import under O.G.L. Dry Cell Battery, warehouse problem and the like, and placed recommendations in this regard to the government. Asked to elaborate warehouse problem, he said that there had been no sufficient storage facility then for the goods coming from India by land route. As a result, many of the imported goods were damaged at Benapole land port. Specific proposals were made to the government in this regard so that effective steps were taken for warehouse there.<sup>3</sup>

Turning to the export of manpower that, in fact, started from that period of time, Mr. Siddiky said, it was noticed that a chaotic situation prevailed in the manpower business, and to streamline the manpower business an annual target of manpower export was set. Talking about getting passport for manpower export, he said that the process was cumbersome and complicated and to remove those problems, a demand was made to the government on behalf of the traders for simplifying the process. On the other hand, for increasing skill of the workers, short technical training and job training courses were suggested.

Asked whether the manpower export sector had ever appeared as a promising one, he said there had been a lot of demands of manpower, both skilled and unskilled, in the Middle Eastern

3 For details, see Annual Report of DCCI for the year 1979.



Mr. Tanvir Ahmed Siddiky, President DCCI discussing with a Chinese Business Team

countries. Countries like India, Sri Lanka and the Philippines were ahead in sending their manpower over there. Bangladesh was lagging behind in that respect. Later it proved how prosperous it was in earning foreign exchange by exporting manpower.

Regarding nationalised industries, he said, 'following nationalisation of the mills and factories after the liberation war widespread corruption and inefficiency cropped up at almost all levels dragging down the industrial units to losing concerns. The lofty ideals of achieving the goals of more profit-making, socialism and benefits for the state remained a far cry for the faulty maintenance and poor management under the nationalisation programme done in a hurry.' Whether they had any recommendation about the nationalised industries from the Chamber, he said, 'we suggested for denationalisation of the nationalised enterprises with a view to making them profit earning units.' Some specific recommendations were. "The divisions of the country's cotton textile and jute mills in two distinct managements – (a) the abandoned mills under the public sector, and (b) the other in the private sector of the Bengali owners."

In reply to a question how they used to exert influence on the government and whether they succeeded, Mr. Siddiky said that by sending delegations from the Chamber to the government circles concerned, the problems or issues were explained along with the suggestions for solutions. Often written recommendations were placed on behalf of the Chamber. Sometimes depending on the situation, through press conferences, the importance and significance of the issues was explained. Through all these processes they, as Chamber leaders, sincerely tried to promote and protect the interest of the business community. He felt that the authorities concerned had also duly considered those issues raised by them.





A Meeting with the Overseas Development Corporation

About the membership of the DCCI, he said that the number of members started to increase with the coming of new generation to the business more and more.<sup>4</sup> The DCCI runs with the help of several committees formed with the members such as the Building Sub-Committee, Establishment Sub-Committee, Industries Sub-Committee, Finance Sub-Committee, Export-Import Sub-Committee, Taxation and Revenue Sub-Committee, etc. He said that the main task of the Chamber is to help the industrialists and businessmen to run their enterprises smoothly and profitably as well as for their expansion and further development. Besides some social responsibilities like facing natural calamities at the national level, the Chamber also discharged those tasks.

Mr. Siddiky mentioned various economic activities of the Chamber like holding fair at Cox's Bazar and that was a very successful one. Efforts were there by the Chamber to make import policy 'business-friendly'. They also worked to resolve problems facing the cotton and textile industries of the country. Talking about jute, he said, 'though jute was once a cash crop in Bangladesh, its position in the international market was changed due to the coming of synthetic fiber as a substitute of jute. The jute sector as a whole turned worst following total mismanagement, inefficiency and corruption following nationalisation of all the industrial and commercial enterprises. By projecting comparative pictures, we showed how the industries incurred loss up to 36 per cent by then in 1976.'

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4 For a list of the members of the DCCI, see Member Directory, New Millennium issue.



## 3

**Anwar Hossain**

'Dhaka has got a long business tradition of her own. Dhaka had inhabitation even before the Mughals. There were trade and commerce here, too, though in a small scale,' observed Mr. Anwar Hossain who comes of a traditional business family of old Dhaka and is the chairman of Anwar Group of Industries. In an interview, a soft-spoken and a man of amiable nature, Mr. Hossain said about his ancestral home at famous Amligola and inheritance of traditional family business. He explained the historical and commercial significance as well during the lengthy interview taken on the eve of publishing Dhaka's Commercial History and celebrating the golden jubilee anniversary of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI). Mr. Hossain's forefather Lat Mia was a businessman in Dhaka during the British period. Since his forefathers time, they have been in business. It is now more than 175 years they are in business. At that time the business was not that extended. His grandfather after having religious studies became an *Imam* of a mosque at Islampur though business was the main source of income of the family.

The businessmen of Dhaka then used to live on the side of the Buriganga River. Some of them were weavers while others were blacksmiths and potters. During my grandfather's days, the Nawabs of Dhaka were advanced in business. They were in the trade of hides and skins<sup>1</sup> and salt.<sup>2</sup> The French traders were concentrated at Farashganj. The English unlike others rather centered their business at the nearby Tejgaon areas and later came to the riverside. The Armenians used to do business first with the *Nawabs* and later they got their own. Garments for the European traders living in Dhaka and the number of troops after the 'Sepoy Mutiny' increased. They were in need of buttons. But there was no factory for comb production in Dhaka. "Though my grandfather first started business, later he was known as money lender and that is why he was called a *Mahajan*.<sup>3</sup>



Anwar Hossain

My grandfather either looked after a number of factories or invested money for those. Our business continued uninterrupted since then," Hossain added. Perhaps, he was dreaming to be one of the big traders like the English. 'Chawk was the main trading centre of Dhaka at that time,' Mr. Anwar added. Earlier there was a fort there before the Mughals came.

1 Hides and Skin is an old business of Dhaka. In 1904, *The Bengal Times* (published from Dacca) carried an article 'Noting Like Leather' where the mention of hides was made as under:

One of this division's (Dacca) Chief Industries and a remunerative source of income is that of hides. This industry has so long been established in this province that its origin is lost in obscurity. 'Chamers' claim as their common ancestor, one Rui Das, or Luidas or Ravi Das reported to have lived in the fourteenth century.  
-*The Bengal Times*. May 21, 1904

2 Dhaka's Nawab had their salt business with the Company's servants. Richard Barwell, when he was the Chief of Dacca, made a fortune in salt transitions. Robert Lindsay, when was in Dacca in 1776 as a very junior servant of the Company a few years later, also speculated largely in salt business in his private capacity. He writes:

Among the numerous articles of commerce carried on in the interior of the Dacca district salt is not the least considerable.

See *Anecdotes of an Indian Life* by Robert Lindsay in *Oriental Miscellanies*, 1840.

3 A. L. Clay, in his *History and Statistics of the Dacca Division*, 1868, termed the word *Mahajan* as 'Capitalist', see p. 212.



Logo of Anwar Group

that pottery, perhaps, is the most ancient industry of Dhaka. Then came the *Aratdari* or stock business of paddy and rice, followed by the businesses of kerosene and salt, and later of hides and skin. All these are considered as old businesses. His grand father once used to be a contractor. 'My grandfather, presumably, used to work at the time when new construction of buildings started here in a big way,' he explained. There were no architects, so those who knew the work had great demand. "My grandfather's business flourished in producing combs made of horns. At that time my grandfather used to bring the raw materials from Madras.<sup>5</sup> It took one and half months to bring goods from Madras by boat. As *Mahajan*, my grandfather provided investment for this sector."

One who had wholesale shop or business at Chawkbazar was then also called '*Bepari*' and that mattered in society so far status is concerned. About the business of those old days, Mr. Anwar said that earlier business was based mostly on cottage industry. Recalling from what he heard from the elders, he said that goods used to come to the *Ghat* of Dhaka (stations on the riverside) by boats from Mymensing, Jamalpur, Barisal and Sirajganj. Besides Manikganj, Chandpur and Mirkadim<sup>6</sup> were also famous for business spots. *Gayna*-type boat used to ply from nearby places and big boats using sails used to carry goods to Dhaka from faraway places. Initially *Sahas*, *Basaks* and *Ghoses* were dominant in Dhaka's business. Later Muslims started coming in business at a small scale. Talking about 'social control' in Dhaka, he said the control in under the grip of the Nawabs. There was *Sardar* for each *Mahalla* in the city and the *Sardars* used to run the mahallas through the *Panchayet* system.<sup>7</sup> The *Panchayet* consisted of 22 or 12 members and the sardar was called as *Mir-i-Malla*. 'Basically we are businessmen and our grandfather's instruction was not to get involved in any social administration other than our own business activities. There might be tilt in resolving social conflicts for which neither my father nor anyone else of the family inclined to

A market grew around the fort and developed as a wholesale market place. Maulavibazar, still known as one of the business hubs in Dhaka, established after the name of Maulavi Abdul Ali.<sup>4</sup> The area of 'Chawk' market was square in size for which it has been named Chawkbazar. In reply to a question on how their business connection with Chawkbazar developed, he said that his grandfather bought a shop in Maulavibazar which belonged to the *Kundus*, Zamindar of Bhaggyakul. The holding number of shops now is 207 and it is 175 years old and in possession of the other inheritors now. Mr. Hossain considers

4 Moulavi Abdul Ali (1786-1866) was a *zaminder* during nineteenth century Dhaka. He was originally from 'Nayabari' under Dohar Thana. He set up a Bazar at *Mukim katra*, which is now known as '*Moulavi Bazar*'. In Dhaka, there was a popular saying:

† eZvi gta kḥv Kvj x  
Avi gvbḥḥi gta Ave'j Avj x

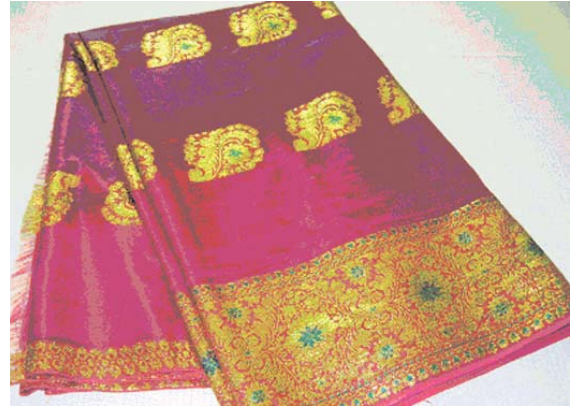
5 See Report on the Button industry in Bengal, 1940, p. 7.

6 For 'Ghats of Dhaka' see Chapter 5 of this book.

7 For details, see K. M. Azam, *The Panchayat System of Dacca*, Dacca, 1912.

become *sardar* despite several opportunities. Though, later my elder brother Nazir Hossain<sup>8</sup> became a Union Board president in the fifties and the sixties, founded Azad Welfare Club and became a ward commissioner. I also became a Member of Parliament.<sup>9</sup>

About inheritance of the business, he said ‘we proceeded with the businesses that we inherited. My father, Rahim Bakhs, became the owner of huge wealth with the businesses left behind by my grandfather. He, too, like my grandfather was known as *Mahajan*. What is meant by an ‘industrialist’ now was meant by a *Mahajan* then. About the condition of Dhaka-centered trade and commerce, Mr. Hossain said, before the sixties, the production was mostly cottage based. *Bishan Shilpa Samity* was formed at Amligola during his father’s time in 1939. This was mentioned in the Report of Industry Department of the united Bengal.<sup>10</sup> ‘My father,



Mala Saree

Rahim Buksh, was one of the pioneers’. The office of the samity was located at a Jagannath Saha Road house from the forties till it was shifted to a new address. About the purpose of forming such a *Samity* or association, he said that the businessmen and the artisans then were common people and they were not aware of the government facilities and official formalities as well in this regard. The purpose of forming the *Samity* was to aid people with information and advice besides credit for import and export in the business. Often some foreign buyers used to come here to buy commodities they required to import to their countries. In the thirties and the forties, four to five persons were well established in my area, he said. And they all had the title of *Mahajans*. They were Aftabuddin Mahajan, Mohiuddin Mahajan, Gafur Mahajan and my father, Rahim Buksh, who was known as Rahim Mahajan. Their inheritors later became owners of more big businesses. Sirco Soap Co. and Khan Brothers are the establishments belonging to their inheritors.

About the business pattern in the forties and fifties, he said that there were retailers and whole-sellers as usual in trading. Boat, launch and rail were the means of transport. The *ghats* of the Buriganga river were comfortable for handling cargos, particularly for loading and unloading purposes. *Manu Bepari's ghat* at Jinjira of Dhaka was named after one of my maternal uncles. He was an influential businessman at that time.

During the beginning of the last century, Dhaka was a rural town. Many of its citizens used to live on cultivating the low-lying areas of Dhaka to produce vegetable and fruits. Dhanmondi was used as a centre for growing paddy-seedlings. Both Moghbazar and Rayerbazar were known once for producing vegetable. The same was the case with Jatrabari and Khilgaon areas. Most of the city roads were unmetalled. Horse carriage was one of the main means of transport. Recalling his days

8 Nazir Hossain was elected Chairman of the Union Board during the Pakistan era and twice word Commissioners and author of several books including *Keengbadantir Dacca* first published in 1981.

9 Mr. Anwar Hossain was elected a member of the parliament from Dhaka in 1988 and acted as a lawmaker till 1990.

10 Report on the Button Industry in Bengal, *ibid.* p. 9.

of boyhood, Mr. Hossain said, that the Hindus dominated the business. They unilaterally used to run the show. After the partition in 1947, things started to change. Gangaram, Pushpa Saha and Jagannath Saha were basically big businessmen and they were engaged in the trading of food items, cloth and money lending in my area. After the forties, there were rapid changes in the nature of business before and after the partition. Modern industries gradually started replacing cottage industries. Industrialists from outside the country started their ventures in Dhaka and Narayanganj.<sup>11</sup> Earlier the old Dhaka was the major commercial centre. In the fifties, commercial activities started at places like Dhaka's Baitul Mukarram, Motijheel and New Market.<sup>12</sup> Weekly *hats* were used to take place earlier in many places like Mirpur and Rayerbazar of the city.<sup>13</sup> Around 1954, Motijheel was developed as a 'commercial area'. Later on places like Tejgaon and Tongi were developed as industrial areas one after another. Tejgaon turned into a greater industrial area



Chief of the American Trade Center, Charles Cablant presents ISO certificate 2000 at a function held in Dhaka Club on 10 May 2004

gradually in the early sixties. Talking about who used to exert influence in the industrial areas, Mr. Hossain said, though some Bangalees<sup>14</sup> came forward usually most of the entrepreneurs were non-Bangalees and so they got prominence. Bangalees then were reluctant in getting involved in any risk for any such ventures. Apart from these, the question of availability of funds

for investment was also a prime issue. In fact, though the Bengali Muslims had some experiences in trading, they lacked expertise totally in running industries particularly in this region. For this reason, the people of this locality entered into industry lately and faced competition with the non-Bangalees who were already established.

About the business of his own, Mr. Hossain said that after the death of his father he decided to quit studies and enter into business. "It is worth mentioning here that before starting my own business

11 Bengali and Non-Bengali refugees had a great influx in 1951, and they were in Dhaka. For details of refugee traders, See Census of East Bengal, 1951.

12 In order to rehabilitate the displaced persons and to cope with the increasing needs of the city, these shopping areas were developed under a Govt. plan.

13 B.C. Allen, in the *Dacca District Gazetteers*, named 5 weekly bazars with the present Jurisdiction of Dhaka city, namely-Demra, Hazaribagh, Kawran bazar, Mirpur and Jinjira. See B.C. Allen, *Dacca District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1912) p. 116.

14 Among the Bangalees Gul Bukhs Bhuiyan, Zahirul Islam, Mohammad Fakir Chand, Mir Hossain, Aga Yousuf, A.K. Khan, Anwara Begum, Sk. Akij Uddin and few others were in a good shape in the sixties, see Ramani Mohan Debanath, *Babsa-Shilpe Bangalee*, Bangla Academy, 1986, p. 64.



with small investment, I started working at a different cloth shop belonging to some other persons as a novice or new entrant to learn business despite the fact that we had our own similar business. My main intension was to learn the business by practically working under a disciplined manner and able supervision. Within six months, I learnt the tid-bits of business. I started cloth business of my own at shop no. 220 after giving-up my father's shop at 207 Chawkbazar in 1953 with whatever capital I had. By converting some silver coins given by my mother I started afresh in the name of Anwar Cloth Store. A healthy business relation was developed with Hossain Brothers of Begumbazar at that time.” He said that in the fifties, Chawkbazar was the main business mart of Dhaka. But the business was extended to



A view of Anwar Jute Spinning Mills Ltd

Jinjira Hat and Rayerbazar Hat. For running the cloth business, supply used to come usually from Narsinghdi, Baburhat<sup>15</sup> and Ruhitpur on a wholesale basis. Mr. Hossain went on by saying that he set up one weaving factory entitled – Anwar Weaving Factory at Ruhitpur.<sup>16</sup> Regarding the nature of cloth business in the country in the fifties, he said that clothes like poplin, markin, long cloth, chiffon and georgette were then imported from Japan and also from West Pakistan. “I decided myself to print the clothes and sell those at my shop,” he remarked. Talking about extending his business to West Pakistan, he said that the big businessmen then had their own business centres in Karachi. “With the idea – why not we do have business over there when people coming from West Pakistan could do business here in East Pakistan – I first took an office in Karachi in 1960,” he added. Gradually, I became known as a businessman in Karachi, Lahore and Layalpur. At the same time my business at home also expanded. A number of business centres were opened at Islampur and Narayanganj. Famous brand of print saree namely ‘Mala Saree’ became popular during 1968 and onward. Some of our establishments like ‘Mala Corporation’, ‘Manowar Store’ and ‘Khaled Corporation’ were named after the names of my children during that time.

Talking about *Mala saree* that became much popular once, he said that his intention was to produce quality *saree* by adopting his own designs. “And that became possible”, he happily noted. Once he took agency of Burma Shell Company as it was a good business, but being pressed too much with other businesses he could not give proper attention and later he gave it up. Replying to a question

15 Baburhat is the principal mart of handloom products on the river Megna, which is often referred to as the ‘Manchester of Bangladesh’. The market is held once a week and the thousands of cloth dealers from almost every district of Bangladesh assemble at Baburhat to replenish their stocks of Dhakai cloths.

16 Ruhitpur was famous for *Bafta* or ordinary cloths i. e. *Sarees*, and *lungis*. Inhabitants are mostly of *Jolas* or weavers. There was a proverb at Ruhitpur area, which also describes the *Jolas*:

১৬ জন বস্ত্র তৈরি করে  
গরিবের খাতিয়ে দেয়।

on how he turned to be an industrialist from being a businessman, Mr. Anwar Hossain said that in the sixties he was an agent of the mills like Olympia, Adamjee, Bawani, Kohinoor, etc. and most of those were owned by the non-Bangalees. “As a *Bangalee*, I thought, why not we could set up an industry. Then I had determination to do something. I came across with Hafiz Shaheb, an industrialist from Chittagong. In 1964, on his advice and encouragement, I bought a silk mill of East Pakistan Small Industries Corporation (EPSIC). The then EPSIC Chairman Latifullah Shaheb<sup>17</sup> also helped me.” He set up his first industry in Tongi. Tongi was just a rural village at that time and with the set-up of the industry it started to grow as an industrial area gradually.<sup>18</sup> In 1968, the mill started running as ‘Anwar Silk Mill’. The name of ‘Famous Saree’ was changed to *Mala Saree* and *Mala Saree* became a much talked about product. ‘Mala Saree’ almost became the synonym of the ‘Bengali woman’. It can be mentioned here that ‘Anwar Silk Mills’ was the complete establishment ever set up by a Bangalee entrepreneur in the country. Besides, there were mills like ‘Kamal Textiles’, ‘Shajahan Weaving’ and ‘Quashem Textiles’ owned by the Bangalees.<sup>19</sup> About-facing any competition in the market, he said, “I adopted a strategy in marketing of my products – instead of giving agencies, direct sale centres were opened. As a result, demand of my products was immense. That helped me to survive even though competition was tough.

In reply to a question whether he faced any difficulties in running industry during the Pakistan period, Mr. Anwar Hossain said that the trade unions became strengthened in the seventies.<sup>20</sup> Obviously, a good trade union has the responsibility to protect the interests of the workers, but in some cases its leaders continued to prove themselves irresponsible. There were some good leaders also and Ahsanullah Master was one of them. Here it is important to note one unknown chapter of history. Ahsanullah Master<sup>21</sup> was just a schoolteacher and his qualities impressed me for which I asked the workers to take him as their leader. He agreed and under his leadership, trade union politics was on a sound basis in Tongi area. Ahsanullah Master became a popular trade union leader and he must be acknowledged for his contributions for establishing congenial relations that existed in the factories. After the silk mill, he went for cutlery industry. “Again I approached IPSIC for help and set up ‘Manowar Industries Pvt. Ltd.’ at Tejgaon, the first cutleries industry here by a Bangalee owner.” Talking about the condition of the businesses and industries during the liberation war in 1971, Mr. Anwar said: “The Pakistanis had then realised rightly that it would be difficult for them to stick to their businesses here. So they adopted scorched-earth policy and plundered to the peak in all possible ways. The industries owned by the *Bangalees* were mostly inoperative during the war period and by the end of the war, the big Pakistani investors started leaving for West Pakistan. Turning to the situation during the post-liberation period, he said that the liberation, in fact, provided a wide scope for the *Bangalees*, but due to lack of the required experiences in

17 His full name is Md. Yakub Latifullah. He entered into the Government service in the Department of Industries, East Bengal as Divisional supt. in 1949 and subsequently held the position of Chairman, EPSIC in the 1960s. See History of Services, part-2, Govt. of East Bengal, 1955, p. 783.

18 Tongi was ear-marked as an Industrial Area in the 2nd Five Year Plan and EPSIC chalked out a development programme for industrial rehabilitation in the 1960s.

19 For details, see List of Factories in East Pakistan, (Classification ‘A’ by district) 1961 and 1964.

20 For stoppage of work and numbers of Trade Unions, see appendix, Chapter 3.

21 Ahsanullah Master was a labour leader of Bangladesh Shramik League, the labour front of Awami League. He was a popular labour leader and was elected member of the parliament in 1996. He was killed by political opponents in 2005.

management for running the newly emerged country's industries and businesses they started facing difficulties. Some 'opportunists' and 'briefcase-holders' emerging in the business circle at that time largely disrupted the normal and usual business processes.

Though the abandoned industries owned by the non-Bengalees were nationalised immediately after independence,<sup>22</sup> due to lack of proper management, the profitable industrial concerns started to be the losing ones. As a result, some of those were denationalised while some others were returned to their owners. After all, the industrial sector could not get the opportunity to flourish, as there was no sound industrial policy.



DCCI's youngest president Hossain Khaled being congratulated by former president Mahbubur Rahman in 2006

There might be some improvements in the eighties, but we could hardly overcome that situation. About his pioneering role in establishing bank and insurance at the private sector apart from industry, Mr. Anwar Hossain narrated how he initiated the move in this regard to set up the first private bank in 1983. The nationalised banks with limitations faced a lot of questions regarding their services. Despite prospects in the private sector, none came forward till 1978 with any initiative for opening a bank. As one of the 40-member business delegation, we met the then President Ziaur Rahman. By the way, we raised the demand for a private bank referring to the success stories of similar private sector banks in Pakistan, India and Hong Kong. Late President Zia constituted a committee for the feasibility study immediately. Vice-President Justice Abdus Sattar was the chairman of the committee that consisted of economist, Dr. M. N. Huda and seasoned bureaucrat Shafiul Azam. Later in 1982, permission was given by the government to set up a bank in the private sector. I feel delighted to see the end result with recognition of what I thought. He said, 'The City Bank' was set up as a private sector bank as an outcome of the efforts initiated by him. 'The IFIC Bank' though was first set up in the private sector, it had shares of the government. From that point of view, 'The City Bank' that was set up as the second private sector bank in 1983 can be considered to be the country's first private bank. Subsequently, many banks and insurance companies were set up in the private sector during the period 1983-1990.<sup>23</sup> "This was a big achievement in the country's banking sector and I myself feel delighted for playing my due role in establishing a bank in the private sector", Mr. Anwar Hossain remarked when asked about his feeling for playing a leading role in this regard.

When requested to say a few words about playing his role in introducing 'mobile phone' in the country, Mr. Anwar Hossain said that he had raised the issue with former President H. M. Ershad,

22 See President's Order No. 27 of 1972, the Bangladesh Industrial Enterprises (Nationalisation) Order, 1972 and Schedules.

23 For origin and development of City Bank and IFIC Bank, see Sirajul Islam (ed.) *Banglapedia*, Vol-3, p. 33 and Vol-5, p. 23.

explaining all the good reasons like the utility services for the private sector banks. All, initially, though opposed the idea, conceded to his arguments at last and the mobile phone has been introduced in the country. Though it was confined within limited people, now mobile phones is a widely used technology in our country. I consider it an achievement of my life also. It gives me immense pleasure to see that the whole nation is enjoying the benefit of it.

Mr. Hossain is not only a successful businessman, but also a leader of the business community. He worked as a director for about a decade of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry; and the Dhaka Chamber and Mr. Anwar both have become inevitable to each other.

Mr. Hossain got the Chamber membership in 1970. During that time, there were few Bangalee members and the non-Bangalees were large in number as members and, obviously, at the leadership also. Despite all these, the Dhaka Chamber played a significant role in protecting the interests of all segments of the business community.

Replying to a question on the condition of the Chamber during the liberation war, he said that it was rather shaky and risky. At the beginning, the non-Bangalees were rather active, but later at the end, many of them started winding up their businesses here. After the liberation war, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman gave a call for rebuilding the country afresh. The DCCI, accordingly, took the move in the changed circumstances. After the departure of the non-Bangalees, a new generation entered into the country's business. Though there was hesitation initially, due to matured leadership, the Chamber became active again.

In 1976, Mr. Hossain was elected director of the DCCI for the first time. Later he discharged his responsibilities as director of the Chamber for three terms – 1976-78, 1982-85 and 1989-90. His and his family's relations with the Chamber are very close and deep. He worked for it and, in return, it gave him honour. The DCCI made his son Hossain Khaled twice its president.<sup>24</sup> The Chamber is now a dynamic organisation. We are grateful to all the members of the Chamber. He hopes that the Chamber would continue its present role as a class-one level organisation internationally in future also. In discharging responsibilities of the Chamber, closer and cordial relations developed with many other members. He mentioned the names, among others, as Yahiya Bawani,<sup>25</sup> Sirajuddin, owner of 'Madhumita' Cinema Hall, Abdus Sattar, owner of 'Hotel Purbani', Dhaka's businessmen Hafez Munir Hossain,<sup>26</sup> Fazlul Karim Choudhury, Abdus Satter,<sup>27</sup> Mahabubur Rahman,<sup>28</sup> Choudhury Tanbir Ahmed Siddiky,<sup>29</sup> who was once DCCI president, and many others.

Replying to the question how he, though known as an industrialist, got involved in politics, Mr. Hossain said, 'I was, in fact, absorbed in my business and industry. As a social being, I have some other responsibilities too. My birthplace, the old part of Dhaka, was a neglected area. I stepped

24 Mr. Hossain Khaled has been elected president for the consecutive two terms, i.e. 2007 and 2008.

25 Yahiya Bawani is the son of Ahmed Bawani, who shifted his business from Rangoon to East Bengal in 1949. For details of Bawani group, see the interview with Mr. Yahiya Bawani.

26 Hafez Monir Hossain was an active member of DCCI and was nominated for the Internal Trade and Import Sub-Committee, 1973; Yarn Policy Advisory Committee in 1976 and Internal Business Sub-Committee for 1987-88.

27 Mr. M. A. Satter was the elected president of DCCI during the term of 1982-84. He was elected member of parliament and subsequently appointed state Minister for Commerce in the Ershad's cabinet.

28 Mr. Mahbabur Rahman was the president of DCCI in 1984-85, and presently president of the International Chamber of Commerce, Bangladesh.

29 Former president of DCCI during the period from 1976 to 1978. He was the lawmaker of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party and later was the state Minister for Commerce and Industry in the Ziaur Rahman's Cabinet.



into politics temporarily following the demand of the local people in order to materialise their hopes and aspirations. As a Member of Parliament, I sincerely worked with responsibility.<sup>30</sup> About his achievements in politics, he said frankly that so long he was known among the business community and after joining politics he could for the first time join the people as one of them and he considers that his big achievement. He also did much development work for his locality. The embankment on Dhaka's south-west side for protection from flood was done during his time and due to his efforts.

On his achievements in business, he said: I consider myself as a successful businessman, also successful in setting up a 100 per cent private bank for the first time in the country. I can rightly claim also for success, if there is any, for introducing mobile phones here in the country. Because of these two factors, revolution took place already in our national economy. For the new generation he endorsed: 'Business ethics' must be maintained in business and that is the 'main key' and 'main capital' as I watched it everywhere, when traveling across the world. I traveled to almost all the major countries of the world including Japan, USA, Germany, Australia, Italy, UK, Russia, Korea, Philippines, Indonesia, Canada, Netherlands, Spain, Austria, Belgium, Switzerland, Saudi Arab, Sudan, Turkey, Egypt, Bahrain, UAE, Burma, Taiwan, India, Pakistan, etc.

Replying to another question, he said that he has 17/18 industrial enterprises besides bank, insurance, etc. and has distributed management-responsibilities to his family members and deputed required persons, keeping overall supervision in his hand. As one of the members of the DCCI, he feels delighted on the occasion of its Golden Jubilee celebration<sup>31</sup> and expressed his gratitude for being involved with this organisation. He is also happy to see the celebration of 'Dhaka's 400 years' during his life time and he is willing to contribute more for the development and betterment of the business community.<sup>32</sup>

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30 Mr. Anwar Hossain was elected Member of Parliament in 1988. For his contribution, see his memoirs *Amarjiban*, APPL, 2008.

31 For Origin and Development of DCCI, see, Chapter 8 of this book.

32 In 1608, Subedar Islam Khan transferred his capital from Rajmahal to Dhaka and thus, Dhaka has attained her 400 years by 2008.

## 4

**M. A. Sattar**

Mr. M. A. Sattar was born in a reputed and respectable Muslim family of Jamalpur district in 1939. His father late M. A. Jabber was the Chief Engineer of the Building and Communication Department.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Sattar got his early education in Kolkata. After partition, he came back home and passed Cambridge in 1956. Mr. Sattar got his M. A. degree in political science from Dhaka University in 1962.



M. A. Sattar

In reply to a question Mr. Sattar told that he joined the student politics while he was studying at the Dhaka University. In respect of national politics, Mr. Sattar said that he was elected member of parliament in 1965 as an independent candidate. As he puts it, “In 1986, I took part in the parliament election as an independent candidate and came out successful.” He subsequently joined the Jatiya Party and became the Minister for Commerce. In 1987, he was the Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism. In 1988, he was entrusted with the Commerce Ministry and later on Fisheries and Livestock Ministry. In 1990, he was appointed Minister for Industries, which he continued till the last day of the Ershad regime. Replying to the question regarding his association with Dhaka Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Sattar disclosed that it was in 1974 when he got affiliated with the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce. He was the elected

president of the DCCI both in 1982 and 1984.

How do you evaluate the role of DCCI in regard to business development? In reply to this question Mr. Sattar said that DCCI played a life-giving role in re-organising the organisation. During the liberation war, DCCI literally became inactive as the Bengali members could not play their due role since the non-Bengalis had been running this body, he added. He argued that Bengalis were about 56% of the total population but their representation were very poor. Hardly two/three personnel were included in the Committee; it was nothing but an eye-wash to the Bengalis.

According to Mr. Sattar, after the emergence of Bangladesh, the situation became different. Disadvantageous situations had to overcome gradually. How was it possible? “Credit goes to some senior entrepreneurs like Mr. Moklesur Rahman, Mr. Tanvir Ahmed Siddiky, Hafez Munir Hossain and Mr. Anwar Hossain, who did their best to streamline the anomalies and make the organisation active and useful for the members.

In respect of denationalisation, Mr. Sattar said, ‘We have pursued this aspect vehemently as many of the nationalised industries became sick due to lack of proper management.’

<sup>1</sup> Mr. M. A. Jabber was the founder of the Institute of Engineers, promoter of Dacca Stadium, Ramna Green, Shahbagh Hotel (Now Bangabandhu Shiek Mujib Medical University), New Market and Azimpur Colony. He founded East Pakistan Flying Club and was a sponsor of the Eastern Banking Corporation, the first bank founded by the Bangalis. He also established the Great Eastern Insurance co. He sponsored the Narayanganj Dock Ltd., Narayanganj Iron Ltd. and River Boats Ltd.



Mr. M. A. Sattar, President DCC&I is seen welcoming HRH Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh to a luncheon hosted in his honour at a local hotel in 1983 while Mr. M. S. Islam, President, FBCCI is seen at extreme right

‘In fact we wanted to develop a responsible and steady private sector in the country,’ he added. Mr. Sattar said that towards this objective DCCI requested the Government to denationalise the big industries, which had been suffering its usual growth and became sick. FBCCI, the Apex body and DCCI worked together to this effect. President Husein Muhammed Ershad was eager to denationalise the sick industries. Mr. Shafiul Azam,<sup>2</sup> the then Adviser, played an important and compatible role in building up a strong private sector in the country. Referring to the free economy, Mr. Sattar said that there should be a responsible private sector but unfortunately ‘we are yet to achieve’ it. It is an important factor for a free economy, he added.

We know that during your time of ministership, Private Bank and Insurance Sectors were developed. What were the considerations behind this? ‘I have already told that we intended to have a strong private sector. Some entrepreneurs came forward with some proposals. After discussing this aspect in the policy making level, we considered the matter to give a new pace to our economy.’

How do you evaluate the achievements? In reply to this question, he said that it was result oriented. Meantime, many sick industries were handed over to their owners and they gradually overcome the problems over there and most of the industries turned into a profitable one.

In respect of philanthropic work and humanitarian services during his tenure, Mr. Sattar mentioned that there was a social welfare sub-committee and this committee would consider all these aspects. However, some humanitarian and philanthropic activities were undertaken. Among them donation to Crippled Children Hospital is mentionable. Referring to other activities that took place during

2 Mr. S. M. Shafiul Azam, a former member of the civil service and Adviser in Charge of Ministry of Industries and Commerce, met the members of the DCCI and assured them to solve their problems with regard to the sick industries of the country.

his presidency, Mr. M. A. Sattar said that many significant events occurred during that time. Many trade delegations came to DCCI and bi-lateral issues were discussed. But the most important thing was the new industrial Policy in 1982.



Mr. M. A. Sattar, President DCC&I is seen handing over a cheque to the Secretary of Bangladesh Council for a Child Welfare for Hospital for crippled Children in 1982

How did DCCI act on this policy? The DCCI expressed its satisfaction over the determination of the Government in creating congenial investment climate for the private sector.<sup>3</sup> It was also reiterated that the existence of a private sector is the need of the day, he added. He further said that in fact, the Chamber pledged its full co-operation to any move of the Government in achieving economic emancipation of the country and

establishment of a exploitation free society. According to Mr. Sattar, the new industrial policy would facilitate the cottage industry sector in the rural areas. How far was this policy beneficial to the business Community? Answering to this question Mr. M. A. Sattar said, 'Definitely this policy was business friendly and it was welcomed by the business community'.

In reply to another question, Mr. Sattar opined that the jute sector could be revived if synthetic products could be proved un-hygienic. Considering the aspect of health hazards, iute items are getting popular day by day, he added.

In respect of RMG sector, Mr. Sattar termed it very potential but said the social factor should be addressed properly to create a congenial atmosphere in the RMS sector.

How did you step into the business? "My father was the Chief Engineer of the C & B in the fifties. He always fought for the cause of Bengali nationalism. The Pakistani group did not like it and he had to pay for this. They used to harass my father in different ways. However, as soon as he left the government service, he started business in Narayanganj. He established a dockyard there and ferries were built. Apart from this, structural engineering and building bridges were the main function of our firm'. In regard to golden Jubilee of the DCCI, Mr. M. A. Sattar expressed his satisfaction as he could see this grand occasion in his lifetime. He also opined that the present leadership would be able to meet the challenges of the time and bring significant economic prosperity to the country.

3 The new industrial policy of 1982 pave the way for new investment in the country as more than 40 sectors and sub-sectors were made investment-friendly including jute and textiles sectors.

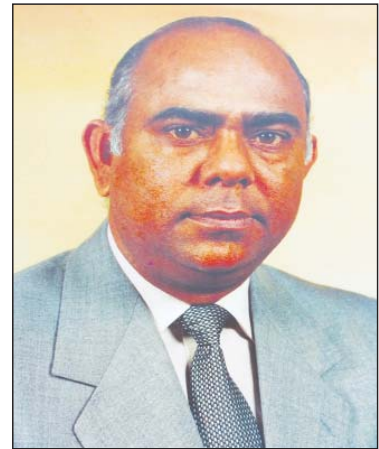


## 5

**Mahbubur Rahman**

Mr. Mahbubur Rahman is a seasoned business leader of Bangladesh. He has been associated with business associations like Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry, International Chamber of Commerce and Industry, etc. Mr. Rahman was elected President of the DCCI in 1985-86<sup>1</sup> and in 1991-92. A dynamic business entrepreneur, Mr. Rahman took many initiatives in developing the country's business sector while he was the President of DCCI. Presently, he is the president of International Chamber of Commerce and Industry. On the eve of publication of this book, he was interviewed and he highlighted Dhaka's business aspect as he had seen during his lifetime.

What should be the role of a modern chamber of commerce? In replying to this question, he said that the responsibilities of a modern chamber of commerce in regard to economic policy making and business development are enormous. It is the chamber's foremost objective to make better business forums. As the country's sound economic policy leads the economic and business development of a country, a congenial and business-friendly economic policy is equally vital. Do you think DCCI has been playing its part towards this goal? Definitely! DCCI's dynamic leadership has always supported this aspect and they always work for the welfare of its valued members and for the furtherance of the economic development of the country, he added.



Mahbubur Rahman

How do you evaluate the participation of entrepreneurs, the labour force and government towards industrial and commercial enancipation of a developing country like Bangladesh? An industrial friendly industrial relation is a factor and also a pre-condition for growth of the industrial sector. Our labour laws have thier limitations and many shortfalls are there, which sometimes hinder the objectives in this regard, he mentioned.<sup>2</sup> The Government, employers and the labour force are the integral part of development. Mr Mahbubur Rahman also commented on the role of private sector in respect of economic growth of our country. According to him, a strong private sector is a lifeline towards the economic growth. It is wroth mentioning here that our private sector is getting a substantial shape day by day and now is almost well-shaped, he added. Replying to another question how the IBA, APO and BITAC seminars worked in this regard? "We arranged several seminars in collaboration with IBA, BITAC and APO.<sup>3</sup> All these seminars were result-oriented. In the reorganisation of our efforts and achievements the President of DCCI, along with 5 members were included in the list of entourage of the state visit of President to China. Apart from this, during my tenure, a powerful business team from South Korea and another team from USA visited Bangladesh. The USA team dealt with the garments quota negotiation, where, as the President of DCCI, I had to participate.<sup>4</sup> In respect of re-

1 Mr. Mahbubur Rahman took over the charges as the President of DCCI and Industry on 30 April 1985.

2 For details, See the President's Report in Yearly Review, 1985-86 p. 6.

3 This Seminar was jointly organised by the BITAC and Asia Productivity Organisation (APO).

4 For Details, see the Presidential Report, *Ibid*.



A view of a discussion meeting organized by the DCCI on 'Investment Privatization, Capital Market Development and Economic Growth' in 1994 where Chairman of the BOI Mr. M Mokammel Huq, Mahbubur Rahman, President FBCCI and M Rob Chowdhury, President DCCI are seen in the picture

commendations from DCCI on export, import and industrial policy, Mr. Rahman said that DCCI suggested many aspects in accordance with the needs of this sector, which helped Government to formulate policies in this regard. Even many sectoral problems were referred to the Government, which were unaddressed and uncared by authority earlier.

Do you think this could influence the policy makers in addressing these sectors? Yes, its feedback was expeditious. The Hon'ble President, Commerce Minister, Economic Adviser, Commerce Secretary and Controller of Export and Import were pleased to contract me directly whenever they felt it necessary and exchanged views on various issues, so far business development was concerned. While talking about foreign investment and joint collaboration, he said that the new industrial policy of the Government paved the way for the foreign investors.<sup>5</sup> It is very congenial and industrial friendly. That's why many foreign investors were keen to invest, especially in joint venture. So far, the French Foreign Minister and EEC member, European Parliament members, Local UNDP representatives, Economic mission from World Bank and Asia Foundation were concerned and we worked together in regard to business development and foreign investment in Bangladesh', he further added.

What were the extent of co-operation? We always emphasised on bilateral issues. The response from the diplomatic arena were encouraging and very effective. Ambassadors and high commissioners from the powerful countries like USA, UK, Soviet Union, France and China had visited DCCI with a view to strengthening the bilateral business issues. Apart from this, business teams from many countries like Pakistan, India, Thailand, South Korea, Taiwan and Japan came to Bangladesh, which developed and strengthened business relations with those countries.

5 The Industrial Policy of 1982 is being referred to here.

How do you evaluate the media's role in emancipation of business of a country like Bangladesh? It is an important aspect so far business development is concerned. The state of economic condition both the global regional and economic development of a country is focused in the media. This provides much information to the business organisations, to the Government as well as to the policy makers. During my period, DCCI's performance and activities were duly highlighted both in the electronic and printing media, Mr. Rahman asserted.<sup>6</sup>



Mr. A.B.M Golam Mostafa, Commerce Secretary, GOB met the members of the DCCI in 1986. Mr. Mahbubur Rahman is also seen in the picture

Mr. Rahman said that among the important publications of the DCCI, the monthly *Review* is a vital one, which provides information and activities of DCCI. We have enriched this publication both in qualitative and layout changes. *Tax Guide* is another publication which is an essential guide-book for the DCCI members and tax payers. So far I could remember, we introduced 'The Directory of World Chambers of Commerce and Industry, in 1985 for the first time in Bangladesh, he added. How do you evaluate the reform proposals made by the donor agencies in regard to the economic and business development of the country?

We always believe in reality and reforms should be based on this. The objectives of such reforms are to be result-oriented in the long run, Mr. Rahman added. What was the role of DCCI in respect of sick industries? In reply to this, Mr. Rahman said that they have talked to different platforms and duly explained the stand and viewpoints of DCCI on this. "In fact we have worked together with the government to this effect", he said.

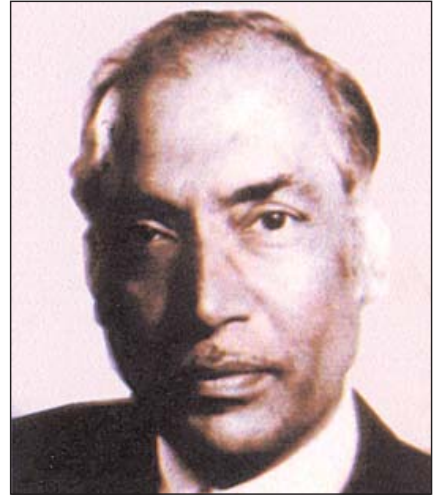
During your tenure, the new Industrial Policy of 1991 was made. What was the impact of this policy on our economy? Mr. Rahman opined that this new industrial policy was the outcome of the DCCI's efforts. We wanted to make the process easier and more dynamic. In view to this, I and other directors met the then Prime Minister, Minister for Industries, Finance and Planning Minister and we suggested categorically the ways and means of development of the country's private sector. What were the achievements of the 'Global Business Opportunities Convention' held in Osaka, Japan in 1991? Mr. Mahabubur Rahman mentioned that this convention was very significant for the economic development of the developing countries. In this global business summit, as president of DCCI, I had to submit paper on expansion of the global trade. We also opened an export promotion booth at the OSAKA Convention centre where some exportable items were displayed, he added. DCCI has celebrated its golden Jubilee this year, what is your feeling? I feel very much proud as I could see this grand occasion in my lifetime. But we have to achieve more and we are to work harder in achieving this.

<sup>6</sup> For details of the DCCI, performance, see Chapter 8 of this book.

## 6

**Muklesur Rahman**

Mr. Muklesur Rahman was born in 1923.<sup>1</sup> He is now 85. He completed his studies at Dhaka University. As a student of political science at Dhaka University, he participated in the Language Movement.<sup>2</sup> After his studies he joined teaching profession. He has to his credit one published book on constitutional history. His father Maulavi Ashraf Ali was also an educationist.<sup>3</sup> He worked at the education department in the early period of the twentieth century. He used to write diary regularly. Much valuable information in the decades of the fifties and sixties of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is available in his diary. Particularly, issues like the Partition of Bengal, the *Swadeshi Andolon*, the *Khelafat* Movement, socio-economic conditions during the First and the Second World Wars and even the memoir of old age are also recorded in his diary. His ancestor was an employee of the revenue department at Narsingdi area in Dhaka district under the *Subedary* of the Mughal period. It is mentioned in the family diary that his ancestors had a shop in Dhaka in the 1920s.

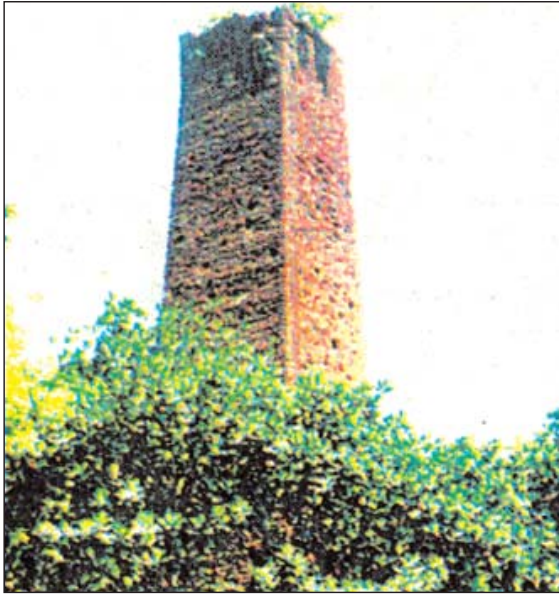


Muklesur Rahman

The Narayanganj-Narsingdi area was a trading centre mainly for cloth. As a result, he had the opportunity to see the rise and fall of business commodities. They knew many businessmen and their families. Once the Sultans and the Pathans used to rule the Sonargaon region.<sup>4</sup> As a result, social relations developed with their posterity. It is stated in the diary that much-known Indigo-planter Watson had indigo plantation once in their village. Still wreckages of the Indigo plantation are there. Mr. Muklesur Rahman was once secretary of the Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Later he came to Dhaka and became involved with the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry. He worked as a 'leader' at the Dhaka Chamber and got the opportunity of knowing many things of Dhaka's businesses. Though overburdened by age, he narrated by recalling from his experiences some facts of the 'Commercial History of Dhaka'. Following are some extracts:

- 1 During the interview Muklesur Rahman mentioned his birth was in 1923, but as per his father's diary his date of birth is 18 April, 1924. It may be a fallacious recollection of his memory.
- 2 At the time of the state language movement Mr. Rahman was a resident student of Salimullah Muslim Hall. His father's diary notes: "In August this year (1949), Muklesh has started to reside at Salimullah Muslim Hall. B.A. 2nd year Honours." 'In 1953, the diary says: "My 2nd son Muklesur Rahman has passed M.A. obtaining 2nd class in Political Science. He has also completed in studying law but yet to appear the exam". It reveals that during the movement he was a final year student of law.
- 3 As per his diary, Ashraf Ali started his carrier as a school teacher in 1919 at Dacca Govt. Moslem High School and in 1921 he switched over to a regular job as a school sub-inspector. Subsequently he was promoted to the sub-divisional Inspector of Schools.
- 4 Sonargaon is the site of the medieval capital of Eastern Bengal. Before the advent of Muslim rule in Eastern Bengal, Sonargaon was in the hands of the kings of Pala and Sena Dynasties. With the defeat of Danuj Roy, the last ruling Hindu Chief at the hands of Tughral Khan, the Viceroy of Emperor Balban in the year 1275 A. D. brought an end to Hindu rule in Sonargaon. Since then for more than 200 years, these areas were ruled by the Sultani and Pathan rulers. For details See Swarup Chandra Roy, *Subarnagramer Itihas* Calcutta, 1891.



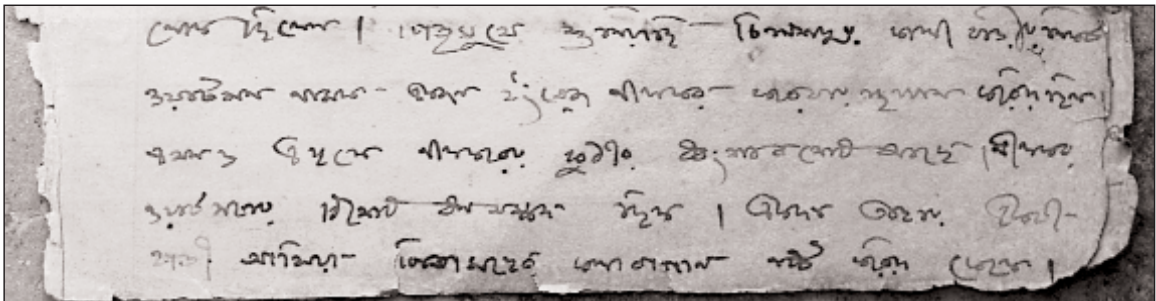


A ruined indigo factory in Narsingdi

In regard to the tradition of Narsingdi he mentioned in reply to my question that the Narsingdi-Narayanganj area of Dhaka is a prominent centre for trade and commerce. In the past this area was well-known for muslin.<sup>5</sup>

Weaving and Jamdani<sup>6</sup> developed here in the last century. Earlier to that there was a boost in the trade for jute particularly in the Narayanganj area. Hosiery too had good reputation. Considering all these factors, this area as his birthplace has been important economically – as it was in the past, as is now at present. Many big industries have been developed in Narsingdi now.<sup>7</sup> Giving reasons for such advancement in trade and industry of this area, he said that that was mainly because of traditional inheritance. Once upon a time, textile industry had developed all along the belt of the Sitalashaya and the Bramaputra rivers. As a result, weavers,

traders, middlemen and business centres grew. Even export trade was also developed in the remote past centering Sonargaon, Panam and Wari-Bateshwar as rivers surround the area. Mainly for communication facilities the area easily retains its importance for a long period as a commercial centre by meeting mostly the required business conditions.



A page of a diary written by an inhabitant, who mentioned of an indigo planter of Narshindi area in the last century

About any traditional *legends*, if any, regarding foreign trade in the region here, he said that historically Sonargaon was famous for muslin.<sup>8</sup> Arab traders once used to come here and, perhaps, the Arabs gave the name of *Sitalashaya* to the river. Contemporary travellers in their writings

5 For Muslin, see Chapter One of this book. For more details, also see James Tylor, *A Descriptive and Historical Account of the Cotton Manufacture of Dacca*, London, 1851; Abdul Karim, *Dhakai Muslin*, Dacca, 1964

6 For details of Jamdani, see Chapter 6 of this book.

7 Directory of Small Industries in East Pakistan, 1966, District Gazetteer 1969 and 1993 have named the industries of this region.

8 Apart from Sonargaon, some other areas of Dhaka and Mymensing were famous for muslin products. See Chapter 1.



Goalando Ghat, a busy steamer station in 1940

planter Watson had his factory that still remains in debris.<sup>11</sup> He stated of an incident relating to his ancestor's family with the indigo factory. Watson had a number of elephants that used to damage the standing crops of the nearby agricultural lands, but none dared to lodge a protest. Following such continued damage, his grandfather one day confined the elephant along with the *mahut* and throw a challenge to Watson. The matter ended with a regret expressed by Watson. About the revolt against indigo cultivation in the Narsingdi area, he said that he did not hear anything about it. But the indigo factory in his area did not last long. Talking about his family's business, he said his fore-fathers were 'Sheikh'. They were landlords. His father was the first Muslim graduate in his area and served in the education department. Starting as a school inspector, he became subsequently a sub-division education officer. His mother had shares of Tk. 50 in 'Bengal Spinning and Weaving Company' in the 1930s.<sup>12</sup> Besides his father had policies of Tk. 3,000 with 'Sun Life Assurance Co.' in 1926-27, of Tk. 1,500 with Great Eastern Co. in 1931 and of Tk. 1,500 with Oriental Life Assurance. In 1932 the policy with Sun Life turned into a paid-up policy.<sup>13</sup> That bears the testimony of his awareness

mentioned trading with Java-Malay and the activities of the Chinese traders.<sup>9</sup> Asked about his opinion that Panam city once had cloth business, he said that there was business of muslin in this region. The river on which Panam city stood had innumerable boats belonging to foreign traders. Why the traditional business was lost? In reply, Mr. Rahman said that the industry policy of the British was responsible for that. The clothes made in European mills drove muslin out of market here. For creating markets for European clothes, an adverse situation was made by that policy. Export tariff was increased several times than the import duty. Patronisation by the state came to an end with the departure of Mughal rule in India. During the colonial period, their business got the preference over others for the interest of colonial power.<sup>10</sup> Whether he had any information of historical importance of indigo cultivation in Dhaka, Mr. Muklesur Rahman said that even in his own area, indigo

9 See Travellers account on Dhaka-business in Chapter 4.

10 Dr. Sharma, *Ruined Industry During the British Raj*, Kolkata, 1996.

11 Dhaka got 37 indigo factories in the late nineteenth century. Watson's factory was one of them. See Chapter 6 and also see Delwar Hassan, *Indigo Cultivation in the District of Dhaka*, a paper read out in the 25th National Conference, *Bangladesh Itihas Samity*, Dhaka University, 2007.

12 Bengal spinning and weaving companies were developed during the partition of Bengal (1905-1911) and it was located at 51 Swamibagh, Dhaka.

13 In the 1930s, Dhaka got several branches of bank and insurance companies. Many of them were named as 'Assurance Co' instead of 'Insurance Co' as named nowadays.

about the safe of his family as well as business-culture of the contemporary period. In his father's diary, there were references more or less regarding his family, society, history and the economy of his time. In this regard Muklesur Rahman cited examples like historical events of the revenue system during the Mughal-Company-British periods, about the Muslims and indigo planters, the partition of Bengal, the *Swadeshi Andolon*, boycotting foreign goods, First World War, the *Khelafat Andolon*, Second World War, Famine, Partition of India, Assassination of Gandhi, etc. About the Second World War, he said in reply to a question, 'I was then Noakhali with my father for few days.' Apprehending that the Japanese might drop a bomb Noakhali, 'Non-Family Zone' was declared there in line with the British policy, meaning that no government employee could keep family there.<sup>14</sup> Following that though I stayed back there with my father, all others of the family went to the village home. As per food policy of the British during the period, there was a strict restriction about the movement of boats, particularly the cargo boats, in the Noakhali-Chittagong region. Asked about the reasons for taking such steps, Mr. Rahman said that the purpose behind was that even if the Japanese could enter into Chittagong or East Bengal, they would not get food or any supply. The result was dangerous as the impact fell on market prices soaring severely and stalling almost the entire economy. Chittagong was then the main commercial centre, especially for export-import of East Bengal. Normal transport movements became disrupted when the area was put under the control of the British navy. In reply to a question whether similar situation was created for Narayanganj, he said that though it was an inland port impact of the war fell on it. In this regard he mentioned that the price of jute did not increase proportionately to the price hike of rice at that time, which caused difficulties to the jute cultivators.<sup>15</sup> Taking advantage of the situation a section of traders adopted unfair means in business for moneymaking through permits when the rationing system was introduced. He agreed that when the permit system was in practice for rice, salt, sugar, cloth, etc, only the people close to those who were in power took advantage. Referring to the 'Famine of 1943', Mr. Rahman said he was then a school student and he could recall the price hike of the commodities including rice as told by the elders.<sup>16</sup> People living in villages of Munshiganj, on the other side of Narayanganj, had lost purchasing power, compelling scores of starving masses to march towards Narayanganj



A view of the Narayanganj Port City

14 It was a war-time policy and there was a directive for the govt. servants in this regard.

15 Besides second world war time, the prices of jute again increased at the time of the Korean war. In 1939 jute per maund was Rs.6, in 1943 it was Rs.11 and in the 1950s it was Rs. 20.00.

16 During the Bengal Famine in 1943, the state of price of rice in Dhaka was as under:

Before famine		During the famine	
1939	Rs. 4.00 per md.	1942	Rs. 7.19 per md.
1940	Rs. 5.00 per md.	1943	Rs. 24.25 per md.
1941	Rs. 6.00 per md.	1944	Rs. 18.16 per md.



and Dhaka.<sup>17</sup> To meet the situation then a number of gruel kitchens were opened by local zaminders. R. P. Saha was active and opened gruel kitchen then in Tangail, Mymensingh, Narayanganj and Dhaka.<sup>18</sup> Talking about the weaving industry of the area from which he hails, Mr. Rahman said its journey was started from what was once called 'cave' loom, named for its setting



Haji Asmat Ali Sawdagar, a renowned merchant of Bhairab, who had his business with Dhaka and Narayanganj

on a dug soil. Later came Japanese loom, and much later came machines from England.<sup>19</sup> That was the time when the movement for boycotting foreign goods got momentum. The Movement for revolution then started to grow in Narsingdi. Dhaka, in fact, was the base for rebels. About the origin and development of Madhabdi, he said after the decline of the tradition of Sonargaon, Madhabdi emerged with due importance as a cloth trading centre in Bangladesh. Madhavdi was known as 'Manchester of Bengal' in the first decade of the twentieth century.<sup>20</sup> Traders coming from Punjab, Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar as well as the whole of Bengal used to collect cloth from here. Cloths made by looms in Dhaka, Mymensingh and Comilla used to come to Madhabdi. Turning to Shekherchar cloth trading, he said that it was located near Madhabdi. The cloth-trading centre started in Shekherchar in protest when the zaminder increased tax of Baburhat during the British period. Now it was going in full swing. When he was asked to comment on the business centres

in the surrounding areas of Dhaka, he said after Dhaka emerged as the capital many of the trading centres around it became active. Narayanganj, Mirkadim and Jinjira were among those. Narayanganj became known for jute, Mirkadim for rice and molasses and Jinjira for cloth and boat making. In this regard Muklesur Rahman mentioned that though business centres like Bhairab<sup>21</sup> and Goalando<sup>22</sup> were

17 In 1943, Asoke Mitra, ICS, was the Sub-divisional officer of Munshiganj and he has given a picture on famine in Vikrampur areas in his memoirs, *Tin kuri Dosh*. Also see K. C. Ghosh, *Famine in Bengal, 1770-1943* (Calcutta, 1944).

18 During the famine in 1943, he contributed Rs. 3,00,000 to the Bengal Red-Cross Society and operated 250 gruel kitchens in the famine-affected areas including Dhaka, Narayanganj, Munshiganj, Tangail and Mymensing.

19 William Herx invented the iron made handloom machine in England in 1813 and this facilitated the weavers in establishing cotton mills in England. In Bengal, Japanese machine was imported at the end of the nineteenth century and it was called the *Chittarnjan tant*.

20 Manchester is a populous seaport of Lancashire, England, which is famous for cotton productions and cotton cloths; considering the likeness, Madhabdi was termed the 'Manchester of Bengal'.

21 Bhairab is a river port in the district of Kishoreganj. It is named after the Dewan of Bajitpur, *Bhairab Roy*. The 'Sahas' of Sonargaon, Baidderbazar, Narshingdi, Louhagonj, Aminpur, etc. were engaged in business in Bhairab in the nineteenth century. Among them, Haripoddar, Nabin Chandra Saha, Shambu Saha, Budhai Saha, Ramdayal Saha, Sashi Mohan and Roy-Kundus of Bhaggyakul were famous and they got a business connection with various business marts of Dhaka region. W.W. Hunter mentioned that Klakandi or Bhairab Bazar, situated on the Brahmaputrer river, just at the tri-boundary junction point of the districts of Dhaka, Tipperah and *Maimensing*, is the most important commercial marts of the district, and a large trade is carried on between here and Narayanganj.

22 Goalando, a river port in the Faridpur district, played an important role in regard to steamer and railway transportations in Eastern India carrying imported goods from Calcutta and exported jute goods from Narayanganj. See Amiya Basu, *Banglaye Vraman*, East Bengal Railway Publicity Wing, Calcutta, 1940.



not under Dhaka district, there were communications for trading with Dhaka and Narayanganj. Businessmen of Tripura, Sylhet, Mymensing and Dhaka had contributions towards the growth of Bhairab as a commercial port. After installing a steamer station at Bhairab, trading in jute increased.<sup>23</sup> There were some offices of foreign companies in Bhairab. Asmat Ali Sawdagar was noted and known for his jute business there. As in Narayanganj there were big *Marwari* businessmen there too, and their businesses were linked with Narayanganj.<sup>24</sup> Goods train started to run after connecting Dhaka by rail in the last century. Bhairab became an important river port. After the construction of the bridge over the river there, Assam was connected by rail. Narayanganj and Goalando also became important, following the introduction of the steamer service.<sup>25</sup> Earlier journey to Calcutta was by steamer from Narayanganj to Goalando, and from there by train to Calcutta. Similarly, businessmen used the route for carrying their goods by steamer or boat up to Dhaka and Narayanganj if they wanted to bring those from Calcutta. Asked to say about his involvement with the Chamber, Mr. Rahman said that after retirement from service he came to know businessmen. He said, “I came to Chittagong and got an opportunity to work at the Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry. I was secretary at the Chamber.” Chittagong was the nerve centre of Bangladesh’s trade and commerce, specifically for the country’s import and export for which the Chamber has got much importance. Replying to a question about his feeling of working there, he said that he got the scope of working with many business people who were established there. “Though my work at the Chamber was administrative in nature, I gathered the experience of coordinating businesses”, he remarked. About his business in Dhaka, he said that he came very close to Mr Hedayet Hossain Choudhury, father of renowned businessman Saber Hossian Chowdhury, who insisted Mr. Rahman to start business with him. Mr Rahman gave up his job at Chittagong and became one of the partners of Mr. Choudury’s firm ‘Karnafuli Ltd.’ ‘Subsequently, I started a separate business. I had my printing press business which I started after the independence,’ Mr. Rahman added.

Talking about his involvement in the Dhaka Chamber for long, he mentioned that the Dhaka Chamber had been extending cooperation in coordinating Dhaka’s businesses from the very beginning. “DCCI’s main tasks are to protect the interest of the businessmen and to provide them with the required suggestions; and for the last 50 years it has been doing all these continuously and systematically.” Regarding his feeling on the eve of Chamber’s golden jubilee anniversary, Muklesur Rahman said, ‘This is a milestone in the history of Dhaka’s business’. Asked how he would see the Pakistan period and the post-independence period, he said that during the Pakistan period, the Chamber had to proceed against the current as the Bengalis could not unilaterally take any decision about policy making and the interest involving East Bengal did not get preference in all fields. Despite all these, many times recommendations could project properly for the interest of trade and commerce. Some of the recommendations, too, were implemented while others remained

23 In 1902, Indian General Navigation (IGN) and River Steam Navigation Company Limited (RSN) started their operation and set up offices in Bhairab bazar. After that local entrepreneurs like Asmat Ali Sawdagar (founder of Haji Asmat Ali College) Kadir Sarkar and Aziz Bepari came forward in jute business. Bark Mayer Company, David and Co., Ralli Brothers Ltd., R Sim and Co and Lily Brothers had their jute collection centres Bhairab. See the map in Chapter 3.

24 Among these *Marwari* Prem Sukdas, Joykishore Jasmal, Tularam and Sakie were the prominent. After the inauguration of Bhairab Bridge by A.K. Fazlul Hoque in 1937 as Prime Minister of Bengal, Assam-Bengal Railway started operation of their railway wagon for jute transportation, which encourages Marwari traders in trading jute in Bhairab Bazar.

25 In 1862, Calcutta-Kustia Rail line was opened and a steamer namely *padma* had been operating between Kustia and Narayanganj. In 1871, railway extended up to Goalando and steamer service between Goalando and Narayanganj was begun.

beyond considerations. The non-Bengalis had the hold over the business till then. Asked to say about the reasons, he said that this was mainly because of their economic condition, secondly for institutional patronisation and thirdly, they were very experienced in business.<sup>26</sup> In many cases they were second and third generation businessmen and industrialists. But almost all the Bengali businessmen, save few, were the first generation in business.

The Bengalis began their business with agricultural products. And the reasons were their small capital and the experience they gathered in agriculture. They made their entry into other businesses after the independence. They rather filled up the vacuum left behind void both in business and industry by the non-Bengalis. Replying to a question why the Bengalis could not get in the business places left by the *Marwaris*, Mr. Rahman said that the Bengalis were then rather facing an adverse situation as the *Marwaris* were then involved with big businesses and it was not possible for the Bengali businessmen to maintain those with their small investments and lack of experience. Moreover, those were branded as 'enemy property'.<sup>27</sup> Whether he found any qualitative changes after the independence, he said, "Of course, there have been changes. With the opening of many avenues following the requirements of a new state, innumerable opportunities have been created here. Accordingly, many of the established businesses faded away with the creation of a lot of other opportunities".

About the merits of the nationalisation policy that was followed immediately after the independence, he said that whatever was the purpose of nationalisation, the weakness in management had foiled it. Experienced and efficient people ran the enterprises earlier, but after the nationalisation policy, they started facing losses because of poor management of the government. Asked about the fate of the jute industry and its subsequent disaster, Muklesur Rahman said that the non-Bengali businessmen proved their efficiency successfully both in trading and in industry in this regard. But when the Bengalis took over, the mills and factories faced the crisis of efficiency acutely. On one hand there was lack of clear government policy; and on the other due to lack of patriotism, jute industry, as a whole, fell victim to corruption and mismanagement. The closure of Adamjee Jute Mill is an instance in this regard.<sup>28</sup> Replying to another question regarding failure on the part of the government in the management of industries, he said this was partly true. The private sector during the Pakistan period proved its efficiency. Industrialisation basically starts with the purpose of meeting the requirements both at home domestically and abroad through export. He replied in the affirmative when asked about the prospective growth of the private sector at present. Trade and commerce had expansion in Bangladesh in the eighties and nineties. Talking about doing business earlier and of now, he said usually earlier one used to inherit business of the family as a matter of preference, but now business is preferred on the question of 'service or business' after completing education irrespective of any family tradition. When Mr. Rahman was asked to comment on the new business generations, he said that the new business generation is potential as they are already in the global business. "I firmly believe they can ensure economic emancipation of the nation through their business based on ethics and patriotism," he remarked.

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26 See the interview with Mr. Bawani in Chapter 6.

27 The Enemy Property Act was enacted in 1965 after the Indo-Pak war.

28 Adamjee was started in 1953 with 3000 looms and by the 1960s it became the biggest jute mill in Asia but after nationalisation, it became a losing concern owing to mismanagement and subsequently it was closed in 2003.

## 7 M Ohiullah

Mr. Ohiullah was born at Dhaka's Bangshal Road in 1935. Like his father he also inherited business. His father late Ahsanullah was a businessman. Even his grandfather Hajee Suba Mia was a businessman in the late nineteenth century. His main business was of hides and skins. During his grandfather's time, Dhaka was famous for rawhide business.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Ohiullah started his business as a contractor. Initially his business was with the Dhaka's Nawab Estate and subsequently with C & B. Presently he is engaged in import business.

Mr. Ohiullah was interviewed on the eve of publication of *Commercial History of Dhaka* and he provided some important information, which is valuable so far the business history of this historic city is concerned. Replying to the question of his ancestors' business, Mr. Ohiullah said, "We have been in business in Dhaka since my fore-father's period. My grandfather started his hides and skins business at Posta in Dhaka. Posta was an important center for lather business in the nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup>

According to Mr. Ohiullah, some Armenians and the Nawabs of Dhaka had this business also. "Like other places only Muslims were in raw hide and raw skin business in Dhaka", he said. He also came to know from his ancestors that the government, to have suggestions for making overall improvement of this sector during the British time, called the Nawabs of Dhaka. The Dhaka-Nawabs represented the Muslim businessmen, who were engaged in hides and skins business in Eastern Bengal and Assam.<sup>3</sup> In reply to the question about who were the then leading Muslim businessmen in hides and skins, Mr. Ohiullah said, 'during his grand father's time, certain Bhutto Hajee<sup>4</sup> was famous. Khan Bahadur Hajee Hafez Mohammed Hossain of Jinjira<sup>5</sup> and Abdul Halim Gaznabi of Tangail were also famous.<sup>5a</sup>



M Ohiullah

1 Dhaka's hides and skins business goes back to the late 18th century. Initially it was a hinterland of Calcutta's industries as raw hide and skin were collected from Dhaka. For details, see *Report of the Hides Cess Enquiry Committee*, Vol-1, Govt. of India, 1930.

2 Among the Khwajas, Khwaja Abdul Ghani was active in hide and skin business. He was a member of the Calcutta Skins and Hides Traders' Association and used to represent the Calcutta based association in different bodies formed by the government. For details, see *Report of the Hides cess Enquiry Committee*, *ibid.* p. 183.

3 Apart from the Dhaka Nawab, Mr. F. J. Gossip, a livestock expert to the Government of Bengal, Ramna, Dacca was orally examined by the Hides Cess Inquiry Committee in 1929.

4 Nazir Hossain in his *Kingbandantir Dacca* also mentioned the name of Bhutto Hajee. The Dhaka Nawab's hide and skin business was subsequently handed over to him as the Nawabs turned to Zamindari.

5 Khan Bahadur Hafez Mohammed Hossain was born at Dhaka's Jinjira in the fifties of the nineteenth century. Like his father Pir Mohammed he was also engaged in family business. His father mainly dealt in rice and cloth business during the East India Company. Hafez Mohammad's business was expanded to Assam, Calcutta, Burma and thus he came into prominence as one of the biggest hides and skins businessmen in undivided Bengal. He was invited to Ahsan Manizil by Khawja Salimullah where he was awarded the title 'Khan Bahadur' in 1906.

5a Sir Abdul Halim Gaznabi (1879-1956) came of a Muslim Zamindar family of Delduar, Tangail. He was a politician and was elected in the Indian Legislative Council from 1926-1945. As he had a different opinion on the question of partition of Bengal, and in order to differentiate him from his elder brother Sir Abdul Karim Gaznabi (1872-1939), the English used to call him 'wrong Gaznabi'. Mr. Gaznabi had his hide and skin business in Kolkata, Assam, Dhaka and in Mymensing. He was the Chairman of the Calcutta Chamber of Commerce.



A view of the Dulai Canal in 1860

Courtesy: British Library

‘Bhutto Hajee was a partner of the Dhaka Nawab.’ Asked to name some local people who were in this trade, he mentioned the names of Mr Doha, a man of Faridpur and Hajee Alim and sons of Kazi Alauddin Road. As per Mr. Ohiullah, the Hindu community was not involved in hides and skins business. The reason he guessed was out of their tradition, but he found one exception as Mr. R. P. Saha of Tangail, who started his business in leather at Narayanganj before 1947. Talking about his own business, Mr. Ohiullah said that he had switched over to import business instead of his ancestor’s business. “As Dhaka had been expanding gradually and construction materials were very demanding, I decided to take up the business of building materials. My father late Ahsanullah gave his consent to go ahead”, Ohiullah added.

In reply to the question about when he started his business, he stated that he began his business in 1961, when President Ayub Khan was in power. ‘Everyone had to be very cautious and careful in business as any wrong if found during that time was subjected to punishment under Martial Law. Among the sanitary materials’ traders, most of them were non-Bengalis, coming mainly from Gujarat.’<sup>6</sup>

About concentration of sanitary business, he said that during the Pakistan time Nawabpur was the major area of this business. After the liberation, Green Road and Fakirapool emerged as new areas for trading and in the 1980s. Rampura Road also had this business. Regarding import, Mr. Ohiullah said, ‘In the sixties the import system was quite different from the existing system. A ‘Pass Book’ was issued to the importer and they used to do their business accordingly, he added. “During the Pakistan period, the items were mainly imported from England, France and Germany but after 1971 import was started from India and Sri Lanka. Asked about consumers’ response towards the change, he said that obviously, the question about the quality arose, but the price was much less

6 Among these businesses ‘Eastern Hard-ware Mart’ belonged to Mr. Abbasuddin. Fakruddin and Fida Hossain were prominent in trading.



than those of the European items.’ In the 1990s, sanitary items began to be imported from Thailand and Malaysia. Import from China is a recent trend. About the main consumers of these imported items, he said that the real estate companies usually are the main buyers. The rich people usually are fond of costly imported items while the commoners prefer cheaper ones. As a whole, the developers are the main user of the imported items.

In regard to the expansion of commercial areas of Dhaka in the 1950s and the 1960s, Mr. Ohiullah observed that from the British period, Nawabpur was famous for home appliance and other businesses.<sup>7</sup> Then it was expanded to Jinnah Avenue (Now Bangabandhu Avenue) and then to Purana Paltan. The DUIENFA Building was famous for various purposes.<sup>8</sup> Asked how Motijheel was developed as a commercial area or center, Mr. Ohiullah said, “Motijheel, in fact, belonged to the Dhaka Nawabs like Dilkhusa. From Islampur to Paltan, the whole area was purchased by the Nawabs.<sup>9</sup> There was a green field where the present stadium is now situated. The then Pakistan Government undertook a rehabilitation programme mainly for the displaced businessmen and they acquired the present Motijheel area for this purpose.<sup>10</sup> Replying to another question whether any local businessmen were accommodated over there, he said, ‘A few, however, was able to have some commercial plot at Motijheel. Among them Mr. Sirajuddin<sup>11</sup>, Mr. Fakir Chand, Mr. Zillur Rahman of Ashek lane and Zaminders Baliadi are mentionable.<sup>12</sup>

Among the prominent non-Bengalis, Ispahani Groups, Bawany Group, Amin Brothers, Omar Sons, Owner of Moon Cinema, so on, could be named who were allotted business plots at Motijheel.

How were the present Paltan and Fakirapool area gradually developed as a business area? Since the British period, Paltan area was mostly residential. Poet like Buddadeb Basu used to live at Paltan.<sup>13</sup> Even our famous singer Abbasuddin Ahmed was the inhabitant of Purana Paltan.<sup>14</sup> Fakirapool and Arambagh were on the north side of a *Khal* or *Jheel*.<sup>15</sup> There was a wooden bridge on this canal. After 1971, this canal lost its utility. However, these areas were densely populated and inhabited mostly by the Hindus. After partition, landed property was purchased by the Muslims. Thus the scenario had been rapidly changed. Among the inhabitants, a good number of them were the petty police officers. These areas turned into a business areas after 1971, specially in the 1980s.

7 Apart from Nawabpur, Chawkbazar, Molavibazar, Islampur and Banglabazar were the principal business centres of the Dhaka city in the 1940s.

8 DUIENFA belonged to ‘*Dhaka Nawab Family*. It was a commercial centre.

9 Dhaka Nawab family was able to purchase a vast quantity of landed property up to Paltan to the north. They could not purchase Paltan area as it was the ‘Cantonment’ of the East India Company. On the contrary, a large portion of the present Dhaka city belonged to the Bhawal Raj. The present Bangabhaban was originally the property of the Nawab family. Perhaps, it was part of the ‘Dilkhusa Baganbari.’ At the time of partition of Bengal, the Dhaka Nawab family handed it over to the government for the residential use of the Governor of the Eastern Bengal and Assam Province.

10 Mr. Madani, the then Chairman of the DIT, and Mr. Rahmatullah, the then district magistrate of Dhaka, both Urdu spoken, initiated the project to rehabilitate the migrated business people. However, this venture was merely responded by the Bengalis and major allocations were made to the migrated businessmen.

11 Sirajuddin was the owner of the Madhumita Cinema Hall and Sirco Soap Company. He was popularly known as the ‘Sirco Siraj’.

12 The plot where the present ‘Baliadi House’ at Dilkhusa situated was allocated to them for business purposes.

13 Poet Buddadev Basu (1908-1974) mentioned ‘Purana Paltan’ in his book *Amar Jouban* and in ‘Purana Paltaner Smirity’ an article published in the periodical.

14 Abbasuddin Ahmed (1901-1959) was settled at Purana Paltan by an exchange program with a Hindu landlord. For details, see *Amar Shilpi Jibaner Katha* by Abbasuddin Ahmed, 1960.

15 This ‘Jheel’ was popularly known as ‘Motijheel Khal’. The word ‘Motijheel’ is perhaps derived from this ‘Jheel’.



Bridge over the canal at Tantibazar-Nawabpur in 1814 Sayer duties were collected from boats passing this bridge

Mr. Ohiullah highlighted the business of the *Dhakya Mahajani* and *Beparis*, who had their business outside Dhaka. They usually termed it as *khep* or *Muffasil-Babsa*. Commodities like cloth, cookeries and shoes were generally chosen for this purpose. Even in the big *ganj* or *hats* there was a separate *gally* (narrow by-lane) namely *Dhakya Patty*. The remote areas like Barisal, Mymensing and Faridpur were their main operative areas where they used to go by boats or by other means of transportation.

Leather items like shoe-sandals had a big market in Mymensing. In Mymensing there was a market operated by the *Dhakaiya* merchants, namely *Dhakaiya Patty*. Like 'Kapuria Patty' different *bazars* of the southern district were dominated by the *Dhakaiyas*. Saree, shirtins and hosiery items were mainly dealt in by them, he mentioned. What was the impact of the 'Khals' in the business of Dhaka? Mr. Ohiullah in reply said that it was the 'nerve of the Dhaka-business.' *Dholai Khal* was the main among these *Khals*, once tolls were imposed on the boats passing with goods through this *khals*. In the 40s of the last century, *Dholai Khal* begun to lose its navigability, as the wastages of the Dhaka cantonment were dumped to this *Khal*.

Replying to the question whether this aspect was looked after by the municipality or city corporation, Mr. Ohiullah said, 'It was war time'<sup>16</sup> and during the World War, the British Army took

16 This refers to World War II. As soon as the World War was threatening Burma, the British Army comprehending expedition to India, developed cantonments and airports in different places of East Bengal. Tejgaon Airport originally was built for war purposes in 1942. Airport in Sylhet and in Cox's Bazar were also developed for military purposes.

over the responsibility of the civil administration. Like other parts of eastern India, Dhaka was in the 'Red alert' Zone as the Japan Army had been advancing towards East Bengal. Dhaka and Chittagong were the important cities considering the military and strategic places of the region. More and more people had been recruited at the cantonments at that time.<sup>17</sup> Movement was very frequent and leftover and other disposable items were dumped in Dhaka's *Khal*, especially in the Dholaikhal. After the partition, the population of Dhaka has been increasing and other *Khals* gradually were filled up for habitat purposes. Thus Dhaka's *Khals* lost their existence, though the *Khals* once were commercially important.<sup>18</sup>

About Tejgaon Industrial Area, in order to rehabilitate the migrated people and for providing them with industrial facilities, this area was earmarked and developed within the shortest possible time. Even some government offices, like the Government Press (now BG Press), the Survey Office and the Govt. Engineering Workshop, etc. were also established at Tejgaon, he added.

As per Mr. Ohiullah, as it was the main industrial area of Dhaka, political unrest was a common phenomenon at Tejgaon Industrial Area. In fact, the labour forces at Tejgaon, Adamjee Jute Mills, Tongi Areas used to determine the fate of the labour movement in East Bengal.<sup>19</sup>

In regard to road communication with new Dhaka, Mr. Ohiullah said, "Dhaka-Mymensing Road, a narrow road in the early sixties, was widened during the visit of the Queen of England in the sixties.<sup>20</sup> Another road was made from Sadarghat to Malibagh-Shantinagar in the sixties aiming to connect Gulshan areas. About the development of Mohammadpur, he said, 'Mohammadpur and Mirpur areas were far away from Dhaka and were like rural villages in the 1950s and 1960s. It was Governor Azam Khan, who initiated to develop *Mohajeeer* Colony over there. After completion, President Ayub inaugurated the colonies.<sup>21</sup>

After Tejgaon, said Mr. Ohiullah, 'Tongi was developed as an industrial area. Though the Tejgaon Industrial Area was mainly for non-Bengali classes but Tongi got a mixed character. Both the Bengali and non-Bengali entrepreneurs were allowed to have industrial allocation over there.

About the industrial prospect of Dhaka, Mr. Ohiullah said, "There is a bright prospect, specially in the hands of new generation. Dhaka, obviously, will grow further in the path of progress and prosperity by expanding areas in commerce and industry in the coming days."

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17 The Kurmitola Cantonment was set up during the Second World War in 1942 for military movements. Hundreds of young men were recruited and the cantonment was subsequently known as 'Dhaka Cantonment'.

18 For importance of the Dhaka's *Khal*, see Po. Geddes 'Report on Town Planning', Dacca, 1917.

19 For Labour Movement, see Kamruddin Ahmed, *Labour Movement in East Pakistan*, 1969.

20 President Ayub inaugurated the Mohammadpur Colony.

21 Queen Elizabeth II visited Dhaka in the month of February 1961 and was accorded civic reception at the Ramna Green on 14 February, 1961.

## 8

**M. Shahjahan Khan**

Though the sea-borne trade of Bangladesh during the pre-Pakistan period could be understood in one way or other, we talked to an eminent shipping businessman Mr. M. Shahjahan Khan, Managing Director of 'S. S. Shipping and Trading Co.' to have a picture of the shipping business in the country after 1947. Mr. Shahjahan Khan is also a director of the 'Shippers Council of Bangladesh' and a former vice-president and an ex-director of the DCCI. After having higher degree in economics at the Dhaka University, he obtained 'Diploma-in Professional Shipping' from the Norwegian Shipping Academy. He served as the General Manager (Chartering) at the Bangladesh Shipping Corporation (BSC).

Talking about his coming to shipping business, he said that he came across with the business while he was serving at the BSC. After this he started his own shipping business. In this regard Mr. Shahjahan said, 'Bangladesh has been traditionally resourceful in the maritime trade and shipping business. The maritime trade has been conducting the lion-share of this country's trade till even now since the time immemorial as mentioned both in ancient history<sup>1</sup> and ancient literature.<sup>2</sup> The *Chand Saudagar* episode is full of various trading sagas of the middle age., Replying to the question of the reasons for such expansion of marine trading in Bengal, the promising shipping businessman of this time said, 'There are many reasons, but the prime reason is this country's geographical and natural location.'



M. Shahjahan Khan

Bangladesh being a riverine country has been immensely gifted with fertile soil producing more than one commercial crops in abundance. Besides, the success in producing *karpas* gave birth to *tanti* or the weaver class of people for which textile has been developed as industry. 'How was it possible to develop textile industry in a country having agro-based economy? In reply to this question Mr. Khan said that this was possible because like other agricultural crops e.g. rice, jute, sugarcane and master seeds, *karpas*<sup>3</sup> used to grow plentifully in various hilly areas of Bangladesh including Dhaka. Though there was utility of other crops for trading and consumption at the production level, it took a long time to turn *karpas* into a commercial product. Perhaps, *karpas* was turned into thread for producing coarse cloth first and later fine cloth. He said that in our agriculture, one farmer usually spends idle time in between sowing and harvesting and possibly for better utilising this time he works

1 *Jataka* Stories, the accounts of the Strabo, Pliny, the *Periplus*, *Megasthenes*' account, etc. give a picture of the Bengal's ancient business. For details, see R. K. Mukharji, *A History of Indian Shipping*, Calcutta, 1912.

2 *Yakti Kalpataru* an ancient *Kabbaya* denotes the marine activities of ancient Bengal. *Purbabanga Gitika* by Dinesh Chandra Sen and *Mangal Kabbays* refer to several kinds of sea-going vessels and business thereby. A poem expresses:

AvtM Ptj Rj cj vi x cvtQ Rj nvi  
tmb Abjmvfi tbsKv evtn KYavi \

3 *Karpas* was produced abundantly in the Brahmaputra valley. The present 'Kapasias' once was famous for producing *Karpas*. According to J. Taylor this *karpas* was of the best quality in the world. See Abdul Karim, *Dhakai Muslim*, Bangla Academy, 1965, pp. 28-29.



for cottage industry. Faced with the question whether he being a student of economics considers 'law of diminishing return' works on land for which switching over to cottage industry with its expansion is taking place. A farmer might not be acquainted with this term, but the knowledge that he gains through practical experiences leads him to the conclusion that by applying additional inputs, capital and labour to a piece of land more than the requirement, would not give much higher yield in return. Natural calamities damage frequently his crops on the land.<sup>4</sup> He has to think for alternatives while facing all these risks. The farmers' families turned to weaving during their leisure period. Gradually this crossed over the domestic market and got expansion in outer world with the refinement of the quality in the form of 'muslin' that later attracted foreign traders.<sup>5</sup>

Over the period, local traders also became active in marine trading, firstly in inland and later outwardly. Talking about marine trading, Mr. Khan said in the ancient period, Bengal's marine trading was extended up to the south and southeast Asia, Central Asia and Europe as there had been many historical evidences of having trade with China, Java, Ceylon and the Arab countries.<sup>6</sup> With regard to competition among the traders in ancient Bengal, he said it appeared that as such there was no competition in the beginning. Later the Arabs and the Chinese came. They used different routes for doing trade – the Chinese from the eastern side and the Arabs from the western side. For commercial interests, there was no unhealthy competition between them. Healthy competition is desirable in the field of business. Replying to another question on how the Europeans entered into marine trading, Mr. Khan said that the Portuguese were the first among the Europeans to come to this trading according to all the available information.<sup>7</sup> But they proved to be too intolerant and conveniently resorted to attacks on other ships as pirates for plundering. Without having any investment, they used to kidnap people and started slave trade. Instead of doing trade as businessmen, they turned, in fact, to be pirates. But the Dutch, the English and the French did trade and maintained, somehow or other, a smooth pattern. Talking about capturing power by the British, he said that they took advantage of the weaknesses of the Mughal rulers. Besides the British had the aspirations of making a colony. With similar missions, the Portuguese attempted to make India as a 'Portuguese colony', the French a 'French colony'.

The English first took 'Dewani' or revenue collection authority and later took over the state-power.<sup>8</sup> Replying to a question on how he views the position of Bengal in sea borne trading during the British period, he said that the British could not abandon the old commercial tradition of Bengal. Perhaps, engine-run vessel was introduced during the period of East India Company in the first quarter of the nineteenth century instead of the sail-set ships, adding a new element to marine trading. About opening of the Suez Canal, he said that that helped expand sea-trading faster with Europe as the long sea route around the African continent has been cut short, making

4 For natural calamities of Dhaka district see appendix of this book.

5 For details of Muslin, see A. Karim *ibid.* Also see appendices of this book.

6 See C. K. Sridharan, *A Maritime History of India*, Delhi, 1965, also see S. Maqbul Ahmad, *Indo-Arab Relations*, New Delhi, 1969.

7 Vasco-da-Gama reached the coast of Calicut in August 1498 during the regime of Sultan Alauddin Husain Shah (1493-1519). The Portuguese first came to Bengal from the Maldives under the command of D. Joao de Silverira in 1517 A. D. Silverira anchored his ship at Chittagong. See Campos, J. J. A, *History of Portuguese in Bengal*, Calcutta, 1919.

8 East India Co. obtained their *Dewani* in 1765 A.D. In the Agreement the company ensured the aspect of Mohammed Reza Khan, as Naib of Dhaka, their business, confirmed the previous agreement with the Dutch, the fortune of the French and other European traders, other than Company, etc.



The historic Suez Canal after opening in 1869

trade much easier and safer. The opening of the Suez Canal, in fact, brought about a revolutionary change in trade by sea for the Asian and African regions.<sup>9</sup> Answering the question whether the Bengali businessmen could avail the opportunity in this regard, he said that though the past of Bengal's marine trading was rich, it could not develop such a way before the twentieth century. Marine trading developed earlier in places like Surat and Madras areas. Later gradually it was developed in Calcutta, Chittagong and Dhaka.<sup>10</sup> Talking about any legacy or inheritor in Dhaka now of Mughal period marine trading, Mr. Khan said that there were ups and downs in the Dhaka trade following the changes of capital several times.

Regarding Dhaka's contribution in maritime trading, he said that trade and commerce of East Bengal was marine-based. The *muslin* of Dhaka earned name and fame not only for Dhaka itself, it rather introduced India to the outside world as a whole.<sup>11</sup> Marine trading here expanded based on muslin and tea of eastern Bengal both for inland and abroad. For the reasons of trading, rivers like Buriganga, Laskhya and Brahmaputra were known to the foreign traders. There had been no specific sites as such here for all ages, but there had been no dearth of foreign travellers and traders here. The desire of visiting 'the land of muslin' existed among almost all the travelers of the Middle Ages. Muslin was not only an object to see or watch, but its importance as a commercial product was comparable with precious metals like silver and gold. Referring back to the British period, specifically to the exportable items from here, Mr. Shajahan Khan said that the major commodities were muslin, Lacca and sugar. Silk was also exported from here. Spices too were exported to Europe. China's silk was exported through Bangladesh.<sup>12</sup> Replying to a question on shipping

9 By 1862, the British India Steam Navigation Company forged ahead and spread their lines of sea communication both in the East and towards the West, devouring on the way all Indian competition with the opening of the Suez canal in 1869 and the shortening of the steaming distance by nearly 4000 miles, the company flourished.

10 Considering the ancientness of business, Dhaka and Chittagong are well ahead of Calcutta. Dhaka's sea-borne trade started before the Christian era, while Chittagong had been used as a sea port by the Chinese and Arabian traders from the beginning of the sixth and the seventh centuries.

11 All early Greek, Roman, Chinese, Arabian and European sources referred to 'Dhaka Muslin' in their accounts.



A ship in the river Shitalakhya

business during Pakistan days, he said that the Bengalis had no leadership in business then.<sup>13</sup> Bengalis started then entering as first generation into the business. On the contrary, others were in advance in this sector. After the partition of India, there were no big ports or port cities other than Chittagong<sup>14</sup> and Narayanganj<sup>15</sup> here. There were no merchant ships too. Whatever ships there had been then in Pakistan were based in Karachi. Some organisations though started to grow here in the fifties, in fact, it did not develop in any place other than Chittagong in East Pakistan.<sup>16</sup> Talking about how and why the Chalna Port came into being, Mr. Khan said that the Korean War in the fifties gave a boost to the jute market for which East Bengal's jute production and export both went up. The Chalna Port was set up.<sup>17</sup> The jute traders of Narayanganj were then using the Chalna Port. About the importance of Narayanganj in marine trading, he said that shipping business grew with

12 China's silk was brought to Bengal and then it was re-exported from the ancient ports of Bengal. Besides, Bengal used to produce silk-cloth and it was included in sea-borne trading.

13 In the Chambers of Commerce, a few Bengali were able to hold the high positions. Viz. Karachi Chamber of Commerce, Narayanganj Chamber of Commerce and Chittagong Chamber of Commerce.

14 Chittagong had started functioning under a trustee board in 1888. Before that it was a sea-harbor. See Administration Report of the Port Commissioner, Chittagong.

15 Narayanganj had been used as an inland port for a long period. In 1898 Narayanganj was made a port under the jurisdiction of Chittagong port.

16 Among the Chittagong based shipping companies in the 1950s, the Asiatic Steam Navigation Co., Bengal Coastal Shipping Co. Ltd, Burma Steam Navigation Co., Chand Bali, Steamer Service Co. Ltd., Indian General Navigation Co. Ltd., Karachi Steam Navigation Co., River Steam Navigation and Co, and in Dhaka Bengal Steamship Co, etc. were in operations.

17 Chalna port was established in 1950 under the port Act 1908. In 1950, a foreign ship namely 'City of Lyons' anchored in the river 'Pasur' and afterward this place was declared anchorage. The port of Chalna Authority was formed in 1976.



Ships at the Zinjira Dockyard

the expansion of jute trading as they were interlinked for Narayanganj that was the river port of Dhaka region.<sup>18</sup> Shippers', and bailers' organisations grew over here on the basis of jute business and jute export. Narayanganj being a river port hardly had any scope of developing itself for marine trading as such in a bigger scale. As the prospect of shipping business nowadays lies with having big merchant ships and from that point of view Dhaka or Narayanganj has little scope to grow. Chittagong with its seaport has rather a wider scope in

this regard. Giving his own assessment about the commercial importance of the Chittagong Port, Mr. Khan said that Chittagong has the history of trading for centuries. According to historical records, before the Arabs, the Chinese traders were first to come to Chittagong. Chittagong, in fact, became more important after railway connected it.<sup>19</sup> Subsequently, tea gardens were raised in the adjoining areas and tea started to be exported from here giving a further boost to its maritime trading. Mr. Shajahan Khan said that shipping business here started developing during the Pakistan period. Bengalis came much later to the business. Despite all these, some of the Bengalis came forward in the shipping business. A.K. Khan Group was one of them. They had shipping business earlier with Rangoon.<sup>20</sup> There were some Pakistani companies too. The shipping companies started growing following the enactment of the Merchant-ships Act of 1948.

Giving a resume of creation of the Bangladesh Shipping Corporation, Mr. Shajahan Khan said that realising the need of building the new country's own shipping, the BSC was set up by a Presidential order in 1972.<sup>21</sup> Though the corporation's head office is located in Chittagong, it got offices also in Dhaka and in Khulna besides overseas offices in Singapore and in London. Replying to another question on functioning of the BSC, Mr. Khan, a former executive of the corporation, said that its function had been divided into two – 'marketing' and 'chartering'. The marketing department looks after the maintenance of the ships and the chartering department is to look after chartering ships, public relations and the management. The shipping minister the ex-officio chairman of the corporation and he runs the organisation with the help of the managing director, directors, general

18 For the role of Narayanganj in trade and commerce of Eastern Bengal, see Chapter II of this book. Also see. Dr. Karunamaya Goshami, *Narayangonger Itihas*.

19 The Administrative Report of 1887-88 reveals that the scarcity of rice in Chittagong gave a thought to the Government to develop a rail line up to Chittagong. In 1892 the Assam Bengal Railway was set up under the Chairmanship of James Mido Rendel. For details, see Government of India, Railway Board, *History of Indian Railways*, p.19. Also see Dinak Shani Kabir, *History of Eastern Bengal Railways* (1862-1947), *ibid*.

20 A. K. Khan started his career as a law practitioner and subsequently became a Munsif in 1936. He got married in 1935 and his father-in-law Abdul Bari Choudhury, had his shipping business in Rangoon.

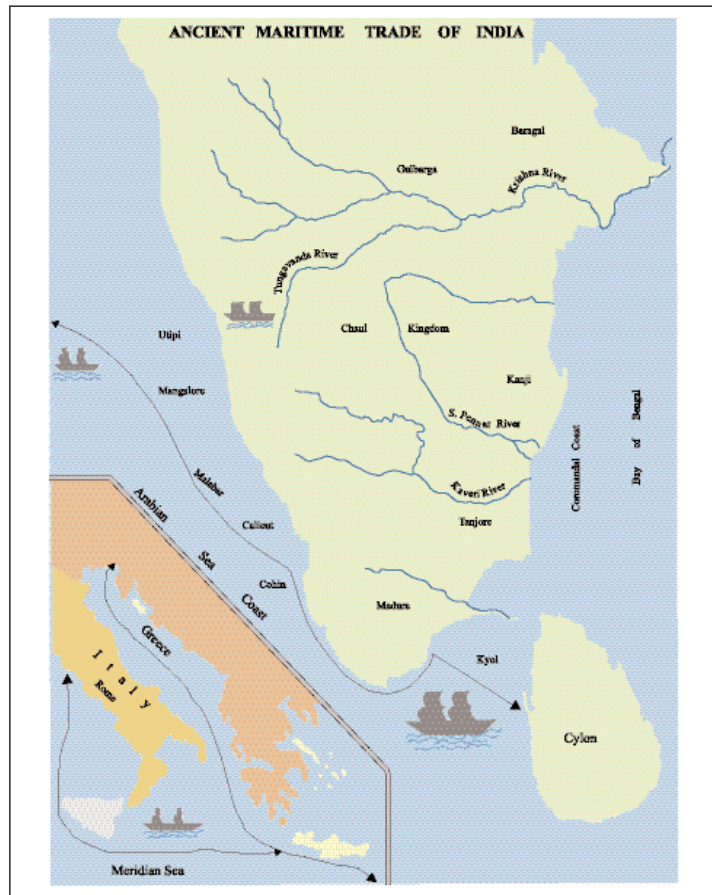
21 BCS was established on 5 February under the President order No-10 of 1972 and started functioning with the lone ship 'Banglar Doot' in 1972.



manager and secretary besides other officials and employees. Talking about the initial period of the shipping corporation, he said the BSC started its journey with the lone ship *Banglar Doot* in 1972. Later the number of ships increased to 13. There are two oil tankers at that time.

The BSC has its dockyard in Chittagong and Khulna. How does he, as a man of shipping business, assess the prospect at the private level, Mr. Khan said, ‘There is a wider prospect of shipping business in our country. Despite competition in the field, situation is conducive to our favour. It is possible to make this sector more prosperous and dynamic by providing the required patronage and by bringing about reforms in the rules and regulations. Referring to the emerging prospect of shipbuilding industry in the country, he said the country had suffered setbacks in traditional products like ‘muslin’ first and ‘jute’ later. Though the readymade garment (RMG) sector is dominating at present, it now seems to have lost its momentum. The shipbuilding has the potentials to grow as an emerging new sector for the country.<sup>22</sup> Bangladesh with its extended coasts and long-stretched beaches amply provides the scope to develop further the industry as a new area. In this regard, he said, Asia provides leadership to the shipbuilding industry for quite a long time. Earlier, Germany, United Kingdom, Finland, Russia, Denmark, the Netherlands and the United States because of their higher technology used to give leadership to the shipbuilding industry. The Asian countries, meanwhile, have also reached a stage in shipbuilding industry because of cheap labour and technical advancement. Among the Asian nations, Singapore had already made its mark. Later countries like Japan, South Korea, China, Vietnam and India earned the skills in the field.<sup>23</sup>

About Bangladesh’s position in this regard, Mr. Khan said that though there has been as such no effort at the public sector, some significant developments are noticeable in the private sector shipbuilding. So far I know two companies here received orders from abroad for shipbuilding and



22 For shipbuilding see Chapter 6 of this book.

23 Also see the article on the Possibilities of Ship Exports by Jalaluddin Omar, *Jai Jai din*, 6 March 2008.

such orders would go on increasing in the coming days. In this regard he felt that liberal government policy was urgently required for further development and expansion of this shipbuilding sector. Many countries have entered into the global market by adopting liberal policies. Citing examples he mentioned the name of Korea that already introduced 'green channel' for the import of raw materials for shipbuilding. To help develop the sector, India provides 30 per cent subsidy besides making shipbuilding industry 'tax free' for 15 years. Singapore is already in advance in the field for long, even though it made separate laws besides providing other facilities to this industry. Japan adopts a congenial policy for the expansion of the shipbuilding industry.

Replying to a question about what should be the policy of Bangladesh in the context of the highly competitive market facing the industry, Mr. Khan said that the world's giant ship makers or companies are now heavily occupied with the orders of building submarines. They are no more interested to build small or medium-size ships till 2010. Bangladesh can avail this opportunity easily for building small and medium size ships or vessels. About investment of capital in this regard, he said that to encourage the private sector, both the government and the banking sector can come forward and the government would get the benefit. Singapore earns 60 per cent of its revenue from the shipbuilding industry sector. In reply to a question whether required trained manpower would be available, he said that the marine institutes in our country have got 'shipbuilding courses' in the syllabus. Now there is hardly any job opportunity at home, they frantically seek jobs abroad. In this connection Mr. Khan informed that 60 per cent of the working employees of the Singapore shipyard are from Bangladesh. Talking about Bangladesh's position in shipbuilding industry, he said that there are some organisations in the private and the public sectors both working for shipbuilding and repairing. The navy-run Khulna Shipyard Limited and the Narayanganj Dockyard and Engineering Works Ltd and the BSC-run Chittagong Dry Dock Ltd are to be mentioned here in this regard. Asked about his comment on the DCCI's Golden Jubilee celebration this year,<sup>24</sup> Mr. Khan expressed his satisfaction saying the Dhaka Chamber's role in the development of the country's trade and commerce is significantly important. As a business leader he considers it a big achievement for the Dhaka Chamber that is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. For promoting and expanding trade of an independent country like Bangladesh, the Chamber's role is undeniable, as it has been amply proved. Mr. Khan expressed his optimism that the DCCI would go long way towards the path of more success and achievement in the years to come under the leadership of new generation.

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24 DCCI was founded in 1958 and it reached to 50 years of its illustrious functioning in March 2008.

# A peep into the traditional business of Dhaka

## 1. Pottery

Mati dia Kumbakare  
Putul Patil Katai gare  
Dhannya bali tare,  
Pani dia Sainna Mati  
Tare Kare Paripati  
Banaye Kato Ghati-bati  
Jater Anusare.

-Folksong of Manikgong

gmlU n' qv KzKvti  
cZj cwiZj KZB Mto  
ab' euj Zvti |  
cmlb n' qv QvBbwe gmlU  
Zvti Kti cwi cmlU  
evbvq KZ NtUevmlU  
RvtiZi Abjmti |  
-gmlbKltiÄi tj vKltvb

Pottery is an ancient industry of Bangladesh. The history of pottery industry in the Indian subcontinent is about five thousand years old. Vogel mentioned the importance given to pottery in ancient India.<sup>1</sup> *Bayyum* (a container of various sizes and shapes), flower vase, jar, pot, mug and cup made of clay are the ones traced back of those days. Pottery exists even now in 680 villages of Bangladesh.<sup>2</sup> Bangladesh, a riverine country finds most of its riverbeds and canals filled with sticky mud and silt that are suitable for making pottery. Pottery grew in villages along the old river belts of Dhaka because the soil available here is befitting for the industry.<sup>3</sup> *Kumarer Chak* (concentration of potter makers) as mentioned in the Kirtibash's *Ramayan* and *Kumarshala*, as if baked by fire' stated in *Mahabharata* and *Kumarer Bouri* in the *Manasa Mangal* during the middle ages – all these amply demonstrate that pottery is an ancient industry of the country. Relics showing existence of pottery in ancient Bengal were found at the archeological sites at Mahasthangarh, Paharpur and Mainamati along with *Kamauli* copper plate of *Vaidyadeva*, *Nidhanpur* copper plate and *Ballala Charita*. Many elements following archeological excavation have been found recently at Wari-Batteshwar of Dhaka region. *Golak*, *Gulti* (sling ball), wide-necked jar made of clay, *Shibling* also made of burnt clay, etc. speak of old civilisation of about 2500 years of Dhaka.<sup>4</sup> It was found through research that the indigenous people – living in Wari- Bateswar situated on the east bank of the old Bramaputra in Dhaka district, Bateswar and other adjoining areas – were very rich in pottery. 'Poin' meaning 'furnace for burning' was found in adjacent places of Wari like Amlab, Ujlab, Baghber, Goradia, Chandipara, Harisaddan, Morjal, Jossore and Letarab.<sup>5</sup> The Archeological Department of Jahangirnagar University discovered many pottery and



A earthen pot discovered at Wari-Bateswar

- 1 Vogel, *Catalogue of the Archaeological Museum at Muthura*, (No-109, 111, 162,199 and 201-4).
- 2 Henry Glassie, *Traditional Art of Dhaka*, (Bangla Academy, Dhaka, 200) p. 136.
- 3 Jatindra Mohan Roy, *Dhakar Itihas*, (Calcutta, 1912) p. 136.
- 4 Mohammad Habibullah Pathan, *Pratnatattik Nidarshan: Wari – Bateswar* (Dhaka, 1989) p. 33.
- 5 *Ibid*, p.33.

broken pieces during excavation at the place known as Old Kapalashawar under Kapashia upazila in 1997. Archeologists after studying and examining their structures and designs identified those as pottery belonging to seventh and eighth centuries of Dhaka. Many plaques and sculpture that are considered as evidences of the Buddhist era of Dhaka were found at the site known for King Harisha Chandra even at Savar of Dhaka.<sup>6</sup> Pottery was in use during the Mughal period. It is presumed that Islam Khan (1569-1613) brought also craftsmen including potters along with various people belonging to different professions when he had shifted capital to Dhaka. Dhaka's 'Kumartali' or 'Kumartuli' and Patuatuli remind one of the commercial activities of the potters in Dhaka during the Mughal period.<sup>7</sup>

The potters of Dhaka were then included as one of the Mughal craftsmen. The *Maharashtra Puran* of Gangaram denotes that during the Nawabi era and on the eve of *Bargi* evading in Bengal, like other people, the 'Kumar' community used to flee away to save their life. Gangaram Says:

Zte me eiWM M0g j jUtZ Avrmj  
hZ M0tgi tj vK me cvj vBj |  
Kvgvi Kvgvi cj v-G j Bqv Pvk  
RvDj v gvDQv cvj v- G j Bqv Rvj `mo|  
--MvZvi vg, gnvi v0tj vY

There was existence of remarkable number of potters in Dhaka in the beginning of the nineteenth century as mentioned by James Taylor regarding working people including the potters.<sup>8</sup> In his book he mentioned of many fairs in the areas of Dhaka where there was significant trade of pottery. Jatindra Mohan Roy, author of the *Dhakar Itihas*, wrote about craftsmanship of the potters of Bikrampur and Chandrapratap (Manikgonj) in making idols. Gaurikanti Sen of Kanchdia was a noted potter in nineteenth century<sup>9</sup> Dhaka. *Motki* meaning large jar and oil-container made of clay were produced in places like Kolakopa and adjacent areas of Dohar in Dhaka district. Size of one such jar was so large that it could contain as much as 40 maunds of oil. The potters here also were skilled in making pots of different sizes. Potters of Bikrampur used to make plates, idols and images of animals like horses, elephants, etc; and those were exported to other provinces through the Lauhajong port.<sup>10</sup>



Gadighar of the Pals at Rayerbazar

6 Mohammad Shah Jalal: *Bangladesher Mrith shilpa*, (Bangla Academy, 1985) p. 39 (ASOP). Also see Jalal, *Traditional Pottery in Bangladesh*, Dhaka, 1987.

7 Abdul Karim, *Dacca: The Mughal Capital*, (ASOP, 1964) p. 120.

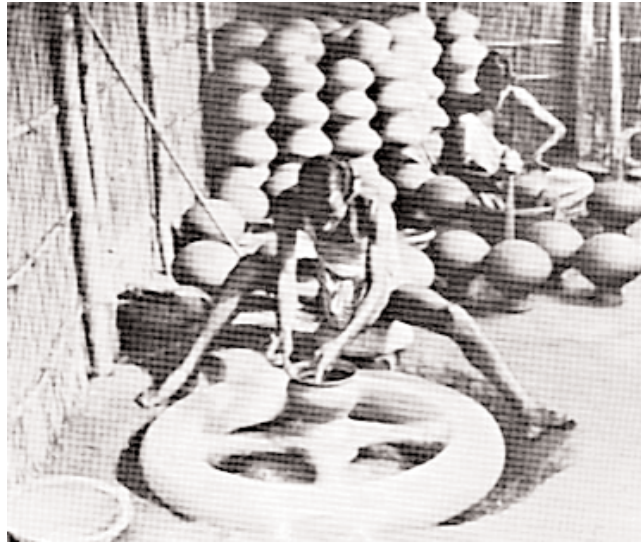
8 James Taylor, *A Sketch of the Topography and Statistic of Dacca*, (Calcutta, 1840) p. 182.

9 Jatindra Mohan Roy, *ibid*, p. 136.

10 Jogendranath Gupta, *Vikrampur Itihas*, (Calcutta, 1907) p. 38.



Potters of Dhaka were known as *Kumbhakar* or *Kumar*. Because of their trade, they belonged to the *Pal* community in Dhaka. Centering round this trade, some pottery-villages and Pal-colonies grew up in greater Dhaka over the ages. The Pal community used to carry out their business through generations. According to Walter's Census of Dacca in 1830 there were 143 *Kamar* families with 665 members. The potters of villages outside Dhaka city, too, had some landed properties.<sup>11</sup> *Kilns* used for burning clay-made pots in the Dhaka region were age-old. Earlier hemp was used for this purpose and now straw has replaced it. Potter's wheel as a significant instrument is required for



A potter at work

making plates and bowls out of clay and it dates back to the *vedic* era. Poet Vijoy Gupta of East Bengal during the middle age mentioned this potter's wheel in his epic *Manasamangal*. Though male potters used to give shape to whatever they made in pottery, female members of the family used to smooth those to beautify. Utensils made of clay, especially those coloured and ornate ones, large-sized jars and the likes were supplied to other places of Bangladesh. In winter, the traders of the Bikrampur areas used to go to the southern region in big boats for selling earthen utensils at the *hats* and *bazaars* there. Keeping their boats anchored for a longer period in one of the places, they used to sell their products by carrying themselves in those areas. Usually their trade was carried out through barter by exchanging paddy for earthen utensils. It was done particularly during the harvesting period. Aluminum, melamine and plastic products have now replaced considerably the traditional clay-made pottery. In various places like Laxmi Bazar of Dhaka during the British period, *Hukkar Kalki*, *Pujar Chati*, *Cherag* (earthen lamp) and *Lota* (jar) were produced though on a small scale.

There was concentration of the Pal community for pottery along both the sides of the non-existent *Pandu River* – now known as Kawran Bazar and Eskaton in Dhaka.<sup>12</sup>

The areas known for pottery – Eskaton on the south bank and Kawran Bazar on the north of the river – were in existence till the fifties and sixties of the last century. Few hundreds of potters and businessmen used to live there. But after the independence, pottery as industry ceased to exist here mainly for extension and expansion of the growing city and for lack of patronisation. Pots made here once were sent to different areas of Dhaka and greater Mymensingh by boat for sale.<sup>13</sup>

11 Shamsur Rahaman, *Life in East Pakistan*, (Dhaka, 1953) p. 45.

12 Delwar Hassan, *Brihattar Dhakar Itihash*, (unpublished) p. 220.

13 Hafizuddin, aged about 75, told this writer that the 'pal' Community of New Eskaton used to sell their products on the whole-sale basis mainly to the 'paikars' of Bhairab and other places of greater Mymensingh district.

### Rayerbazar: a century old potter's village

A village for pottery also grew up remarkably once at Rayerbazar of Dhaka. The Pal community, according to them, came to the area about three hundred years ago.

The sticky and sandy soil of the area (Dhaka) is very useful for any such earthen work.<sup>14</sup> The sticky soil of Dhaka's Rayerbazar is called *Raagmati* and the sandy soil *Abolmati* and the place where the soil for the work is kept is called *Matikhola*. Such dice for making pottery is known as *Atla* at Rayerbazar.<sup>15</sup> The potters of Dhaka region usually make pots and pottery that include among other things water jar, *Sora*, *Matirsuri*, cooking and kitchen utensils like pots and pans, *Shanki*, *Ghoti* of different types and sizes, *Jhajar* for making *Muri*, *Matirgamla* (clay-made basin), salt-pot, dice cast for making *Pitha*, curd-pot, *Paner Dhabar*, *Malsa*, *Kalsi* (water jar), *Hukka*, flower-vase, *Matir pradip*, *Pidi*, 'Matka' (big earthen jar) for storing rice/paddy/wheat), *Chari*, lid to cover utensil, etc. Besides all these earthen utensils, different types of dolls and puppets, and clay-made images of various animals like elephant, horse, tiger, cow and a variety of fruits for sale in fairs and exhibitions were held occasionally in Bengal. The potters of Dhaka also make *Laskhir*



A potter at work



Potters at their finishing task

*Sara*, *Sakher Hari* and images of different gods and goddesses.<sup>16</sup> All these images made by potters of Dhaka were recognised warmly by the Hindu community of the surrounding districts including Dhaka. Dhaka's earthen plate usually carries colours like red, yellow, blue and pink. Apart from these, picture of a goddess is painted on the earthen plate of Dhaka. Though Dhaka's earthen plate resembles that of Faridpur, Amiyo Kumar mentioned about the significant feature of it with the typical symbol (East Bengal's business symbol) of a goddess as sitting on a peacock-shaped boat *Mayur pankhi* that reminds one of the business tradition of ancient

14 Kedarnath Mazumder, *Dhakar Bibaran* (Mymensing, 1910) p. 118.

15 Interview with Mr. Maran Chand Pal (62) of Rayer bazar, Dhaka.

16 The *Saras* of Vikrampur, Dohar are famous for its craftsmanship. *Saras* made at Bhasail, Abirpara lata Khola are called *Dhakai Sara* which are significant as the Devi Luxmi is found sitting on a *Maiurpankhi* boat. It refers to the very old proverb 'Banijjeya Basate Laxmi', Vikrampur areas are surrounded by rivers and had its track records of old maritime business. Also see Mohammad Shahjalal, *Bangladesher Mrithshilpa* (Bangla Academy, 1985) p. 71.

Bengal. Dolls made at Dhaka's Rayerbazar were at par with those made at Kartikpur in Faridpur district. The urn-shaped jars made at Dhaka's Nayarhat were popular all over Bangladesh. Yellow colour makes it spectacular. Flower tubs of Savar and Dhamrai, Matka of Kolakopa-Bandura and curd-pots of Shekhernagar and Sirajdikhan were known for their quality.<sup>17</sup> Products like clay-made pots for saving coins (Matir Bank) and dolls were in large number at both Srinagar and Munshiganj of Dhaka. There were existences of such pottery at different places in Dhaka district during the twenties and thirties of the 20th century. But many of these items have been lost over the period.

#### **Principal pottery centres in the 1930s**

The names of the principal pottery centres are mentioned in the records of the then Sadar subdivision, Manikgonj subdivision, Munshigonj subdivision, and Narayanganj subdivision of Dhaka district as recorded in the survey conducted on cottage industry by the industries division of the Government of Bengal in 1929.

**Sadar Subdivision:** Galimpur, Jafrabad, Sultanganj, Sibpur, Rayerbazar, Simulia, Mamlamir, Golla, Narisha, Bakshanagar, Dohar, Bardhanpara, Barrah, Jantrail, Sakiarpara, Jatrabari, Syampur, Harirampur and Churain.

**Manikganj Subdivision:** Kayannara, Niharpur, Khaliabad, Gopalpur, Daulatpur, Nilua, Khalsi, Rauha, Mirzapur, Baruria, Mahadebpur, Baulikanda, Azimnagar, Lanta, Bharoria, Sutarali, Boyra, Dhankora and Gopinathpur.

**Munshiganj Subdivision:** Pashail, Autshahi, Gaupara, Madhyapara, Dakshin-Charigaon, Tantar, Srinagar, Singpara, Fegunashar, Furshail, Kanaksar, Nagerhat and Bengaon.

**Narayanganj Subdivision:** Nagadiki birbagh ber and Chandanpur.

Source: A. T. Weston, *Report on the Survey of Cottage Industries in Bengal*, Calcutta, 1929, p.73.

As seen now, many of them have either been extinct or lost their tradition. The 1929 survey reveals that about 8,000 potters were engaged in their work in the district of Dhaka. About four hundred potter-families used to live in Dhaka town then and their average monthly income was Taka 20 only.<sup>18</sup>

#### **Pottery Sale-Centres in Dhaka City**

A sale centre of pottery grew at the place adjacent to the Shishu Academy near the High Court in Dhaka city by the end of seventies of the last century. Initially it started with 2/3 makeshift shops of pottery. About its background, Shukur Ali Matabbar (75), one of the founders of the sale centres, said that a fair used to be held at the Shishu Academy premises during the period of 1978-79. But most of the pottery products brought in for the fair used to remain unsold due to continuous rain and storm during that time. Shukur Ali Matabbar had brought the pottery products from Mymensingh region. After the fair, he found it troublesome to take back those unsold products and tried to sell those at the entrance of the Shishu Academy. Though the sale at the fair was not so good, the children and their guardians showed keen interest in the pottery products that made brisk

<sup>17</sup> Shafiqur Rahman Choudhury, *Bangladesher Mritshilpa*, 1995, p. 24.

<sup>18</sup> A.T. Weston, *Report on the Survey of Cottage Industries in Bengal*, Govt. of Bengal, 1929, p.74.

**The Chief Pottery Villages of Dhaka Region in 2003**

Upazilla/Thana	Name of the Pottery village	No of potter Families
Mohammadpur	Rayer Bazar	5
Kaliakair	Benipur	40
Kaliakair	Altapara	32
Savar	Naihati	10
Savar	Khatiapur	9
Joydebpur	Kadda	10
Joydebpur	Shimulia	---
Joydebpur	Khamarpara	---
Dhamrai	Barigaon	---
Dhamrai	Hajeepur	60
Dhamrai	Kagojipara	60
Dhamrai	Brajer tek	18
Dhamrai	Tekpara	---
Dhamrai	Syedpara,	---
Dhamrai	Kakran	60
Dhamrai	Islampur	---
Palash	Gorashal,	7
Kapasia	Aral	---
Kapasia	Nayan bazar	20
Nawabganj	Komarganj	20
Nawabganj	Churain	25
Nawabganj	Zhandrail	20
Nawabganj	Momendi	---
Nawabganj	Harishful	50
Nawabganj	Puratan	---
Nawabganj	Hasnabad	40
Saturia	Khalilabad	20
Saturia	Tilli	---
Saturia	Suturia palpara	25
Harirampur	Alinagar	30
Harirampur	Gonga Sagar	---
Harirampur	Gopinathpur	---
Ghior	Kala Chandpur	20
Ghior	Baravila	---
Tongibari	Abdullahpur	---
Tongibari	Amtali	9
Tongibari	Ghander	---
Tongibari	Aldi	---
Sirajdi Khan	Fainpur	23
Sirajdi Khan	Bhuira	35
Sirajdi Khan	Bashail	---
Sirajdi Khan	Kajishala	31
Sirajdi Khan	Shekhornagur	43
Sirajdi Khan	Tegaria	---
Sirajdi Khan	Abirpara	23
Sirajdi Khan	Charmuddi	---
Sirajdi Khan	Fegunamar	---
Rupganj	Gula Kandail	8
Sreenagar	Kamorgaon	20
Manikganj	Palora	---
Shibalaya	Baradia	15
Shibalaya	Sanbanda	---
Shibalaya	Dhumur	---
Narshingdi	Pulampur	12
Narshingdi	Shaikadi	---
Narshingdi	Bhagiratpur	17

Source: A survey carried out for the 'Commercial History of Dhaka' 2008 and *Bangladesher Karupolli*, BSCIC, Dhaka, 1985



business. In fact, that was the beginning of a temporary sale centre for pottery here. Following Shukur Ali Matabbar of Tangail, Shambhunath Pal (50) and Bhaja Pal (40) of Nayarhat, and Banijja Pal (60) of Dhamrai's Hazipur came there with their pottery. There are now 36 pottery shops in this place. Pottery products usually come from places like Savar, Dhamrai, Nayarhat, Barisal and Patuakhali for sale in these centres.<sup>19</sup> According to shop owner Mohammad Awolad Hossain (47), though traditional potteries were sold earlier, buyers are now more interested in fancy pottery. He informs that besides brisk sale of pottery products like toys and flower tubs, business of new designs is also flourishing. There is also a 60-member registered association for smooth pottery business at Shisu Academy region. The pottery traders here usually come from different districts. Most of those coming from Bhola are victims of the Meghna river erosion.<sup>20</sup>



Pottery products on display

### Pottery of Rayerbazar: In the Eyes of Elderly Potters

About three hundred years ago during the Nawabi period, pottery grew as an industry at Rayerbazar situated in the north-western side of Dhaka city. It is presumed that population of Dhaka started to decline gradually when Nawab Murshid Quli Khan shifted the capital from Dhaka to Rajmahal in 1717. As a result, it became difficult to survive for the potters of the Dhaka's Kumartuly area that grew up during the Mughal period. Then they shifted towards the riverside in Dhaka's north-western area. They shifted because it was then possible to move across the country by river-route from Saatmasjid Ghat for carrying out their pottery business. There were huge demands of pottery produced at Rayerbazar in different localities of the Dhaka and Mymensingh districts. According to a different source, there were 750 weavers families during the Company days, but they turned to pottery when they had found it impossible to do weaving due to repressive textile policy being pursued by the East India Company and export of textile to Europe almost ceased. The great famine of 1770 made the weavers of Dhaka helpless following which they took to many alternative professions for their survival.<sup>21</sup> Three major reasons worked behind the growth of pottery at Rayerbazar. Firstly, soil required for pottery is easily available here. Similarly, fire-materials like straw required for baking pottery are also cheaper; and thirdly, it was easier to carry those products across Bangladesh by river for sale.

19 For district-wise pottery craft industry in Bangladesh, see Dr. Mohammad Shah Jalal, *Traditional Pottery in Bangladesh*, Dhaka, 1987

20 Following is the list of pottery traders:

Abul Kashem Sikder (65), 2. Obaid-Ullah (45), 3. Mafiz (45), 4. Manik (55), 5. Hanif Mandol (60), 6. Bachchu (45), 7. Ruhul Amin (55), 8. Babul (40), 9. Salam (50), 10. Sohel (45) of Rajshahi, 11. Nizam (40), 12. Mannan Sheikh (65), 13. Wahab (55), 14. Sohel (35) of Dhaka, 15. Lalchand (35), 16. Jahangir Mollah (55), 17. Mohammad Awlad (47), 18. Badal (32), 19. Manir (35), 20. Al-Amin (30), 21. Hameed (55), 22. Sadhu (60) and 23. Jaynal (70) of Rayerbazar:

21 For the great famine and other natural calamities, see Kali Charan Ghosh, *Famines in Bengali 1770-1943*. Calcutta, 1944.



A pottery loaded boat at Kumarpara

It is learnt from the local elderly potters that their products were sent to far-away places and regions like Assam and Shilchar. The pot-makers of Rayerbazar later in 1918 formed a 'Pal Samity Trust' for getting their professional recognition.<sup>22</sup> It is learnt that Bango Binod Roy Choudhury, a reputed local zaminder provided revenue free land for temple and rehabilitation of the craftsmen.

**Harivakta Pal:** According to octogenarian Harivakta Pal (85) working still at Rayerbazar, boats coming from Gopalpur and Bhairab used to take pottery products earlier from here. Bhairab was known then as one of the big inland river ports of East Bengal. Pottery from here used to be exported to Mymensingh, Sylhet and Assam region through the Brahmaputra River. Harivakta's father, Rajendra Pal was also a potter and died at the age of 70. His grandfather Nabakishore Pal was a noted potter during the British period. Their ancestral home was at Bakupata area in Savar. Kedarnath Majumder who wrote the *Mymensingher Itihash* mentioned in his book about Gopalpur as the district's one of the major markets and Bhairab as a prime port for export and import.<sup>23</sup> Coal was used in some pottery factories during the British period; and when coal import from India was barred, dependence on straw and *Chan* (materials used as fuel) increased. There were a number of *ghats* (landing site) in the Rayerbazar area and movement of commodities for trade of Dhaka city with other districts used to take place through these ghats. These ghats include: 1. *Talir-office Ghat*, 2. *Rayerbazar Ghat*, 3. *Khejor Parar Ghat*, 4. *Pandit Parar Ghat*, 5. *Rahim Beparir Ghat* and 6.

<sup>22</sup> An interview with Harivakta Pal (85) at Rayerbazar on 10 October 2007.

<sup>23</sup> Kedarnath Majumder, *Mymensingher Bibaran*, 1910,





An Arat at Rayerbazar

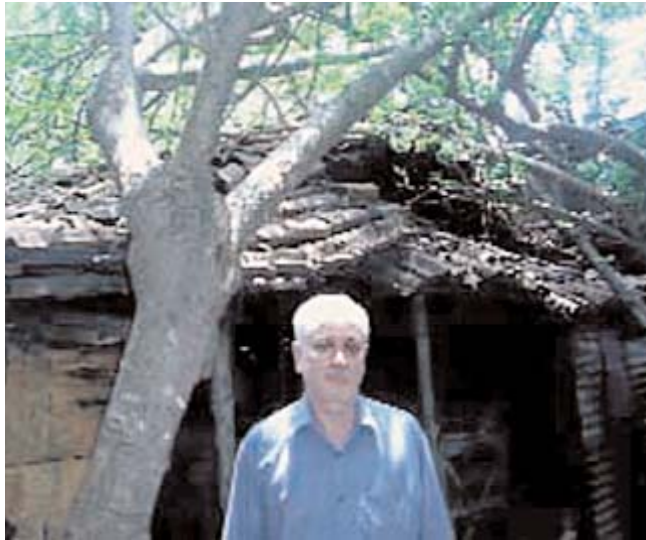
*Saat Masjid Ghat.* Among these ghats, the *Saat Masjid Ghat* was much more known. During the Mughal period, bulk of Dhaka's inland water trade used to take place through this *ghat*. In the map drawn by Rennel in 1786 of Dhaka in which, though the area of the old part was located, Saat Masjid was the only place specifically located.<sup>24</sup> Possibly it was mentioned for its commercial importance. During the Mughal period, there was a Mughal Fort at Zaffarabad, near Rayerbazar and there, too, was a road stretched up to Dhamrai (Displayed on the map of Rennell).

**Nanda Pal:** Now 70, he is engaged still with pottery business. According to him, the whole area stretching from Saat Masjid to Tannery crossing was known as *Palpara* where ten to twelve thousands potters used to live. Every house had a factory. More than one *Kool* was used with the increase in number of family members and the maximum number was four.<sup>25</sup> Three seasons were marked by brisk activities at the *ghats* situated at Palpara and on the riverbanks. And the seasons were known through the months of *Ashar*, *Agrahayan* and *Chaitra* of the Bengali calendar. There was great demand of *Matka* (large jar) made of clay in the month of Agrahayan for storing rice and paddy in families. All these large jars usually used to come from Kolakopa area of Nawabganj through whole-sellers and were sent to different places across Bangladesh through river routes.

**Subhash Pal:** According to Subhash Pal, born in 1946, who now works as a modern designer, pottery trading was almost closed during the liberation war in 1971 when some leading potters

24 See the Map of Dacca environ after Rennell. During the East India Company, Satmajid Ghat was an important 'Ghat' used for maritime business with the northern Bengal, Sylhet and Mymensing areas.

25 Henry Glassie, *ibid*, p. 226.



Subash Pal, a modern potter in front of his 'chulli'

were killed after the Pakistan forces picked them up. After independence, the industry emerged afresh following a tough situation due to increased price of raw materials and stiff competition posed by plastic, melamine and ceramic products. In fact, the industry reduced to almost a non-existence situation. Rayerbazar, too, was reduced to a small trading centre though once it was a hub of pottery. Gitarani Pal (57), Gosai Pal (55), Maranchand Pal (61), now a teacher of Dhaka Arts College, has introduced the modern trend in pottery, particularly in making toys, flower-tubs and flower-vases and his products have got good demand at home and abroad.<sup>26</sup>

Among the potters of Rayerbazar prominent are Shambunath Pal, Chittaranjan Pal, Krishnaballav Pal, Bacchu Mia, Lalchand Pal, Mohammad Ali, Abdur Rahman, Ranjit Pal, Arun Pal, Swadesh Pal, Babul Sheikh and Goda Pal.

### Potters of Kagoji Para and Kakran

Kagojipara, located near Dhamrai in Dhaka district, broadly indicates that once paper was produced here.<sup>27</sup> Dhaka's Nawab Shyeista Khan (1616) gave some lands to those technicians in Dhaka and its surrounding areas for producing paper with a view to keeping official records and documents. But when Murshid Quli Khan shifted the capital from Dhaka to Rajmahal, the 'Kagojis' started facing hardship and they switched over to other technical jobs as an alternative. Now the pertinent question comes whether the 'Kagojis' of Dhamrai's Kagojipara turned to pottery as an alternative job. As there was a road reaching Dhamrai from Zafarabad near Rayerbazar as shown in Rennell's map,<sup>28</sup> the question would continue to be asked until the history of the pottery at Kagojipara is revealed. Both Kagojipara and Kakran are located on the side of the Bangshi river beside the Asian Highway, 38 kilometers west of Dhaka. There are 30 pottery factories in the two villages and most of the inhabitants are Hindu potters.<sup>29</sup> As it has become difficult to survive with traditional products, the potters are now making fancy ones like *Shakher hari*, toys, dolls, ornate flower-vases, flower-tubs, ashtrays and images. For their survival, the potters have adopted the modern means as alternative. Out of a total 26 factories of Kakran village, six of them are modern ones. Among the elderly potters of Kagojipara and Kakran, the following names are worth mentioning.

<sup>26</sup> Interview with Moranchand Pal at Rayerbazar on October 23, 2007.

<sup>27</sup> In places like Aral in Dhaka district, one kind of paper used to be produced and those who were involved in the production were known as *Kagoji* by name. Dhaka's *Kagojitola* also reminds one of the paper-producers of Dhaka.

<sup>28</sup> See Rennell's Atlas

<sup>29</sup> According to a survey in 1985, Kagojipara and Kakran had 120 families with this profession. By this time, many of them have given up their ancestor's profession: see Bangladesher Karupolli, BSCIC, 1985.



**Amulya Chandra Pal:** Born in 1916, now he lives permanently at Kagojipara as usual with his job. According to Amulya Chandra Pal, initially though he made traditional clay jars and utensils he started making ashtrays and toy-banks when their demands declined over the period. Later he produced images of toy animals like elephant, horse and images of poet Nazrul, Rabindranath, Ganesh and replica of Tajmahal and Savar mausoleum. The famous 1350-famine work of Zainul Abedin was remarkably reflected through his pottery apart from the tasks on traditional *Palki* or palanquin of Bengal, Bangladesh map and terracotta. Manindra Pal, Gaurchandra Pal, Tarun Pal, Khokanchandra Pal, Jamunarani Pal and Nepalchandra Pal are also known for their skills in pottery.

### **Shimulia-Khamarpara**

Shimulia is situated under Savar in the north of Dhamrai. Pottery is produced at Shimulia and in the three of its adjacent villages. Big sizes of clay-made elephant and horse are produced at Khamarpara. It is in the remote area and not easily accessible by road from Dhamrai. The whole-sellers usually take the products from here for doing their business elsewhere. In fact, the reputation of pottery at Savar is very age-old.<sup>30</sup>

**Maranchandra Pal:** A noted potter of Shimulia, he is now 75 and his father's name is Chandmohan Pal. Their factory at Shimulia is quite big and they have earned the skills in producing pottery of animal images. He is also aware of the declining condition of these products and is seeking remedies to overcome the problems.

**Narayan Chandra Pal:** In the locality he is known as the '*Murtir Karigar*'. He has the name for making large size of earthen goddess Durga. He used to get orders from various places for making images of goddesses. He is also an expert in making '*Swareswati*' (goddess of education). His younger brother Babu Lal also helps him in his work of making images.<sup>31</sup>

**Babu Lal Pal:** Born in 1935 at Khamarpara. His father was also a prominent potter during his time. Babu Lal's son Swapan Pal had his education at Dacca's Art Collage following this line. Images of goddesses Durga, Kali, Laksmi and Swareswati are usually made at his workshop. Besides Sylhet and Narshingdi districts, maximum orders are being received from Manikganj area.

Babu Lal is also reputed for his terracotta works on *Mahabharata* and village life.<sup>32</sup>

The families of Falan Chandra Pal and Joypal have also gained name and fame in making quality pottery. Henry Glassie mentioned in his writings places like Palara, Manikganj, Baliadi, Kaliakair as famous for pottery manufacturing besides Shimulia and Khamarpara.<sup>33</sup>

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30 Delwar Hassan, *Brihattar Dhakar Itihas*. (Unpublished), p. 224.

31 Interview with Narayan Chandra Pal at Khamarpara, Savar on October 23, 2007.

32 Interview with Babulal Pal at Khamarpara, Savar on October 23, 2007.

33 Henry Glessie, *ibid*, p. 223.

## 2. Conch shell industry

wñ½v tm Wgij v evq| i'j cñZ MxZ Mvq|  
 Kvfb tkvtf kñ•Li KñJ  
 -gKs`ivtgi Pñg½j  
 Pvi `QBj vi gvl %ñj vg tñZvi `vñei Nñi  
 `qv Kñi Pvi Lvb kuLv bvB ñc×vBm tñvñi \  
 -ñMvñ Pññ`i Mñb

Singa se damura bae. Sulpati geet gae.  
 Kane shove shanker kundal  
 -Chandi Mangal of Mukanda Ram  
 Char chailar mao hailam tor daver ghare  
 Daya kori charkhan shanka nai Pindhais more  
 -Song of Gopi Chand

Conch shell is, too, an ancient industry of Bangladesh. According to modern researchers, conch shell emerged as an industry about two thousand years ago. Many of the conch-shell works of two thousand years old have been found in Korkai, the ancient capital of Tamil state and in the ruins of Kayel.<sup>1</sup> The industry expanded along the coast of India's Manna. There was good description of expansion of conch-shell industry in Korkai city, alternative capital of Pandyan state as mentioned in an old Tamil poem titled *Maduraikkanchi*. The Tamil epic, *Silappathikaran*, (composed in the first century) also mentioned the conch-shell industry and products of southern India used to be exported to different countries of the world with the help of Greek and Egyptian merchants. James Hornell is convinced that the conch-shell industry can be traced back from the first century of the Christian era, as it is evident from ancient Tamil classics. According to Hornel:

Reference to ancient Tamil classics furnishes evidence scanily but indubitable of the existence of an important chunk-cutting industry in the ancient Pandyan Kingdom in the early centuries of the Christian era. Similar evidence is also extant of a widespread use of carved and ornamented chunk bangles in former days by the women of Pandyan country, which may be considered as roughly coextensive with the modern districts of Tinnevely, Madura and Ramnad, forming the eastern section of the extreme south of the Madras presidency.<sup>2</sup>

Not only in Tamil, this industry expanded in many areas of Deccan and Gujarat also. Later it flourished in Dhaka city of East Bengal. Conch-shell was once the major commercial product of Bengal and Dhaka emerged as the main centre of India's conch-shell industry.<sup>3</sup> But how the hub of conch shell industry was transferred to Dhaka from the southern India is still a matter of research. Hornell, however, mentioned one reason in 1912 assuming that the artisans of conch shell industry came to Dhaka after the fall of the Hindu kingdom Tinnevely, following invasion by Malik Kafur during the fourteenth century and later on the industry flourished in Dhaka. He remarked in this regard:

Why the seat of the bangle-cutting trade became transferred of limited scale to Bengal is obscure and may never be satisfactorily elucidated; I am, however, inclined to suggest the hypothesis that the decay of the industry in Tinnevely may have been consequent upon the Mohammedan invasion. The sate of passing away of the chank-cutting industry I am inclined to put tentatively at about the fourteenth century, a time which marks the close of unchallenged Hindu supremacy in the South, the spoliation of the vast riches of the Pandyan cities by the Moslem and the heyday of Arab sea-power on this part of the Indian coast. With the depression and decay entailed by the loot and ruin of their enormously wealthy temples and long prosperous cities by the invaders under Malik Kafur, it is far from improbable that the particular trade here referred to become disorganized with the Pandyan realm and forced into a different channel, the whole of the shells being exported to Bengal to be cut there instead of being treated, at east in part, locally at the seat of the fishery.<sup>4</sup>

1 Dinesh Chandra Sen, *Brihath Bango*, Vol-2 (Calcutta, 1995), p. 928.

2 James Hornel, *The Chank-Bangle Industry: It's Antiquity and Present Condition*, Memoirs of Asiatic Society Journal, Vol. 3, Calcutta, 1912, p. 408.

3 Dinesh Chandra Sen, *ibid*, p. 928.

4 Hanif Pathan, *Wari-Bateswar*, *ibid*.

Dr. Dinesh Chandra Sen does not agree with the contention of what Hornell says. What has been observed is that women of this country used to wear bangle made of conch-shell as evident from the ancient literature during *Biyaapati* and *Chandidas* and those were not apparently imported from the Deccan. Existence of conch-shell industry is available immensely through historical, mythological and literary evidences from much before the fourteenth century. The folk-rhyme of ancient Bengal denotes; '*Tanka Bhenge shankha delam kane*' (Spending money provided *shankha* for her ear). Another rhyme narrates:



Shankha

k•L cwi tZ tMŠi vBi gtb eo mva  
Ki tRṽi Kb wktei mṽjvr \

(Gourai hankers after the wearing of *shankha*, meets Shiva and fervently requests to Him for it). The above rhymes of mediaeval Bengal indicates the very use of conch shell wears in those days. Dinesh Chandra Sen considered that the conch shell industry of Dhaka was not so modern. Portuguese writer Garcia da Orta in his book *The Trade in Bengal* writes that conch shell industry got recognition as a profitable business in Bengal from much before. But it turned to decline when the Pathans' rule prevailed. According to him:

This 'chanko' is a ware for the Bengal trade and formerly produced more profit than now.... and there was formerly a custom in Bengal that no virgin in honour and esteem could be corrupted unless it were by placing bracelets of chanco on her arms; but, since the Pathans came in this usage has more or less ceased and so the chanco is rated lower now.<sup>5</sup>

Like the Portuguese writer, Boccardo considers Dhaka's conch shell as an ancient industry. In the *Mongol Kabya* of Bengali literature during the medieval ages, elaborate descriptions are found of the visits abroad by Bengal businessmen or traders. Conch shell is also mentioned in the barter-trading as highlighted through the description by Poet Kankon during that period.

Ki ½ (nwi Y) e`tj Zi ½ (tNvov) cve  
bw̃i tKj e`tj k•L  
weo½ (Jlpxdj) e`tj j e½ cve  
i'tÉi (i'Kbv Aṽv) e`tj U¼ (UvKv)

(In lieu of deer, I will get horses,/ I will get conch shell, in stead of coconut; /in lieu of medicinal plant, I will get *Labango*/ and I will get money in barter of dried ginger)

Even in the song of Manik Chandra Raja, it is found that 'a conch shell worth of one lac takas was broken on the hand' [j vL UvKvi K¼ nvtZtZ fw̃zj]. Conch shell industry is deeply related with the Bengali people from the old days.<sup>6</sup> Tavernier was one among the travelers who came to Dhaka in the seventeenth century. In 1666, he came to Dhaka and mentioned the conch shell industry in his

5 See preface, A. T. Weston, The Conch shell Industry in Bengal, Bulletin No-82, Govt. of Bengal, Industries Department, 1927.

6 Tavernier, Travels in India (Translated by V. Ball, London, ELC, 1899) p. 169.

book *Travels in India*. Tavernier also mentioned the expansion of the industry in Pabna region besides Dhaka. In 1810 Williams mentioned that ornaments made of conch shell were attractive to the women of Bengal. According to him:

The Women of Bengal wear rings made of Kaunch or Chank or common sea-conch-cut out by means of fine saws into narrow slips. The city of Dacca so famous for Muslins, carry on a large intercourse with Chittagong and the coast of Aracan for conches rings are cut from the most circular part of the conch-shell and usually pure whiteness is preserved with much assiduity.

James Tylor in his book *Sketch of the Topography and Statistics of Dacca* gave much information about conch shell industry and the people involved with it. According to him, the conch shell workers first came to Dhaka soon with its foundation. Provincial ruler (Subedar) Islam Khan set up the capital in Dhaka either in 1608 or in 1610 A.D.

But the exact time of the coming of the conch shell artisans to Dhaka could not be ascertained due to lack of the date and time of setting of the capital and foundation of the city. James Wise wrote in his book *Notes on the Races, Castes and Trade of Eastern Bengal* that the ‘conch shell workers’ came to East Bengal or to Dhaka city during the rule of Ballal Sena (1160-1178 A.D.).<sup>7</sup> James Wise considers that there was a ‘Shankhari Bazar’ in Bikrampur and that carried the reminiscence of the conch shell workers during the Ballal Sena period. It implied that conch shell workers came to Bikrampur with Ballal Sena first.



Shankharies at work in 1860

On the other hand, there is an opinion that the Mughals after coming to Dhaka in the seventeenth century brought the conch shell workers to Dhaka with the allurements of the *Lakheraj* lands. On their arrival in Dhaka the conch shell workers selected one area and started to live there and that is now known as *Shankhari Bazar*. From a practical point of view, this appears to be a realistic and acceptable opinion. The conch shell workers of Dhaka never lived elsewhere in Dhaka as the place was selected for them and remained tax-free.<sup>8</sup>

Apart from Dhaka, conch shell workers used to live in other parts of Bengal during that period. There were 2,735 conch shell workers in East Bengal in 1883.<sup>9</sup> In Dhaka, their number was 835. These numbers varied over the periods.

5 See preface, A. T. Weston, *The Conch shell Industry in Bengal*, Bulletin No-82, Govt. of Bengal, Industries Department, 1927.

6 Tavernier, *Travels in India* (Trans. by V. Ball, London, ELC, 1899), p. 169.

7 Muntassir Mamoon, *Smruti-Bismritir Nagari*, (Bangla Academy, 1993) pp. 280-281.

8 Ascoli mentioned the name of places *lakeraj* i.e. Lalbagh Fort, the Nimtali and the residence of Dhaka Nawabs in the Survey and Settlement Report of Dacca, 1912 which excludes *Shakhari Bazar*.

9 James Wise, *Notes on the Races, Castes and Trades of Eastern Bengal*, London, 1883.



**Table-1**

Period	No. of workers	Sources
1666	2000	Tavernier <sup>10</sup>
1840	500	James Tylor <sup>11</sup>
1864	400-500	A. L. Clay <sup>12</sup>
1883	835	James Wise <sup>13</sup>
1926	2000	Hridaynath Majumder <sup>14</sup>
1929	2000	Jatindra Mohan Roy <sup>15</sup>
1944	3000	Choudhury Hafizul Islam <sup>16</sup>

Source: Compiled from the books mentioned in the foot notes

The shell from which these bracelets are made are unvalued; they are brought up to Calcutta by vessels from the Maldives, Ceylon and the Madras coast, where they have been purchased by men sent from Dacca. About 5000 Taka are annually spent by Dacca merchants in the purchase of such shells.<sup>17</sup>

Dhaka's noted lawyer and author of *Reminiscence of Dacca* Hridaynath Majumder wrote about the conch shell industry of Dhaka as he mentioned Dhaka as the main centre of the industry in East Bengal. The conch shell workers of Dhaka used to supply the shell-bangle for the Hindu women of Bengal. Hridaynath wrote about the raw shells:

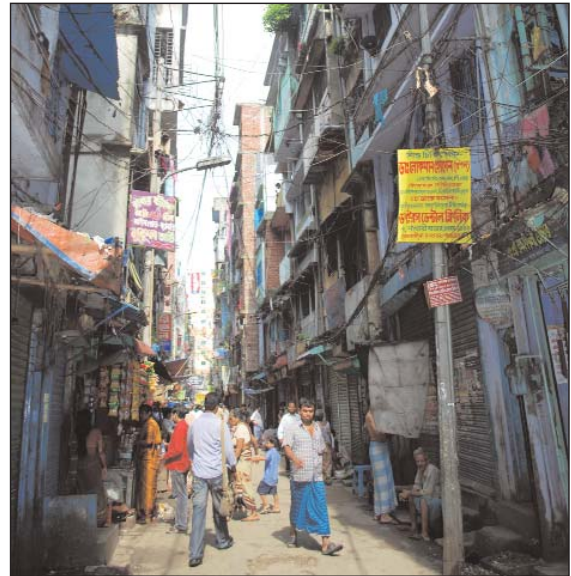
Dacca supplies Shankas to all Hindus of Bengal; raw shells were purchased by the wealthy from Ceylon where there is shell fishery.<sup>18</sup>

Sir James Watt published his book *The Commercial Products of India* on the occasion of India Art Exhibition in Delhi in 1903. The conch shell industry of Dhaka was mentioned along with Bengal's conch shell industry in his book. He also wrote briefly about Dinajpur, Rangpur and Sylhet beside Dhaka of East Bengal.

Dhaka was the main place of conch shell industry and the conch shell products were exported from here to different towns of Bengal. In this regard Hornell says:

Dacca as in Tavernier's day (seventeenth century), when it was the capital of Bengal, continues to be the headquarters of chunk-cutting trade and the chief mart for the purchase by dealers and hawkers of the finished

Hridaynath Majumder mentioned that it was mandatory for married Hindu women to wear *Shankha* (Conch shell bangle). W. W. Hunter in his book *Statistical Account of Bengal* (1875) also mentioned the conch shell industry of Dhaka. It is presumed that the industry was then flourishing in Dhaka. Authentic description was there in the write-up of Hunter as regards how conch shell was imported by its traders in Dhaka:



Shankharibazar Gali

<sup>10</sup> Tavernier, *ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> James Tylor, *ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> A. L. Clay, *Principal Heads, History and Statistics of the Dacca Division*, Calcutta, 1868

<sup>13</sup> James Wise, *ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Hridaynath Majumder, *Reminiscence of Dacca*, edited by Delwar Hassan, Dhaka, 2008.

<sup>15</sup> Jatindra Mohan Roy, *Dhakar Itihas*, Calcutta 1912.

<sup>16</sup> Choudhury Hafizul Islam, *The Regional Geography of Dacca*, With special reference to its Agricultural and Industrial Activities, unpublished Thesis, Aligarh, 1944.

<sup>17</sup> W. W. Hunter, *Statistical Account of Bengal*, Vol-5. (London: Trubner & Co, 1875) p. 6.

<sup>18</sup> Hridaynath Majumder, *ibid.*

article. From Dacca, also, are exported to other towns in Bengal large quantities of conch shell sections in the rough to be carved and fished locally. In Dacca the shell-cutter's quarter, the Shankhari Bazar, is located in the heart of the city; it consists in the main of a long and narrow street, devoted exclusively to this one trade.<sup>19</sup>

There are elaborate descriptions of Dhaka's conch shell industry in the book '*Dhakar Bibaran*' written by Kedarnath Majumder.<sup>20</sup>

The book *Dhakar Biboran* highlighted the economy and life and living of contemporary Dhaka. Kedarnath furnished information about the market prices of different conch shell products along with the export and import prices. They are as follows:

From the above list, it is found that the procured conch shell from Baroda and Bombay were ones of high quality and costlier. Dhaka once used to import conch shell worth of rupees one to three lakhs and export worth of rupees five lakhs. By the end of the twentieth century O.S.M. Mohammad Tambi, J.N. Saik Mohammad and K. Venkat Salam Chetty used to control the import of conch shell from Ceylon. Messrs J.B. Sutta and Hemchandra Kar used to look after the business

Name of shell	Place-available	Price (per 100)
Titkauri	Sri Lanka	Rs. 8-10
Pati	Setubandh-Rameshwar	Rs. 8-10
Jahaji	Setubandh-Rameshwar	Rs. 6
Dhalla	Setubandh-Rameshwar	Rs. 4
Garbaki	Madras	Rs. 3.5-4
Surati	Baroda	Rs. 15-20
Do-anapati	Tribankur	Rs. 15-20
Alla bila	Baroda	Rs. 15-20

Source: Kedarnath Majumder, *Dhakar Biboran*, Calcutta, 1910.

of Ramchandra Fisher. A.T. Weston mentioned in his report that the conch-shell workers of Dhaka formed an organization namely *Shanka Samabay Samity* in 1928.<sup>21</sup> Gopal Chandra Roy mentioned seven cooperative societies in his book *Naya Banglar Gora Pattan* in 1927. The artisans of Dhaka usually liked white conch shell because of high quality. Taylor mentioned that huge conch shell used to be sold in big fairs.<sup>22</sup> The conch shell of Dhaka was of high quality, its demand was also high.



Nakulram Sur, an elderly artisan at Shankharibazar

In his book '*Travels in Bengal*' (1877), Shambhucharan Mukherjee writes in the chapter 'East Bengal' that conch shell of Dhaka was made with excellence. There is no specific mention anywhere as regards to what extent Dhaka's conch shell workers had the commercial successes. The use of conch shell by Hindus because of their religious obligation in day-to-day life-style, it sustained as an industry in Dhaka. Though it is a monopoly profession of the *Shakharis*, all involved in it did not attain the same and similar successes.

It appears that because of qualitative excellence as well as demand, the trade spread elsewhere outside Dhaka. Dr. S.G. Panandikar considers:

19 James Hornel, *ibid*, p. 426.

20 Kedarnath Majumder was born in Kishoreganj and wrote the books, *Maimansinger Itihas and Maimansinger Bibaran* in 1905 and 1908 respectively. He was also the editor of the weekly *Sourav* published from Mymensing.

21 A. T. Weston, *ibid*.

22 James Tylor, *ibid*, p.180. For the list of Fairs of Dhaka region, see appendix.



A conch shell artisan  
with his products

‘the conch shell bangles made in Dacca are distinguished by their superior artistic value and are much in demand.’<sup>23</sup>

Demand of conch shell increased so much in the beginning of the twentieth century that adequate number of workers was not available to cope with. For which artisans were brought in by offering them advance payments handsomely from Murshidabad and other places to meet the demand.<sup>24</sup> Because of the financial and social importance being attached to conch shell industry in the third decade of the twentieth century, attention of the industry department of Bengal also focused on it. The industry department on an experimental basis supplied one electricity-run conch shell-cutting machine, and finding the successes later on installed some more machines. Even facilities were provided to bring conch shell at reduced prices from the fisheries.<sup>25</sup> Now there is, as such, no use of any modern machine for cutting conch shell at Sankhari Bazar. But in Barisal electricity-run machine was used in the industry.

The *Shankharis* of Dhaka consider that no qualitative standard can be maintained and artistic excellence as well also cannot be achieved with the help of machine. Some light has been thrown on the economic life of the conch shell artisans of Dhaka in the survey report of the government of Bengal of 1929. The report, in fact, depicted only few of Dhaka’s conch shell artisans as rich, but rest as poor ones.<sup>26</sup> The Dhaka Gazetteer, on the other hand, mentioned that The *Shankharis* or manufacturers of shell work in the city of Dacca ranked next to the weaver from the point of view of wealth.<sup>27</sup> But after the partition, the condition of the *Shankharis* deteriorated though the author of *Dhakar Itihash*, Jatindra Mohan Roy, mentioned that the conch shell industry expanded during India’s national movement.<sup>28</sup> Many of Dhaka’s *Shankharis* shifted elsewhere. As a result, their number remains confined now between 100 and 150 families though their number of families were between 400 and 500 earlier. The *Shankharis* of Dhaka now imports conch shell from Sri Lanka. Earlier they used to collect the required conch shell from Calcutta. But its import from Sri Lanka increased since the seventies of the last century. Though the conch shell industry existed in other districts of Bangladesh also, the conch shell artisans of Dhaka used to meet the demand of this region. Following were the centres of conch shell industry:

Dhaka’s Shankhari Bazar, Faridabad, Manikganj, Chittagong, Mymensingh, Faridpur, Barisal, Jessore, Bogra, Rajshahi. Apart from these, the industry expanded in places like Bishnupur, Nadia, Murshidabad, Midnapore and Calcutta of West Bengal.<sup>29</sup> Among all these centres, Dhaka used to make the big chunk of the conch shell products. The industry bulletin published by the government of Bengal in 1927 mentioned the *Shankharis* of

24 A. T. Weston, *ibid*, p. 9.

25 *Ibid*.

26 A. T. Weston, *Report on the Survey of Cottage Industries in Bengal*, (Calcutta, 1929) pp. 64-65.

27 A. H. Rizvi, *Dacca, District Gazetteer*, 1969, p. 201.

28 Jatindra Mohon Roy, *ibid*, p. 131.

29 See A.T. Weston, *ibid*.

29 See A.T. Weston, *ibid*.

30 *Ibid*, p. 64.

31 *Ibid*.



Dhaka as the bigger workforce and recorded their produce to be 10 lac to 12 lac pieces annually.<sup>30</sup> The artisans of Dhaka make varieties of conch shell products. Only Dhaka has the fame of making nicely curved and finely polished bangles made of conch shell. In the report of 1929, there were mentions of setting of ruby, gold and pearl on quality conchshell-bangles.<sup>31</sup>

**Dhaka's conch shell products:** *Sankha*, rings, bracelet, *churis*, wristwatch chain, button, earring, 'ornate *latabala*, *Uparbeni*, buckles, etc. Ajimushan Haider writes that products like *attardan*, ashtray and agarbati-stand are made of conch shell.<sup>32</sup>

### Present Conch shell Artisans of Dhaka

The condition of the conch shell industry is not now the same as before. The fate of the *Shankharis* regarding their rise and fall remained more or less inter-linked with the political upheavals in Dhaka. The riots of the thirties and forties and the liberation war of the last century left behind political and economic impacts on the *Shankhar*. According to folk art expert Tofael Ahmed, there are now only 142 *Shankhari* families in Dhaka and *Shankhari* work goes on now only in 14 houses of them.<sup>33</sup> In the beginning of the twentieth century, there were 400-500 families here. Many of the *Shankharis* switched over to other alternative professions. The rise and fall of conch shell business were due to the Hindu population increase and its decline in Dhaka



A modern shop where Shankha Bangles are ready for sale

### Conch shell of Dhaka was known in different names in different periods

<b>Early Age</b>	: Gara ( from 2 gacha to 4 gacha)
<b>Middle Age</b>	: Saatkana, Panchdona, Tindana, Sadabala and Auolakeshi.
<b>Present period</b>	: Sona badhano, Tali, Kine sod, Chittaranjan, Panbot, Morano, Satilaskhi, Jalfash, Haishadar, Danadar, Sadasankha, Sankhabala, Aipeteron, Englishpatch, Bherasankha, Siklibala, Neklesbala, Latabala, Dhanchar, Beni, Choumukhi, Hashi-khushi, Dajiling, Tarpech, Chaishek, Payurhata, Golapful, Motalata Maj, Muridar, Angurpata, Upabeni, Bangsir, Golapbala, Nagribala, etc.

as they were linked. The industry lost its excellence following exodus of many *Shankhari* from Dhaka after the partition. Besides, due to worse economic condition, the use of conch shell declined gradually.<sup>34</sup> Muntassir Mamoon mentioned that land of *Shankharibazar* and *Tantibazar* during the mid-nineteenth century was sold at much higher prices like the ones now being sold at higher prices at Banani, Gulshan and Baridhara residential areas.<sup>35</sup> The reason is that both the places were then known for being the centres of conch shell and gold businesses. But now these places are too narrow and crowded and no longer healthier in condition. The houses there were of the same

32 Ajimushsan Haider-Majhar Bari : Dacca's Traditional Arts and Crafts, in *A City and its Civic Body*, Dacca Municipality, 1966, pp. 37-38.

33 Tofail Ahmed, *Amader Pracin Shilpa* (Bangla Academy, 19 92) p. 131.

34 Sipra Sarkar, *Sankha Shilpa*, (Bangla Academy, 1997) p. 54.

35 Muntassir Mamoon, *Dhaka: Smriti sriti-Bisritir Nagori*, Bangla Academy, 1993, p. 28.



structural-pattern. Local elderly persons talk about their security in living there because of the poor conditions. James Wise mentioned another reason that the area of *Lakheraj* land given to them was small in size. The houses were constructed over there accepting the land area for which their structural pattern was different from that of other houses in Dhaka. Renowned conch-shell artisans during the British period were Premchand Soor, Darikanath Nag (Dhaka), Krishna Kumar, Ram Gopalsoor and Trolaishyanath Dhar.

### Some elderly *Shankharis* of Dhaka

In order to have a picture of this industry, life and experience of some elderly conch shell artisans of Dhaka have been mentioned here.

**Aloke Nandi:** He is an elderly artisan of *Shankhari Bazar*. His full name is Aloke Nath Nandi, better known as ‘Aloke Nandi’.<sup>36</sup> He was born at *Shankhari Bazar* in 1922. He devoted himself to his ancestor’s profession in early youth. He is a father of five children who, too, are involved in the same business. Aloke Nandi considers that the glory of Dhaka’s conch shell industry is famous in history. That glory could not be restored. The industry in Dhaka now is facing manifold problems. According to him, the main problem is to get financial investment. The artificial articles have damaged this sector profusely. The Government initiative could pave the way for further development of this neglected sector.

During the Pakistan period, the government did not pay any attention towards them. Besides, fairs are not also frequently held in the Dhaka region as before. There were brisk businesses of conch shell products at fairs in the past. Nowadays educated Hindu women usually do not follow rigidly the religious provision of wearing bangle made of conch shell mandatory for the married women. Price hike of raw materials also stands as an obstacle in the way of this industry’s expansion. Aloke Nandi has witnessed the three periods of the British, Pakistan and Bangladesh and remembered the price as follows:

Period	Price of conch shell (one pair)
British period	4 Annas
Pakistan period	3.50-4.00 Rupees
Bangladesh period	60-65 Takas

During the British period, on the other hand, price of conch shell of Sri Lanka and Madras was Rs. 40 per bag. That now costs Tk. 2,500 – 2,700, twenty times increase in price. Aloke Nandi started working as a designer first and later he worked as a craftsman. According to him, only the people belonging to the lower middle class now of his community wear *Shankha*. Business of conch shell products has been declining for many reasons; one of them is infrequent trade fairs during ‘Puja’ festivals and marriage ceremonies of the Hindu community. According to Nandi sales of conch-shell industry are scanty in a changing life-style and non-availability of a large range of designs are some of the main obstacles of this industry. One of his sons is working as a goldsmith. It has now become difficult for the industry to sustain because of introducing marriage outside one’s own caste, he thinks.

36 The present writer interviewed Alok Nandi, for his forth-coming book *Brihattar Dhakar Itihas* earlier and the relevant portions are being mentioned here.

### 3. Indigo Factories in Dhaka

Assumingly people came in contact with indigo since the dawn of civilization. The mummies of the Egyptian monarchs in the sixteenth century B. C. used to be wrapped with blue. In the ancient period, oil extracted from indigo seeds was used for the treatment of neurological disease and of hysterical disorder. It is learnt that indigo used to be exported to Europe during the Roman period and in the medieval ages. Bernier (1558-1666) in his travelogue mentioned productions of cotton, silk and indigo widely in Bengal.<sup>1</sup> Indigo produced here was deep in color and known for its quality. The Dutch and Portuguese traders in the seventeenth century used to export indigo to Europe from India. In fact, the indigo plant was brought by the Portuguese first but perhaps was not of the commercial variety.<sup>2</sup> The traders in England floated a company in 1600 A. D. and started trading in indigo. They used to send indigo first to England and then it was supplied to the whole of Europe. The weavers of England then did not know the proper use of indigo. In 1660, some workers were brought in from Belgium to teach the process of using indigo. As a result, demand of indigo went up. India exported 12,42,000 pounds of indigo to Europe during the period from 1664 to 1690.<sup>3</sup>



A rare indigo plant. No more commercially cultivated

#### Indigo Cultivation in Bengal

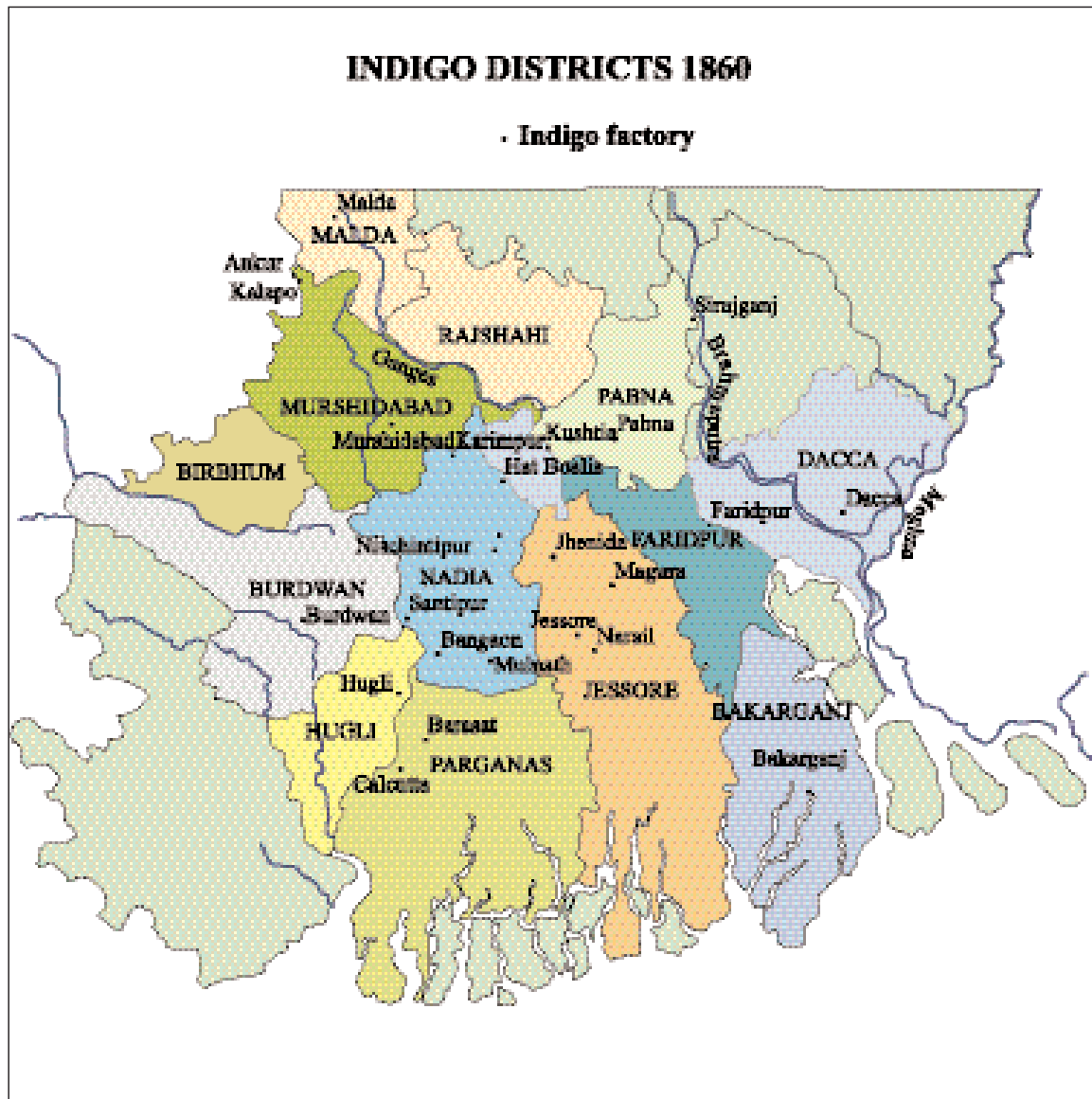
A French trader, M L. Bonard, first initiated indigo cultivation in Bengal in 1772.<sup>4</sup> The French set up the indigo factory first at Hugli and later on at Chandan Nagar. Indigo cultivation expanded widely in the region now comprising Bangladesh after 1788. The East India Company then considered this land as an alternative for the supply of indigo. Some indigo cultivators were then sent from the West Indies to Bangladesh with huge investment. This way, in the beginning of the nineteenth century, indigo cultivation started in different districts like Nadia, Kushtia, Burdwan, Midnapore, Birbhum, Jessore, Pabna, Faridpur and Hugli. By 1859, about five hundred indigo factories were set up in the then East Bengal. But bulk of indigo production took place in Nadia and Jessore areas. As fresh water was required for cleaning indigo, so indigo factories were set up in Bangladesh on the banks of the Padma, Meghna, Brahmaputra, Chitra, Isamati and Madhumati rivers.

1 See Bernier, *Travels in the Mughal Empire* (Westminster, 1901).

2 J. J. A Compos, *History of the Portuguese in Bengal*, London, 1919 p. 256.

3 Dr. Kumud Battycharcya, *Raja Ram Mohan: Bangladesher Arthaniti O Sangskriti*, Calcutta, 1986.

4 Tofayel Ahmed, *Amader Prachin Shilpa*, Bangla Academy, Dhaka, 1992, p. 176.



### Indigo Cultivation in the Dhaka District

Following the decline in the trading of Muslin, the English company turned to indigo cultivation. Indigo produced in Dhaka was not of the quality of indigo produced in Jessore as mentioned by Dr. James, Civil Surgeon of Dhaka<sup>5</sup> (1839). In 1801 there were only two indigo factories in the Dhaka region, which increased to 33 in 1833. The total land for indigo cultivation was 1,00,000 acres and the annual production was about 2600 maunds.<sup>6</sup> Dhaka was ranked as the second after Jessore for

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p.176.

<sup>6</sup> James Taylor, *Topography of Dacca*, (Calcutta, 1840) p. 134.

the cultivation of indigo. By the middle of the nineteenth century, Dhaka became the top in the indigo cultivation as shown in the following table:

Table: Production of Indigo between 1849-1859 (Dhaka and other districts)										
	1849-50	1850-51	1851-52	1852-53	1853-54	1854-55	1855-56	1856-57	1857-58	1858-59
Jessore	16,818	1,955	9,572	9,654	7,811	12,305	6,585	10,227	10,353	8,635
Dacca	2,654	2,512	2,338	2,48	1,423	2,252	2,069	2,400	716	1,773
Furrudpore	1,763	1,368	1,627	2,780	815	2,048	1,414	1,587	937	1,488
Mymensing	1,030	1,108	815	1,814	1,229	1,743	1,129	1,403	677	978

Not in the Dhaka district alone, indigo cultivation was also started in other parts of the districts of Faridpur and Barisal under Dhaka division.<sup>7</sup> Native superintendents were appointed to look after indigo cultivation. In 1871, indigo was sold at the rate of 27 pounds per 100 kilogram. J.P. Wise was the main person among the indigo cultivators in Dhaka district. All the indigo cultivation factories, except that of the Eastern Bengal Indigo Company in the north-west of the district, belonged to Wise, the real owner was, however, Dr. Lamb. Most of the indigo factories of Dhaka in 1870 were on the banks of the Buriganga. The indigo cultivation cost for Wise was £29,047. He had his own peasants' force for indigo cultivation. Wise had 'Zamindari' in the surrounding districts of Mymensingh and Comilla and there were indigo cultivations too. The biggest factory of Wise was on the bank of river Buriganga and the name of Wise-ghat reminds of his memory.

Following were the prominent indigo factories in the old thana jurisdictions of Dhaka district:<sup>8</sup>

1. Atrai (Keraniganj Thana)
2. Fulbaria, Dolaigram (Savar)
3. Joypara-Galimpur (Nawabganj Thana)
4. Shaorati-Ekdala-Barmi (Kapasasia)
5. Buraria-Tilai, Kinchin Khara (Manikganj)
6. Mirzapur, Nathpur, Paikpara, Golkhani, Ketapara, Maoachel (Gheor Thana)
7. Azimnagar- Mabuin, Maluchi, Kurerpur (Harirampur Thana)
8. Serajbaz, Balatia, Bajahadaber Char (Munshiganj)
9. Char Ramanud, Dighuli, Lauhajang (Sreenagar Thana)
10. Ramchandradi, Ladurchar, Petulganj, Hossenskat (Rupganj Thana)
11. Gajaria, Mamudabad, Burti, Bar Kamalapur (Raipur Thana)
12. Many places in Manikganj and Munshiganj, now devoured by the river Padma.

7 W. W. Hunter mentioned indigo cultivation in the Faridpur and Bakergonj district.

In 1825, indigo factories were established at Punjakaran and Khagasura in Bakergonj district. See W.W. Hunter, *Statistical Account of Bengal*, (Vol-v) London., 1877.

8 A. H. Rizvi, *ibid*.



### Oppression by Indigo Planters

Farmers of Bengal were subjected to ruthless oppression for non-compliance of indigo cultivation. Oppressions of the musclemen and followers of the indigo planters very often went beyond all limits. Infamous names of the Englishmen, connected with the indigo plantation, were James Hill, T. I. Kanny,<sup>9</sup> Fergusson, Watts, Simson and Hamilton. Amjhupi of Meherpur stands still with the memories of such sad stories of oppression done by indigo factory-owner's *Kuthials* namely, Eikenny, Simson, Robert Morrel and Fergusson. In 1835 Lord Macaulay, in a report to the Indian government, had termed the agreement of indigo cultivation 'very objectionable and illegal'.<sup>10</sup> The cultivators narrated how oppressions were going on against them by Tomas Ivan Kenny when J. Morris of Indian civil service came for investigation following the incident of the stopping of paying taxes in protest against the indigo cultivation of Kushtia.

Lt. Governor Sir J. P Grant recorded in his diary in 1860:<sup>11</sup> 'Numerous cultivators in 1960 cultivate indigo. Numerous crowds at various places whose whole prayer was for an order of Government that they will not cultivate indigo....'

Following the petition filed by the indigo cultivators, the British government formed an 'Indigo Inquiry Commission to look into the matter'.<sup>12</sup> As Governor Grant sympathised to the Indigo cultivators, he was vehemently criticized by his fellow countrymen.



An indigo factory at Dhaka's Wiseghat in the 19th century

The peasants of Jessore-Kushtia region revolted under the leadership of Parry Sundari, Titumir and Haji Shariatullah. Some local peasant leaders led the movement in the Dhaka region and in north Bengal. A folk-song of the nineteenth century depicts the mighty roles of these peasant leaders as under:

9 The oppression of Kanny was narrated by a local folk-poet as under:

'i'b KaVqij t' i mgiPvi Kwij `tq KaV hvi  
 tKbx mvtne KvBR'vi Ki j 'ii"  
 tm AvDtki RigtZ tevtb bij me ivqtZi nj gij  
 -cUvi cWgcvto Mz Mvb|

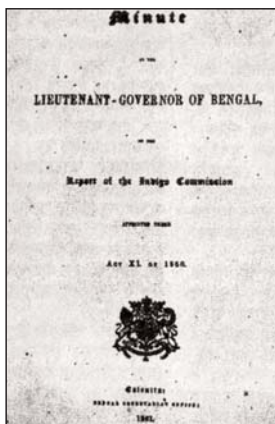
10 Shahriar Iqbal, *Nil Bidraha*, Bangla Academy, p.37.

11 J. P. Grant, the then Governor General of India visited Pabna district on 17 September in 1860 and remarked this in his diary.

12 For details, see Blair B. King: *The Blue Mutiny*, p. 20.

In 1844, peasants of Kagmari in Tangail revolted and attacked the indigo factory. In Dhaka the indigo farmers revolted in 1850. They told the Christian Missionaries in Dhaka: 'Why don't you tell your countrymen, the indigo planters to be less oppressive.'

Some other Bengalees also drew the attention of the English to various oppressions committed by indigo planters. They were the Hindu patriot editor Harishchandra Mukherji, Ramgopal Ghosh and founder of the *Amritabazar Patrika* Shishir Kumar Ghosh. Sunil Gangopadhyaya depicted some of the stories in his novel *Sheisamay* about indigo planters' oppressions. Mir Mosharraf Hussain's autobiography *Udashin Pathiker Moner Katha* also reflects



Report of the Indigo Commission, 1861

many of such oppressive stories. The then newspaper *Sangbad Prabhakar* in its issue of January

1859 remarked: 'Oppressions by the indigo planters have continued to escalate in the villages one after another. Police officers keep quite ignoring all these oppressions. One English magistrate, Tower by name, appearing before the Indigo Commission, stated that 'he himself witnessed some of the tenants (rayats) were pierced by arrows and some others were shot dead.'

The stories of ruthless oppression by the indigo planters saddened English clergyman Reverend Long. He wrote a book in this regard exposing the ugly scenes of oppression and exploitations. Bankim Chandra himself had arrested one oppressor English indigo planter at Baruikhali in Khulna.<sup>13</sup>

### Writing of *Nil Darpan* and its staging in Dhaka

Dinbandhu Mitra wrote his famous drama *Nil Darpan* soon after the report of the Indigo Commission was released in 1860. He was then the inspecting postmaster of Dhaka division. Dinbandhu Mitra used to travel frequently between Dhaka and Mymensingh district on official work.<sup>14</sup> There were a number of indigo factories in the two districts. The printing machine was set up in Dhaka in 1859 and the *Nil Darpan* was printed there in September 1860. As he was in the government service, his drama was

Avi Gj t¶Zicvovi ivq|  
weRq t¶Mwe>` tP\$aj x ZmwZ e>` hvi evox  
dj evoxi l Øvi K mi Kvi ivq\  
`j vBi gpkx mv¶ne, b>`x gnvkq hvi bvtqe  
Avi hvb t¶j i cvKivkx|  
tg\$ ex Ave`j Avj x XvKvi kni hvi evox,  
wmi vRMtÅ wnm`vi hvi AvtQ\  
Zvovtki tQvU evey Kv/vj t¶L eob Kvey  
dmi`c¶i tm w qv¶Q BRvi v|  
eo Zi d etbvqvi x j vj hvi W¼v wPi Kvj  
mv¶ne gv¶i Kí Qvi Lvi |  
tm c¶v v Kti`R`o gv¶m Avgj wMY me PZ¶icv¶tk®  
Av¶M ew¶a j wVi Av¶Mvq dj |  
Wvgiv AvtQ Qvj ymi Kvi Ki tZ t¶q bv bxtj i Kvi evi  
j wV gv¶i Wvgivi c¶v ivq|  
thgb wmi mbwmx e,ov tRj v hvi evox  
t¶MwvBt` i ,i`f e tm nq|  
nvgKovi gRg`vi wekx` i Kvici`vR  
bv¶Uvti i gnvivRv eob m¶x Zvi c¶Rv  
i Zb wekx t¶L Kti fq|  
i Zb wekx úKg t¶q KwV fv¶½ tWgivi ivq  
KwV fv¶½ tdj j Rtj |

13 Satish Chandra Mitra, *Gossor Khulner Itihas*.

14 Lalit Chandra Mitra, the preface writer of this famous book mentioned that in one occasion Din Bandhu was crossing the mighty river the Meghna and his boat was about to sink while he was carrying his drafted-manuscript *Nil Darpan* with him. However, another country boat came to rescue him and thus he narrowly escaped a great disaster. (See prelude of 'Nildarpan' Dacca, 1861).

published with a nickname. Durgakar was then a government physician posted in Dhaka. Dinbandhu used to come to the house of Durgakar Das every night when the printing of his drama was going on. The two friends together used to see the proof by closing the doors and windows of the room. A year later after the publication of the *Nil Darpan* it was staged. The correspondent in Dhaka wrote in the *Harkara* paper coming out from Kustia: 'Our native friends entertained themselves with occasional theatrical performances and the *Nil Darpan* was staged on one of these occasions'. The drama was staged in one of the houses near the present Jagannath College of Dhaka. Dinbandhu wrote in *Nil Darpan* about the consequence of advance for indigo:

bxj `v`b fāvcvi tfj `v  
GKevi j vMij Avi l†Vbv<sup>15</sup>

Michael Madhusudan Dutt translated the drama *Nil Darpan* into English and clergyman Reverend Long wrote the preamble of it. It can be mentioned here that Michael did the translation work overnight and it was written "Translated from the Bengali by 'A Native'." For writing the preamble, Rev. Long was penalised with one month's prison along with a fine of Rs one thousand. Mahatma Kali Prasanna Singh, a friend of Long, made the payment of his fine. The folk-poet used to sing a popular song on this:

Øbxj evbtī tmvbi evsj v Ktj - Gevi Qvi Lvi  
Amgtq nmi k gtj v, j s Gi ntj v Kvi vMvi  
cRvi Avi cØY euPv†bv fvi |Ø<sup>16</sup>

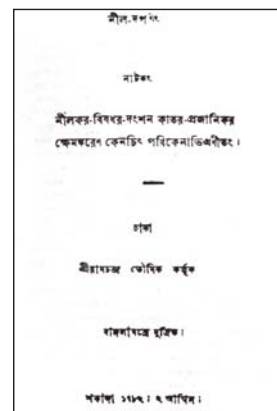
Bankim Chandra wrote: By doing the English translation Michael Madhusudan was insulted and rebuked quietly and he was compelled, later on, to leave the Supreme Court job which was his livelihood.



Dinbandhu Mitra, the inspecting postmaster of Dhaka Division

By going through the English translation of *Nil Darpan*, the Englishmen became furious. As there was no name of the publisher of the book, Manuel, as printer, faced a case and was exempted by paying a fine of rupees ten. At that time, one Sittonkar was Secretary to the Bengal government and all the English translations were printed at the government printing press on his behalf. After the disposal of the case, Secretary Sitton resigned in 1861 though the Lt. Governor did not accept his resignation. On the other hand, Rev. Long left this country for England in 1862.

In Dhaka, *Nil Darpan* became very popular and within a year, it was reprinted. It was first staged only in Dhaka. But before staging it, Ganga Gobinda, an inhabitant of Narsingdi and brother of Sir K.G Gupta of Indian civil service,<sup>17</sup> and Dr. Durga Kar made some minor changes of the drama.



Nil Darpan

15 *Nil Darpan*, *ibid*.

16 Dinbandu Mitra, *ibid*.

17 *Ibid*.



A rare photograph of an indigo factory of Eastern Bengal



### Dhaka's Indigo Planters and Planters' Magazines

The very name of Dhaka's 'Nilkhet' reminds one of the tradition of indigo cultivation in Dhaka. One of Dhaka's *Zaminders* N.P. Pogose, an Armenian and indigo planter, did much work for the welfare of society. He was also involved in the activities of the Municipal Commission. He was the founder of Pogose School of Dhaka. Another Zaminder and indigo planter, J.P. Wise, was in the governing body of the Dhaka College. Having been influenced by the ideas and thoughts of Macaulay, many of the English planters came forward for setting up schools and colleges in the rural areas. Among them the names of Tomas Survy of Munshiganj, N. Pogose of Dhaka, Henry Kreiton of Dinajpur, H. Mackenji of Jhikargacha and T.J. Cone of Pabna are mentionable. Contributions of the indigo planters were remarkable for the establishment of the Dhaka College in 1841. In spite of that the folk-song mentioned earlier indicates their oppressions in the villages namely Fulbari, Dolai (Savar), Tarash and Demra areas of the then Dhaka district.

In 1856, *Dhaka News* came out as newspaper in Dhaka.<sup>18</sup> This was known as Indigo planters' newspaper for which it was called 'Planters' Journal'. J.P. Wise and N.P. Pogose were among others the owners of this paper. The paper used to carry the market price of indigo and *Kusumphul* in it under the heading 'Commercial'. The educated middle-class at that time, possibly, remained split either in favour or against the indigo planters. The monthly magazine *Manoranjaka* ceased to come out due to difference of opinion among the patrons and directors regarding the oppressions done by the planters. Poet Krishna Chandra Majumder was its editor. Raja Rammohan Roy, Darakanath Tagore and Prasanna Kumar Thakur and others rather praised the indigo planters of Bengal. Rammohan used to say that the English planters did more for the welfare of the common people. Dwarakanath Tagore said that people living in the areas of indigo cultivation enjoyed more facilities than those having no indigo cultivation.

Table: Expenditure of an Indigo Factory

Employee	Number	Monthly Salary
Ox cart man (120 cart)	120	7/-
Boatman (48 boats)	96	9/-
<i>Sardar</i>	01	4/-
Vat colliies	72	3/-
Medinipuri	40	4/-
<i>Ozondar</i>	02	2/-
Chinese pump operator	30	3.60
Pin colлие	01	4/-
Boiler house Staffs	06	3/-
<i>Stroker</i>	03	3.60
<i>Dalai marai</i>	06	3
<i>Ghat majhi</i> (women)	06	2/-
Godown coolie	04	2/-
<i>Coolie sardar</i>	02	3/-
<i>Medinipuri</i>	02	5/-
<i>Ghat majhi</i>	01	4/-
Cake cutter	01	4/-
<i>Sutar</i>	01	4/-
<i>Karmakar</i>	01	5/-

18 *Dacca News* was the first English weekly published from East Bengal. Mr. Alexander Forbes was the editor of this newspaper. The other partners were: Khawja Abdul Gani, AM Amarun, Armeni Pogose, G A Grage and JP Wise. The *Dacca News* first came out in 1856 and was closed down in 1869.



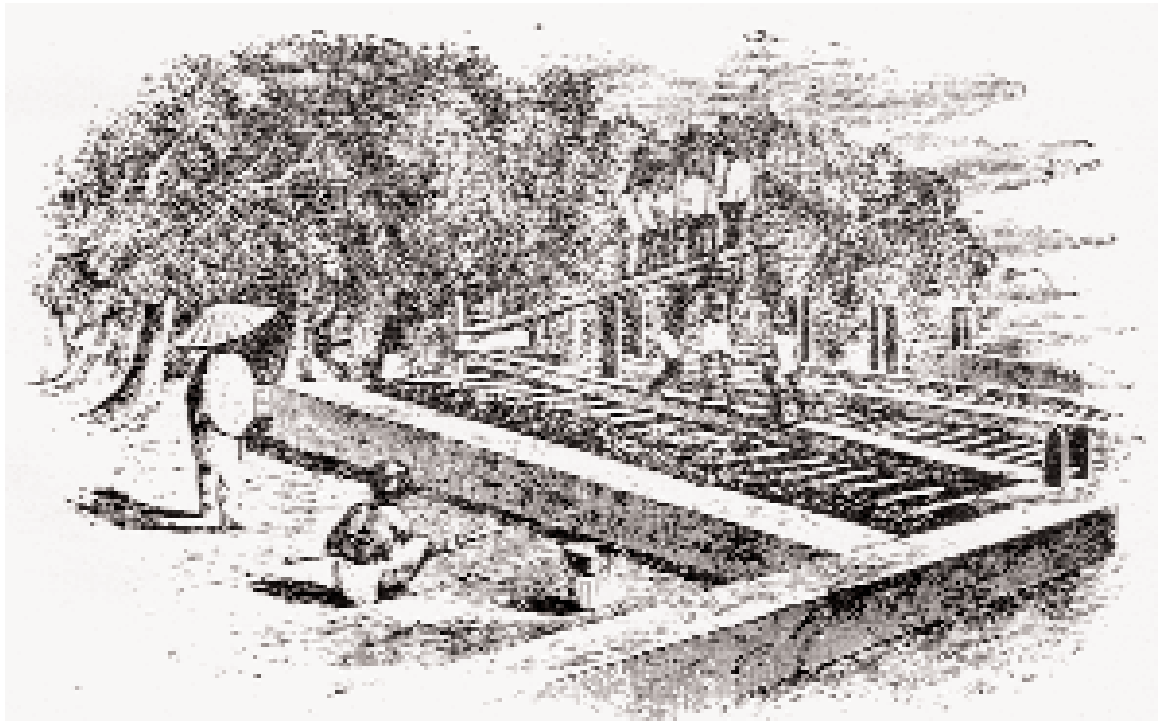
Harvesting of indigo plants



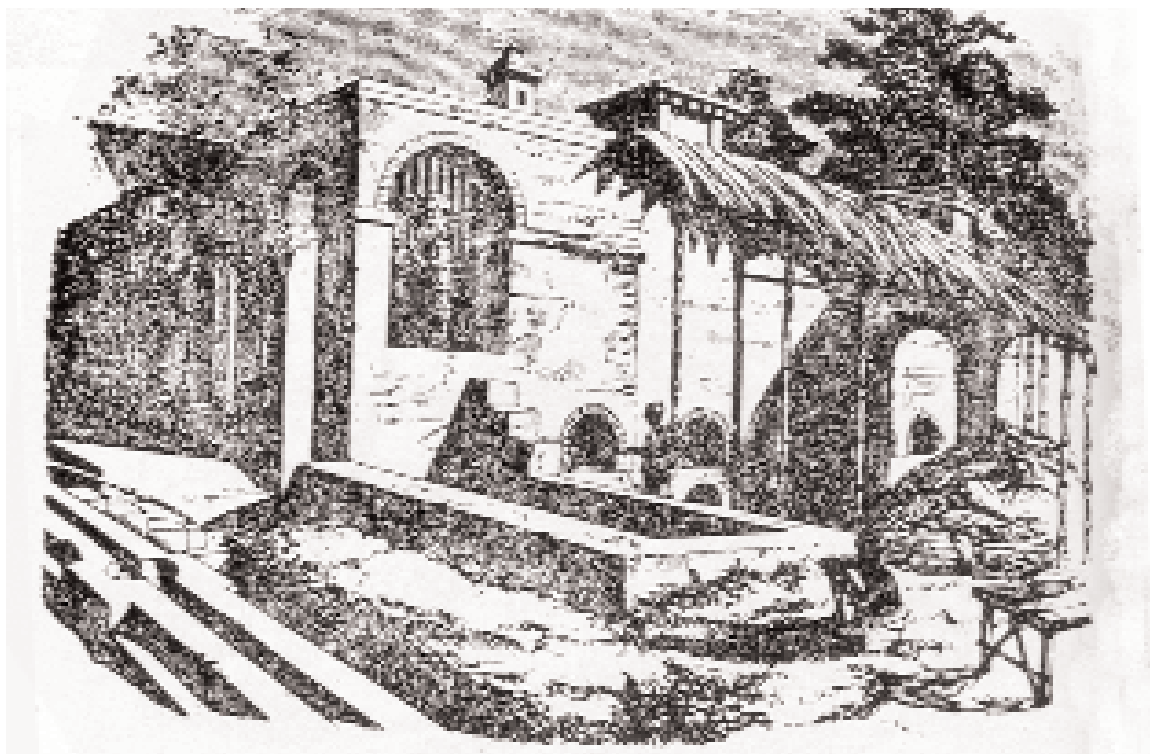
Loading indigo on bull-cart



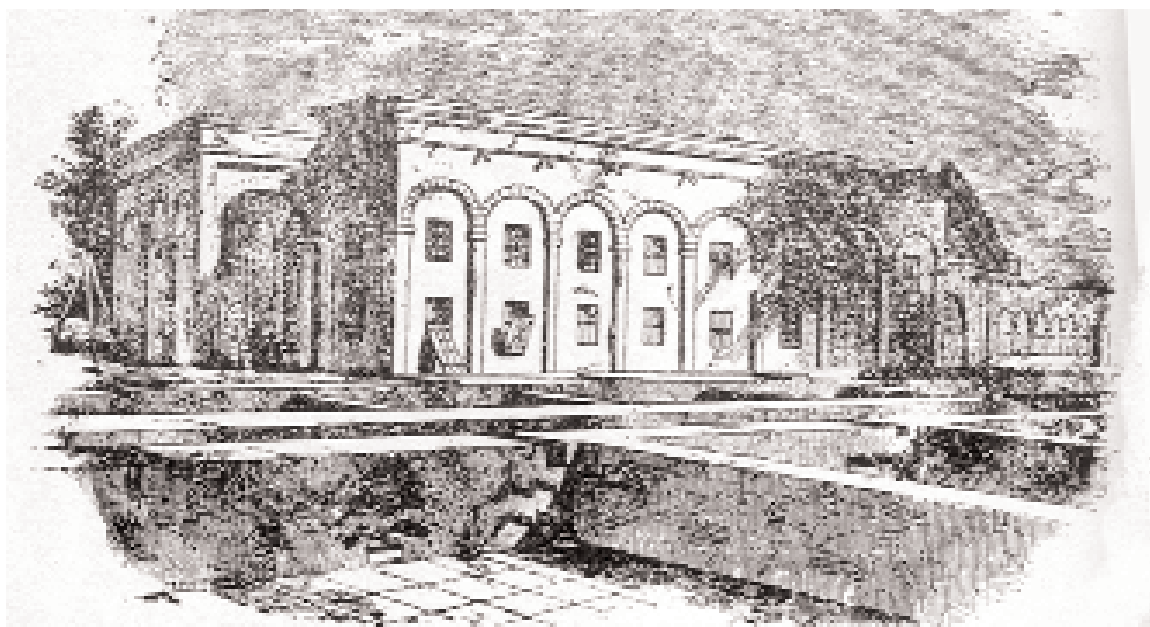
An artificial choubacha for processing indigo



Another processing unit of indigo plants



A firehouse to burnout indigo plants



A Neel-Kuthi of an indigo planter



## 4. Jewellery

তম্বা ফি  
 কি "Yv বব  
 i/cv \_b bwnK avex  
 -Phc`

People have been ornamenting themselves since the beginning of civilization. The relics of the primitive men and women show that they used to wear ornaments of different natural objects, like flowers, leaves, bones, stones, etc. Gradually the uses of different metals like copper, silver, gold and precious stones were initiated. That trend, in fact, never exhausted. Centuries after centuries, people have been wearing metallic jewellery carved in various shapes and styles. The spheres of elegant craftsmanship in which Dhaka artisans showed up their accomplishment includes jewellery and filigree work. Dhaka's gold and silver work, especially its filigree work, had a subcontinent-wide repute and still maintains something of past grace.<sup>1</sup>

As the ornaments have been used since the prehistoric times, its history goes back to 4000-3000 B.C. in the sub-continent. Excavation at the Indus valley sites has unearthed gold, silver, bronze ornaments, which reveal a rich civilization in this sub-continent.<sup>2</sup>

Like some other craftsmanship, jewellery is also an old craft of Bengal as well as India. The *Ramayana* has an account of the jewellery and many of its kinds are still in use. It is the Aryans, who introduced the gold and silver culture in this region.<sup>3</sup> The Aryans were very fond of gold. *Yajurveda* and Brahmanical texts say about gold ornaments. Even the *Kamasutra*, deals with arts including the knowledge of gems. It mentored the art of stringing garlands and necklaces of making ear ornaments, and using jewellery. The Kautiliya's *Arthashastra* also denotes a sort of ornaments in ancient Bengal.<sup>4</sup> *Ain-i-Akbari* also tells us much about gold and silver in medieval Bengal. During the Mughal period, three treasuries are known from *Ain-i-Akbari*. These are: treasury of precious stones, treasury of gold ware and treasury of inlaid jewellery.<sup>5</sup>



Popular ornaments found in Wari-Bateshwar

Amir Kashru of Mughal court termed using ornaments artificial and termed it unnecessary.<sup>6</sup> Sultan Mahmood of Gazni took away a huge quantity of gold during his expeditions in India. Excavation at Mainamati discovered some gold and silver made ornaments.<sup>7</sup> Chinese travelers also mentioned that the Bengali women used to wear gold-wired stone, gold bangles in hands and gold made finger-rings.

1 Azimussan Haider & Mazhar Bari, *Dacca's Traditional Crafts* in 'A City and its Civic Body' A souvenir to mark the Centenary of Dacca Municipality, edited by Azimussan Haider, 1966, p. 39.

2 Sirajul Islam (ed.) *Banglapedia*, Vol-7, p. 366; also see, Kiran Choudhury, *Bharater Itihas Katha*. Vol-1 (Calcutta, 1985).

3 Tofayel Ahmed, *Amader Prachin shilpa*, (Bangla Academy, 1992) p. 131.

4 *Banglapedia*, *ibid*.

5 H. Blockmann, *Ain-i-Akbari of Abul Fazal*, Calcutta, 1939.

6 K. M. Ashraf, *Life, and Conditions of the People of Hindustan*, (Kalkata, 1980) p. 224.



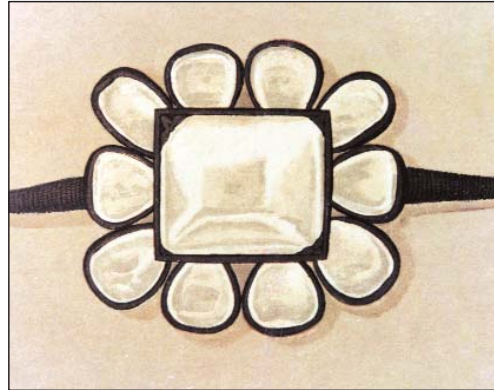
A.L. Clay also praised the gold and silver work of Dhaka, saying that the Dacca workmen excelled in filigree work, and also made bracelets, neck-chains, ear and nose-rings, etc. besides vessels for containing *attar* and rose water.<sup>13</sup> Dinesh Chandra Sen has highly spoken of this filigree work, as it was very light and valuable, which re-allures a cute but does not de-allure anybody.<sup>14</sup>

### Patronisation of Dhaka's Nawabs

Besides the Mughal Nawabs, the Khajahs of Dhaka were also very fond of ornaments. Khaja Alimullah was in the habit of purchasing ornaments of old aristocratic families of Dhaka and thus he had the world famous 'DaryaI-Noor' from the Naib Nazim of Dhaka Nushrat Jung. Hamilton's Catalogue tells us about the *Darya-i-Noor* as under:

This splendid jewel was sold by public sale under the commands of the Government of India in 1852 and was purchased by Hon'ble Khajah Ali Mollah (Alimullah), Zamindar of Dacca, in the possession of whose descendants it now remains.<sup>15</sup>

Taifoor endorsed the same view of public auction. According to him, 'the Nawab's properties were sold by public auction. The gorgeous state howdahs of the dynasty with heavy silver mounting upon scatted bonnet were purchased by the *Basakh* weavers of Dhaka who exhibited them in their *Janmashtami* processions on the occasion of Jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1887. Nawab Ahsan Ullah had a cute gold-made container for keeping the address of welcome with the excellence of Dhaka's craftsmanship. In fact, it was a regular phenomenon for the Dhaka Nawabs to present Dhaka's famous products including Muslin, gold and silver made filigree works.



*Darya-i-Noor*

Many precious and unique jewellery of the house entered into several rich people's houses in Dhaka. A precious emerald called *Dariya-e-Noor* is said to have been purchased by Khajah Alimullah, the ancestor of the present Nawab of Dhaka.<sup>16</sup> According to B.C. Allen, some of the costliest specimens of the jewellers' art are to be seen on the occasion of *Janmastmi* procession, when fine shrines of gold and silver are dragged through the city on bullock carts.<sup>17</sup>

The London Fair in 1851 duly highlighted the performance of the Dhaka's goldsmiths and its subsequent impress found in the encyclopedia as under:

Since then learnt more about those workers and have been compelled to acknowledge ... how completely the oriental jeweller understood his work and with what singular simplicity of method he carried out his work.<sup>18</sup>

Bird Wood mentioned that the Dhaka's craftsmanship was followed by the goldsmiths of other districts.<sup>19</sup>

14 Dinesh Chandra Sen, *Brihat Banga*, p. 928.

15 Muntassir Mamoon, *Dhaka: Smriti Bismritir Nagari*, Bangla Academy, 1993, pp. 23-24.

16 Syed Muhammed Taifoor, *Glimpses of Old Dhaka*, 1956 p. 243.

17 B. C. Allen, *Eastern Bengal District Gazetteers, Dacca* (Allahbad, 1912) p. 114.

18 Tofael Ahmed: *Amader Prachin Shilpa*, *ibid*, p. 139.

19 See Birdwood, Geozge C.N. *The Industrial Arts of India*, London, 1880.

### Origin of Goldsmith in Dhaka

The industry of jewellery in Dhaka became famous during the pre-Mughal era. It flourished in a unique manner during the Mughal and Nawabi periods. According to J. Wise, the goldsmiths of Nadia crossed the Ganges on the eve of attacks of Brgees and migrated to Dhaka. A Bengali contemporary poem depicts the Bargi-attacks in the following manner:

Zte me ei Mx Mōg j jūtZ j vMj  
 hZ Mōtgi tj vK me cvj vBj \  
 eṭpY cj vT cṭi fvi j Bqv|  
 tmvbi evBb'v cj vT nōw<sup>3</sup> ni mc j Bqv\

-M½vi vg



Dhaka's *Sonarus* (Goldsmiths) at work in the mid-19th century

These artisans bore the social title Paal, Sen, Sheel, Manikya and Dey. They were engaged in the washing of gold at the Dhaka Mint House. But as soon as the Dhaka's mint house was wound up, these goldsmiths started washing gold of their own.<sup>20</sup> During the Mughal time both the Hindus and Muslims were involved in this business. After the establishment of banks, the *Poddar* class ultimately switched over to the jewellery sector as moneylender or *Poddar*. The goldsmiths and *Poddars* are now concentrated in the Tantibazar area because the *Tantis* or weavers once lost their glories and were bound to change their profession as goldsmith. According to Kedarnath Majumdar, the Muslin traders and weavers entered into the jewellery business in the first quarter of the nineteenth century.<sup>21</sup>

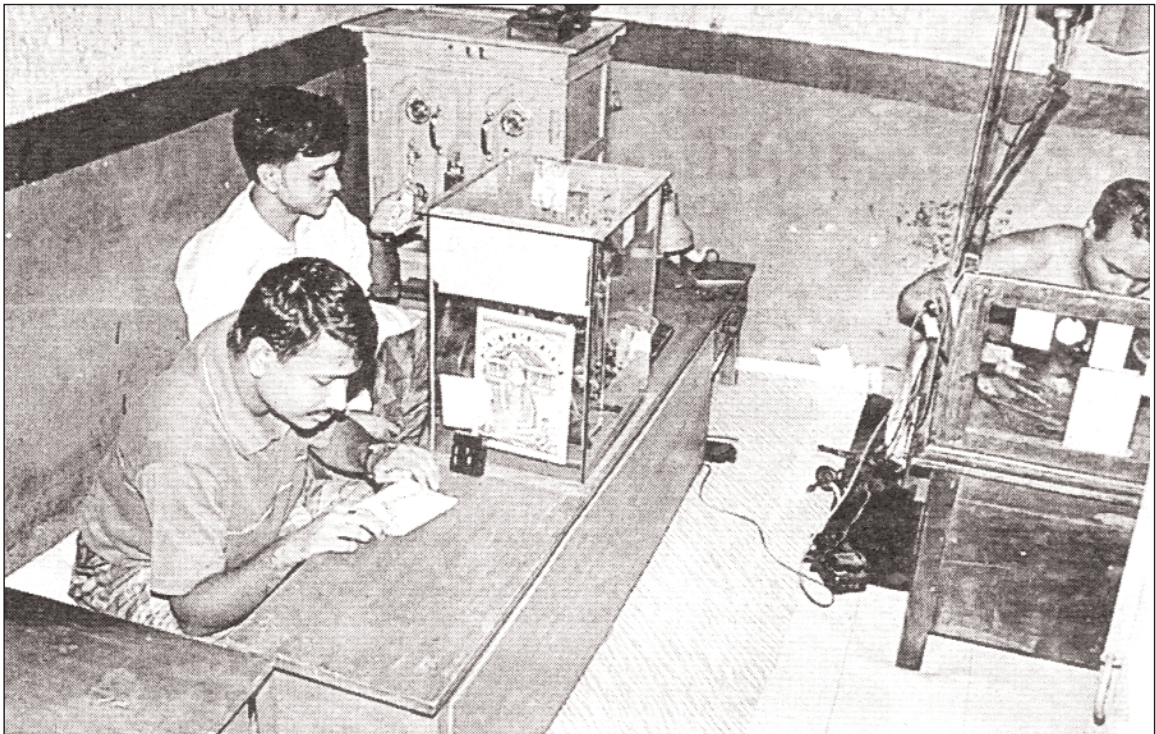
20 Wise James, *Notes on the Race, Castes and Tribes of Eastern Bengal*, (London, 1883) also in Tofail Ahmed, *ibid*.

21 Kedarnath Majumdar : *Dhakar Bibaran* (Mymensing, 1910) pp. 116-117.



In Dhaka, the *Marwari* class could not step into jewellery business owing to these *Podders*. Podders also obtained orders and had it done by the goldsmiths as per design and specification.

**Classifications of Dhaka's Gold-Silver work:** The goldsmiths of Dhaka were efficient in designed filigrees, silla or engraving work, dice-work, bidri work, Minakari and Badla, etc. All the above classifications are either of Nadia Model or the Mughal Model developed over the ages. These works developed in the hands of Dhaka's craftsmen. The Mina work of Dhaka is of Lahore origin and came to Dhaka via Joypur in the sixteenth century.



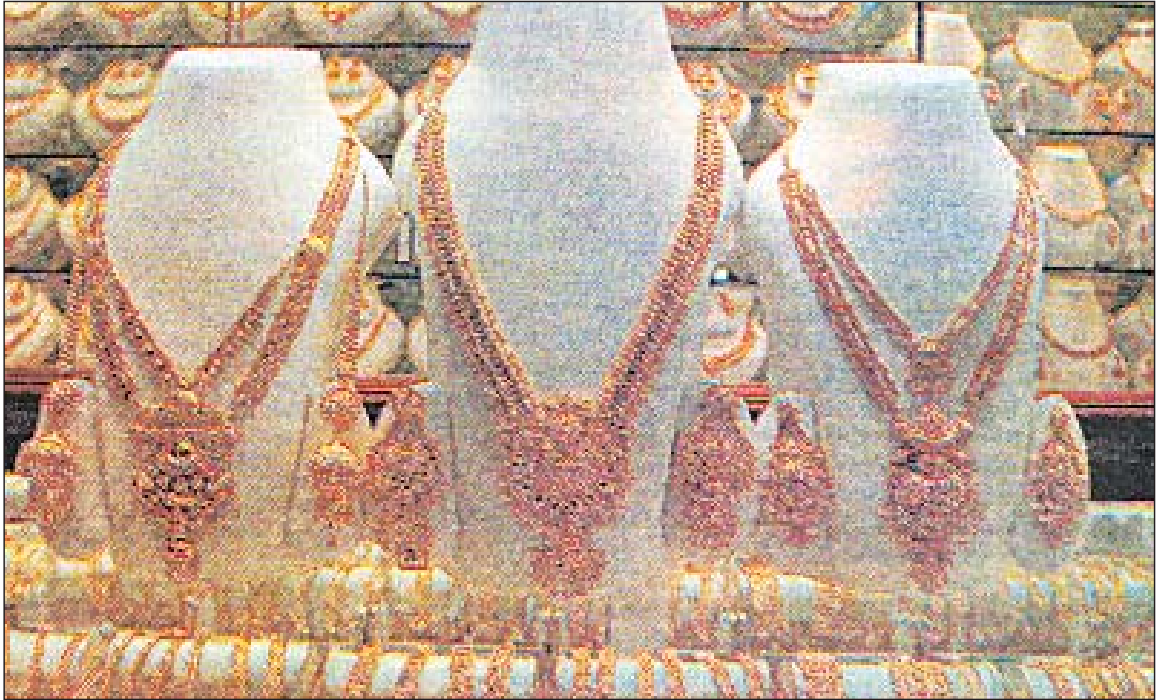
Goldsmith at work in modern times

For filigree work, silver or gold wires were being made in Dhaka. The *Basaks* of Dhaka were skilful in this work.<sup>22</sup> Hakim Habibur Rahman compared this work with the work of Kataka. According to Hakim, though the Mina work originally was not of Dhaka origin but the artisans of Dhaka became expert in course of time. He also found Dhaka the only place in Bengal where Muslim artisans had excellence.<sup>23</sup> It is assumed that the *Basaks* of Dhaka learned the craftsmanship of *Badla* work from the *Muslem karigars* of Dhaka. The transfer of capital from Dhaka to Rajmahal and the great famine of Bengal put the *Basaks* of Dhaka in great difficulties and they entered into different businesses including jewellery. W. W. Hunter has also spoken highly of *Badla* work of Dhaka.<sup>24</sup>

22 Tofail Ahmed, *ibid*, p. 138.

23 Hakim Habibur Rahman, *Dhaka Panchas Baras Pahle*, p. 62.

24 W. W. Hunter, *ibid*.



Various type of modern ornaments

The Paris Exhibition held in 1866 has also applauded the filigree work of Dhaka and Maskelyne and compared this work with Greek craftsmanship. In Dhaka, the teenagers were engaged in doing this as their fingers were quite soft and suitable for this purpose. He states, ‘... it had probably reached its limits of delicacy and design at a very archaic period and has made no real progress in recent time’.<sup>25</sup> Out of two in India, Dhaka was one of the biggest centers of filigree work, while the other was Kataka. Birdwood found Dhaka’s work comparable to that of Murshidabad.<sup>26</sup> The documentary book on jewellery industry *A Monograph on Gold and Silver Work in the Presidency of Bengal* has denoted the superiority of Dhaka jewellery and its craftsmen.<sup>27</sup> Another type of filigree work, developed in the sixteenth century, namely ‘Mandila’ was famous in kinds. A ‘Mandila’ work<sup>28</sup> and *Attardan* were sent in the exhibition of Delhi in 1903.<sup>29</sup>

It was Emperor Jahangir who encouraged Mandila filigree work in Dhaka. In fact, all the Muslim emperors<sup>30</sup> had keen interests in this craftsmanship. Evidences are there that this work once disappeared from Dhaka after the leaving of the Mughal royal families in the beginning of the eighteenth century. According to Meyharj, this work was re-introduced in Dhaka in 1818.<sup>31</sup>

25 Quoted in Tofail Ahmed, *ibid.* p. 140.

26 Birdwood, *ibid.*

27 See *A Monograph on Gold and Silver work in the presidency of Bengal*, Calcutta, 1905.

28 ‘Mandila’ is a sorts of Filigree work done heavily.

29 See George Watt, *Indian Art at Delhi*, London, 1903.

30 ‘Dhaka Filigree work’ in the *Journal of Indian Art* vol-1, No-13, p. 97.

31 T.H. Meyharj, *Art Manufactures of India* (Delhi, 1988) p. 134.

32 J.H. Hendley, *Indian Jewellery*, Vol-11 (Delhi, 1909) p.1 30, also in Tofail Ahmed, *ibid.* p. 142.

In exhibitions in India or elsewhere in Europe, Dhaka's filigrees were displayed. *The Journal of Indian Art* reported that in the 1880s Dhaka's 'Mandila' filigree work could not be managed for the exhibition in London. However, this simply suggests the state of demand and good reputation of Dhaka's Mandila work. T.H. Hendley also mentioned that no where in India the art (filigree) was practised with greater success than in Dacca.<sup>32</sup> In the Calcutta Fair of 1883, some items of Bhairab Chandra Karmaker of Tantibazar i.e. *Paandan, Attardan, Golap pash* were exhibited in 1878.<sup>33</sup>

**Dhaka's Early Business:** The craftsmanship of gold and silver goes back to the early civilization in India. It is believed that the people of this country were acquainted with gold dust that was available in the bed of the sea or river. Females of riverbanks used to collect this gold dust from 3-4 rivers of Bengal.<sup>34</sup> Bramaputra was such a river, where gold dust was found in the ancient time. During the Hindu period, the male class of Rajas, zamindars and rich businessmen used ornaments.<sup>35</sup> At the end of the middle age, the women of Bengal used to wear gold-and silver-made ornaments. Before external trading in Bengal the natural sources were the only means to obtain gold for this purpose.

In the region of Dhaka, Comilla and Sylhet the rivers of adjacent areas provided gold dust. Even the people living near the Brahmaputra were known as *Swarnabhushitas*.<sup>36</sup> The ancestors of Dhaka Nawab family Khaja Abdul Hakim's sons Khaja Abdul Kadir Kashmiri and Khawja Abdullah were engaged in leather, salt, *swal* and gold dust business in Sylhet.<sup>37</sup> When they migrated to Dhaka, their leather and salt businesses were continued but little is known about their gold-dust business in Dhaka. According to Swarup Chandra Roy, Sonargaon or *subarnagram* was famous for gold and silver ornaments along with bell metal copper business.<sup>38</sup>

Jogendranath Gupta, in his *Vikrampur Itihas*, hinted that the people of Vikrampur used both the gold and silver made ornaments, though the silver was in vogue at large.<sup>39</sup>

Apart from Dhaka, Jaforganj, Abdullapur, Rajnagar, Louhagonj and Sreepoor were famous for the craftsmanship of gold and silver work in seventeenth and eighteenth century Dhaka.

In fact, Dhaka was the main centre for this craftsmanship. A segment of Dhaka's goldsmith was brought by the Mughal Nawabs, while the bulk were compelled to leave Nadia at the advent of Bargis in Bengal. The goldsmith class of Dhaka consisted of the artisans of migrated people and local podder classes who lost their previous professions after the growth of usual banking in Dhaka. On the contrary, after the abolishment of Dhaka's mint house the people who dealt with the gold-dust business had to give up and shifted their business to gold and silversmith.

The weaver class of Dhaka, especially of Tantibazar, lost their business in between 1717 and 1818 and made their fortune in new areas like gold and silversmith business as well as pottery. Taylor's reports reveal that more than 300 craftsmen had been working in this trade.<sup>40</sup>

32 J.H. Hendley, *Indian Jewellery*, Vol-11 (Delhi, 1909) p.1 30, also in Tofail Ahmed, *ibid.* p. 142.

33 Official Report, Calcutta International Exhibition, Calcutta, 1895.

34 Jitiendranath Roy, *Banglar Kalkarkhana O Karigori Biddar Itihas*, Kolkata, 2005.

35 *Ibid.* p. 82.

36 Asiatic Research, Vol-8, pp. 331-332.

37 Delwar Hassan, *Dhakar Nawab Paribar O Purba Banglar Rajniti*, Dhaka, 2001, p. 9.

38 Swarup Chandra Ray, *Subarnagrmer Itihas*, (Calcutta, 1891) p. 27.

39 J.N. Gupta, *Vikrampur Itihas*, (Calcutta, 1907) p. 342.

40 James Tylor, *ibid.*





A view of Swarnapatti

In the middle of the nineteenth century, Dhaka's jewellery business was booming up because of the peasantry class of Dhaka got a handsome money in their hands out of jute cultivation.

Govinda Das, a renowned poet of nineteenth century Dhaka, has given a good picture of using ornaments by the well-to-do people in his poem:

côZ tekx Avtô hvi v, mKtj B abx Zvi v  
 tgôq tQtj i vtL Mvq tmvbn i fcv Rôqvy|  
 emvtq i fci nvU DRtj `mNi NvU  
 eo gubtj i tgôq hZ ftv cûoq<sup>41</sup>  
 Ñ fvtqvj Kue tMme> `vm|

A segment of their surplus money was supposed to be spent out for purchasing luxury items like ornaments. The increasing demands from in and outside Dhaka led the city's jewellery business up-trend considerably. On the contrary, a special feature of the Dhaka's Jamdani Saree was the ornamental border of gold and silver thread with large, bold corners. The manufacture of especially fine gold and silver thread for weavers and embroideries became a specialty of Dhaka.

Sharif opines that some social and economic revival of these traditional luxury handicrafts also encouraged goldsmiths and silversmiths who produced both for local and export markets.<sup>42</sup>

**Major Business Concentration:** During the British period, the *Subarnabaniks* of Dhaka's Nababganj and Choudhury Bazar used to prepare filigrees out of gold-dust and sold it out to the goldsmiths and silversmiths of Dhaka.<sup>43</sup>

41 Govinda Chand Das, *Kum kum*, Dacca, p. 68.

42 Sharifuddin Ahmed, *Dacca: A study in Urban History and Development*, (London, 1986) p. 115.

43 See 'Dhaka Filigree work' in the *Journal of Indian Art* vol- 1 No-13, p. 97.



Some *Shakarīs* and *Tantis* were also involved in the work, though their work was not of superior quality. In the early stage, the craftsmen of this industry were located at Kamarnagar, Banagram and Amligola mahallahs of the city. Subsequently, they gradually concentrated to Tantibazar and its adjoining areas. In fact, the industry flourished as a profitable one and this induced many *Basak* weavers and also the *Kuttis* to take up goldsmithing.<sup>44</sup> James Wise reported in the 1890s that these *kuttis* have become expert goldsmiths, competing on equal terms with the Hindus in the finest filigree work.<sup>45</sup> At the beginning of the twentieth century, these handicrafts were also found in Islampur, Patuatuli, Nawabpur and Chawkbazar areas of Dhaka. After partition, in the 1960s along with the above-mentioned places Baitul Mukarram and New Market were developed, where jewellery took its place like other business. After independence, Mouchawk and Chandrima Market were other shopping areas of ornament items. At the outset of the present century, some shopping malls have been developed and jewellery items are being sold in these shops. Handicrafts shops like *Kumudumi*, *Argong*, etc, all have jewellery counters, where ornaments are also sold. Apart from Dhaka, Vartuka in Savar is a place literally called the village of *Sakra* or *Swarnakar*.

**Concentration of Karigars:** There are about 50,000 *Karigars* working during this time. Most of the present *Karigars* are from Manikganj, Vikrampur and other neighboring districts of Dhaka. Like workers of other branches of jewellery industry, the *Karigars* have an organisation to protect their interest.<sup>46</sup> The approximate numbers are as under:

Area	Approx. Nos
Kotwali Road	20,000
Radika Mohan Road	7,000
Rakhal Chandra Basak Road	6,000
Tanti Bazar	10,000
Sutarnagar	5,00
Others	2,000

Source: Based on interviews of local artisans.

The above-mentioned *Karigars* usually work as per order given by the *Mahajans*. There are about 1,000 *Mahajans* working in the district now. The chain of work is as follows: Jewellery shops Karkhana Mahajan Mahajan Karigar. The *karigars* normally do not get any wages. They get a portion of gold instead of wages.

There are different kinds of carats of gold available in the market. These are:

24 Carats	: 100% Gold
22 Carats	: 1.5 Annas <i>Khad</i>
21 Carats	: 2 Annas <i>Khad</i>
20 Carats	: 3 Annas <i>Khad</i>
18 Carats	: 5 Annas <i>Khad</i>
14 Carats	: 8 Annas <i>Khad</i>
Normal ( <i>Deshi</i> )	: 6 Annas <i>Khad</i>

Source: Based on interviews.

**Kinds of Ornament:** Wari-Bateswar excavation reveals that the people of the Dhaka region used to wear ornaments of different sizes and colours. A song of greater Dhaka describes the name of ornaments used in the Dhaka region over the ages:

<sup>44</sup> Taifoor, *Glimpses of old Dhaka*, *ibid.* p. 73.

<sup>45</sup> James, Wise, *Notes on the Races, Castes and Traders of Eastern Bengal, London, 1883*.

<sup>46</sup> The organisations working in the jewellery sector are: Bangladesh Jewellers Samity, Jewellers Banik Samity, Swarna Shilpi Karigar Samity, Dhaka pathar Babsahi Samity and Bangladesh Podder Samity.

nvtZ kutKi Pwō wē,  
 KvibbtZ gvKwō wē,  
 i "bySbySj vB wē Mnbl  
 cvtqtZ bej wē,  
 WvqgŪ KuŪv ewK wē,  
 bvŷK bj K wē `j bvl  
 -XvKv AĀtj Mx Mvb

**Some Illustrious Artisans:** The goldsmiths and silversmiths of Dhaka were very famous in India. It is said that a few artisans of excellence were invited to Murshidabad after the removal of capital to Murshidabad. In Alahabad, some goldsmith families are of Dhaka origin who settled over there in the eighteenth century.<sup>47</sup> Even the prominent goldsmiths of Calcutta once lived in the site of *Buriganga*. An album of 14 pieces of jewellery in the Dhaka collection published by a famous Calcutta Jeweller, Hamiton and Co. reveals the excellence of Dhaka's jewellery.<sup>48</sup>

In the nineteenth century Ananda Hari and Gopi Karmaker were famous for their craftsmanship. Among the *podder*, who usually used to lend money to the goldsmiths and silversmiths, the following were famous artisans since the British period:

**British period:** Banshi Charans Podder, Kartick Sen podder, Gopi Gosh podder, Jogesh Nandi, Raghunath Pal, Kanta Ghosh and Shamal Basak Joy Gopal sur.

**Pakistan and Bangladesh period:** After Partition in 1947, many Muslims came forward in jewellery business. Ansari in his *Trade Directory of Pakistan*, along with other jewellery merchants named few enterprises run by Muslims.<sup>49</sup> Nepal Saha, Gopal Saha, Barkat Ali Kazmi, Hajee Musa, Hajee saleh, Hajee Atiqur Rahman, Hajee Kawser and Ganga Charon Malakar, are the famous jewellery merchants of Dhaka.

**Goura Chandra of Tanti Bazar:** Goura Chandra, aged about 80 years, has been living in the Tanti Bazar area since his boyhood and familiar with the jewellery business of Dhaka. He had his education at Dhaka's Pagose School in the 1930s. Mainly Radha Raman Basak started his family business. According to Goura Chandra, his forefathers had been with this trade since the late Mughal period. Initially, like other traders, they used to cross the Buriganga River and after transaction of their business at Dhaka City they returned to home everyday. As per Goura Chandra, like gold and silver made ornaments, precious stones are also popular among the wealthy people of Dhaka. Besides, ornament boxes are required for this trade. It was a time when people irrespective of creed and religion were fond of wearing stones. But now this trend has been changed considerably. The costs of stones and golds have gone high and this is hampering the further growth of business. According to him, this business was mainly on the bank of the river Buriganga and subsequently has expanded to Babu Bazar, Islampur, Kumartuli and Tanti Bazar areas. Goura Chandra came to know from his father that these goldsmiths were originally weavers and due to their hard time in the past, they had to change their business line, though they did not change their residence.

Goura mentioned the present Tanti Bazar as a *Karkhana* place of gold and silver ornaments as well as place of *Poddari* business. Among the *Karkhana* owners, Manatosh Karmakar, Litan Karmakar and Bindu Das Karmaker are doing well.

47 Amrita Lal Sheel, *Gahana*, Prabashi, 1335 BS, p. 735.

48 Sirajul Islam, (ed.) *Banglapedia*, ASOB, Vol-7, p. 368.

49 These are Cassims Mohammadia Stores, Muslim Jahan Jewellery Company, Pak Jewellers, Pakistan Jewellery House, Qassims, Modern Jewellery store, Khaja Wahiduddin and Company, see Ansari's *Trade Directory of Pakistan* (1951-52, 1954) Karachi.

## 5. Button and Comb Industry

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Swadeshi Movement in Bengal gave an impetus to industrial development as a result of which the attention of the pioneers was attracted to the possibilities of establishing a button industry.<sup>1</sup> This was indeed the beginning of many efforts to promote the industry the relics of which we discovered in several centres of Bengal. Although no individual effort was eminently successful, the industry struck roots in certain places by reason of the availability of raw materials. Thus the manufacture of mother-of-pearl buttons in some areas of Dhaka developed and was carried on although it is no longer very remunerative. Besides, the horn button industry of Dhaka city in the last century also deserves special mention. In some other directions, namely manufacture of metal buttons, celluloid buttons and shank buttons, efforts had been undertaken in Dhaka.

Although an article of luxury more or less, buttons have an economic utility which modern people can hardly forego. As articles of ornamentation, they were invented in prehistoric ages, but the changing fashions of civilization have accorded a distinctive place to buttons as necessary accessories of modern dresses. The consumption of buttons, therefore, was correlated with the standard of living of the people and necessarily their utility is bound to increase with the rise in the standard of living in the country.<sup>2</sup> The large annual imports of buttons of various sorts into Bengal as well as India easily point to the importance of buttons in the every-day of the country in the last century. The following Table denotes the import of various sorts from different countries.

**Table 1: Total imports of Buttons of all sorts**

Country	1931-32 Rs.	1932-33 Rs.	1933-34 Rs.	1934-35 Rs.	1935-36 Rs.	1936-37 Rs.	1937-38. Rs.
United Kingdom	87087	1,01,412	1,48,492	1,49,398	1,78,724	1,57,333	1,55,762
Other British Possession	512	399	432	302	394	311	1,884
Total British Empire	87,599	1,01,811	1,48,924	1,49,700	1,79,118	1,57,649	1,57,646
Poland	---	---	8,163	2,616	1,360	1,073	---
Germany	2,70,006	4,23,426	3,88,499	4,80,677	5,34,632	4,55,660	4,30,494
France	35,884	71,395	11,420	9,299	981	3,063	1,529
Switzerland	---	---	836	---	1,619	29,874	---
Italy	3,33,549	56,430	3,66,165	2,44,848	1,08,187	1,18,103	1,89,606
Austria	4,611	8,125	7,901	7,320	13,327	18,089	35,630
Czechoslovakia	3,57,186	4,77,599	4,75,000	6,00,284	4,41,081	3,60,566	5,27,187
Japan	4,24,323	7,23,749	6,89,602	11,56,318	10,00,917	97,206	10,94,222
U. S. A. Atlantic	34,852	47,797	47,246	25,941	16,250	22,485	19,651
U. S. A Via Pacific	---	182	722	127	619	---	---
Other foreign Countries	5,968	3,944	1,842	6,280	4,042	4,828	12,753
Total foreign Countries.	14,66,369	23,20,526	19,88,396	25,33,719	21,23,015	19,88,952	23,11,072
Share of Bengal	5,35,510	8,75,955	6,21,646	8,96,832	8,66,528	6,75,183	7,55,788

Source: Report on the Button Industry in Bengal, 1940.

1 Report on the Button Industry in Bengal, 1940.

2 Bulletin No. 93, Department of Industries, Govt. of Bengal, November, 1940.

The volume of imports points to the large requirements of button in Bengal. In Dhaka three sorts of buttons were being manufactured till the sixties of the last century.

#### a. Mother-of-Pearl Buttons

The manufacture of mother-of-pearl buttons in Bengal was carried on in a few centres only. The industry was once flourishing but it has gradually declined by the middle of the 20th century due to some reasons. The present condition of the industry is very much depressed and bears the typical signs of decay that seized most of the cottage industries of old Dhaka. East Bengal is the principal area where the industry originated and although some sporadic efforts were made to develop it in some other places in the 1940s, the industry was concentrated in a number of villages in the districts of Dhaka and Comilla only.

**Concentration in Dhaka:** The manufacture of mother-of-pearl buttons was a very important cottage industry of Dhaka district. Around Nangalband in the district of Narayanganj, there were a number of villages in which the industry was carried on in the homes of the people. The principal villages were Lalati, Kamargaon, Madhabpasa, Malikpara, Barapara, Jindhara, Tajpur and Kaintala. In the suburbs of the Dhaka city, such as Narinda, Faridabad, Ekrapur and Sutrapur, the industry was prevalent, but at present no manufacture of buttons takes place in these areas, although Dhaka served as the trading centre of the industry till the seventies of the twentieth century. Nangalband is about 20 miles away from Dhaka and all the products of this place and the neighbouring villages came to Dhaka and were then sent to distant centres. Jatindra Mohan Roy mentioned in his *Dhakar Itihash* that these sorts of production were used to send to Kolkata, Madras and Bombay.<sup>3</sup> About 2,200 people were engaged in the industry although many of them had agriculture as their subsidiary occupation.<sup>4</sup> If they were entirely dependent on button making alone, it would be very difficult for them to make both ends meet, for the earnings of the industry are not so large now-a-days that many families can obtain a living out of it. As per census of 1901, there were about 782 regular male and 14 female workers who used to live by this profession.<sup>5</sup> Besides, there were a large number of amateurs who made buttons during their spare time.<sup>6</sup>



Button and other objects found in the Indus Civilization

**Production:** As per D.N. Ghose, about 7,500 great grosses of buttons of different varieties were manufactured every month and the estimated value of the monthly production was about Rs. 7,000.<sup>7</sup> The work of the manufactures used to continue more or less uniformly throughout the year, but as most of the workers pursued agriculture as well, their production during the harvesting and sowing seasons was to some extent curtailed. Those who carried on the industry as the main

3 Jatindra Mohan Roy, *Dhakar Itihash*, Calcutta, 1912, p. 136.

4 Report on the Button Industry in Bengal, *ibid.*

5 See Census of Bengal, 1901, part Vol-UIA, Tables (Calcutta, 1902).

6 Report on the Survey of Cottage Industries in Bengal, 1929, p. 65.

7 Report on the Button Industry by D. N. Ghose, Industrial Intelligence Officer, Bengal Govt. press. Alipore, 1941, p. 3.



occupation, their number was small to work for about 10 hours a day on an average.

The workers manufactured buttons both on orders and for disposal in the open market. But very few workers carried on all the stages of manufacture. Generally, they finished all the stages except drilling which was done by the *mahajans* by employing a special batch of workers who are generally specialized in boring holes in the unfinished buttons. The workers took their unfinished buttons to the market where they were sold by weight and were mostly purchased by the *Mahajans*.<sup>8</sup> They get the buttons bored and finished and fitted upon pasteboards for disposal in the market. According to a report there were middlemen who played a vital role in this business. The report says:

In the town of Dacca there are a good many middlemen who advertise themselves as manufacturers of mother of pearl buttons. As a matter of fact, they go to Nangalband to buy buttons as far as possible as samples that they supply to their customers.<sup>9</sup>

**The production procedure:** The productive processes were carried on mostly by hand in a crude fashion just in the same manner as it was done earlier. Till the 1940s, no labour saving machinery had so far been introduced in any centre. There were altogether six processes, which were necessary for the manufacture of a complete set of buttons. They are: (1) Blanking; (2) Grinding; (3) Facing; (4) Drilling; (5) Smoothing; and (6) Colouring.

Excepting the last one, all the other processes were carried out by hand.

**Sources of raw materials:** The materials for the button industry consist of mainly mussel shells and pasteboards. The mussel shells were obtained in the local markets where a class of people called *Bede* who have hardly any fixed homes but wander from place to place brought the shells for sale. They used to collect these shells from the riverbanks or riverbeds in the locality. The *Buriganga*, the *Meghna*, the *Sitalakhaya* and other smaller rivers in the adjoining districts contain mussel shells moderately in large quantities. The Jamuna and the other small rivers flowing by or through Mymensingh, Pabna and Bogra contain also such shells which are collected by local people and sent to Dhaka.<sup>10</sup>



Modern buttons



An artisan making hole on the button

8 A. L. Clay in his book *History and statistics of the Dacca division* mentioned *Mahajan* as the 'Capitalist. Industrialist Anwar Hossain is also of the same opinion as he told that in case of Dhaka, a *Mahajan* used to invest money in business like an industrialist now-a-days.

9 Report on the Survey of Cottage Industries in Bengal. *ibid* p. 68.

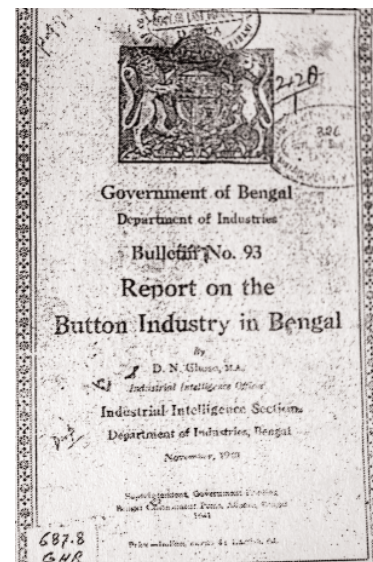
10 Report on the Button Industry in Bengal, *ibid*. p. 5.

It is generally felt that as regards the supply of raw materials the producers had to encounter no serious problems. The supply of shells was said to be more than adequate for the existing requirements of the industry while the supply of other materials such as pasteboards on which buttons are fitted up was obtained from Kolkata.

The collection of mussel shells from the riverbanks and riverbeds did not involve any monetary investment on the part of the collectors, for they get it free as nature's gifts. In Eastern Bengal the principal fisheries were situated in the small rivers, '*bils*' and ponds. The central pearl and shell market was at Demra in the district of Dhaka. The shells were either bought direct from the fishermen or from merchants in Demra, Dhaka city, Nangalband and Narayanganj. The Sylhet shells were good in quality and were sold at Rs. 3 to Rs. 4 a maund; the shells taken from the Turag River were sold at Rs. 1 to Rs. 2 per maund.<sup>11</sup>

### Decline of Mother-of-Pearl Buttons

The industry faced difficulties about marketing, financing, etc. as the situation was admittedly very unsatisfactory. The system prevailing, if it can be called a system at all, is subject to the common drawbacks from which most of our cottage industries suffer. The manufactures, that is, the actual workers have no organization among themselves for the purpose of effecting bulk purchases of raw materials or of marketing their products, buy raw materials individually, fashion them into semi-finished products individually and dispose of them individually in the market. The middlemen, or, the Mahajans, buy the semi-fished goods, have them finished by other people and sell them in the market. It was they who were to think of the market for finished goods and what they cared about most was the margin of profit which they could retain by taking advantage of the weak position of the workers. They did not feel the urge for helping the workers to improve the technique of production. Nor were they so much interested in finding new markets for the products in which they deal.



Report on Button industry in Bengal

Whenever they obtained a big order or a large quantity of buttons, they approached the workers with whom they placed orders. But they did not supervise nor had the technical staffs to supervise the manufacture of the required buttons. The result was that invariably the buttons offered were not of uniform quality and the traders who placed the orders originally went away disappointed and dissatisfied. Thus gradually the market was lost to the Dhaka buttons. It is true that this disadvantage was to some extent due to the crude methods of manufacturing. But at the same time it should be said that had the Mahajans the necessary vision to organize the industry on a scientific basis, introduce improved methods of manufacturing and look to the marketing of the product more carefully, the products would have possessed a greater degree of finishing and uniformity and would have also fetched a more remunerative price to the workers.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

### b. The Horn Button Industry

Horn button or horn carving is an old industry of Dhaka. The report of the government of Bengal reveals that the horn button industry is concentrated in the city of Dhaka and is carried on by about 700 persons among whom as many as 600 were wage earners in the Mahallas of Amligola, Nawabganj, Choudhury Bazar and Bhater Masjid. According to Anwar Hossain, from Rahmatganj to Hazaribagh there were 2000 Muslim families who used to produce button and combs by horns.<sup>12</sup> The industry originated during the period of the European War when foreign supplies were cut off. The Second World War recruited a good number of soldiers and to meet the increasing needs of uniform, much more buttons were required. Nazir Hossain, a writer of Dhaka history mentioned that the women of Amligola engaged themselves in making buttons at home.<sup>13</sup> The industry did well for some years but with the coming of depression and for other internal drawbacks the decline of the industry set in. In the opinion of Anwar Hossain, after the end of the world war, the demand of buttons considerably declined and Dhaka's businessmen were severely affected. On the contrary, the inferior quality of horn buttons and advent of plastic products hampered further the growth of this industry.<sup>14</sup>

It was estimated that about Rs. 80,000 worth of horn buttons were manufactured every year. A skilled labourer can turn out 2 gross of buttons per day working 10 hours daily. The rainy season is the slack season when production is to some extent curtailed. The manufacturers produce buttons generally for the market but sometimes they produce also to orders from the local merchants.

### Production Technique of Horn Button

D.N. Ghosh mentioned that the production technique in the case of horn buttons is rather crude in the same manner as in the case of mother-of-pearl buttons. Such buttons are made from the solid portion of the horns. No machinery is practically used except a saw, a file, a knife and a lathe. The solid portion of the horn is first of all chiseled off to give it a cylindrical shape. It is then fixed by means of a clamp to a hollow horizontal spindle fixed in bearings round which a fiddle is made to pass by which it is given a rotating motion. Buttons are cut out of the solid horn by bringing a chisel to bear against it while revolving. This gives the buttons a polish. No buffing is done. The holes in the buttons are drilled by a bow-drill.

Though the technique has not been perfected by the introduction of machinery, the buttons turned out are fairly uniform and display good polish. The workers are all Muhammadans and very hard working. Labour is cheap and the normal daily wages were paid to a skilled hand is between 8 annas to 12 annas in the 1940s.<sup>15</sup>



A horn button crafts woman at work

12 S. N. H. Rizvi, *Dacca District Getteer*. 1969, p. 201.

13 Anwar Hossain, *Amar Jiban*, (Auto biography of Mr. Anwar Hossain, Chairman of the Anwar group of Industries), APPL, 2008.

14 Nazir Hossain, *Kingbadantir Dhaka*, 3rd edition, 1995, p. 565.

15 Anwar Hossain, *Amar Jiban*, *ibid*.

**Sources of raw materials:** The horns are obtained mainly from Madras and Assam. In Dhaka there were about 10 dealers in the 1940s, who imported buffalo horns from Calcutta and the manufacturers obtain their supplies from them. Bengal's cattle horns are reported to be deficient in the extent of solid portion, which is found in the bigger sized buffalo horns of Assam and Madras. Anwar Hossain cited that the major portion of horns was being imported from Madras by 'Gaina boat.' It normally took one and a half months to two months to reach Dhaka.<sup>16</sup> There are different qualities of horns, which sell at different rates. The price varied from Rs. 10 per maund to Rs. 50 per maund. The white coloured horns were much in demand and sold at higher prices. The total consumption of buffalo horns was estimated to be about 1,400 maunds worth about Rs. 35,000 every year.

**State of Marketing:** The marketing of horn buttons is affected principally through local dealers who receive the buttons from the manufacturers, stamp them with their own trademarks and distribute them to Kolkata and other provinces. There were only two manufacturing dealers who were trying to sell their finished products direct to Kolkata.

The state of horn button export and its concentration in Dhaka in the 1930s were as under:			
Area of Concentration	No of Workers	Yearly production	Place where Exported
Amligola Choudhuribazar Nawabgonj	700	1400 munds	Lucknow, Cawnpore, Delhi
Bhater Masjid Chak bazar (Mokam)			Bombay Central Province
Narinda Hazaribagh Subaldas Lane			Madras, Burma, East Africa

Source: Compiled from the Report on the Button Industry in Bengal.

The markets for Dhaka horn buttons are said to be very extensive. The largest portion of the buttons produced at Dhaka is said to be going to Bombay. Considering the extent of market, it is presumed that the buttons once enjoyed a wide popularity. But the conditions of the workers were very much depressed which

Cost of production (Stock: 1 maund of horns)			
(a) Total receipts	Rs. a. p.		
3 grosses of best quality coat button at Rs. 2-8	7	8	0
11 Grosses of 2nd quality coat buttons at Rs. 1-8	16	8	0
3 Grosses of inferior quality at 15 as.	2	13	0
4 great grosses of shirt buttons at Rs. 3-14	15	8	0
4 grosses of ivory type buttons at 10 as.	2	8	0
Horn dust	0	2	0
	<b>44</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>
(b) Total expenditure			
Cost of 1 maund horn	12	0	0
Labour cost of 17 grosses of coat buttons	10	10	0
Labour cost of 4 great grosses of shirt buttons	12	0	0
Labour cost of 4 grosses of Ivory type of buttons	1	8	0
Drilling charges	0	8	6
Colouring charges	0	1	6
For fitting on paste boards	0	8	0
	<b>37</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total profit (a-b)</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>11</b>	

Source: Report on the Button Industry in Bengal, Calcutta 1940

seemed to point out that there were drawbacks in the system of marketing. The middlemen, no doubt, took away a big slice of profit while absence of proper publicity deprived the industry of a good potential demand. However, the following Tables will show the profit margin per maund.

It is evident that on average the workers can earn a profit of a little over 3 annas per seer of horn finished.

#### **'Dacca Co-operative Bishan Silpa Samity'**

The manufacturers really feel that there should be some organizations, among themselves through which they will be able to effect bulk purchase of raw materials and to market their products. To this end, they had formed the Co-operative Bishan-Silpa Samity, Ltd., the objective of which is not only to help the worker

16 D. N. Ghosh. *ibid.* p.9.





*Bishan Silpa Samity members along with a foreign buyer in the 1940s*

members with loans and advances but also to make arrangements for purchasing raw materials for all members and for marketing finished products. The report of the government of Bengal remarked that:

The Association has great possibilities if only the workers adhere to its principles and act accordingly with honesty and perseverance. It has not as yet begun to function actively. So its achievements have yet to be watched and waited. This 'Dacca Co-operative Bishan Shilpa Samity' was formed in 1939 at Jagannath Saha Road and subsequently was shifted to Choudhury Bazar.<sup>17</sup>

### **Entrepreneurs in the 1930s**

It is very difficult to trace the pioneers of this age-old industry of Dhaka. However, the autobiography of Anwar Hossain, *Amar Jiban* reveals that late Lat Bepari alias Lat Mia was one of the pioneers of Dhaka's horn button industry in mid nineteenth century Dhaka. Lat Mahajan of Amligola, who was engaged in the business of both horn button and combs in Dhaka, made his fortune during his lifetime. One Mr. Gupta, popularly known as 'Gopi Babu' of Lalbag, was also prominent in this line and extended his business up to Kolkata. Aftabuddin of Churi Hatta was an agent, who catered these items on wholesale basis. In the 1940s, late Rahim Baksh of Amligola was a famous entrepreneur in this trade. The Bishan Samity members were: Mr. Ahmedullah, Mr. Hafez Musa, Hafez Mohammed, Hajee Nur Ahmed, Bara Khan and Chotto Khan and others.<sup>18</sup>

### **State of this Business in the 1950s and 1960s**

After the partition in 1947, imports of buttons from India ceased and the requirement of button for the increasing people of Dhaka rose considerably. Apart from its old concentration (see Table) more industries and trading centres were developed. Ansari's Trade Directory recorded 18 Nos of such factories<sup>19</sup> at Amligola, Rupchand Mokim Lane, Faridabad, Laxmibazar, Chawkbazar, Posta, Sutrapur, Nowabpur, Kather Pool Lane, Ruihatta, Urdu Rood, Kapurianagar, Walter Road and Kulutola.

<sup>17</sup> Anwar Hossain *Amar Jiban*, (ed.) *ibid*.

<sup>18</sup> Anwar Hossain, *ibid*.

<sup>19</sup> Ansari's Trade Directory of Pakistan, 1951-1954, Karachi, p. 323.

In 1963, the Pakistan Annual provided a list of button manufacturing industries of Dhaka showing 16 of such industries in operation located in different parts of old Dhaka.<sup>20</sup> However, many of them were in the manufacturing process of combs.

### c. The Metal Button Industry

In the whole of Bengal there was only one regular factory, although in a small scale, for manufacturing metal buttons. It was Messrs. S. N. Basak & Sons at Nawabpore, Dhaka. The total volume of production of this firm was only 1,000 gross buttons amounting to Rs. 2,250 only. It engaged only two workers and consumed 4 maunds of brass sheet and 2 maunds of silver sheet monthly worth about Rs. 150 and Rs. 150 respectively.

The machinery it possessed consists of a cutting machine and press machine mainly. For want of funds the firm could not use improved machineries. It was claimed that although the firm manufactured a few varieties only, namely, brass and silver buttons, they enjoyed a fairly good demand. From the limited production and sale of the buttons, it assumed that the firm was not enterprising enough.

**Table 2: Imports of Metal Buttons**

Country	1931-32 Rs.	1932-33 Rs.	1933-34 Rs.	1934-35 Rs.	1935-36 Rs.	1936-37 Rs.	1937-38 Rs.
United Kingdom	63,878	59,530	1,05,246	1,03,056	1,15,436	97,725	98,818
Other British possession	74	303	54	93	390	79	1,249
Total British Empire	63,952	59,833	1,05,300	1,03,149	1,15,826	97,804	1,00,067
Germany	2,13,608	3,65,178	3,28,075	3,84,846	3,88,467	3,45,883	3,19,198
Italy	9,646	12,180	12,926	7,250	523	889	2,214
Austria	4,009	7,902	7,281	6,292	4,486	1,859	12,021
Czechoslovakia	3,10,520	4,11,205	3,74,378	4,53,305	3,02,644	2,59,740	4,72,371
U. S. Asia pacific	---	---	722	127	619	---	---
Other foreign countries	2,948	367	3,220	1,236	1,377	2,050	2,444
Total foreign countries	5,72,281	8,86,722	8,49,145	9,46,878	7,85,229	7,33,934	8,76,448
Share of Bengal	1,51,344	2,77,300	2,32,043	2,82,674	2,57,634	2,00,698	1,84,358

Source: Report on the Button Industry in Bengal 1940.

There were again some occasional out turns of buttons by certain metal works in Calcutta and its suburbs, but such buttons were manufactured in a limited quantity and were not meant for the market for they almost always made orders for specific purposes.

### Buttons of other sorts

Besides mother of pearl buttons, horn buttons and metallic buttons, there are certain other kinds of buttons manufactured in a limited quantity on stray occasions and for specific purposes. Shank buttons are made by the 'Shankharis' who make bangles and other ornamental articles out of conch shells; they are not for the general market. They are often made to orders to suit the fancies or requirements of individual customers. Some buttons are also made of ivory, mainly for ornamental purposes and have hardly any commercial possibilities. Some wooden buttons are also reported to be made in certain centres, but they hardly make their appearance in the market.

<sup>20</sup> Pakistan Annual, 1963-64.

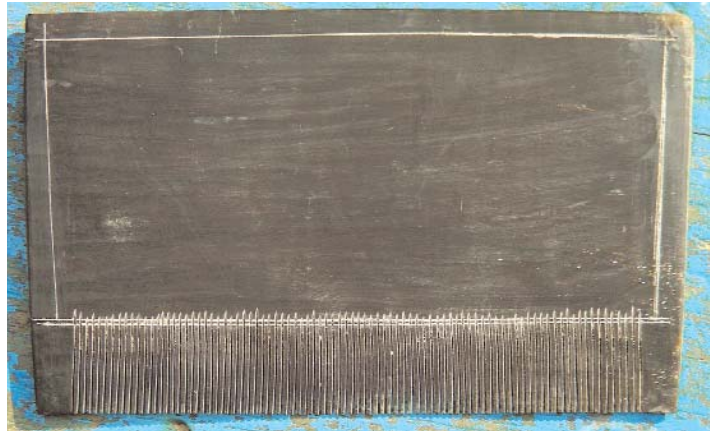
Celluloid buttons are mostly imported, but some of the celluloid work in Kolkata and in Jessore which are contemplating their manufacture in a commercial scale, sometimes produce them in a limited scale, when specific orders are placed with them. So the manufacture of celluloid buttons cannot be a regular feature of Bengal's button industry.

Mr. I. Mustaphi, who was an expert in the button industry, once attempted buttons made of corozonut, which is a hard sort of nut imported from South America. The venture was reported to have progressed satisfactorily, but he had to suspend the business at a later stage owing to difficulties in management. It was claimed by Mr. Mustaphi in the 1940s that if the manufacture of corozonut buttons was combined with the manufacture of mother-of-pearl buttons in a commercial scale and carried on with the help of suitable up-to-date machinery, the venture might have been a business success.

### Horn Combs

There were some 40 people at Amligola and Churihatta in the suburbs of the city of Dhaka, who manufactured horn plates. They were all Muhammadans. They got their supply of horns from the wholesale merchants in Kolkata. Anwar Hossain in his book mentioned that some raw materials were imported from Madras by boats.<sup>21</sup>

The process of making horn plates previous to their being made into combs is very simple as it was made manually. The hollow portion of the horn is separated from the solid by cutting it transversely with a handsaw. The solid portion is disposed of for the manufacturing of horn buttons and toys, etc. The hollow portion of the horn is then cut longitudinally into 2 pieces. These pieces are then put on a charcoal fire.



A horn-made Comb

When the horn is sufficiently heated and has become soft it is flattened with iron tongs. When the horn is partially flattened out and is still soft some heavy weights are put on it to flatten it further. The charred portions of the horn plate are then removed with an edge after the plates have cooled down. From these horn plates, buttons and combs are manufactured.<sup>22</sup>

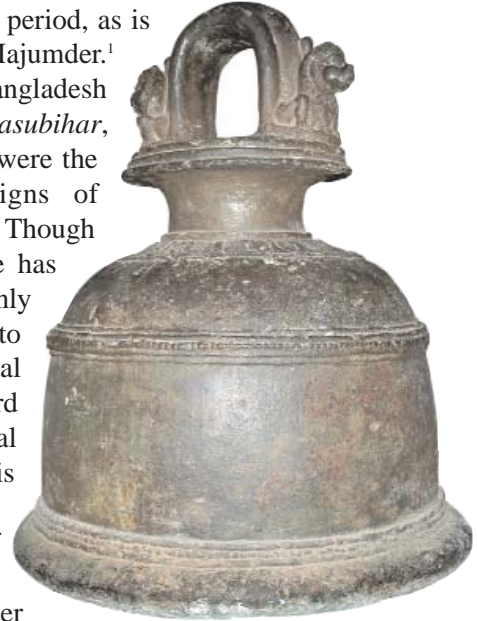
Buttons from horn plates were made at the Narayanganj Button Factory and the Dacca Coronation Button factory. In the 1930s there were 50 cottage workers in Churihatta, a suburb of Dhaka, where they made combs from horn plates. They cut the horn plate to the required size and then with a handsaw the teeth of the comb are cut. Sometimes, some of the combs are ornamented. They are then finished and polished by rubbing them with a brush dipped in oil and charcoal powder. These combs are very strong. They have an extensive sale in the mufassail areas. Especially, the women folk are very fond of it.

<sup>21</sup> Anwar Hossain, *ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Report on the survey of Cottage Industries in Bengal, 1929, p. 67.

## 6. Brass and Bell-Metal Industry

There was use of metals in Bangladesh since the ancient period, as is known through the writings of Dr. Ramesh Chandra Majumder.<sup>1</sup> Use of brass among the metals has been popular in Bangladesh since the old days. Out of 86 bronze artifacts found at *Basubihar*, four miles west of Bogra's *Mahasthangarh*, 40 of them were the attractive statuettes of Buddhism showing the signs of Bangladesh's metal industry during the Pala dynasty. Though bronze and brass are different metals, bronze sculpture has been mentioned here for the reason that although commonly called bronzes, the old metal icons that have come down to us are generally made of copper or brass.<sup>2</sup> About the metal ingredients here Debala Mitra said, 'although the word bronze has been used in the title of the book, all the metal objects in the absence of their compositional analysis cannot be recognised as bronze'. From the chemical analysis it appears that sculptors for casting the objects of the hoard from Jhewari<sup>3</sup> used both bronze and brass. The Indian *Karigars* learned to prepare bronze brass and copper through vulcanizing stone.<sup>4</sup> This was a significant development towards the metallic production. In



A bronze metal bell found at Mainamati (7-10 century)

Bangladesh, bell-metal industry has got reputation much earlier than we usually presume. The recent excavation of Wari-Bateswar areas has unearthed some objects which manifest the antiquity of metal uses of old time Dhaka.<sup>5</sup> Islampur, Nababganj and Kaghmari are well-reputed for bell-metal industry and also a hinterland for Dhaka's market.<sup>6</sup> Dhaka's Shimulia and Lalar Tek are also famous for manufacturing some objects and brass-smithing.

### Development of Kansa-Brass Industry

The history of Kansa and brass dates back to the pre-historic Bengal. Attention can now be diverted to the history of metal industry of Dhaka city from the context of Bangladesh. Even if brass is not exactly the ingredient, the typical *Bidri* or *Koptagari*-work of placing gold and silver plates on the metal pot made of amalgamated zinc and copper is a traditional metal work industry of Dhaka. The *Bidri*-work on the box sent by Nawab Ahsanullah was adjudged the 'best' at the international exhibition in Calcutta held in 1883-84.<sup>7</sup> On another occasion Nawab Ahsanullah sent

1 R.C. Majumder, *The History of Bengal*, Vol-1, 1948.

2 Debala Mitra: *Bronzes from Bangladesh*: Agan Kala Prakashan, (Delhi, 1982) p.10 also see Tofail Ahmed, *Bannijik Charukala*, ASOB, 1991, pp. 7-8.

3 Jhewari is a village in the Chittagong district, where 61 statuettes of Buddha were found by one Shah Ali Balee in 1927 and subsequently these were shifted to Indian Museum in 1929.

4 Jitendranath Ray, *Banglar Kalkarkhana O Karigari Bidyar Itihas*, Kolkata, 2005, p. 77 also see Tofail Ahmed, *ibid.* p. 7.

5 For details, see Sufi Mostafizur Rahman, *Archaeological Heritage*, Cultural Survey of Bangladesh Series, ASOB, 2008.

6 Henry Glassie-Firoz Mahmud, *Living Traditions*, ASOB, 2008, p. 212.

7 For exhibitions of Dhaka-products, see Appendix of this book.





Brass made paandan

at the *Dhakeshwari Mandir* presumed to be built by Ballal Sena. Names of *Kansari*, *Bidrisaj* and *Cherakosh* are found in the list of metal artisans in the census of 1838 as is mentioned in James Taylor's book *Topography of Dacca*.<sup>11</sup> Apart from all these, the process of production of household utensils was also very old. There were no metal object other than the articles required for Hindu worship and utensils produced in the country by the end of the British period. Dinanath Sen, a renowned Inspector of schools prepared a brass made special lamp stand. During the Pakistan period, enough metal-made articles imported mainly from the western region for decoration for houses were traded in the handicraft shops of Dhaka. As the source ceased to exist with the independence, Dhaka's metal industry has expanded. Decoration pieces made of metal took the factories manufacturing utensils for production instead.

But the number of people involved with this industry was not less even during the British period. W. W. Hunter mentioned 489 workers in bell metal and copper (*Kansaris*) in the Statistical Account of Dacca District.<sup>12</sup> Following is the chart showing the number of people involved with the production, trading of this industry during 1901 and 1921:

Year	Nos in Production	Nos in Trading
1901	5080	2518
1921	2518	572

Source: Based on Censuses of 1901 and 1921.

a replica of Ahsan Manzil in response to a request of a photograph of Ahsan Manzil.<sup>8</sup> He also placed an order to Ananda Hari to build a replica of Dhaka's *Imambara* who was a famous artisan of 19th century Dhaka.<sup>9</sup> Some of such evidences are preserved at the Bangladesh National Museum. Two large-size insignias made of brass at the *Hussaini Dalan* are also preserved and these are displayed only at the *Muharram* festival. The two insignias written in Arabic *Togara* and *Fulpata* are ornate in *Moradabadi* work. The year of production 1219 Hijri (1798 A.D.) was inscribed on both the insignia.<sup>10</sup> There are some brass images besides the evidences made of other metals

A golappash  
(19th century)

<sup>8</sup> Jatindra Mohan Ray, *Dhakar Itihas*, (Calcutta, 1912), p. 132.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, p. 133.

<sup>10</sup> Tofail Ahmed, *ibid*.

<sup>11</sup> James Taylor, *Topography of Dacca*, (London, 1840) p. 180.

<sup>12</sup> W.W. Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Bengal*, Vol-V, (London, 1877) p. 36.

**Price and mode of sale:** Brass and other metals in Dhaka are being sold by the seer. The following table will show the price of these metal in the 1860s.

**Present condition:** The state of the Brass and bell metal did not take any major change over the ages. In some cases it has been modernised to meet up the needs of the people.

The raw material of this industry is primarily local. During the East India Company the Dutch imported raw materials.<sup>13</sup> Before the partition of India in 1947, copper and brass metal was imported from Calcutta.<sup>14</sup> Some new brass was imported from Korea, Japan, United Kingdom and China. Some 30 to 35 importers are learnt to be involved for the import of 30/40 tons of brass annually and import comes down to 20/30 tons if the demand is less. The businessmen of Nawabpur area, Mitford Hospital area, New Elephant Road and New Circular Road are importing for Dhaka Market. For brass fittings of electric lamps, Messers Crescent Trading Agency, Swash Corporation Ltd., Mehbub Electrics, Bangladesh Crafts are among others known for the import. These industrial plants produce various lucrative brass light fittings in their own factories. This is one remarkable side of the brass work. As importers, names of Maowla Bux, Sobhan Bux, Mercantile Trading, Emran Corporation, etc. are also known. New brass is directly imported by these organisations for their industrial and factory uses.<sup>15</sup> Bulk of the raw material comes through *Bhangaru* or *Bhangari* meaning the broken and old brass utensils. Vendors collect these from



A view of craft processing

everywhere beginning from villages to ports and sell to 250/300 *Bhangaru* stalls of Rajani Bose Lane of Dhaka. Subsequently, with a profit margin of a small amount per kilogram, the shopkeepers sell them to the factory. Old brass is also obtained by breaking abandoned ships in Chittagong. But nowadays there is as such no supply from these sources of getting the raw material. There are big factories, five in number, in Tejgaon Industrial Area, Nolgola, Mirpur Section No.11 and Islambagh. Around 500 kg to 850 kg brass is melt each day in all these big factories. Automatic machines are used for this purpose abroad. An approximate price of such machine is Tk 12 lakh to 20 lakh. Besides the price of the machine, investment worth Tk 6/8 lakh is required. The number of workers is 20/30 and the ratio of skilled and unskilled workers stands at 10 and 12. Daily profit of the factory comes between Tk 1,000 and 1,200. As demand of brass has

**Table 1: Price of Brass-metal in 1860**

Item	State of metal	Price (seer)		
		Rs.	Annas	Paisa
Brass	Unmanufactured	0	12	0
Brass	Manufactured	1	2	0
Copper	Unmanufactured	1	0	0
Copper	Manufactured	1	6	0
Bell-metal	Unmanufactured	1	0	0
Bell-metal	Manufactured	1	6	0

Source: A. L. Clay, Principles Heads History and Statistic of the Dacca Division (Calcutta, 1868) p. 30.

13 Tofail Ahmed, Ibid, pp. 8-9.

14 Sheikh Muksud Ali, *Bangladesh Zilla Gazetteer*, Dhaka, 1993 p. 435.

15 As Metal based products, especially Kansha-goods are not in vogue now a day, its demand has been declined to a great extent.



Metal products

declined day by day, production of these factories has reduced now almost to a half. According to the craftsmen, some of the raw materials are smuggled abroad.<sup>16</sup>

Generally, in the small factories like the big ones, products like *badna*, glasses, pots, *bati*, spoons, lamps, etc. besides utensils are made by galvanising the broken brass amounting approximately to half a mound to one mound a day. Products like flowers vases, ashtrays, medals, etc. are also made of brass by the same processes.

### Products: As Narrated by the Elderly Artisans

**Mosharraf Hossain:** Mosharraf Hossain (60) of Kayetpara in Dhamrai considers himself to be the only brass-sculpture artist in the whole of Bangladesh. It is difficult to say whether Mosharraf is the most efficient one in this field. But he is unparallel in making brass furniture and fittings. He made his mark in making unique designs of brass cot, bedstead, costly bedstead, dressing-table, sofa set, etc. especially the ornate ones by creating his own world of ideas.

His main artisan Ananda Chandra Pal (50) is basically a potter. 'Out of his great zeal, Ananda Pal has learned this craftsmanship', he expressed to respond to a question in this regard. His monthly salary was Tk. 5,000 in 1984 and that was increased to Tk. 6,000 subsequently. Answering to a question Mosharraf says, that a cot set on dragon sculpture costs Taka one lakh twenty thousand, price of a *Palanka* or costly cot with ornate foot is Tk. 80,000 and dressing table costs from Tk. 80,000 to 100,000. If work goes on for the a month, Mosharraf gets a profit of Taka 4/5 thousand only per month. Market of these brass metal products is dull now mainly because of import of foreign decoration pieces from some other Asian countries.



Mosharraf Hossain

According to him, pots and plates can be made through molding or castings, but the work for making *gamla* (dishes), *dekchi*, plates for flower tabs, cup for sport cannot be made through casting or moulding and these are made with brass sheets. Brass sheets are cut into pieces according to the required size and these products are made with the help of welding and these are later polished as finishing task. Jars are produced at about 15/20 brass factories at Jinjira across the *Buriganga* river. It is assumed that brass-metal industry at Jinjira is very old.

### Bangarus of Bangshi Bazar

Brass sheets are produced at some of the factories owned by the shopkeepers collecting the broken pieces at Bangshi Bazar. According to Ahmed, the artisans used to buy the sheets from them for

16 During interview an artisan disclosed this information. Also see Tofail Ahmed, *ibid*.





A craftsman at work

their work. Price of local brass sheet was earlier at the rate from Tk. 84 to 90 per kg. One at the factory can produce five jars a day. He was then paid Tk. 15 as wage for each jar. A factory with the workforce of five can produce 20 jars a day. These products were sold at the rate of Tk. 210 to 220 per kg and the owner used to earn a profit of Tk. 200 on an average per day. The jars are to be sold at the wholesale rate to the brass sheet sellers through barter instead of making payments. Abdul Mannan aged about 62 says that they are under the grip of the whole-sellers as they control the price. The real artisans are deprived and have lost interest in the work.”<sup>17</sup>

The same process is adopted for the production of plain covers and containers of flower tubs at the factories along with their ornate work. Such work goes on in 5 to 7 factories in all at Jinjira, Shanirakhra and Mohammadpur of Dhaka and the raw material is collected from the same source. As per the artisan, the same sheet out of which the jar is cut out is also used for ornate brass embossed with the help of *petai* or *thapai* (repossess). The same process is adopted for making the wall pluck and flower tubs containers ornate. The numbers of these factories are few. A few factories at Kathuria (Jinjira), Aganagar, Bangladesh-math at Kaliganj and Bangshi Bazar do the work. Artisans numbering 8 of age between 9 and 25 do the drawings besides working free hand to make the pictures lively. None of them had even any elementary education. But they want their children to be educated to have a job instead of their family profession.

### Business concentration

The main industry of brass is especially concentrated in the old part of Dhaka. There are approximately 100 factories located at places like Urdu Road, Becharam Deori, Jagannathshaha Road, Duri Angol Lane, Lalbagh, Tipu Sultan Road, Nababganj, Sheikh Shaheb Bazar, Choudhury Bazar, Chawk Bazar, Kamrangir Char, Bangshal, Azimpur, Amligola, Siddique Bazar of the old part and Moghbazar, Mohakhali, Mohammadpur, Mirpur of new part of Dhaka and the total workforce of 10,000 are employed in these small brass factories. A factory with 4 to 6 artisans can perform on an average half a mound of broken brass pieces per day. At Shimulia in Dhamrai of greater Dhaka, 600 workers are employed in 60 factories. But their number has declined recently. There were eleven factories at Dhamrai and five others were in the surrounding areas in the decade of nineties. Shimulia has got reputation to a great extent in spite of its backwardness in regard to communication. But the quality product like engraved *kalshis* usually attracts *Paikars* to purchase these items. According to Firoz Mahmud, *kalshis* from Shimulia are also engraved in Dhaka City but not in the fashion peculiar to Dhamrai.<sup>18</sup> Lalor Tek is a ‘specialised craft settlement’ which is also backward but potential for further flourishing of this craftsmanship. There are 5-6 retail shops

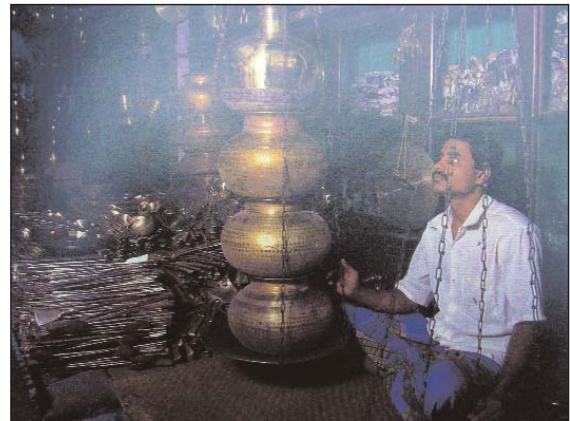
<sup>17</sup> Henry Glassie and Firoz Mahmud, *Living Tradition*, Cultural Survey of Bangladesh Series-11, (ASOB, 2008) pp. 252-253.

<sup>18</sup> Henry Glassie and Firoz Mahmud, *ibid*.



and the lone wholesale shop of Kansha and brass metals at Dhamrai and the utensils made of these metals are supplied from there throughout Bangladesh. *Badna*, *Ghati*, *Kalshi* and glass are produced at Dhamrai while plate, *Bati* and spoon are manufactured at Shimulia. According to Suresh Chandra, such utensils are traded at 15 to 20 shops of Mitford Road and at Elephant Road. The wholesale trading of brass products goes on only at Bangshi Bazar in the metropolitan city. Daily sale of the congested shops side by side at Matin Market and Ismail Market is estimated at around Taka few lakhs. Investment in all these shops is about Taka one lakh and on an average three persons along with the owner of a shop run the business. The nearby booming businesses go on of the same products made of aluminum, stainless steel and melamine as rival of the brass products at Chawk. As per traders, the problem facing by the whole-sellers of the brass products is that whatever they buy they do on cash, but whenever they sell that is on fifty per cent credit and it is difficult to realize the remaining amount. As it is an old practice, they cannot change it now.

There are allegations that imported raw materials are smuggled out through the border of Chapai Nawabganj. The artisans in Dhaka also made allegation of smuggling of broken brass. In India, 10 per cent cash incentive is provided for the production of kansha and brass metal handicrafts along with some subsidy per kg. As per craftsmen, after a thorough review of the problems and prospects of this industry, practical steps or measures should be taken for future. BISIC, the state owned enterprise could play a vital role to save this industry.



Brass made jars

Despite decay of this industry, there is a prospect of it as gift products and decoration pieces both at home and abroad. There is no specific statistics available about export of these products. Tofayel mentioned names of two organizations only, which are available so far for exporting of these products. They are 'Bangladesh Traders' and 'Box Traders'. By adopting developed technology, an organization, Deran Enterprise at Joydebpur industrial estate, produced attractive decoration pieces and usable items and earned US \$ 50,000 and \$ 70,000 to US \$80,000 through export in the first year and in the next year respectively. The owner of this enterprise is a former ambassador, late Ataur Rahman, who bought all the required modern machines from abroad after having a clear idea of the demand in the foreign market of these products before he started production. His products also earned name abroad, but because of high cost of production he faced difficulties in competing Indian products.<sup>19</sup> The products here cost 20 per cent higher. The industry in India is in an advantageous position mainly because of cash incentive and subsidy being provided by the state.

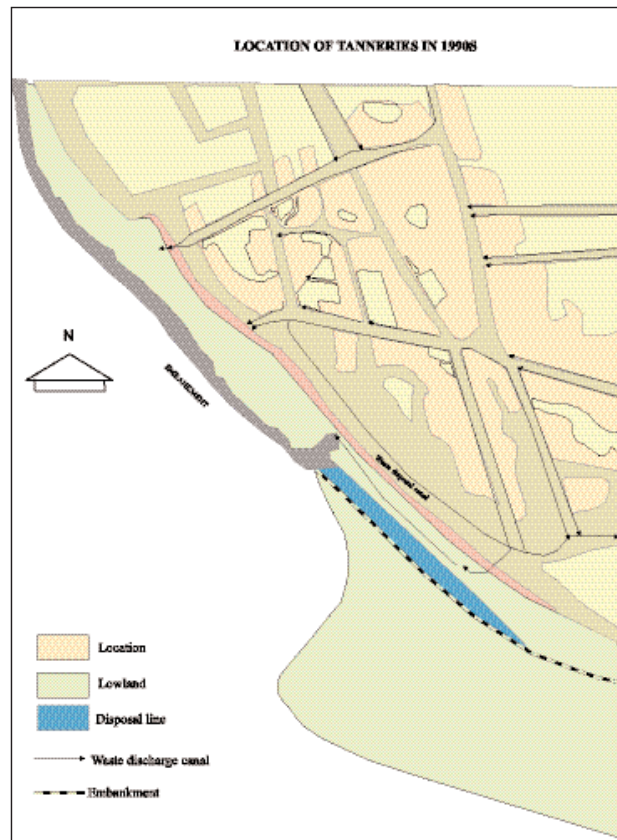
The World Bank recommended same facilities equally to the neighboring countries and the government here has also agreed to provide subsidy in this regard.

<sup>19</sup> An interview with Mr. Anwar Hossain of Elephant Road, Dhaka.

## 7. Leather Industry

The tradition of Bangladesh's leather industry dates back to thousand years. Uses of vegetable tanned leather have been in practice in this country since the old days. The industrial leather is tanned even now by the same process.<sup>1</sup> Though the leather industry is quite old in this country, there is no specific recorded history on when exactly this was evolved. There are, however, evidences of its development in the middle ages. Earlier during the imperial periods, leather was used widely for making *hawda* – used as seat on the back of elephant, saddle for horse-riding, shield for warfare, cover for swords-knives, container for carrying water, etcetera. Those who used to work for producing these things in the Middle Ages in Bangladesh were known as *Kubdgars*. The *Kubdgars* could make designs on their leather products with the help of red-hot iron rod.<sup>2</sup> Though the *Kubdgars* were Muslims, the *Chamars* or *Charmakars* who used to supply leather belonged to the Hindu schedule caste.

**Early Phase:** It is difficult to say when, in fact, Dhaka's leather industry developed. Nothing specifically is known about this industry before the middle ages. Leather was needed for making drum and tom-tom apart from meeting the regal requirements. The churners used to make different leather products for the military during Sultani and Afghan rule. A *Charmakar*, Singchandal by name, first set up *Richis* or *Charmakar-village* in Kanpur of India in 1750. Commercial production of leather goods started with the setting up of cantonment in this region by the British in 1778 to meet the need of materials required in warfare.<sup>3</sup> By the middle of the nineteenth century, some *Charmakers* coming from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar started tannery in Calcutta. They usually supplied leather according to the demand-order placed by the East India Company employees and other dignitaries. Later on, churners of Kanpur and China also started the leather business. At the beginning, there were 5 to 6 big tanneries in Calcutta.<sup>4</sup> Most of the



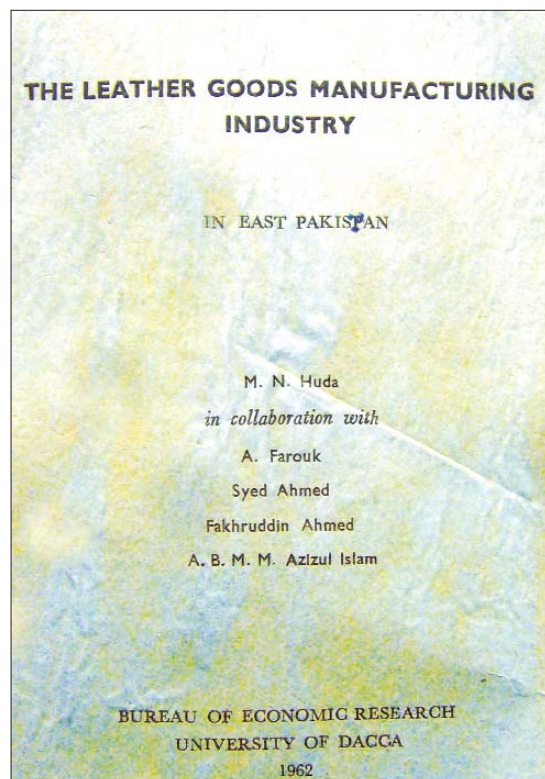
- 1 M. Mozammel Haq, K. M. Nabiul Islam, *A Case Study of Leather Manufacture in Bangladesh*, BDS Report No 93, Dhaka, p. 5.
- 2 Maleka Khan, *Leather Crafts of Bangladesh : An Anthology on Crafts of Bangladesh*, 1987, p. 103.
- 3 Jitendranath Roy, *Banglar Kalkarkhana O Karigari Biddar Itihas* (Kolkata, 2005) p. 1.
- 4 These were namely, Bengal Tannery at Khidirpur, The Sasun Co. at Tapsia Road, M/S Graham Co. and another 3 in the Mufassil namely E. Alexander & Co at Katchrapara, Bahrapur Tannery at Murshidabad and Baliadanga Tannery at Nadia.

supply of skins for these tanneries used to come mainly from East Bengal's Muslim-populated districts. The Muslim entrepreneurs ran two tanneries. The German traders used to export leather to Germany by putting 'East India Tanning' seal on most of the hides of Bengal through the Calcutta port.<sup>5</sup> In the beginning of the twentieth century, Dr. Nilratan Sarkar set up National Tannery and according to the suggestion of Acharya Prafulla Chandra Roy sent one Birajmohan Das, a meritorious student to England for higher studies in leather industry. Birajmohan Das was from Faridpur district and joined National Tannery after completing his higher studies. With a view to setting up modern leather industry, he set up in 1918 the 'Calcutta Research Tannery', which later became known as 'Bengal Tanning Institute'.

**Leather business in Dhaka:** The leather business got a boost during the Second World War<sup>6</sup> and most of the then businessmen of leather were, in fact, agents representing the businessmen of Calcutta. The leather business at Dhaka's Beraid and Narayanganj developed to a considerable extent during the Second World War. The businessmen used to send semi-tanned hides to Calcutta. In the early stage, the industry in Dhaka region was in the hands of cobblers and shoemakers.<sup>7</sup>

The initial phase of the history of Dhaka's leather industry was linked to the rise and fall of commercial ventures of the Nawabs of Dhaka. The ancestors of Dhaka's Nawab family came here from Sylhet in connection with trade. They were then engaged in salt and leather businesses. Nawab Abdul Gani of Dhaka, forefather of Dhaka's Nawab family, in fact, founded the export-oriented leather business in Dhaka. In this regard, the author of *Reminiscence of Dhaka*, Hridaynath Majumder<sup>8</sup> wrote that in the beginning of the twentieth century, Sachindranth Ghosh after receiving training from Madras set up the first tannery in Dhaka with an investment of Tk. 50,000. But the industry could not last long.<sup>9</sup>

Leather industry of Dhaka is run in two ways. One group produces different products like shoes, sandals, slippers, boots, suitcases, attaches, lady's-bags, etcetera with the help of finished leather.



5 *Ibid.*, p. 72.

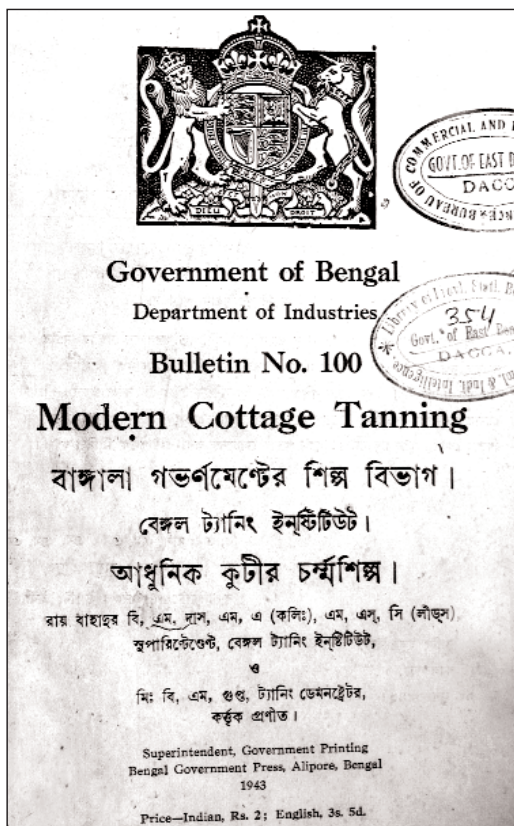
6 As in Second World War, leather was also in demand during the First World War because huge number of people were recruited during these wars.

7 Choudhury Hafizul Islam: *The Regional Geography of Dhaka*, (Aligarh 1944).

8 Hridaynath Majumdar was a vakil of Dhaka in the mid Nineteenth century. His book provides a good account of Dhaka of his time. For more details, see Delwar Hassan (ed.) *Reminiscence of Dacca* by Hridaynath Majumder, APPL, 2008.

9 A.H. Rizvi, Dhaka District Gazetteer, 1969, p. 205.





Though earlier leather was imported from Calcutta, now local leather is used for such products. The other group processes leather for export. Usually hides are collected from different places with the help of *Richis*. It is presumed that initially the Hindus were in leather business but as soon as some Persian and Kashmiri Muslim traders came to Dhaka and started hide and skin business, the local Muslims came forward for doing this business. One Bhutto Hajee of Dhaka, Guznavis of Mymensingh and Khan Bahadur Hafez Mohammed Hossain of Jinzira were the pioneers Muslim entrepreneurs in this trade. Hafez Mohammed Hossain had his business and collecting centers at Dhaka, Rangpur, Jalpaiguri Shilchar, Hailakandi (Bhairab), Kachar and Karimganj. Apart from this, he had his offices at Madras and Calcutta. At Shillong, he had 40 hide and skin *arats*. As per prospectus of the East Bengal Mercantile Company Ltd., when some big companies of Dhaka and Narayanganj formed a Joint stock Company in 1877, they categorically mentioned that they would never enter into hide and skin business in East Bengal. Thus the big Hindu businessmen of Dhaka and Narayanganj were

refrained from leather business and the business remained in the hands of Muslims. On the other hand, during the Crimean war, Russian leather export to London was seized and the East Indian type of leather were in high demand. (*The Dacca News*, 27 December 1856). Since then, those who have been involved with leather export are largely Muslims. In Dhaka, those who were doing leather business were known as *Chamrar Bepari* or hide merchant.<sup>10</sup>

Nazir Hussain, author of *Kingbadantir Dhaka*, mentioned that well-known hide merchant Khezar Shaheb had his business in Dhaka during the British period.<sup>11</sup> No other identification other than this of Khezar Shaheb is available anywhere. Nawab Abdul Gani was doing salt and leather business with some Armenian and British merchants and possibly, he might have been one of them. It appears that leather business during the British period was very profitable. Clay mentioned that *Charmakars* of Dhaka made leather shoes after processing the hides in the nineteenth century.<sup>12</sup> They produced drums and bows used in cleaning cotton. It appears that leather trading expanded in the third decade of the nineteenth century. James Taylor also referred to the disposal of six cases by the Dhaka Judge Court during the period between 1833 and 1838 related to leather trade

10 Dacca District Gazetteer, *ibid*, p. 205.

11 Nazir Hussain mentioned the name of 'Khezar Saheb', which is likely to be 'Kheza', or 'Khoza', as we know, some Persian traders came to Dhaka who used the title 'Khoja' with their names.

12 Clay: History and Statistics of the Dhaka Division, London, 1868, p. 6.





Processed leather

leather. After jute and tea, unfinished leather figured in the export items list in 1904. There was a proposal to set up a leather research centre in Dhaka, and the Leather Institute of Dhaka accordingly came into being.<sup>15</sup> Dhaka's leather industry came to the hands of Muslims from the 'Richis'. Dhaka was then the important centre of the leather industry and a suitable place for tanning business.

Beraid and Kamrangirchar of Dhaka were once the main centres of leather business before it developed in Hazaribagh of the city.<sup>16</sup> Beraid is a village, north-east of Dhaka under Badda Thana. It is an old village of Koshais from the Mughal period. A segment of the Beraid 'Koshai' were compelled to leave Beraid after the great Famine and came to *Dholaikhal Par* for their livelihood. In the course of time, they got connected with Dhaka's old cantonment at Paltan Area. The Cantonment authority used to buy military shoes and other items from these *Koshai* or *Chamars*. As they were connected with the Urdu and Hindi-speaking upper Indian military personnel of Dhaka Cantonment, they were accustomed to speak in a mixed language *Dhakaiya Urdu*. Another segment of present-day *Kuttis* are from Dhaka's Mirpur village and other neighboring areas. They became victims of river erosion at Vikrampur and Manikganj in the eighteenth century, came to Dhaka and started petty business as shopkeepers, *vestiwalla*, food-grain traders and housemates. They got closely connected with the cantonment people and other upper Indians residing in Dhaka.<sup>17</sup> Thus they also used to speak the cantonment language 'Urdu'.

dispute.<sup>13</sup> Hindu *Richis* and Muslim *Kosais* (butchers) used to collect hides of cow, goat and buffalo. As such, there was no price for the skin of dead animals; as a result, it was gainful. First they used to bring the salt-mixed hides to the businessmen of Dhaka for sale. The economic condition of the *Richis* living in the Dhaka region was not very good.<sup>14</sup>

During the Mughal period, the *Kosai* community used to do leather business. The area where they used to live in Dhaka was known as *Koshaituly*. Weston mentioned about few dozens of *Richi* families living in Dhaka. These *Richis* used to make *Chappals* (slippers) with low quality



Leather products

13 James Taylor, *Topography of Dhaka*, 1840, p. 275.

14 A. T. Weston: *Report on the Survey of Cottage Industries in Bengal*, Calcutta, 1929, p. 72.

15 Nafiz Ahmed, *An Economic History of East Pakistan*, (London: 1958) p. 219.

16 A.T. Weston, p. 72.

17 In the census of 1891, Dhaka district got 26,49,588 people who were engaged in different professions (see appendix).

The hides were tanned here locally. The government of Bengal in 1918 introduced at Beraid a developed process of leather tanning.<sup>18</sup> This was the most suitable place for the tanning process because of clean water from the *Sitalakshya* and *Balu* rivers and for their navigability as well. R. P. Saha set up the first tannery in the fourth decade of the twentieth century in Narayanganj and later it was shifted to Hazaribagh.<sup>19</sup>

**Leather industry after 1947:** There were only two leather-works in East Bengal during the partition in 1947; but as such there was no big refinery here. And refinery work was manual in nature. After the partition, most of the *Muhajir* leather traders of India's Kanpur and Agra regions migrated to West Pakistan and some Muslim leather traders from north India and Calcutta came to Dhaka. As they were rehabilitated at Hazaribagh, leather industry developed over here. There was, as such, no factory in this region in the 1940s for refining hides into leather.<sup>20</sup>



Bangladesh College of Leather Technology

Wet-salt-mixed or dry-leather used to be sent to Calcutta and Kanpur tanneries then for processing. In 1949, the College of Leather Technology was set up on a 10-acre land at Hazaribagh for providing training on leather industry. Former Finance Minister of Pakistan Hamidul Huq Choudhury laid the foundation stone of the college. Initially the Muhajirs coming from India and some business-people from West Pakistan played the pioneering role in setting up this industry; but later some local traders also came forward. By 1960, a good number of tannery plants were established in Dhaka. Most of the leather produced in these plants used to be exported from here to different places including West Pakistan. Some mentionable tanneries here during the 1960s were as follows:

18 Beraid, now in the Badda Thana, was famous for hide and skin business from the nineteenth century. For details, see A. T. Weston, *ibid.*

19 *Banglapedia*, 10th vol. p. 37.

20 Tofael Ahmed, *Dhaka's Commercial Crafts*, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, Dhaka 1991, p. 20.

Name of tanneries		Location.	Sq. ft.	Productions Sole lbs.	Kinds lbs.
1.	Aziz Tanneries	Dhaka	360,000	112,000	126,000
2.	Chinese Leather	Dhaka	360,000	---	---
3.	Dacca Tanneries	Dhaka	720,000	375,000	75,000
4.	East Pakistan Chrome Tannery	Dhaka	720,000	187,000	72,000
5.	East and West Pak. Tannery	Dhaka	27,000	---	---
			(Suade)	---	---
6.	Dilkusha Tannery	Dhaka	360,000	90,000	108,000
7.	Inam Tannery	Dhaka	---	54,000	72,000
			---	10,000	---
				(Sheep)	
8.	Orient Tannery	Dhaka	270,000	37,00	---
				(Glackit)	
9.	S.N.A. Tannery	Dhaka	135,000	135,000	---
			(Suade)	(Glackit)	
			157,000	27,000	---
			(Chamois)	(Reptiles)	
10.	Shalimar Leather Corporation.	Dhaka	90,000	---	---
			(Suade)		
11.	Taj Tannery	Dhaka	168,000	---	---
12.	Omer Tannery	Dhaka	360,000		180,000
13.	Firdous Tannery	Dhaka	360,000	165,000	180,000

Source: *Dacca District Gazetteer*, 1969.



A modern leather industry



## 8. Footwear Industry

The history of the modern footwear industry in Bengal could be traced back to the beginning of the nineteenth century. In India, Kanpur of Uttar Pradesh was the pioneer in making shoes and developing business in footwear, which started in the late eighteenth century. A military cantonment was established in Kanpur in 1778 and various leather products including combat shoes were required to be purchased to meet the increasing demands of the growing military establishment of the British East India Company. A poem of 19th century Bengal describes the shoe *Karkhanas* in the cantonment area as under:

তম্বত্ৰি জ ব্ৰত মত্ৰি ১/২ ১/২ বমেজি ব  
 ডব্বাৰ্জ ব্ৰত্ৰি হ\_ব 'মব' কবি ব  
 পবি অবি ম্ৰক্ৰি হৰ্জ মবি,  
 অক্ৰমব চ'ব্ৰক ১/২ ১/২ মে'ৰি  
 ব্ৰত্ৰি কবি এম কৰি থ পবি,  
 কবি ১/২ ১/২ ১/২ ১/২ ১/২ ১/২  
 - ম্ৰজি কবি, 'ব্ৰত্ৰি' (1864)

In British Bengal, footwear industry was developed in Calcutta by some Chinese and European entrepreneurs.<sup>2</sup> The leather and footwear industries in Bengal owe to Dr. Nil Ratan Sarker, the founder of the National Tannery (1905) and Mr. Biraj Mohon Das of Faridpur, who enriched leather technology in the province. After the partition of Bengal in 1905 some indigenous industries were developed in the leather sector.<sup>3</sup> 'The Dacca Leather Company' was set up to encourage the local trade and commerce related to leather and leather products. Sachindranath Ghosh founded *Dacca Tannery Works* in 1906 with an investment amounting to Rs. 50,000. He was trained in Madras and was the Managing Director of the *Dacca Tannery Works*.<sup>4</sup> At Laxmibazar, Malitola, Nawabpur in Dacca, a colony of shoemakers was set up where over 100 shoe makers used to work. Materials required for footwear industries were imported from Calcutta, Kanpur and Jullundhor.<sup>5</sup> Dhaka's Laxmibazar was famous for shoemaking since the British era.



Wooden *Kharam*, an old tradition of Bengal

- 1 Dino Bandu Mitra, *Suradhuni Kabboya*, Calcutta, 1864.
- 2 William E. Cooper and J. Allen established 'Cooper, Allen and Co' in 1880 and there were three modern factories run by the Europeans in 1900, see J. N. Ray, *Banglar Karkhana O Karigori Biddar Itihash*, (Kalkata, 2005) p.72.
- 3 See MKU Molla, *The New Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam*, (Dhaka 1981), p.103.
- 4 Out of 25 indigenous leather and footwear industries during the Swadeshi Movement, 23 unit were set up in Dhaka, 2 units in outside Dhaka. Tanning Company, Pubna (1910) : Swadesh Shoe Co. Barisal (1911) See, Sipra Sarker (ed.) *Journal of History*, Jadavpur University, Calcutta, Vol-v, 1984, pp. 129-131.
- 5 *Ibid.* p. 131.



Chamartuli, a place of Dacca indicates that Dhaka was home to a group of *Charmakers* or shoemakers during the Muhghal period.<sup>6</sup> This craftsmanship was in the shape of cottage industry run by local *Rishis*. The *Rishis* of Dacca produced *Chappal*, Sandals and inferior quality shoes with the vegetable-tanned local leather. The *Rishis* of Saturia, *khals* of Manikganj and *Beraid* of Dacca locally tanned the leather. This local tanned leather was used in the making of shoes of lower qualities. In the remote areas *Chamars* or *Rishis* were engaged in leather work or shoe making which could merely meet the requirements of a family even in nineteenth century Dhaka. The following table will illustrate the point.



A shoemaker taking measurement of a customer in Greece

**Table 1: Moharanda Rishi of Dhamrai forming a family of 3 members**

Income	Expenditure
From leather works Rs 10-0-0	Diet : Rs : 40-0-0
As <i>Baddoker</i>	Rs: 10-0-0
Clothes	Rs : 5-0-0
* Has debts	Rent Rs : 2-0-0
* The women also	Choukidary Tax Rs : 0-9-0
work for subsistence	House repair Rs : 3-0-0
Religious and social ceremonies	Rs : 1-0-0
Contingencies Rs :	1-0-0 Rs. 52-9-0

Source: P. Nolen: *Report on the Condition of the Lower Classes of Population in Bengal*, 1888.

production of shoes.<sup>8</sup> EPSI, a shoe company established its production plant in 1967, started exporting foot wear to USSR, Czechoslovakia and England. During the late seventies of the last century, Bata and EPSI held a major share in the local footwear market.<sup>9</sup> The footwear industry suffered major setback in 1971 during the war of independence as a large number of non-Bengali people left their business. In Bangladesh this sector was re-organized by the industrious the entrepreneurs of the newly born state; many of the new Footwear industries were developed. After emergence of Bangladesh notable among these are Apex footwear with its factory in Safipur, Excelsior Shoes, Paragon Leather and Footwear Industries, Dhaka Footwear Ltd. and Bay Tannery of Hazaribagh, etc.

**After 1947:** Evidence is there that the Europeans and well-to-do people of Dhaka city were in the habit of using shoes imported from Calcutta or elsewhere.<sup>7</sup> After 1947, footwear started being imported from West Pakistan. Apart from indigenous entrepreneurs, some non-Bengali entrepreneurs came forward in leather producing as well as in leather products, business (see leather industry). Besides, Bata established in 1962, East Pakistan Civil and Military Boot Factory at Tejgaon Industrial Area engaged in large-scale production. Bata Shoe Company was the first big manufacturing plant that went for large-scale

6 Nazir Hossain, *Kingbadantir Dacca*, (Dacca, 1995) p. 103.

7 Ghose Brothers of Calcutta had a good business in Dacca in the forties of the last century to meet up the demands of the local people.

8 There were two boots and shoe dealer by name Bata shoe Co. Ltd. (78 Loyal street) and Bata Shoe store (256, Nawabpur) in Dhaka, in 1952 and 1954 respectively.

9 Sirajul Islam (ed.) *Banglapedia*, Vol. 4 (ASOB) p. 228.

10 Josejesh Chandra Ghosh : *Dhakar Karigari Shilpa Andalan*, in *Banik*, Calcutta, 1940.



A house of a *Muchhi* in the 19th century

trained and orgained. There was also a colony of over 100 shoemakers, all settled at Laxmibazar, Malitola and Nawabpur, where they used to make new shoes and repair the old ones. In addition to the shoemakers' shops, there were four or five leather shops in Dhaka; most of these were located at Posta.<sup>12</sup> During the British era, the firm of Whitman and Sons used to import at least 25,000 rupees worth of English boots and shoes annually but during the 'Swadeshi Movement' it could not sell more than 100 rupees worth of those.<sup>13</sup> Kedarnath Mazumder has mentioned that in 1905 like other goods, shoes were mostly imported from Calcutta.<sup>14</sup> It was noted that Dhaka did not make any quality shoes till the first decade of the 20th century. Of all the sandals of Dhaka, *Nagra* was very popular among the Muslim and Hindu customers. Apart from shoes, the *Muchis* also prepared leather made *Barmo* or *Dhal*.<sup>15</sup> In the thirties of the 20th century there were about a dozen Rishi families in the town of Dhaka who made quality boots, shoes and slippers which were much cheaper than the imported ones. The *Muchis* of Laxmibazar made durable shoes of good design and quality from chrome leather.<sup>16</sup> Usually, sandals and *slippers* made by the *Rishis* were sold at the local market. In the forties of the last century, shoes and slippers of inferior quality were made at Suturia and Khalsi in the Manikganj area and at Dhamrai in the Dhaka district.<sup>17</sup> Shoe manufacturing was entirely in the hands of *Muchis* and *Chamars*.<sup>18</sup> In the 1950s, there were about 451 boot and shoe makers and repair workers and 10,116 hand made boot and shoe manufacturing' units in Bangladesh, where about 16,535 workers were employed.<sup>19</sup> In the Dhaka Municipality area there were 1691 leather workers of which 848 were Muslims and 814 Hindus. In 1951, in the Dhaka district as a whole, the number of shoemakers engaged in manufacturing leather goods was 3167.

In the forties of the last century, the economic conditions of the shoemakers of Dhaka were not very good they were also engaged in cultivation for their livelihood. Still a good; hance number of shoemakers have been running their ancestors, professions. Jogeshchandra Ghosh mentioned that the craftsmanship of Laxmibazar in shoemaking was of high order and many of the inhabitants of Dhaka came to this Charmakers to make their shoes.<sup>10</sup> These factories usually used to hire workers from outside to cope with the increasing demand of the customers. These craftsmen possessed all the requisite qualities of a good shoemaker but as *Dhaka Gazetteer*<sup>11</sup> points out they were let to be

11 H. Rizvi, *Dacca District Gazetteer* (1969), p. 205.

12 Hafiz Golam Azam Siddiqui, *Bangladesher Shilpa*, Bangla Academy p.70.

13 H. N. Rizvi, *ibid.* p. 205.

14 Kedarnath Mazumder, *Dhakar Bibaran* (Dhaka, 1910) p. 105.

15 Paresh Banghapadhya, *Banglar Purabryatta*, Calcutta, 1907, p. 366.

16 Report on the Survey of Cottage Industries in Bengal, Govt of Bengal, Calcutta, 1929, p. 72.

17 *Ibid*, p.72.

18 Choudhury Hafizul Islam, *The Regional Geography of Dacca* (an unpublished PhD thesis of the M. U. Aligarh, 1940).

19 See, Census of Pakistan, 1951, Vol-8, East Bengal Tables, Karachi.

A street *Muchhi* at work

A contemporary trade directory reveals that in 1954 there were 40 boot and shoe dealers in Dhaka and 8 in Narayanganj while there were 20 boot manufacturers and exporters in Dhaka and 5 in Narayanganj who successfully dealt with shoe business.<sup>20</sup> By the 1950s, Dhaka had at least 30 shoe-shops. As Narayanganj was growing fast in the fifties of the last century, some new shops were set up there.<sup>21</sup> At the same time about 25 shoe manufacturers and exporters entered into the business with quality products (see table).

**Table 2:- Manufacturing Leather Workers (skilled) in 1951**

Area	Employers	Employees	Independent workers	Unpaid family member	Total
Dhaka Sadar subdivision	139	891	1219	132	2381
Dhaka Municipality	79	736	777	99	1691
Narayanganj subdivision	5	53	278	7	343
Narayanganj Municipality	2	41	69	4	116
Manikganj subdivision	-	2	87	7	96
Manikganj municipality	-	27	248	13	288

Source: Based on Census, 1951.

A survey reveals that there are 2000 footwear units in Bangladesh of which Dhaka alone shares about 80% of it. Most units are, however, small and medium in size and only 25 are relatively large and adapted to modern technology. The articles made in factories are approximately 32 million pairs of leather and non-leather footwear.<sup>22</sup> Production capacity of each mechanized manufacturing concern varies from 750 to 3,000 pairs a day while a small cottage and family type unit produce 6 to 24 pairs of shoes a day. The shoes produced are mainly sold out in the local markets. As a good numbers of shoes are being exported to the foreign countries, Bangladesh has gradually been converted from a footwear importing country to a footwear exporting one. The list of export markets of footwear from Bangladesh includes Japan, UK, Spain, Germany, Italy, USA and Russia. Presently, about 25000 people are employed in this manufacturing concerns and nearly 50% of them are working with the semi-mechanized units. Only nine large industries are fully mechanized. As per census of non-firm economic activities, there are 763 shoe manufacturing units and about 4503 workers in the footwear market of Dhaka. Marketing of footwear manufacturing units in Dhaka is operated through a network of wholesale and retail shops, which employ an estimated 3000 persons. Dhaka's marketing of imported footwear is done through importers directly or by local agents.

<sup>20</sup> Ansaris, *Trade Directory of Pakistan*, 1951- 1952, p. 145.

<sup>21</sup> Sirajul Islam, (ed.) *Banglapedia*, ASOB, Vol-4 p. 228.

<sup>22</sup> Sirajul Islam, *ibid*.

**Table 3: Concentration of Big Shoe Manufacturing Concerns in the 1960s**

Location	Units of Factory
Midford Road	2
Tejgaon	2
Bangshall	15
Aga Sadek	3
Joynag Road	1
Chawk circulr	1
Lalbagh	6
Jinnah Avenue	1
Malitola	4
Asgar Lane	1
Ahsanullah Road	1
Nawabpur	8
Elephant Road	1
Faridabad	1
NawabYousuf Market	4
Tanti Bazar	1
Tikatali	4
Posta	1
Siddiq Bazar (pukur par)	8
Brojahari Saha Street	1
Purana Palton	3
Tathari Bazar	2
Goalghat Lane	1
Patuatuli	2

Source: Based on interviews with various entrepreneurs.

**Table 4: Concentration of Cottage and Family-type Shoe Manufacturing Concerns in 1990s**

Location	Number of unit (Approx.)
Siddiq Bazar	4000
Laxmi Bazar	10
Alu Bazar	3000
Bangla Bazar	6
Sicatululy	1500
Narinda	30
Daksin Moisundi	30
Nawabpur (Teker Hat)	200
Banogram	10
Nazira Bazar	1000
Mahut Tuli	
Kashituli	300
Jurain	30
Suritola	2000
Malitola	2000
Bangshal	2000
Nababganj	1200
Fulbaria	100
Agamosilane	
Kamrangir Char	100
Mirpur	60
Mohammedpur	100
Tikatuli	50
Shanir Akra	15

Source: Based on interview with Mr. Abdul Gafur of Siddiq Bazar and Mr. Anwaraul Haque of Leader Shoes, Elephant Road, Dhaka.



## 9. Printing Press

The history of printing in India goes back to late eighteenth century when the missionary at Hugli first published a book in 1778. Another printing press was established in Calcutta in 1780. It took another 60 years to start a printing press in Dhaka.<sup>1</sup> As Calcutta was the premier publishing centre from the late 18th century onwards, Dhaka's early printing received scant attention, and the extent and contribution of the Dhaka presses during the *Nabajagaran* or Renaissance period has perhaps been underestimated.<sup>2</sup> The annual Reports and Census Reports provide an account of early printing presses of Dhaka. It could not be denied the fact that printing began in Dhaka much later than in Calcutta. On the contrary, Dhaka was not the first town in Bangladesh to have a printing press, as Rangpur could boast of having a printing press by 1847, from where the *Rangpur Bartabaha* was published.<sup>3</sup>



Gutan Burgh



'Bangla Yantra' the first printing press of Dhaka

### Dhaka's Printing Presses: Early Phase

A recent research has revealed that like Hugli, Dhaka got the first printing machine by the Baptist missionaries namely 'Kattrra Press' in 1849, though it was believed that the 'Dacca News Press' was the first printing press of Dhaka founded in 1856.

It was Samuel Bost, who came to Dhaka to assist the East Bengal Missionary Society and brought a printing press in 1847. Dhaka's first printer therefore was the Swiss Samuel Bost.<sup>4</sup> For how many years this Missionary press (Kattrra press) continued has not yet been ascertained.<sup>5</sup> The India Office Library in London possesses a copy of the report namely the *First Report of the East Bengal Missionary Society* which carries the imprint "Dacca. Printed at the Kattrra Press, 1849".

The Second printing press was 'Dacca News Press' where a Bengali name 'Sreenath Dutta' was being printed as the printer, while Alexander Forbes<sup>6</sup>

- 1 Muntassir Mamoon, *Dhakar Adi Mudraner Itihash* in *Samaj Nirikhan*, Samaj Nirikhan Kendara, (Dhaka University, 1990), p. 2.
- 2 G.W. Shaw, Printing and Publishing in Dhaka 1945-1900, in Sharifuddin Ahmed (ed.) *Dhaka Past, Present, Future*, (ASB, 1991) p. 89.
- 3 *Rangpur Bartabaha* was published in the month of August, 1847 under the sponsorship of Kalichan Roy, a Zaminder of *Kundi Pargana* while Guru Charan Roy was the editor of this periodical.
- 4 Samuel Bost, a bachelor, born on 22 July in 1822 at Geneva and trained in the Mission school at Basel in 1843. He came to Dhaka at the age of twenty-five for missionary purposes.
- 5 G.W. Shaw assumed that Kattrra press was established at the Chato Kattrra area and functioned at least for four years.
- 6 Forbes, a Scot came to Dhaka in 1844 as an assistant to Mr. J.P. Wise, the Indigo Planter and Zamindar of the then Dacca. *Dhaka Prokash* in its 18 November issue of 1861 published news that as a Indigo planter he became wealthy and notorious in pressing the indigo cultivators. *Dhaka Prakash* published a brief news how he grew into an influential European in Dacca society in the 1860s. J.P. Wise donated 100 *bighas* of land property to the Dayagonj Mission in Dhaka where the missionary people started cultivation of Cotton, fruits and vegetables. For details, see Muntassir Mamoon, *Unish Shatake Dhakar Mudran O Prakashana*, (Dhaka 2008) p. 32.

was the owner of this press. Dacca News Press was the second Dhaka press and the first to be run on commercial lines. Alexander Forbes became a leading member of the European business community in Dhaka. Apart from this, he used to engage in business and was the secretary of the Dacca Bank.<sup>7</sup> Forbes, perhaps, became the owner of this printing press as the Missionary possibly sold out the Kattrra press to him. *Dacca News* had to face a difficult time as it was not easy to run such a printing press without trained personnel.<sup>8</sup>

Broja Mohan Mitra, an inhabitant of Manikganj and a Brahmin of Dhaka, procured *Bangla Yantra* in 1860, which was highly criticized by the orthodox Hindus of the then Dhaka. A. L. Clay has given a list of press and publications where only 3 printing presses were mentioned in 1866 (See Table).

**Table: List of Presses and Publications in 1866**

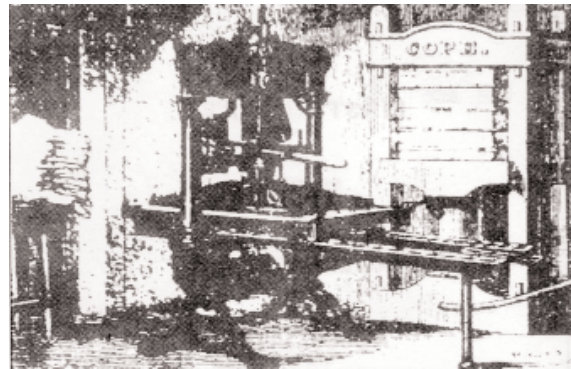
Name of the Press	Name of the Proprietor/ Partners	Name of the Newspaper	How often published	No of copies printed
Dacca News press	Messrs A.M. Cameron, N. P. Pogose, J. A. Gregg, J. P. Wise, Khajeh Abdool Gouni	'Dacca News' (Planter's Journal)	Weekly	225
'Bengali' Press	Ramsunker Moulik	<i>Dacca Prakash</i>	Every Sunday	250
'Sulava' Press	Baboo Juggunath Roy Choudhury and Dharma Rakkini Sabha, partners; Baboo Hurrish Chunder Mitter, proprietor	<i>Hindoo Hitoisheeni</i> <i>Polly Biggan</i>	Every Saturday once in a month	300 300

Source: A.L. Clay, History and Statistics of the Dacca Division; 1868, p 122.

### Printing presses during the British period

By 1870, the number of printing presses rose to 47 only; and these were mainly used in printing newspapers or in making public opinions.<sup>9</sup> The very commercial purpose of these presses was not significant, though the Dacca News press advertised selling of some forms, *challans* and bills, etc.

The brand names of the printing presses established in Dhaka were not known, where the Calcutta's printing presses were named Chelle, Collombian, Albion and Imperial brands. However, old printing presses found in Dhaka is of Albion Brand.<sup>10</sup>



An old model printing press found in Dhaka

There were essentially three generations of Dhaka presses in the 19th century, each representing a distant phase in the early development of printing and publishing in the Dhaka city.

The second phase of printing presses included *Raghunth*, *Oriental*, *Ishan*, *Shyamkanto*, *Adarsha Yantra*, etc. While the 3rd phase printing presses were:

7 Sharif uddin Ahmed, (ed.) *Dhaka Past Present Future*, (ASOB, 1991) p. 92.

8 *Dacca News*, 23 October, 1858.

9 G. W. Shaw, *ibid.* p. 95.

10 Shree Pantha, *Jakhen Chhapakhana elo* (Calcutta, 1971) p. 102.

*Genderia, Baikunthanath, Asutosh, Mahjeshvar, Narayan, Imdadul Islamia, Sudarshan, Gopinath Yantra*, etc. According to G.W. Shaw, over 80 printers working in these 45 presses have been traced out.<sup>11</sup> But the actual numbers are yet to ascertain. The first census of Bengal in 1872 by H. Beverly registered 23 printers in the district of Dhaka, while the Bengal Library Catalogue recorded only 7 presses in operation.<sup>12</sup> The next census of 1881 by J.A. Bourdillon, where only ‘workers in books’ were calculated and figured a total of 189 people in 21 towns in the district.<sup>13</sup> The 1891 Census of India by C.J. O Donnell cited 298 printing press proprietors, lithographers and printers in India without any breakdown by districts. The Census of 1901 by E.A. Gait, mentioned a figure of 129 men fully employed as workmen and other subordinates in printing presses.<sup>14</sup>

### Principal Classes of Printers

The Bengal Library Catalogue reveals that the Dhaka’s printing press trading was expanded during the 1880s. Among the printers maximum was Hindus i. e. roughly three quarters Hindu and one quarter Muslim. The contemporary poetry reveals that before the 1870s, printing presses run by the Muslim compositors did not improve. A local poet Abdul Ghafur writes:

Ômj Z t'ul'j Zv'K mmi teb AvtM  
GB wte`b t'gvi g'g'bi AvtM\  
w'>ynt`tZ c'p nBij K Qvcv\  
Mj t'Zi Kvi Y GB b'v'K w'KQyQvcv \  
w'>j t'ctim w'fbw'Avi b'v'v XvKv,  
me'fj v'K AvtQ c'ó b'v'v GtZ XvKv \<sup>15</sup>

The longest serving Muslim printer was Muhammad Jan, who worked for the period between 1877 and 1895 at the *Mohammadi Yantra*. Other printers of the ‘Basak’ Class of Dhaka were: Madan Mohan Basak (*Bangla Yantra*), Krisna Das Basak (*East Bengal Yantra*), Hari Mohan

**Table 2:** Printing presses involved in Newspaper Publishing in nineteenth century

Name of the Press	Periodical Printed	Year Published
Dacca News press	<i>Dacca News</i>	1856
Bangla Yantra	<i>Dacca Prokash</i>	1856
	<i>Monoronjika</i>	1860
Natun Yantra	<i>Abakash Ranjika</i>	1862
	<i>Chittya Ranjika</i>	1862
Sulava Yantra	<i>Dhaka Darpan</i>	1863
	<i>Masik Kabaya Prakash</i>	1864
Sulava Yantra	<i>Hindu Ranjika</i>	1866
	<i>Hindu Hitoisheeni</i>	1866
	<i>Palli Biggan (Vikrampur*)</i>	1867
Sulava Yantra	<i>Ala Bandava (Vikrampur*)</i>	1869
Sulava Yantra	<i>Narishikha</i>	1870
	<i>Dhumketu</i>	1871
	<i>Hitokri</i>	1871
Dacca Bijnapani Yantra	<i>Saptahik Bijnapani</i>	1865
Grish Yantra	<i>Mitra Prokash</i>	1870
Grish Yantra	<i>Subhosadini</i>	1871
Grish Yantra	<i>Hitakari</i>	1871
Grish Yantra	<i>Bharat Bikhari</i>	1879
East Bengal Press	<i>‘Bangalee’ **</i>	1879
Surhit Yantra (Nannar Gram)	<i>Manik Kiran</i>	1883
Garib Press	<i>Mahabiddya</i>	1887
	<i>Garib Manik (Vikrampur)</i>	1894

Source: Kazi Zafrul Islam, *British Yuge Bangladesher Sangbad Patra O Samayiki: 1847-1947*, Dhaka, 2001

\* These periodicals were published from Vikrampur.

\*\* ‘Bangalee’ was published from Mymensing but it was printed at East Bengal Press, Dhaka.

11 G.W. Shaw, *ibid.* p. 97.

12 See H. Beverly, *Census of Bengal*, Calcutta, 1872.

13 Presumably, ‘printer’ in this context must be taken to mean all those employed at a printing press, from the head printer to compositors, etc.

14 See, E.A. Gait, *Census of India*, 1901, Volume, VI A. Calcutta 1902, p. 374.

15 Abdul Ghafur, *Khaibarkat*, Dacca, 1870 also quoted in *Sekaler Dhaka*, Bangla Accdemy Patrika, Grisma number, 1407 BS.



Printing works

Basak (*Bangla Yantra*), Nanda Kishore Basak (*Raghunath Yantra*) Ram Chandra Basak (Oriental Press) Pran Chittanya Basak, Brojanath Basak, Dharoni Dhar Basak, Shasi Mohan Basak, Baikuthanath Basak, etc.

These Basaks were the dominant class of Dhaka's printing arena till the 1930s of the 20th century.<sup>16</sup> Apart from this, a group of printing trade operatives belonging to Manikgonj areas came in the lime light at the end of the nineteenth century;<sup>17</sup> and by 1950s of the last century, they became dominant in comparison to other district operatives.<sup>18</sup>

The largest serving Muslim printer was Muhammad Jan at the *Mohammadi Yantra*. In between 1877-95 out of 45 presses, only 6 presses belonged to Muslims and of these only 3 flourished for any length of time. These are *Azizia* (1883-90), the *Imadul Islamia* (1895) and the *Mohammadi Yantra* (1875-94). Muhammad Jan described his itendity as under:

Avig gnvæ\$ Rvb,  
emZ XvKvq Rvb  
QvcvLvbvi gnæ\$ir bvg|  
PtKi th ceæcvtQ,  
tg\$ji wei evRvi AvtQ|  
Z\_v e\$U Avgvi tgvKvg|<sup>19</sup>

Other Muslim printers in the nineteenth century were: Munshi Wahed Buksh, Munshi Moula Buksh (*Girish Yantra*), Sheikh Abdul Ghani (*Adarsha Yantra*), Kalimailin Munshi, Abdul Aziz, (*Aziza Press*), Munshi Akabbar (*Symantak Yantra*), Syedur Rahman of Syeedi Press, Mahammad Faizuddin (*Azizia Yantra*), Ali Akbar (*Mohammadi Yantra*) and Kalimuddin Choudhury (*Girish Yantra*). These Muslim printers were also used to print *Puthis* or Islamic books.

### European printers

Apart from Bolt, we find only one English printer, who served for a long time in Dhaka, namely EC Kemp, the printer, publisher and proprietor from 1871 to 1893.<sup>20</sup> J. A. Minas that belonged to Dhaka's Armenian community was another printer of the *Dacca News* in the 1850s. J. P. Wise, and N.P. Pagose of European community belonged to 'Dhaka Press' with Khaja Abdul Gani of Dhaka Nawab family.

16 The *Basaks* were a sub-group of the *tanti* or weaver, who used to work in cloth manufacturing earlier. According to Risley, as the Cotton trade of East Bengal declined with the influx of cheap machine-made goods, many *Basaks* turned to agriculture or trade. See H. H. Risley, *The Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, Vol. 11 Calcutta, 1891, p. 301

17 A good number of people from Harirampur of the then Manikganj subdivision used to work in Calcutta in this trade in various capacities. They left Calcutta after the partition in 1947 and settled down in Dhaka.

18 Based on interviews with the printers of Manikganj origin.

19 Munshi Kashimuddin, *Kholastal Masail* (Dacca, 1878) also quoted in Muntaseer Mamoon *Unnish Satake Dhakar Mudran o Parkastana*, (Dhaka, 2004) p. 373.

20 EC Kemp was the proprietor of the successor to the Dacca News.



Printing presses of Dhaka had a good business and were commercially viable as the 'punthis' were very popular and widely cited by the Muslim people of Bengal. The printing presses had won commercial rates for this purpose. A rate as prescribed by the *Sulava Yantra* at Dhaka's Mughaltuli in 1870 was as under:

Forma	Rate
Small Paika	Rs. 6
English	Rs. 5
Grade	Rs. 5
Double grade	Rs. 4
English	Rs. 8
Source: Based on Ambica Charan Banerjee, <i>Upadesh Satak</i> ; 1870' (an advertisement published in the last cover)	

The above items denote that the Dhaka presses had to print many items as it is today. In the eighteenth century, some Government rules were enacted and these were prescribed for formats besides the House Rent Receipt, etc. These Rules and Acts, Format were frequently printed to meet up the needs of the cities and Mufasail of Eastern Bangal.

At the end of the nineteenth century, the quality of types improved as some new improved types were imported from Calcutta by the Dacca Prakash Press. A contemporary poem says:

AwmmqvŕQ bZb Aŕŕi,  
 tm Aŕŕi my' i tkLi,  
 hZ ŕcŕn AvŕQ XvKv  
 mKj tŕwŕ ŕe XvKv,  
 XvKv cŕŕŕk Kwi fi\`<sup>22</sup>

It is very difficult to ascertain the actual number of printing presses in nineteenth century Dhaka. Prof Abdul Quium, Graham W. Shaw and Muntassir Mamoon have given a list to this effect but it was mainly based on available published books in nineteenth century Dhaka, though G. W. Shaw has used the India Office library where Dhaka books have been preserved. As all the books published from Dhaka are not available now and some printing presses did only job works or did not publish any books, it is very difficult to ascertain an accurate figure of printing presses of 19th century Dhaka. Shaw mentioned 46 names while Mamoon provided a list consisting of 47 names for nineteenth century Dhaka presses. However, it is hypothesized that these numbers were more than it was figured out. The most distinguishing aspects of nineteenth century Dhaka presses were that it was long-lived besides some exceptions and the printers frequently switched over from one press to another, perhaps, for better prospects, on the contrary. The maximum owners of these printing presses were of Dhaka origin. Even the owners of the first printing press *Bangla Yantra* came from different places of Dhaka district.<sup>23</sup>

In fact, the above rates were the revised ones. The previous rates were slightly reduced owing to competition. We find a description of the jobs usually done at the Dhaka printing presses for an advertisement published in the *Dacca Prakash* in 1880 as under:

#### The Dacca Bengali Press

We have just received a fresh supply of various sorts of English types and are ready to execute neatly and clearly. With dispatch and at moderate charge, Books, Pamphlets, Letters, Catalogues, Cheques, Receipts labels, Cards and other sorts of job work.

- Govindo prosad Ray, proprietor, Manager<sup>21</sup>

21 *Dhaka Prakash*, 1880, also see *Samaj Nirikahn*, No-36, 1990 *Samaj Nirikhan kendra*, Dhaka University.

22 Muntassir Mamoon, *ibid*.

23 *Bangla Yantra* was belong to Brajasunder Mitra, a Deputy Magistrate and an inhabitant of Tetuljara of Dhaka. Mr. Vagaban Chandra Bose, a Deputy Magistrate and father of Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose of Rarikhali, Vikrampur and Kashi Kanta of Dhaka. See Girija Kanta Gosh, 'Dhakar Sahittaya' in 1267' *Dhaka Prakash*, 29 Agrabayan, 1325 BS.

### Twentieth Century Scenario: 1901-1947

The Bengal Renaissance in the 18th century brought significant changes over the subsequent periods. Its impact on art, culture and on literature was meaningful. In compliance with its needs, numbers of books were published during the 20th century. Though Calcutta shared the lion part of these publications, Dacca, too, shared a segment of it. The partition of Bengal made Dhaka the capital of Eastern Bengal and Assam. To meet up the increasing needs of the new capital and the increased people of Dhaka, few printing presses were established. Besides, most of the old presses were running on. It is very difficult to give an account of these printing presses owing to lack of dependable records and sources. At the beginning of the twentieth century, there were at least 40 printing presses. Kedarnath Mazumdar mentioned that 706 personnel were engaged in printing and publishing works.<sup>24</sup> The communication with Calcutta, perhaps, reduced the printing of the books in Dhaka. On the contrary, the educated class of East Bengal had been mostly residing in Calcutta for all practical purposes i. e. education, service and business, etc. After the annulment of Bengal in 1912, Dhaka became merely a district town and the commercial and administrative significance declined considerably. The First World War caused an increase in printing due to scarcity of paper and printing materials. The non co-operation movement, the severe economic depression in the 1930s and the great famine of Bengal in 1943, the Second World War and political disturbance over India disfavored the growth of the printing presses in Dhaka. In spite of that there were more than 40 printing presses in Dhaka, Narayanganj, Manikganj, Munshiganj and in Louhajang till 1947.<sup>25</sup> In Dhaka, some printing presses have been running since the 19th century.<sup>26</sup> Apart from its commercial jobs many of them served as the printers and publishers of newspapers and periodicals. Unfortunatel, some printing presses did not print their names in the books, periodicals, pamphlets in order to circumvent the harassment during the non-cooperation movement in India. On the other hand, no list has been compiled so far for this period. Shaw mentioned 43 printing presses while Mamoon cited it at least 40 in numbers. Among these printing presses, the below mentioned ones were in operation in the years mentioned against the name:

Press	Operating Year*
Bangla Press	1900
Gopinath Press	1900
Presidency Printing works	1900
Bedbas Press	1904
Adarsha Press (Swarna Press)	1908
Narayan Printers (Machine Press)	1916-62
Jagat Art Press	1919
East Bengal Printing and Publication	1917
Islamia Press	1917
Associated Printing Press	1924
Mohammdi Press	1924
Ahmadia Press	1926
S. M. Press	1927
Jagarani Press	1927
New India Press	1928
Bani Press	1928
Harinath Press	1930
Roy Press	1934
Munjer Press	1935
Naki Press	1935
Baliadi Printing & Publishing	1938
Kashi Printing Press	1939
R.K. Basak Printing works	1941
Oriental Press	1945
Dass Brothers Printing Press	1945
Muslim Publishing works	1946
Syeda Press	1946
Karim Printing House	1947
Altaf Press	1947
Dhaka Bharti Machine Press	1947

\*The year shown is not meant for the out set but found in operation.

24 Kedarnath Majumder, *Dhakar Bibaran*, (Calcutta, 1910), p. 239.

25 Muntassir Mamoon, *ibid*.

26 These are Narayan Printers, Bedbas Press, Adarsha Press, and Presidency printing works, Islamia Press, Mohammadi Press, etc.

### Dhaka's Printing Press: 1947-1971

The partition of India, like many other things made striking changes in the socio-economic aspects of East Bengal. The Hindus were the chief trading classes in Dhaka since the 19th century. As the Dhaka's printing presses were mainly in the possession of the Hindu middle class, especially under the control of Basaks,<sup>27</sup> Dasses,<sup>28</sup> Duttas<sup>29</sup> and Basus, they left Dhaka in big numbers after the partition in 1947. The Muslim entrepreneurs duly filled in this vacuum considerably. Especially, the *Manikgonj-people*, who had been serving as the printing operatives in Kolkata for years together. They made good room replacing their business in Dhaka, like others. Many of them exchanged their movable and immovable properties including their printing presses, etc. with the traders of the same nature, who left Dhaka for Calcutta or elsewhere.<sup>30</sup> By the 1950s there were at least 30-35 printing presses in Dhaka, where more than one thousand people worked (see table below) with these presses.



Abdur Rashid

Among these presses, Pioneer Press of 2, Ramakanta Nandilane, Bengal Printing Works of Patuatuli Lane,<sup>31</sup> Tamuddun Press of 50 Lalbagh, Baliadi Printing Works of 137, Bangshal Road, Alexander S. M. Press of 244, Nawabpur, Narayan Machine Press of 134, Nawabpur, Presidency Printing Works of 37-38 Banglabazar, Paramount Press Ltd, and Syeda Press of 8 Rajani Bose lane were prominent in this line. By 1965, these numbers increased to 88, including the printing and publishing newspaper presses in Dhaka. In the list of factories (registered under Factories Act. 1934) provided the name of 8 printing presses<sup>32</sup> engaged in newspaper printing in Dhaka was a segment as more printing presses were involved in printing newspapers and periodicals in Dhaka till 1971.

S.N. H. Rizivi, the Editor of the Dacca District Gazetteer has given a list of printing presses in Dhaka in the 1969-70s. However, Dhaka has got the following printing presses by the 1970s.<sup>33</sup>

Ajmeri Printing Works, Al Nafsar Press, Alexandra Steam Machine Press, Al Helal Printing and Publishing, Co. Ltd., Altaf Press, Baliadi Printing Works, B. F. H. Publishing House, Beauty Art

**Table 2: Showing the printing press operatives in the Dhaka region in 1950s**

Area	Staff	Employer	Employee	Independent
Dacca Municipality	1053	17	934	84
Narayanganj	102	-	79	22
Musiganj	19	-	7	11
Dacca Sadar	1129	17	13	
Manikganj	17	1		

Source: Census of 1951

27 Among these Basaks, Modan Mohan Basak, Gopinath Basak, Laksman Basak, Krishna Das Basak, Hari Mohan Basak, Nanda Kishore Basak, Ram Chandra Basak, Pran Chaitanaya Basak, Shasi Mohan Basak, Brojanath Basak, Dharamidar Basak, Rada Ballab Basak and Baikunthanath Basak were the prominent ones.

28 Bhanu Chandra Das, Baishnab Charan Das, Rebat Mohan Das were famous in Dhaka's printing business.

29 Ras Bihari Dutta, Amrita Lal Dutta and Ramchandra Dutta could be named in this regard.

30 Interview with Mr Anisur Rahman of *Chistia* printing press, 22/2 Sheikh Saheb Bazar, Dhaka.

31 Bengal Printing Press acted as the printer of weekly *Ittefaq*, *Elaan*, *Chitrali* and *Janamat* in the 1950s.

32 See the list of factories (registered under Factories Act, 1934) in East Pakistan, E. P. Govt. Press, Dacca, 1965.

33 Based on District Gazetteer, Dacca, 1969 and List of Factories in E. Pakistan, Dacca, 1965. Perhaps all the printing presses operative in the 1970s are not included in this list.

**Table 3: Dhaka's printing presses served as the printers of newspapers and periodicals (1947-71)**

Sl. No.	Name of Printing Presses	Name of Newspapers/periodicals published	Sl. No.	Printing Press	News paper/periodical published	Year
1.	Baliadi Printing Works	<i>Zindegi</i>	26.	Ward Printers	Samaboy	1961
2.	137 Banshal Road.	<i>Insaaf</i>	3	Peari Das Road	Mujahid	1956
3.	East Pakistan Press	The Daily <i>Sangbad</i>	27.		<i>Ranga Provat</i>	1957
63	Bangshal Road				<i>Mohila</i>	1961
3.	Saugat Press	<i>Begum</i>	28.	E. Bengal Govt. Press	<i>Pak Samachar</i>	1651
66	Loyal street	<i>Al-Islam</i>			Bangla Academy Journal	1957
		<i>Kanchi Kancha</i>			<i>Samaj Kallayan Patrika</i>	182
4.	H. Printing Works	Weekly <i>Insaaf</i>	29.	Paramount Press Ltd.	<i>Pakistani Khabar</i>	1952
52	Jansan Road	<i>Fariad</i>	9	Hatkholra Road	<i>Spandan</i>	1953
5.	Shinepukur Art Press	<i>Nawbelal</i>			<i>Biggan Bichitra</i>	1957
48/1	Liakat Avenue				<i>British Darpan</i>	1957
6.	Balaram Press	<i>Nowroj</i>			<i>Daily Ittefaq</i>	1953
7.	New Model Press	<i>Jihad</i>			<i>Panch Mishali</i>	1960
77	Malitola Road				<i>Sahittlya?</i>	1960
8.	Jubilee Press	<i>Sainik</i>			Islamic Academy Patrika	1961
48	Kaptan Bazar				<i>Bibartan</i>	1960
9.	Chabuk Printing Press	<i>Mukul</i>			<i>Darpon</i>	1965
52	Janshan Road	<i>Rupchaya</i>			Nazrul Academy Patrika	1969
10.	Shrinin press	<i>Mukul</i>			<i>Swaraj</i>	1971
27	Urdu Road	<i>Al Hakim</i>	30.	Eden press	Iqbal Academy Patrika	1971
11.	Harinath press	<i>Juger Dabi</i>	42	Hatkholra Road	<i>Markin Paricroma</i>	1952
12.	Altaf Press	<i>Jangkar</i>			<i>Busicad?</i>	1955
11	Mahuttuli	Dainik paigam			Ramna puhrahi	1960
13.	Srikanta Press	Mahenou			<i>Ajker Germani, Sanglap</i>	1961
5	Naya Bazar		31.	Kamal Brothers Printing Works	<i>Daily Millat</i>	1952
14.	Crown Press	<i>Minar</i>	17	Court House Streel	<i>Bartaman</i>	1962
15.	Pioneer Press	<i>Annya Chai Alo Chai</i>	32.	Karwan Press	<i>Ajkal</i>	1952
2	Ramakanta Nandi Lane	<i>Amaradesh</i>	253	French Road		
		<i>Nabajat</i>	33.	Majid Publishing Press	<i>Alapani</i>	1954
16.	Word Press	<i>Dilruba</i>	2/2	Rajar Dewri		
17.	Harinath press	<i>Janamat</i>	34.	Amader Press	<i>Noor</i>	1954
29	Patuatuli		19	Azimpur	<i>Taretakks?</i>	1964
18.	Chabuk Press	Pakistan	35.	Al Helal Press	<i>Setara</i>	1955
19.	Muslim Bengal Press	<i>Noebahar</i>	3/1	Jansan Press	<i>Shaheen</i>	1955
46	Zindabahar 1 <sup>st</sup> land				<i>Anannya</i>	1955
20.	Malik Press	<i>Imrose</i>			<i>Purbadesh</i>	1962
21.	Bengal Printing Works	Weekly <i>Ittefaq</i>	36.	Malaya Printing Press	<i>Samakal</i>	1952
3/4	Patuatuli Lane	<i>Elaan</i>	2	Nandalal Dutta Lane	<i>Ittehad</i>	1955
		<i>Chitralli</i>	37.	Narayan Machine Press		
		<i>Janamat</i>	Nawabpur Road		<i>Khelagarh</i>	1955
		<i>Natun Din</i>			<i>Mrithika</i>	1962
		<i>Amar Bangla</i>	38.	Imprial Press	<i>Amar Bangla</i>	1956
		<i>Hamdard</i>	10,	Hat Khola Road	<i>Sachitra Sandhani</i>	1956
		<i>Darbar</i>			<i>Prabaha</i>	1957
		<i>Uttaran</i>	39.	Dilruba Printing Works	<i>Chashi</i>	1956
		<i>Parichay</i>	13/	Farashganj		
22.	Tamuddun Press	East Bengal Scout	40.	Avijan Printing House	<i>Kishore Sahittya</i>	1956
50	Lalbagh	<i>Tahjib</i>	54	Agamosi Lane	<i>Padakhep</i>	1960
23.	Eastern Pakistan Press	<i>Homeopath</i>	41.	News Printers	<i>Natun Khabar</i>	1959
24.	Capital Printing Press	<i>Mukti</i>	32	Agamosi Lane	<i>Aangona</i>	1962
50	Begum Bazar	<i>Hullor</i>	42.	Jinnat Press	<i>Jagori</i>	1956
25.	Samakal Mudrayan	<i>Samaboy</i>	Narayanganj			
Mothijheel		<i>Shilpayan</i>	43.	Al Helal Printing & Publishing Co.	Pakistan Observer,	
		<i>Sangjok</i>			<i>Purbadesh</i>	
			44.	Pakistan Co-operative Book Society Press	<i>Sahi tta Patrika</i>	1966
					<i>Pakistan, Probin</i>	1965
					<i>Hetaishi, Rashmi</i>	



Sl. No.	Printing Press	News paper/ periodical published	Year	Sl. No.	Printing Press	News paper/ periodical published	Year
45.	Kashem Printing Publishing	<i>Aaj</i>	1957	76.	Azizia Printing Press	<i>Protiva</i>	1963
46.	Al Hadith Printing & Publishing House	<i>Arafat</i>	1957	77.	Sahajan Printing works 97/2 Siddik Bazar	<i>Saptak</i>	1963
47.	B. Printing Works	<i>Darbar</i>	1958	78.	City Press	<i>Prithibi</i>	1963
48.	Govt. of Pakistan Press	<i>Pakistaner Krishi Pak Jamhuriat</i>	1958 1960	79.	Renaissance Printings	<i>Grihasree</i>	1963
49.	Nabojata Printing Works	<i>Daily Nobojato</i>	1959	80.	The Title Press 23 Haricharan Road	<i>Niramaya</i>	1963
50.	New Nation Press I R. K. Mission Road	<i>Chabuk Rangberong Cinemajagat Jangkar Minar</i>	1958 1959 1961 1961 1958	81.	Monalisa Fine Art Press 55 Pattakhan Press	<i>Karabi</i>	1963
51.	Kushim Printing Press	<i>Jahane neo</i>	1958	82.	Art Press 22/2 Sheikh Saheb Bazar	<i>Saikat</i>	1963
52.	Forward Printing Works	<i>Patheo</i>	1967	83.	Saida Press 8, Rajni Bose Lane	<i>Gramer Katha (Munshiganj)</i>	1963
53.	Mamata2 Printing Works	<i>Parichiti</i>	1959	84.	Star Press, 21/1 Sheikh Saheb Bazar	<i>Jagorani (Narayanganj)</i>	1964 1969
54.	Purbabango Press 2 Zindabahr 2 <sup>nd</sup> Lane	<i>Lekhok shango patrika Nagorik</i>	1961 1961	85.	Osmania Printing Press Digubabu Bazar, Narayanganj	<i>Jagaran</i>	1970
55.	Pakistan Express Printers 58 water works Road.	<i>Shefa</i>	1959	86.	Choudhury Printing and Publications	<i>Mausumi</i>	1970
56.	Dimond Printing Works	<i>Homeopathy</i>	1959	87.	Azad Press	<i>Biplab</i>	1970
57.	Universe Press	<i>Rupkatha</i>	1959	88.	Shams Printing Press Oriental Press	<i>Sristi Sukher Ullase Manjeel</i>	1964 1970
58.	Muslim Printing Works 8/2 Wiseghat	<i>Jubabani</i>	1960	89.	Prabaha Mudrayan Liberty printing works	<i>Kanthataswar Sampratit</i>	1965 1970
59.	Bulbul Printing Works 95, Islampur	<i>Rangdhanu</i>	1960	90.	Eastern Printing and Publications	<i>Dipti Lalana</i>	1966
60.	Marcentile Press 38 Bangla Bazar	<i>Bai Bichitra Dishari</i>	1960 1960	91.	Pakistan Family Welfare Project Press	<i>Sukhi Jiban Pubali</i>	1966 1970
61.	Ideal Printing Press 118 Hrikesh lane	<i>Madhumita Joy Sarbahara</i>	1960 1970	92.	Press International Laboni Printing Press	<i>Jiban O Jouban Laboni</i>	1967 1970
62.	Cultural Press 14/15 Bubu Bazar	<i>Pubali</i>	1960	93.	Modern Art Press Manikganj	<i>Rhita Rang Man Nayajamana</i>	1967 1969
63.	B. J. Press 3/6 Liakat Avenue	<i>Chalantika Sandesh</i>	1960 1963	94.	Anupama Mudrayan Murshid Press Abco Press	<i>Tamuddun Sudhi Nabarun</i>	1969 1970 1970
64.	??	<i>'Kharkhana' (EPIDC) Majdur Madina</i>	1961 1969 1961	95.	Asiatic Press Asgar Printing Press	<i>Itihas Chitralkha</i>	1967 1969
65.	Jiko Press 73 Laxmi Bazar			96.	Barnasree Mudran 34 Tipu sultan Rd.	<i>Chotogolpo Natun Bangla</i>	1967 1971
66.	Ratan Art Press	<i>Detective</i>	1961	97.	The Popular Printing Press	<i>Ekata</i>	1970
67.	Urrio Press	<i>Pioneers</i>	1963	98.	Palash Art Press	<i>Dabanal</i>	1971
68.	Polwel Printing Press	<i>Detective WAPDA Sangbad Jibaner Alo Nou Paribahan</i>	1964 1961 1965 1965	99.	Associated Printers Ltd.	<i>Shampan</i>	1970
69.	Pak Industrial Press	<i>Nagorik</i>	1967	100.	Gana Bangla Mudrayan	<i>Gana Bangla</i>	1971
70.	Jagriti Mudrayan 4/1. Hemendra Das Road.	<i>Khudra Shilpa</i>	1967	101.	Adarsha Chapa Khana	<i>Isayat</i>	1971
71.	Consulate Press 38 BCC Road	<i>Chaitali</i>	1962	102.	Modern Printers	<i>Kichudhani</i>	1971
72.	Khawja Printing Press 17-Mirjumla Rd. N. ganj	<i>Balaka</i>	1962	103.	Purbachal Printing	<i>Nirikh</i>	1971
73.	Associate Printers Ltd. 3/1 Liakat avenue	<i>Shapath</i>	1965	104.	Time Press	<i>Deshbangla</i>	1971
74.	Latif Art Press 22/2 Sheikh Saheb Bazar	<i>Al Hera</i>	1962	105.	Bajra Kantha Mudrani	<i>Bajra Kantha</i>	1971
75.	Jesmin Printing Press	<i>Mriithhika</i>	1962	106.	Leminated Press 20 Rama Kanta Nandi Lane	<i>Kendriya Bangla Unnayan Board Paltrika</i>	1971

\* This table does not show the name of printing presses only in Dhaka over the periods, but it also shows the name of newspapers and periodicals, publishing years, etc. published from these printing presses.



A modern printing press

Press, Bengal Printing Works, Broadway Printing Press, Central Offset Press, City Press, Crown Press, Dacca Press, Dacca Printing Works, Diamond Printing Works, East Bengal Press, Eastern Press and Type Foundry, Eden Press, Elite Press, Ever Green Publicities, Pakistan Publicity, Fine Art Press, Government of Pakistan Press, Globe Printing Press, Great Eastern Press, Husain Art Press, Art Press, Ideal Printing Works, Imperial Press, Islamia Printing Works, Litho Art Press, Luckman Press, Narayan Machine Press, Nasar Lithographic Art Press, National Art Press, National Press, Noorani Press, Oxford University Press, Pakistan Co-operative Book Society, Pakistan Printers and Publishers, Printers, Purba

Bangla Press and Parichiti, Ratan Type Foundry, Ratan Art Press, Star Press, Sulekha Printing Press, Unique Printing, United Press, Universal Press, Victoria Fine Press and Warsi Printing Works.

Besides, each subdivisional town had at least one or two printing presses in the 1970s. Apart from the Government of Pakistan Press and the East Pakistan Government Press located at Tejgaon Industrial Area, Co-operative Press<sup>34</sup> at Motijheel was established and running under the supervision of Government. There were some Principal Printing Presses like Al Helal Printing Press, Pioneer Printing Press, Associated Printers, B.F.A. Publishing House, Islamia Printing Works, Oxford University Press, Narayan Machine Press, Star Press, Zeenat Printing Works, Presidency Printing Press, Eden Press, Paramount Press, Abco Press, etc.<sup>35</sup>

In the 1970s, 1108 persons had been working under the Government funded printing presses whereas, 140(?) personnel were working in the presses owned by private concerns.

### Bangladesh Period

Dhaka emerged as the capital city of Bangladesh in 1971. This paved the way for the extending of printing aspects. After liberation the major documents, forms, pads and other printed papers were to reproduce and these immensely increased the demand of printing presses. On the other hand, a good number of newspapers and periodicals were published from Dhaka for the period between 1972 and 1973, which involved more new printing presses in Dhaka, numbered it to 110 till 1973. The Government Printing Press<sup>36</sup> at Tejgaon is working for printing of all sorts of forms, service rules, manual, govt. orders, ordinances and other govt. publications as prescribed in this regard. It is not easy to provide the list of total printing presses here due to space constrain and lack of reliable sources. However, statistics revealed that 2% people of total employment are working in this sector. The census of 1981 also gives a figure of total staff engaged and number of printing press in Dhaka SMA as 465 where 4650 personnel are working with an average number of 10 workers in each printing press.<sup>37</sup>

34 Co-operative Printing Press was initiated by Niaz Mohammed Khan, CSP and was assisted by Asia Foundation of U. S. A.

35 S. N. H Rizvi, *ibid.* p. 217.

36 Formally it was named 'East Pakistan Press'.

37 Bangladesh Population Census, Dhaka SMA, 1985, Bangladesh Bureau of statistic, Govt. of Bangladesh.



Bangladesh Government Press at Tejgaon

### Major Business Concentration

The early printing press was established at Katra in 1849. But that was not a commercial one. It is very difficult to mark the particular area or areas, where printing presses were concentrated. Especially after independence, printing presses were established all over the city, though old Dhaka shared the lion portion of its concentration. Muntassir Mamoon mentioned that no particular area can be cited of its concentration. However, during the British era, maximum printing presses were set up from Bangla Bazar to Baburbazar and Begumbazar areas.

**British period:** Bangla Bazar, Nawabpur, Islampur, Wari, Armanitota, Babu Bazar, Katra, Begum Bazar, etc.

**Pakistan Period:** Malitola, Mahut tuli, Lalbagh, Wari, Satraoja, Laxmi Bazar, Court House Street, Karkunbari Lane, Hatkhola, Narinda, Rama Kanta Nandi Lane, Hrishi Kesh Das Lane, Dhakeshwari Road, Paridas Road, Hemendra Das Road, Asek Lane, Rajani Bose Lane, Vajahari Saha Street, Siddik Bazar, Wiseghat, Bangshal, Segun Bagicha, Liakat Avenue, Syed Hassan Ali Lane, Naya Paltan, Motijheel, Sheikh Saheb Bazar, Akmal Khan Road, Farashganj, Zindabahar, Pilkhana, Haranath Gosh Road, Nazimuddin Road, Banagram, Bakshi Bazar, North Brook Hall Road, Patlakhan Lane, etc.

**Bangladesh:** Apart from the above mentioned areas, some new areas were developed after liberation. The major concentrations were at Arambagh, Fakirapool and Nilkhet. Arambagh and Fakirapool are the important areas for printing press operatives since the 1980s. More printing presses are being installed at Bangla Bazar, Free School Street and its adjoining areas to facilitate the publication houses of that area.

**Table 4: Dhaka's Printing Presses served as the printers of Newspapers and periodicals (1972-73)**

Sl. No	Printing Presses	Newspapers/ periodicals published	Year	Sl. No	Printing Presses	Newspapers/ periodicals published	Year
1.	Royal Printing Press	<i>Sonar Bangla</i>	1972	33.	Associated Printer Ltd.	<i>Ganosahittya</i> <i>Nabarun</i>	1972
2.	Ganakantha Mudrayan	<i>Ganakhantha</i>	1972	34.	Concept Printers	<i>Rupshi</i>	1972
3.	The Economy Printers	<i>Amar Bangladesh</i>	1973	35.	Paramount Press	<i>Ittehad</i>	1972
4.	Jatiya Mudran	<i>Sonarbangla</i> <i>Joyadhani</i>	1972	36.	Venas Printing Press	<i>Ganamukti</i>	1972
5.	Sahin Press	<i>Kalosrot</i>	1972	37.	Pioneer Printing press	Soviet Samikkha	1972
6.	Bangla Press	<i>Dipta Bangla</i>	1972	38.	Mukti Press	<i>Muktibani</i>	1972
7.	Mudrayan	<i>Suchana</i>	1972	39.	Eastern Printing Press	Nipirita	---
8.	Jagriti Mudnayan	<i>Telegram</i>	1972	40.	Bajra Knath Mudrani	Uttaran	1972
9.	Imperial Press	<i>Bangodarpan</i>	1972	41.	Sahin Press	Swadesh	1972
10.	Syeda Press	<i>Dinik Samaj</i>	1972			---	1972
11.	Concept Printers	<i>Nabin</i>	1972	42.	Noor Art Press	<i>Alpana</i>	1972
12.	Salimabad Press	<i>Sphutan</i>	1972	43.	Choudhury Printers	<i>Janantik</i>	1972
13.	Nasim Printing Press	<i>Sarbahara</i>	1972	44.	Book Promotion Press	<i>Janantik</i>	1972
14.	Polwel Printing Press	<i>Byabsa-Banijya</i> <i>Shilpa-Banijya</i> <i>Rupam</i> <i>Dipak</i>	1972	45.	Latif Art Press	<i>Shila Kuri</i> – <i>Aroggya</i>	1972 1973
15.	Star Press	<i>Kalpurus</i> <i>Swapakkhe</i>	1972	46.	Associated Printers Ltd	<i>Maitri</i>	1972
16.	Abco Press	Charampatra	1972	47.	The Title Press	<i>Chitrarath</i>	1973
17.	Haraf Mudrayan	<i>'Diganta'</i>	1972	48.	I. B. Press	<i>Kuhelika</i>	1973
18.	Swadesh Press	<i>Narikantha</i>	1972	49.	Alam Printing Press	<i>Tilottoma</i>	1972
19.	Azad Press	<i>Parikrama</i>	1972	50.	Paramount Press	<i>Purbachal</i>	1973
20.	Bangla Press	<i>Sabajbangla</i>	1972	51.	Eden Press	Bangladesh Sangbad	1972
21.	Madina Printing	<i>Mukti</i>	1972	52.	Abco Press	<i>Bharat Bichitra</i>	1973
22.	Eastern Printing Press	Langal	1972	53.	Associate Printers	Janapada	1973
23.	Puratatta Press	Sucharita	1972	54.	Aktarika	<i>Mudran Tahjib</i>	1973
24.	Madhumati Mudranalay	Pratidhani	1972	55.	Alam Printing Press	<i>Dhaleswari</i>	1973
25.	Paramount Press	<i>Kakali</i>	1972	56.	Bangla Press	<i>Purbaragh</i>	1973
26.	Prabhati Press	<i>Paniparikroma</i>		57.	Barna Mudrayan	<i>Aarchana</i>	1973
27.	Anupama Mudrayan	<i>Rupashi Bangla.</i>	1972	58.	Islamia Printing Works	<i>Bijoy Barta</i>	1974
28.	Jagriti Mudrayan	<i>Nabazuk</i>	1972	59.	Palli Chhapa Khana	<i>Shatadal</i>	1973
29.	Purbachal Printing Works	Chikitsa Samikkha	1972	60.	Mukti Mudrayan	<i>Sombhar</i>	1973
30.	Jatiya Mudrayan	Shamikkhan	1972	61.	B. J. Press	<i>Auronoday</i>	1973
31.	Ananda Mudrayan	<i>Lalita</i>	1972	62.	Biplotlabi Mudrayan	<i>Janamat</i>	1973
32.	Sandhani Press	Adhuna	1972	63.	B. Printing Works	<i>Sujaneshu</i>	1973
				64.	Jagriti Mudrayan	<i>Haqbani</i>	1973
				65.	Glory Printing Works	<i>Niharika</i>	1973
				66.	Haraf Madrayan	<i>Binimoy</i>	1975
				67.	Associated Printers Ltd.	<i>Abarta</i>	1972
				68.	The Printers	<i>Jatrik</i>	1972



## 10. Book Publication and Book Shops

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M̃s̃ K\_v h\_vZ\_v fr̃³fti Ktñ\

-Avj vIj

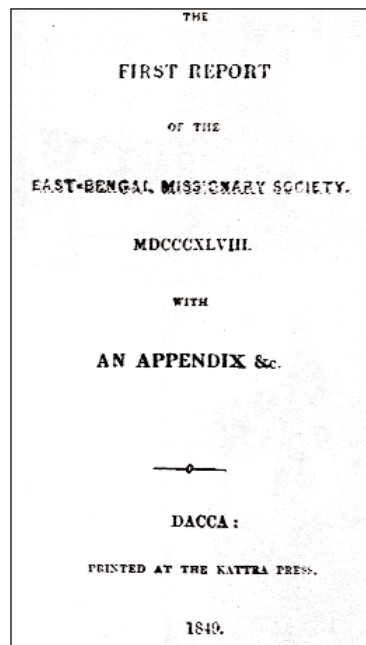
I am the book for good or ill  
Over the counter and past the till.  
I am at your elbow, I'm by your bed,  
Just open a page and I am into your head.  
I'll show you how, I'll tell you why?  
I'll take you in arm-chairs up to the sky.  
Yes, books, books, books,  
You can't get along without book.

-An English poem

### Beginning of Book Publication

Bengali printing and publication owes its origin to Christian Missionaries who introduced this new art to the people of this land. It was in 1800, when the Missionaries embarked upon mass distribution of printed religious books among the people of Bengal; they came to know that there was a process like printing, which could be employed for dissemination of human knowledge.<sup>1</sup> In Bengal, the first publication of book took place in Hoogli in 1778, when N. B. Halhed's *A Grammar of the Bengali Language* was published. In the meantime, William Augustus Hickey brought a printing press to Calcutta and published the famous 'Bengal Gazetteer' in 1780. In 1800, William Carey set up a missionary press at Sreerampur. In fact, the first printing press and its publications received the patronage of the East India Company as well as Christian Missionaries. That is why the early publications were on laws and regulations, dictionaries, grammars and religious propaganda of the Missionaries. It was Warren Hastings, who first came forward to patronise books in India.<sup>2</sup>

Before the publication of any book, Dhaka had a newspaper, the *Dhaka News* published from the Dhaka Press in 1856. Printing and publication in Dhaka did not, as was long thought, start with the 'Dacca News Press' founded in 1856, but some seven years earlier.<sup>3</sup> The India Office Library has a copy of the 'First Report of the East-Bengal Missionary Society, MDCCXL VIII,' which carries the imprint 'Dacca: Printed at the Kattr Press, 1849'.

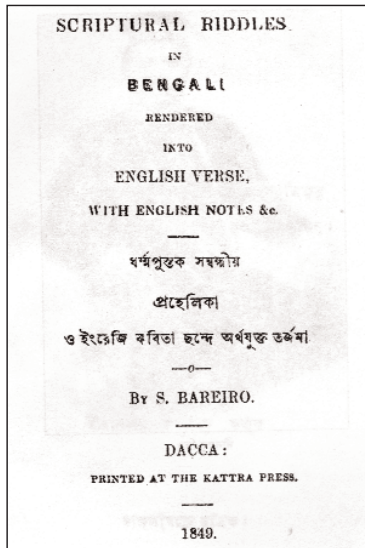


First booklet published from Dhaka by the Kattr Press in 1849

1 M. H. Khan, *The Bengali Book: History of Printing and Book Making*, (Bangla Academy, 1999) p. 165.

2 Muntassir Mamoon, *Unish Shatake Dhakar Mudran O Prakashana*, (Samay Prakashani, 2004).

3 G. W. Shaw, Printing and Publishing in Dhaka, 1849-1900, in Sharifuddin (ed.) *Dhaka: Past Present Future*, ASOB: 1991, p. 90.



The first Bengali book 'Prahelika' published from Dhaka in 1849

The First Report of the East Bengal Missionary Society minutes the meeting of the Society held on 12 March 1849. No other publication was found from this Kattra Press as yet. The third printing press '*Bangla Yantra*' was set up in 1860, which was the pioneer in publishing books from Dhaka. This printing press belonged to some Bengali entrepreneurs, namely Brajamohan Mitra, Bhagaban Chandra Basu and Kashi Kanta Chattopaddya.<sup>4</sup> This *Bangla Yantra* played a vital role in early publishing of books from Dhaka. The first book in Bengali *Brahmen-Roman Catholic Sangbad* was composed at 'Bhawal' in Dhaka by Rev. Dom Antonio De Rozario, which was printed in Lisbon in 1743.<sup>5</sup> By the first decade of the 19th century, Calcutta produced about ten thousand books. In the 1819, the *Samachar Darpan* applauded the extent of publications and mentioned that books published were warmly appreciated by all sections people. In the mid of 19th century, Dhaka got many printing presses and by the 1860s, a good number of newspapers and books were published from these presses. Mamoon mentioned that by the

1900s, Dhaka's printing presses published 150 to 500 books each from their inception. Among these presses, *Girish Yantra* and *Shamantak* were leading in publishing books. By the 1900s, *Girish* published 543 books while the latter published 443 books. The year 1887 marked the highest publications numbering 206 books. On the contrary, no book perhaps was published in 1859.

It is interesting to note that Dhaka got a book-selling library named 'Cheap Library' in 1860. Now it is very difficult to know who was the entrepreneur in founding such a library. As the *Basaks* of Dhaka were the leading class in printing and publishing business, they might be the pioneers in this line.<sup>6</sup> G. W. Shaw has given a picture of book publishing by the 1900s. According to him, "Just 11 presses issued more than 100 works, and only 63 more than 200, during the period 1857-1900, the most prolific of all being *Girish Yantra* with 543 over 32 years".<sup>7</sup>

Though by this time, publications were overwhelmingly in Bangla; a good number of books in English (156) and Sanskrit (56) were also published. Apart from this, a few books were published in other Islamic languages, 5 in urdu and 2 in Persian as well as bilingual i. e. Arabic-Urdu, Arabic-Bengali, Urdu-Persian, etc.

### Islamic Books and Punthi Sahitya

*Punthi Sahitya* was very popular among the Muslims and the printing presses at Chawkbazar area used to publish popular *Punthis*. The famous *Ketab Patti* of Chawkbazar concentrated on printing and publishing books about Islamic & religious issues.<sup>8</sup> These *Punthi* writers used to live in

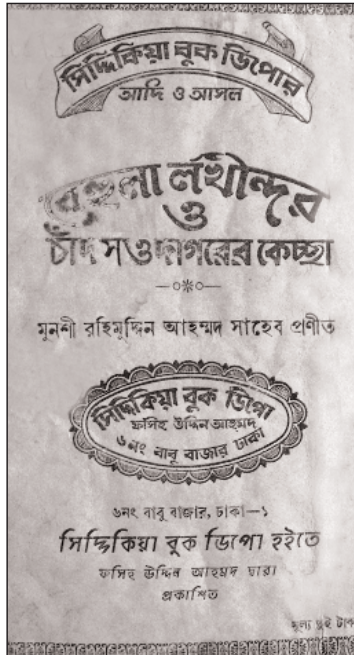
4 A. L. Clay, *Principal Heads History and Statistics of the Dacca Division*, Calcutta, 1868.

5 Dom Antonio was from a Royal Family of Eastern Bengal, who was bappiest.

6 Out of the Hindu printers, G. W. Shaw found 15 personnel, who bear the caste name '*Basak*'; See Sharifuddin, *ibid.* ASOB: 1991, p. 98.

7 G. W. Shaw, *ibid.* p. 96.

8 See Abdul Quaium 'Dhakar Kayek Jan Punthi Rachaita' in *Bangla Academy Journal*, 1372 BS.



A Bangla Punthi

**Table: Dhaka's Punthi Writers by Profession (1856-1900)**

Writer & Residence	Published Punthi	Occupations
Mushi Garibullah Rahamatganj	<i>Rousanal Momenin</i> (1868) <i>Dilrousan</i> (1868) <i>Iblish Namar Punthi</i> (1870) <i>Nekbibir Keycha</i> <i>Delaram</i> (1882)	Business at Chawkbazar
Male Mohammad Bagapur, Abdollahpur	<i>Saiful Mulk, Tambitunessa</i> , <i>Ahkamu' Juma, Seratul</i> <i>Momenin</i>	Book shop owner at Mughaltuli
Manwar Ali Kanchanpur, Comilla	<i>Almas O Goiraihan</i>	Business
Muniruddin Rahmatganj	<i>Bhumicomper Marma O Hal</i> <i>Alinama, Hanumaner</i> <i>Janga</i> , <i>Rashinama, Persinama</i> <i>Sude se masala</i>	Book-shop at Mughaltuli and Press business
Zahiruddi Posta	<i>Esk Ajaeb &amp; others</i>	Book-shop at Chawkbazar
Haider Jan	<i>Sahi Talenama</i>	Book-shop at
Mirja Mannar Deuri	<i>Khalilgoljar</i>	Chawkbazar
Syed Jan	<i>Nasiatnama</i>	Business
Thathari Bazar		
Basiruddin	<i>Harninama</i>	Business with Armenians
Raipura, Dhaka		
Mohammad Ghinu, Faizuddin		Business at Kashar book shop and Printing press.
Keraniganj		

different parts of Dhaka city and many were of Dhaka origin. By profession, most of them were in business (see table). Records reveal that they made their fortune by establishing printing presses and publishing *punthi* as Islamic books. In order to sell their publications, they also founded bookshops near Chawkbazar and Moulavibazar areas.

### Publication of Text Books

Another aspect of Dhaka's earlier publications was the production of school text books.<sup>9</sup> On analysis, no less than 60% of the 3442 published books fell into this category. Shaw mentioned that these school books were principally to do with language learning, numbering 1547 or about 45%, whether Bangla, English or Sanskrit grammars, vocabularies and dictionaries, readers, primers, keys and glossaries to standard school or examination texts. Mathematics and *Manasanko* were prominent category, while there were many works of science, history and geography. Books of poetry containing moral advice for children were also aimed at the school market.<sup>10</sup> In the 1870s, like to day, the schoolbook business was very alluring owing to its profit margins. Even the schoolteachers were involved in business ignoring their usual functions at schools.<sup>11</sup> It went beyond the limit and the government had to circulate an order prohibiting private business by the officers of the education department.<sup>12</sup> Alexander Forbes cited this aspect 20 years earlier in 1856 in the *Dacca News* that, the vernacular is useful only in corresponding on matters of business.<sup>13</sup> In the 1890s,

9 For details see Ashis Khastagir, *Uni Shshataker Bangla Boi*, Kolkata.

10 G. W. Shaw. *ibid.* p. 102.

11 See, *Dhaka Prakash*, 9 September, 1875.

12 *Dacca Prokash*.

13 *Dacca News*, No. 30, November 15, 1856; also see, Sharifuddin, Dhaka, *ibid.* p. 103.

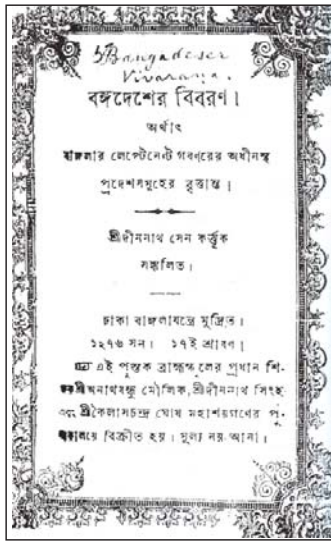
**Table: Text- Books as Received by the Bengal Library: 1873-1899**

Year	In Provincial Language	No of Text-Books	Percentage
1873-75	1480	225	10.5%
1876-80	4164	138	30.25%
1881-85	7202	2071	30%
1886-90	6335	2155	30.5%
1891-94	4809	1172	20.5%
1896-97	1536 (Bengali)	600	40%
1898-99	12039	319	20.5%

Figures are approx. and re-printed books are excluded.

Source: Ashish Kastaqir: *Unish Sataker Bangla Boi*.

Gopinath, Ishan, Maheshwar, Gendaria, Asutosh and other presses all printed a large number of textbooks. The trend of publication of text-books may be ascertained from the Bengal Library catalogue as under:



The cover page of *Bangadesher Bibaran* by Dinanath Sen, 1869

The early publication of books consisted mainly of Language, Poetry, Fiction, Drama, Religion, Mathematics, Medicine, History, Science, Music, Geography, Biography, Law, Education and others (see appendix).

According to an estimate, three presses alone i.e. *Girish Yantra*, *Shamantak* and *Bangla Yantra* were able to publish one third of the total of 3442 monographs.

The *Bangla Yantra* was mostly credited for publishing the famous book of Din Bandhu Mitra *Nil Darpan* in 1860.<sup>14</sup> Undoubtedly, it was a milestone in the history of book publishing in 19th century Dhaka.

### Book Libraries: Early Phase

These publications obviously paved the way for book-selling business in Dhaka. But how many libraries were set up to cater to this business is yet to be ascertained. The first census of Bengal in 1872 records only 23 printers, without any break-up. No separate information on booksellers or publishers is available in this report. The subsequent census reports were also prepared in the same manner, where specific data on book publishing or book shops was not inserted.<sup>15</sup>

The Report on the Census of Bengal, 1881 is singularly imprecise since it contained figures only for workers in books; a total of 189 personnel had been working in 21 towns in the then Dhaka district.<sup>16</sup> The next census of 1891 by C. J. O Donnel provide a figure of 298 press operatives. But

14 *Nil Darpan* was composed in Dhaka and mainly based on his personal knowledge he gathered in and around Dhaka Indigo factories while he was working at Dhaka in the 1860s. After Publication of the *Nil Darpan*, the 'Shome Prakash' of Calcutta published a short review in its no 12. Issue 1860.

15 See The Report on the Census of Bengal, 1872 by H. Beverly, Calcutta, 1872.

16 By J. A. Bourdillon, Vol-11, Calcutta, 1883, p. 381.





A view of Banglabazar

no account of bookshops or libraries was mentioned. Jatindra Mohan has given a list of 14 books published in the 1860s but the years of publication are very hypothetical and non-specific.<sup>17</sup> These books are:

Year	Name of the book	Writer	Printing Press
1854-63	<i>Prantoshini</i>	Gurudas Talukdar	Bangla Yantra
1855-63	<i>Shuk Geeta</i>	Chandra Kumar Basak	Bangla Yantra
1854-63	<i>Swapnabilas</i>	Govinda Chandra Saha	Natun Yantra
1859-63	<i>Byakaran Sar</i>	Govinda Prasad Ray	Bangla Yantra
1859-63	<i>Kunja bilas</i>	Jaggacanda Chakrabarti	Bangla Yantra
1859-63	<i>Byakaran Mihir</i>	Parimohan Chottopadhyai	Bangla Yantra
1859-63	<i>Kumar Sahitya</i>	---	---
1859-63	<i>Dankeli Koumudi</i>	Deenanath Bhounik.	Bangla Yantra
1859-63	<i>Parihar Sangher</i>	Lalmohan Basak	Bangla Yantra
1859-63	<i>Charu Prasad</i>	Haranarayan Roy	Bangla Yantra
1859-63	<i>Sreebatsa</i>	Hara Chandra Sen	Bangla Yantra
1856	Anecdotes on Christian Graces	S. Bost	Cuttra Press
1857	Avidhan	---	---
1859	Kumar Kamrup	Chandra Kumar Basak	Cuttra Press

Source: Jatindra Mohan: *Mudrita Bangla Granther Panji*, 1993. Also See Muntassir Mamoon, *ibid*.

Jatindra Mohan did not conclude about the year of publication of these books. He indicated a probable year between 1854 and 1863. He did not even mention the well-known book *Nildarpan* of Dinbandu Mitra, which was published from *Bangla Yantra* in 1860. In spite of this, we can surmise that the actual publications were more than the figure mentioned. In respect of libraries or

17 Jatindra Mohan Bhattacharya, '*Mudrita Bangla Granther Panji*,' Kolkata, 1993, see Introduction.

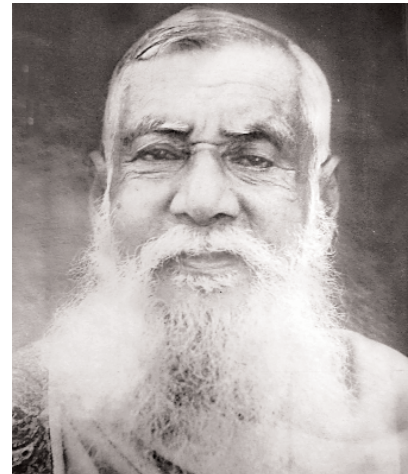
bookshops, we can also assume that initially it was the authors' own arrangement to sell books. The advertisements in the contemporary newspapers revealed that the printing presses from where the books were published were also used as selling centers. Mammoon cited 4 types of arrangements for marketing books: 1. Through vendor, 2. By Printing Press, 3. From the House of Writer or Publisher and 4. Book-library. Selling books through libraries was a later development. Relatives, or friends' houses were also used for this purpose. There was Battalla of Kolkata. Dhaka got a Ketabpatti at Chawkbazar, where mainly *Punthis* were published and sold. There were a good number of printing presses; most of these belonged to Muslims from Babubazar to Begumbazar, which used to print *Punthis* and Islamic books. Dhaka's Punthi was very popular among the Muslims of Eastern Bengal.<sup>18</sup> *Punthis* published in Dhaka were sent to the mufassil by boat through Babubazar Khal and Buriganga River.

By the 1870s there were a pretty good number of bookshops in Dhaka. Besides, a few local agents were involved in book selling business. Agents were offered good commissions.<sup>19</sup> Author's advertisement was very helpful to find out the sales centre or bookshops. Such an advertisement published in the book is as under:

GB tKZvte hvi `i Kvi nBte  
 wR t'vKvrb tgi v Avmtj cvBte  
 wgv i weDj -vn e!U fwMbx RvgvB\  
 t'vKvrb \_vtKb tmB cvte Zvi VuB|  
 P!tKi cWÖg avti tKZve cWtZ|  
 wKvov ewj qv w bymevi tL`gtZ`<sup>20</sup>

### Concentration of the Book Shops

Like printing presses, early book-shops were clustered in the adjacent areas of Chawkbazar. Initially the publisher or the author himself had to initiate in selling their books. Even school teachers in Dhaka city or author's home areas, known educated personnel, nurses and grocery shop-keepers were also engaged in book-selling business. Publication in 19th century Dhaka, as elsewhere, was almost exclusively undertaken at the author's instigation; investing his own money, he had to initiate to get the money back. However, by the 1880s, a good number of book-sellers also sprang up to cater to the book market. Among these *pustakalays* (libraries), K.C. Ghosh & Brothers, *Purba Banga Pustakalaya* and Student Library catered to the school text books. Before flourishing in *Ketab Patti* at Chawkbazar, some Pustakalay (Book-shops) were set up at Dhaka's Islampur, Patuatuli and Mughaltuli areas. It is now very difficult to ascertain the actual number of these books-hops. The prominent *Pustakalay* (Book-shops) founded till the 1880s were as under:



Jagadishchandra Ghosh

Name of the Book-shops	Year Estd.	Location
K.C. Ghosh & Brothers	1867	Islampur
Nandakumar Guher Boier Dokan	1868	Islampur
Purba Banga Pustakalay	1868	Islampur
Dinanath Singer Pustakalay	1868	Islampur
Sree Anath Bandhu Malliker Pustakalay	1869	Islampur
Kailas Chander Pustakalay	1869	Islampur
Darkanath Paler Pustakalay	1871	Mughaltuli
Brajadas Babajir Boier Dokan	1873	Mughaltuli
Benimadhab Dey Co.	1876	Mughaltuli
National Depository	1876	Patuatuli
Kabya Prakash Library	1877	Patuatuli
Matilal Chakrabartir Pustakalay	1878	Islampur
Students Library.	1880	Islampur
N.K. Chattopadhyai Co.	1879	Babubazar
Govinda Lal Library.	---	---
Ripad Library	---	---
Ashutosh Library	---	---
PC Gupta Co.	---	---
Govinda Chandra Das Co.	---	---
Azizia Library	1880	Boigoudi (Dacca)

Source: Based on Bengal Library Catalogue.

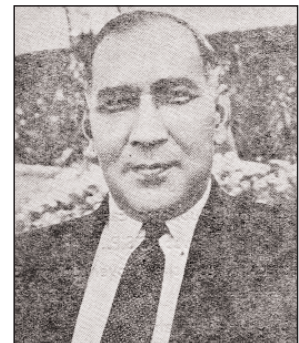
The above list is a segment of the booksellers of 19th century Dhaka. *The Statistical Accounts of Bengal*, Vol-5, by W. W. Hunter, which covered Dacca district, did not give any figure to this effect; but it gave a brief account of the newspapers and printing presses of Dhaka till 1874. It is also estimated that the total number of *pustakalay* or bookshops in Dhaka till 1900 were not less than 40.

### Book Publication: Pakistan Era

After partition in 1947, many remarkable changes took place in the socio-culture arena of the country. The state of publication also affected considerably. A good number of experiend publishers left the country and another new group came forward to fill this *vacum*. In the fifties, there were some old publications house like Provincial Book Depot, Baliadi Publishing House, Liakat Publishing Co. Majeed Publishing House, Eastern Publishers, Naoroz Kitabistan, Hamidia Library, Shirin Publishing House,

Choudhury Publishing House and Medical Book Society, etc. Mr. N.M. Khan ICS, a civilian, also initiated the Pakistan Co-operative Book Society Ltd. which subsequently became one of the big publishing houses of Dhaka. A contempory trade directory listed about 30 publishers where many book libraries also worked as sellers as well as book publishers.<sup>21</sup> In the fifties, the acute crisis of paper hampared the publications area and the publishers harldy could meet the requirements of the country.

Apart from publishers there were a good number of book-shops in Dhaka. Before 1947, the main concentration of these book-shops was in the Islampur and Patuatuli areas but after the fifties these shops were gradully shifted to Banglabazar areas. After partition many book shop owners left the country and new faces came to this business. By 1955, there were about 117 book-shops in Dhaka (see table 6 ). Some old book-shops like Ashutosh Library, Baliady Publishing House, Islamia Library, Looknath Book Agency, Kohinoor Library, Mukdumi Ahsanullah Library, Osmani Book Depot, Presidency Library, Great Bengal Library, Warsi Book Centre Taj Co. Limited, etc also continued their business.<sup>22</sup>



N.M. Khan

<sup>21</sup> For details, see Ansari's *Trade Directory of Pakistan*, 1954

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

### Book Publication after 1971

After Independence, the book publication business had to confront some problems due to the scarcity of paper and other post-liberation dilemmas. In some cases shops and other establishments related to this trade were damaged during the war of Independence. It took time to come to shape. However, after some time this business started to flourish once again and more and more books were published to meet the increasing need. *Mukta Dhara*, a new publisher which came into being at Mujibnagar during the liberation war had been publishing a good number of books while some old publishers like Co-Operative Book Society, Ahmed Publishing House, Khosroz Kitabistan, Moula Brothers, Mallick Brothers, Adel Brothers, Presidency Library, Provincial Book Depot, Islamia Library, Shirin Prokasani, Beauty Book House, etc. continued their publication in full swing. It was late Chittaranjan Saha, the owner of *Muktadhara*, who initiated *Ekushe Boi Mela* (Book Fair on February 21) first at the premises of the Bangla Academy. Subsequently this *Boi Mela* became a regular phenomenon during the month of February. This promotion venture encouraged the book publishers who started another book promotional fair, namely '*Dhaka Boi Mela*' (Dhaka Book Fair) every year under the guidance and auspices of National Book Centre. By the 1980s, the number of book publishers in Dhaka increased as the new generation stepped into this business.



Chittaranjan Saha



Ekushe Boi Mela

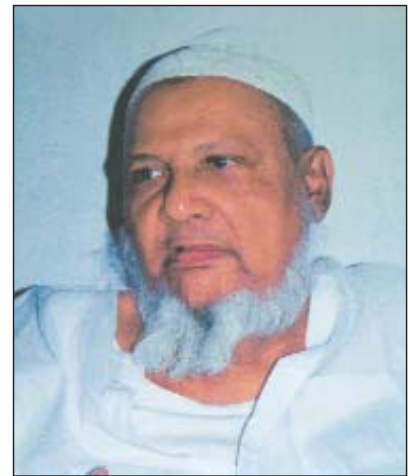


Before the 1980s, only Banglabazar and New Market were the principal business marts of their kind but after that more areas were developed. Nilkhet and Aziz Super Market and their rapid growth were the achievement of young entrepreneurs. Dhaka has lost some publication houses like Oxford University Press and Franklin Publications, but some potential publishing houses have emerged by this time. Besides the old publishers, UPL, APPL, Agami, Sahitya Prokash, Annya Prakash, Adorn Publishers, Dibbya Prakash, Gatidhara, Panjeri, Palak Publishers, Anupama Prakashani, Oitiya, Pathak Samabesh, Dhaka Ahsania Mission, Nawroze and Sahitta Shambher are doing well. More names could be added here. Though the book publication business is a potential sector, expenses of publication are still high in Bangladesh. On the contrary, unauthorised filtration of books from outside and piracy in publication are hampering the normal growth of this sector.

### Book Publication as Seen by Some Entrepreneurs

**Ahmed Ali Mullick of Mullick Brothers:** Mullick Brothers is a distinguished name in the arena of country's book publication business. The tradition of their business goes back to the forties of the 20th century when their forefather late Omed Ali Mullick started his business in front of the Presidency College, Calcutta. But the turbulent situation in Calcutta in 1946 compelled Rajab Ali Mullick and some of his brothers to come to East Bengal. In the turmoil, they lost their valuables and the bookshop was burnt down. In East Pakistan, they had to make a new start with the trade name 'Mullick Brothers'.

According to Ahmed Ali, his father Rajab Ali Mullick, the owner of the Mullick Brothers, first started his business at the corner of Dhaka's Sadarghat in 1947. This was a small start, but it was a promising venture. In course of time, Mullick Brothers became a worthy publisher both in publishing as well as in exporting and importing books. The credit goes to late Rajab Ali Mullick, who with his professional sincerity was able to gain name and fame in publication business. Mr. Ahmed Ali informed that initially they used to publish textbooks of colleges. Among the early publications of Mallik Brother, Father Timm's *A Text of Biology* is mentionable. This book was popular among the students both in East and West Pakistan. A good number of books were exported to West Pakistan, mainly textbooks. Apart from textbooks, reference books were also popular both in East and West Pakistan. The Calcutta bookshop once was well known to many luminous personalities of Bengal like A.K. Fazlul Haque, Shahid Suhrawardy, Dr. Meghnad Saha, Syed Amir Ali and other reputed men. Mr. Ali opined that an unhealthy competition in the publication sector was actually hampering the usual growth and development of this potential sector.



Rajab Ali Mullick

**Ms. Shahina Rahman of APPL:** Among the women entrepreneurs in the book publishing industry, Shahina Rahman is an enterprising name in the arena of quality publications. She inherited Academic Press and Publishers Library (APPL) after the death of her husband late Habibur Rahman. Late Habibur Rahman, an executive of the Oxford University Press, Dhaka



Shahina Rahman

branch founded Academic Publishers Ltd in 1982. Subsequently, it became a public limited company under the guidance and leadership of Dr. Mizanur Rahman Shelly, the Chairman of APPL. According to Shahina Rahman, publication business is a challenging one, as the book lovers often cannot afford the prices of books. An unhealthy competition is prevailing now, which is undesirable. Especially, imports from outside Bangladesh is a great challenge for the further flourishing of this sector. In reply to a question, Ms. Shahina said that APPL always tried to publish quality reference books but the market's increasing demand is of a different type. With regard to the state of business, she said, the institutional groups, organisations, NGOs and foreign missions prefer APPL's publications.

**Table 3**  
**Printing Press-wise book publication in 19th Century Dhaka**

Printing Press	Books published	Printing Press	Books published
Girish	543	Baikunthanath	23
Shamantak	443	Shankhanidhi	18
Bangla	302	Garib	13
Ashutosh	227	Sreedhar	12
East Bengal	223	Sayeedi	11
Sulav	200	Dacca	10
Raghunath	161	Nannar	9
Gendaria	152	Ratnakar	5
Adarsha	150	Dacca News	4
Oriental	146	Bharat Bandhab	3
Gopinath	115	Bramohbani	3
Ishan	88	Homeopathic	3
Narayan	85	Jagannath	3
Moheswar	80	Saraswati	2
Sudarshan	60	Biggapani	1
Shital	59	Odaitya	1
Natoon	50	Central	1
Imdadul Islamia	46	Dhaka Prokash	1
Azizia	45	Elahadad Khan*	1
Arya	30	Sarang Harish	1
Pran Chaitanya	30	Total	3421

Source: G. W. Shaw, *ibid.*

\* Baikunthanath and Elahadad Khan were perhaps either printers or publishers.

**Table 4**  
**Subject-wise Publications in 19th Century Dhaka**

Language	1547
Poetry	499
Novel	99
Drama	84
Hindu-Religion	214
Islam	108
Brahmah	74
Christian	13
Arithmetic	168
Medical Science	125
Science	89
History	81
Music	60
Geography	51
Autobiography	26
Law	56
Education	36
Sociology	23
Others	89
Total	3442

Source: G. W. Shaw, *ibid.*

**Table 5**  
**Area-wise Book Shops of Dhaka in the 1950s**

Area	Shops
Islampur	35
Banglabazar	24
Patuatuli	12
Johnson Road	6
Chawk Circular Rd.	4
Babubazar	5
Nawabpur	3
Victoria Park	3
Chitta Ranjan Avenue	3
Bangshal	1
Layal street	1
Faridabad	1
Midford Road	3
Mughaltuli	1
Station Road	1
Rahamatganj	1
Moulavibazar	1
Hospital Road	1
Captanbazar	1
Tantibazar	1
Nazimuddin Road	1
Lalbagh	1
North Maisundi	1
Mahuttuli	1
Gopinath Road	1
Huseini Dalan	1
Armenian street	1
Total	112

Source: Based on Ansari's *Trade Directory*, Lahore, Pakistan, 1951-52 and 1954, and Field Survey.

**Table 6**  
**Book-Binders of Dhaka (1951-54)**

Sl.No.	Name	Location
1.	Abdul Aziz Co.	Chawkbazar
2.	Amjad Ali Bhuiyan	Lakshmibazar
3.	Asadad Khan	Laksmibazar
4.	Easten Book Binding Workshops	---
5.	Israfil and Co.	Armenian street
6.	Khan & Co.	Ramakanti Lane
7.	New Binding Works	Mitford Road
8.	Salam and Sons, A.	Islampur
9.	Alhamra Library	Banglabazar
10.	Art press	Banglabazar
11.	I.E. Factory	Islampur
12.	Roshan Ali & Co.	Mitford Road

Source: Ansari's *Trade Directory of Pakistan* 1951-52 and 1954 pp. 499 and 30 and Survey and Interviews.

**Table 7**  
**Year-wise Book Publications: During 1857-1900**

Year	Books published	Year	Books published
1857	1	1881	91
1858	1	1882	76
1859	---	1883	101
1860	1	1884	78
1861	2	1885	120
1862	5	1886	147
1863	13	1887	206
1864	4	1888	146
1865	5	1889	174
1866	1	1890	163
1867	7	1891	63
1868	26	1892	102
1869	43	1893	99
1870	51	1894	175
1871	25	1895	165
1872	39	1896	140
1873	37	1897	153
1874	50	1898	160
1875	59	1899	170
1876	81	1900	203
1877	56	Total:	3442
1878	55	Source: G. W. Shaw, <i>ibid.</i>	
1879	59		
1880	89		

**Table 8**  
**Book Publishers in 1954**

1.	Baliadi Publishing House	Bangsai Road
2.	Book Company	Bangla Bazar
3.	Brain Publishers	Faridabad
4.	Liakat Publishing House	Gopinath Rd.
5.	Likat Publishing Co.	Islampur
6.	Majed Publishing House	Patuatuli
7.	Medical Book Society	Banglabazar Rd.
8.	Nafis Book House	Mughaltuli
9.	Choudhury Publishing House	Banglabazar Rd.
10.	Eastern Publishers	Patuatuli
11.	Forcos Publication	Nawabpur Rd.
12.	Friends Publishing House	Husaini Dhalan
13.	Shirin Publishing House	North Brook Hall Rd.
14.	Pakistan Co-operative Book Society Ltd.	Rahmatganj
15.	Pak Publishers	Banglabazar
16.	Provincial Book Depot	Victoria Park south
17.	Quran Publishing House	Moulavi Bazar
18.	Ashraf Pustakalaya	Babubazar
19.	East Pakistan Press	Bangsai Road
20.	Manju Press	Ramakantanandi Lane
21.	Muslim Jehan Book-selling	Malitota Road
22.	Printing and Publishing Co.	---
23.	Oriental Publishers	Station Road
24.	North Bengal Publishing House	Islampur Rd.
25.	Naoroz Kitabistan	Banglabazar Rd.

Source: Ansari's *Trade Directory of Pakistan, ibid.*



**Table 9**  
**Book-Shops during 1951-54**

Sl.	Name	Location	Sl.	Name	Location
1.	Abdur Rashid	Babubazar	62.	Pakistan Co-operative Book Society Ltd.	Rahmatganj
2.	Adeel Brothers	Patuatuli	63.	Pak Kitabghar	Patuatuli
3.	Alhamra Library	Banglabazar	64.	Pak Paper & Book House	Islampur
4.	Anwar Publicity	North Masundi	65.	Pak Publishers	Banglabazar
5.	Art Library	Islampur	66.	Paradise Book Hall	Thathari Bazar
6.	Ashutosh Library (Pak) Ltd	Loyal Street	67.	Presidency Library	Banglabazar Road
7.	Aylal Book Agency	Islampur	68.	Provincial Book Depot	Victoria Park
8.	Azad Book House	Islampur	69.	Principal Library	Victoria Park
9.	Baliadi Publishing House	Bangsai Road	70.	Quran Manzil	Babubazar
10.	Brain Publisher and News Agents	Faridabad	71.	Quran Publishing House	Moulavibazar
11.	Book Company, publishers	Banglabazar	72.	Soraj Library	Patuatuli
12.	Central Book Depot	Patuatuli	73.	Sheikh Moniruddin & Co.	Banglabazar
13.	Choudhury Publishing House	Banglabazar	74.	Shaheen News Agency	Hospital Road
14.	Dacca Book Depot	Islampur Road	75.	Taj Mahal Library	Risalpur
15.	Dacca Book House	Banglabazar	76.	United Book Exchange	Johnson Road
16.	Dacca Book Stall	Banglabazar	77.	Universal Library	Victoria Park
17.	Dacca Library	Islampur Road	78.	Victoria Library	Patuatuli
18.	Dacca Town Library	Banglabazar	80.	Alamgir Library	Islampur Road
19.	Deen Brothers	Islampur Road	81.	Asad Book Depot	Banglabazar
20.	Dominion Book House	Islampur	82.	Ashraf Pustakalaya	Babubazar
21.	East India Agency (Importer)	Nawabpur Road	83.	Atar Library	Islampur
22.	Eastern Book Agency	Islampur Road	84.	Central Library	Islampur
23.	Eastern Publisher	Patuatuli	85.	City Library	Captanbazar
24.	Farhad Brothers & Co.	Banglabazar	86.	City Publishers	Islampur
25.	Farcos Publication	Nawabpur Road	87.	Comilla Library	Islampur
26.	Fazlur Rouf Kazi	Patuatuli	88.	Dacca Book Hall	Banglabazar
27.	Firdaus Library	Nawabpur Road	89.	Deshbandhu Library	Islampur Road
28.	Friends Publishing House	Husaini Dalan	90.	Friends Union Library	Islampur
29.	Hash Sons Co. (Pakistan)	Banglabazar	91.	General Book Company	Islampur
30.	Imperial Book Depot	Banglabazar	92.	Great Bengal Library	Islampur
31.	India Library	Islampur	93.	Green White Co.	Banglabazar
32.	Itikatha Book Depot,	Armenian Street	94.	Habibya Library	Chawk Circular Rd.
33.	Jewel Library	Banglabazar	95.	Hant sons & Co. (Pakistan) Ltd.	Banglabazar
34.	Kabir Book Co.	Loyal Street	96.	Hamidia Library	Chawk Circular Rd.
35.	Khosh Roz Kitab Mahal	Banglabazar	97.	Islamia Library	Islampur Rd.
36.	Kitab Ghar	Banglabazar	98.	Jewel Library	Banglabazar Road
37.	Kohinoor Bhandar	Mitford Road	99.	Kohinoor Library	Islampur Road
38.	Liaquat Publishing Co.	Islampur	100.	Madina Library	Islampur Road
39.	Liaquat Publishing House	Gopinath Road	101.	Malik Library	Patuatuli
40.	Liaquat Publishing House	Mitford Road	102.	Mir Brothers	Islampur
41.	Loknath Book Agency	Banglabazar	103.	Mirza Library	Islampur
42.	Majeed Publishing House	Patuatuli	104.	Mohammadi Book House	Patuatuli
43.	Medical Books society	Banglabazar Rd.	105.	Nababganj Library	Islampur
44.	Modern Book House	Patuatuli	106.	Nawab (S. W.)	Tantibazar
45.	Mohammadi Book House	Patuatuli	107.	New School Supply Co.	Johnson Road
46.	Mubarak Library	Islampur	108.	Nawroz Library	Islampur
47.	Mofizur Rahman Khan	Islampur	109.	Orient Longman's Ltd	Sir Nazimuddin Rd
48.	Mohd. Abdur Rashid Khan	Islampur	110.	Pakistan Book Depot.	Islampur
49.	Mohiuddin Ahmed	Islampur	111.	Royal Stationary Supply House	Johnson Road
50.	Mukhdumi Ahsanullah Library	Banglabazar	112.	School Agency	Banglabazar
51.	Mullick & Brothers	Banglabazar	113.	School Book Supply Co.	Banglabazar
52.	Mullick Excercise Mfg. Co.	Banglabazar	114.	Suresh Choudhury Dhar	Johnson Road
53.	Nafis Book House	Mughaltuli	115.	Tabligue Din Library	Chawkbazar
54.	Nafis Book House	Mitford Road	116.	Taj Co. Ltd.	Lalbagh.
55.	Naoroz Kitabistan	Banglabazar	117.	Tarun Library	Johnson Road
56.	New School Supply Co.	Johnson Road	118.	Warsi Book Centre	Mughaltuli
57.	North Bengal Publishing House	Islampur	119.	Amir Library	Kalibazar N.ganj
58.	Oriental Publishers	Station Road	120.	Islamia Library	Kalibazar N.ganj
59.	Osmania Book Depot.	Babubazar	121.	Globe Library	Northbrook Hall
60.	Pakistan Book Co.	Chawk Circular Rd.	122.	Nabajug Library	Banglabazar
61.	Pakistan Book Depot	Islampur Road			

Source: Ansari's *Trade Directory of Pakistan*, *ibid*.

**Table 10**  
**Publishers of Dhaka: 1900-1946**

Library	Proprietor/Printer	Year in operation
Krishna Kumar Das Co.	Karisua Kumar	1900
Chakbazar Ketab Ghar	Munshi Ekabber	1901
Sharat Chandra Dutta & Sons	Sharat Chandra	1904
A Brothers & Co.	---	1914
Moslem Store	Afsaruddin	1925
Dacca Library	Aziz Khan	1932
Provincial Library	Khan Bahadur A. Rashid	1923
The Great Eastern Library*	---	
Majidia, Library	A. Aziz Tulukder	1933
Nawabganj Library	Abdur Rouf	1927
Zakaria Library	---	1928
Albert Library	Brindban C. Basak	1914
Sabuj Bangla Prakasani	Osman Ali	1935
Universal Library	A. H. M. Hamid	1932
Hashemia Library	Abdul Karim	1929
Islamia Publishing Co.	A. N. Shahidullah	1931
Ahmadia Pustika	A. Salam B. A.	1935
Dacca Pustakalay	Badruddin Haider	1935
Eastern Agency	Kazi Habiul Huq	1936
Sahjahan Library	A. F. Khan B. A.	1941
Islamia Library*	---	1930
Ahmed Publishing House*	---	1946
Popular Library*	---	1930
Brindaban Dhar & sons*	---	1947
Popular Library*	---	1934
Liakat Publishing Co.	Mohd-Husein Khan	1938
Mahbub Library	Mahbubar Rahman	1940
Isdani Sahittaya Kuthir	Rousan Isdani	1946
Pragati Publishers	Abdul Bari Warsi	1946
Purba Pakistan Publishing House	Shamsuddin Ahmed.	1946
Medical Book Society	---	1947
Presidency Library	Anil Chandra Ghosh	1947
Oriental Publishers	Begum Afifa Khatun	1948
Al Hamra Library	Begum Rahima Khan	1947
Muslim Bengal Library	Begum Mahfuza Khan	1947
Dacca Town Library	---	1947

\* Proprietor/printer could not be ascertained

## 11. Jamdani

ebvZ gLqj cUz fYvB Lvmv|  
 eJlv`vi XvKvBqv f`uLz Zvgvkv\  
 -i vgcñv f`i Kwj Kvg½j |

Like muslin, Jamdani is also an old industry of Dhaka. The weaving manufactures of Dhaka became known to the outside world through the narratives of travellers coming from different countries including Arabia, China and Italy. According to Nihar Ranjan Roy, the eminence of the Bangladeshi weaving had spread much before the birth of Jesus Christ so far its ancientness is concerned. There are mentions in this regard in Kouttilya's *Arthasastra* and the book *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* about weaving manufactures as the prime industry of this country.<sup>1</sup> Even *Rigveda*, *Charya-geeti*, the Bible, '*Arthabetak prabachan*' and in the *Baishnab*-songs mention about cotton crafts.<sup>2</sup> In the Bangla proverb there is a saying:

Pi Kv Avgvi fvZvi cZ  
 Pi Kv Avgvi bmvZ

Historian Milburn opines, in 17 A.D. Pliny was aware of the trade and manufactures of India and spoke highly of the excellence of Bengal muslins.<sup>3</sup> Pliny wrote that the economy of Rome with its limited reserves of gold and silver was being ruined by the excessive importation of Indian cloth. James Taylor in his book mentioned about weaving of excellent cotton clothes quoting from 'Accounts of India and China by two Mohammedan travellers in the 9th century' written by two Chinese travellers of that century. The European writers also opined that Dhaka's muslin was not handmade, but by the fairy beings.<sup>4</sup>

### Origin of the name of 'Jamdani'

Another part of the world-famous muslin industry is 'Jamdani'. By doing different types of embroidery work on fine muslin cloth, Jamdani is produced. And embroidery work is done on muslin while weaving it to make it Jamdani. *Megasthenes*, the Greek ambassador to the court of Chandragupta, wrote about flowered garments made from the finest muslins. According to S.R. Ghuznavi "these embroidered garments were probably the precursors of the loom patterned Jamdani, the most expensive product of the Dhaka looms".<sup>5</sup> Nothing elaborate is known about the origin of the name of 'Jamdani'. But researchers assume that the word 'Jamdani' is of Persian origin as 'Jamadani' in Farsi is cloth and 'dana' is batik. From that point of view, it means batik-cloth.<sup>6</sup> The word Jamdani seems to be a deviation of it. Even Farsi word 'Jamdar' carries the meaning of 'batik work'. According to Watt, "The Dominant feature of those art fabrics (Jamdani) is unquestionable, designs that are commonly accepted as Persian in origin."<sup>7</sup> Persy Brown also holds strongly the same

1 Henry Glassie, *ibid*, p. 223.

2 The old part of Prisbedu narrates about the weavers, while Bible mentions the Muslin (Isa, 3rd chapter, P. 23).

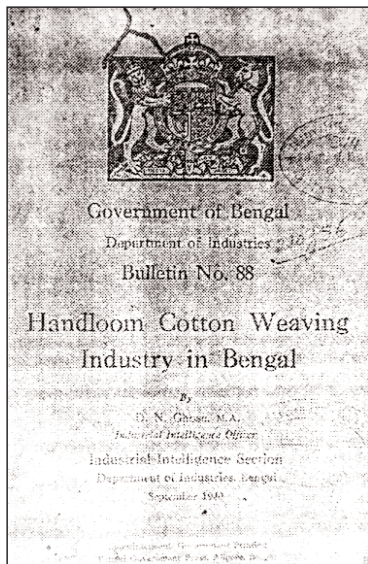
3 William Milburn, *Oriental Commerce*, Vol-11, (London, 1813), p. 229.

4 James Taylor, *A Sketch of the Topography and Statistics of Dacca*, (Calcutta, 1840), p.163.

5 Muntassir Mamoon, *Dhaka: Smrithi Bismritir Nagari* (Dhaka, 1993), p.218. also S. A. S.R. Ghuznavi, *Jamdani: The Legend and Legacy in Textile*, p. 45.

6 Tofail Ahmed, *Amader Prachin Shilpa*, (Bangla Academy 1993) p. 56.

7 Sirajul Islam (ed.), *Banglapedia*, Vol-5, ASOB, 2003, p. 371.



A report on cotton weavers of Bengal

view. The emperors of Delhi once brought selected Muslim craftsmen from Persia, for which the Iranian influence is spectacular in the Jamdani designs. James Taylor also viewed that possibly the Muslims introduced the weaving of Jamdani and 'still (in 1840) they unilaterally maintain the industry'.<sup>8</sup> The author of *Dhakar Itihas* was of the view, as expressed in *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea*, that Skotulats cloth and Jamdani of Dhaka were the same.<sup>9</sup> Parvin Ahmed, too, considers that Jamdani had Persian connection. According to her, 'the figured muslin, called Jamdani, which evolved as an art fabric under the influence of Persian design, gained a unique position in the world of weaving'.<sup>10</sup> The above viewpoints lead to the conclusion that though the tradition of muslin solely belongs to this country, in designing and producing Jamdani here, Persian influence is present. The Jamdani industry as a whole has inherited both domestic and Persian influence. Henry Glassie very rightly described that Hindus wove fine, plane muslins; Muslims flowered them with embroidery, or brocade.<sup>11</sup>

Jamdani is also popularly known as the *Dhakai Sari*. Rabindranath Tagore wrote:

The room she did not enter, though in and out of my mind she goes all the while wearing her *Dhakai Sari*. With a touch of vermillion on her forehead.

### Development of Jamdani Industry in Dhaka Region

Jamdani was introduced in Dhaka along with muslin during the Mughal period. Like the conch-shell artisans, the craftsmen of Jamdani industry in Dhaka region were settled in a specific area (mainly at Tarabo union of Rupganj area) giving indication that they were different from the muslin craftsmen. Possibly, they developed the industry in this region under the patronisation of the Mughal Subedars. In this regard, D.B. Mitra very rightly viewed that royal patronage was present all through for the development of cotton industry of Bengal since its beginning. According to him:

Royal patronage was one of the important reasons for the encouragement of the cotton industry in Bengal. The Mughal emperors extended their unstinted patronage to the industry and with the establishment of Mughal rule in Bengal, commerce really flourished.<sup>12</sup>

After the Mughal conquest of Bengal, the muslin of Dhaka drew their attention. It was once a practice for the rulers of Bengal to send muslin and Jamdani to the *Darbar* of Delhi.<sup>13</sup> Significantly, after Empress Nurjahan showed her liking for the skillfully embroidered muslin sent from Dhaka, the Mughal emperors started to patronise the weaving industry of Dhaka. Emperor Shahjahan visited Dhaka in 1629 and at the time of his departure, he took away 40 lac rupees and a bulk lot of *Dhakai Muslin* for the Mughal Court.

8 James Taylor, *ibid*.

9 Jatindra Mohan Roy, *Dhakar Itihas*, Calcutta, 1912.

10 Parvin Ahmed, *Crafts from Bangladesh*, BSCIC (Dhaka, 1974) p. 3.

11 Henry Glassie -Firoz Mahmud, *Contemporary Traditional Art of Bangladesh*, Dhaka, Bangladesh National Museum, 200, p. 36; also *Traditional Art of Dhaka*, Bangla Academy, 2000, p. 403.

12 D. B. Mitra, *The Cotton Weavers of Bengal*, *ibid.*, p. 160.

13 S. R. Ghuznavi, op. cit p. 45.





A Tanti at work at Tantibazar in the 19th century

Courtesy: British Library

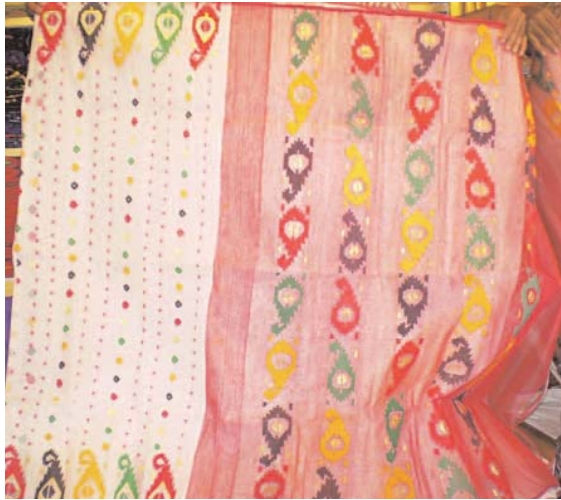
### **Jamdani Centre of Dhaka during the Mughal era**

During the Mughal period, the weavers were rehabilitated at Tantibazar of Dhaka. Only the weavers of Dhaka's Aurang could knit Jamdani in the whole of Bangladesh.<sup>14</sup> The views of D. B. Mitra is relevant here: 'The art of making Jamdanis or embroidered cloths in the loom was exclusively possessed by the weavers of the Dhaka Aurang.'<sup>15</sup> Places like Nawabpur, Tantibazar, Kalota Bazar of Dhaka city, and Dhamrai and Demra – far away from Dhaka – had the habitation of Jamdani weavers. Jogesh Chandra Ghosh also mentioned Baliadi and Abdullahpur. As the Jamdani producing village,<sup>16</sup> Dhaka's Tantibazar was once known as the Jamdaninagar as artisans used to produce Jamdani before converting themselves into goldsmith or silversmith. James Wise mentioned: 'for many generations, the Dhaka weavers have resided in two quarters of the city, Tantibazar and Nawabpur. After the transfer of the Mughal capital from Dhaka to Rajmahal of

14 Tofail Ahmed, *Amader Prachin Shilpa*, Bangla Academy, 1992, p. 58.

15 Survey of Jamdani Products Manufacturing units, EPSIC, 1967, p. 11.

16 Jogesh Chandra Gosh, *Dhaka Zillar Kutir Shilpa Andolan* (Dacca, 1940) pp. 452-454 also D. B. Mitra, *The Cotton Weaver of Bengal*, (Calcutta, 1978) p. 42.



Jamdani Saree

Patna in 1704, Dhaka's population decreased remarkably. Both the rich and business people started to leave Dhaka. This way most of the Mughal elites left Dhaka. As a result, patronisation to Jamdani came to an end'. Besides the 1770 great famine and the 1777 devastating floods broke the backbone of the weavers totally. Many of the weavers who famed once for muslin and Jamdani of Dhaka city took shelter in the surrounding villages following the calamities. This way the Muslim weavers got themselves settled in Siddhirganj and Demra of Dhaka and on both sides of the *Sitalakhya* River. A group of the workmen settled in Dhamrai. A bigger group of the Hindu weavers though returned to agriculture, some of

them (assuming 750 houses) settled in Zafarabad and Rayerbazar of Dhaka and devoted to pottery after changing their profession. There is elaborate description in B.D. Mitra's book, *Cotton Weavers of Bengal*: 'The Jamdanis made for the Emperor were advanced for by the *Darogas* of the sudder mulboos khas cooties at Dacca; but probably from same local considerations, part of the cloth was made under the inspection of the *Darogas*. The rest was manufactured at the weaver's houses.'<sup>17</sup> Sometimes, the weavers failed to supply cloth as agreed upon.

During the company days, there were changes in the weaving (textile) policy of the East India Company. In the first decade of the nineteenth century, Dhaka factory was closed down and the weavers engaged by the company there became jobless as the weavers of Dhaka then had no other profession. The Jamdani weavers of Dhaka made an appeal to the Board of Trade:

Our ancestors and we as well as four or five hundred workmen under us together with our families maintained ourselves by weaving the company's commissioned Jamdanee cloths, but no order having been received last year, we are suffering much distress. We have no means to maintain ourselves for we have not been brought up in any other line. We do not know the duties of a servant that we might engage ourselves in that capacity.<sup>18</sup>

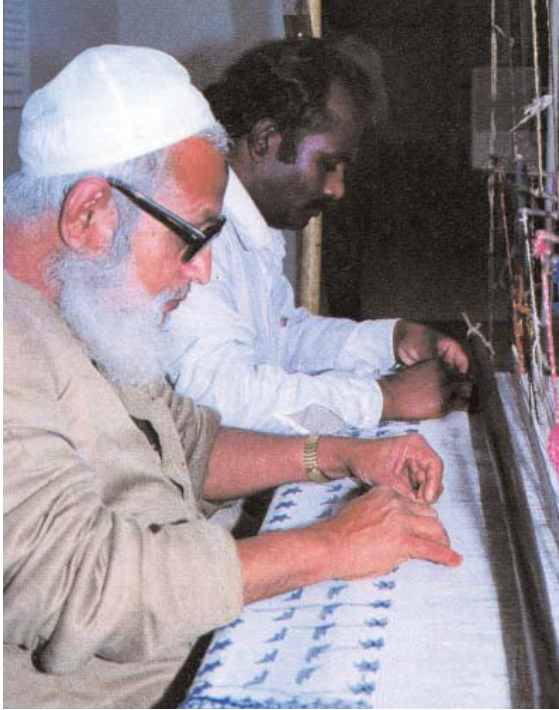
In fact, India's weaving started facing setback after the introduction of modern spinning and weaving in England since 1787.

### Jamdani at the Mughal Darbar

From historical point of view, it is found that this product was highly appreciated at the Mughal Darbar. The period under the Subedars and Nawabs during the Mughal period was the best time for achieving excellence in the weaving industry here. This because there was royal patronage which helped this industry grow and flourish. In fact, the Mughal Emperors, Subedars and Nawabs played significant roles in the development of Bengal's weaving industry. In *Ain-i-Akbari*, Abul Fazl mentioned: 'Under Akbar's patronage, goods of great artistic skill were produced.'<sup>19</sup> Although Abul Fazl wrote in his book about 30 types of fine cloth, there was no direct mention of Jamdani industry

18 Progs Board of Trade, 14th June, 1816, pros. no- 21, Vol-319, part-1.

19 H. Blochmann and Jarett (tr.) *Ain-i-Akbari* by Abul Fazl, Vol-1 (Calcutta, 1949) pp.100-101.



A master waver in weaving Jamdani

embroidered cloth later on. A Poet of the Mughal period clearly mentioned the 'Jari' work and Jamdani ('Jam' in the Poem) as under:

cvfUi VKiv tgNj v Avi hZ kmo|  
hZ Kwi qv tj n KvctotZ Rwi \  
bvbv i ½ kmo tj n Kwi qv hZb|  
Bnvi e' tj ube cvfUi emb\  
Rwgi e' tj ube Rvqdj Rvg|<sup>25</sup>

The above poem denotes various types of cloths as well as the barter system of trading during the Mughal period.

Historian Mooreland noted that muslin was popular at the Darbar of Emperor Shahjahan. He wrote, 'Abul Fazl noted that the fine muslins were produced in Sonargaon, the predecessor of Dacca. The muslins of this part of the country had not, however, attained the reputation subsequently enjoyed, which appears to have been due largely to the patronage of the court of Shajahan.' It can be

there.<sup>20</sup> Emperor Jehangir's wife Nurjahan was a special patron of muslin. It was learnt that she selected muslin of Bengal for the Mughal harem and encouraged the weavers to produce finer quality of cloth.<sup>21</sup> Here the comment of Charles Stuart is relevant as he said: 'The delicate muslins of Dacca and silk of Malda constituted the chief part of the dress of the imperial court whether male or female'.<sup>22</sup> It would not be out of place to mention that the males also used to attire in muslin, especially in the Mughal courts. In this regard D. Pant gave special information about Empress Nurjahan: 'Nurjahan dabbled in indigo and embroidered cloth trade'.<sup>23</sup> Traveller Petro Dela Valley's description of this embroidered cloth is significant. He wrote, 'It was white wrought with gold flowers.'<sup>24</sup> This embroidered cloth is the traditional Jamdani of Dhaka. It can be noted here that flowery design was done by 'Jari' (golden thread) as ornate on Jamdani. So it would not be irrelevant to consider that Jamdani evolved from the



Abul Fazal, mentioned Muslin in *Ain-i-Akbari*

20 *Ibid.*

21 Dinesh Chandra Sen, *Brihath Banga*, Vol-2, (Calcutta 1935) p. 931 also, see Nusrat Fatema. *ibid.* p. 66.

22 Charles Steward, *The History of Bengal*, (Calcutta, 1910) p. 222.

23 D. Pant, *The Commercial Policy of the Moghuls*, (Delhi, 1978), p. 165; also Nusrat Fatema, *ibid.*

24 *Ibid.*

25 See *Manasa Mangal* by Jagajjivan Ghosal.



mentioned here that clear evidences are there that the later version of muslin was known as Jamdani during the period of Emperor Aurangazeb, though this fine quality cloth produced in the period of Shajahan was not known as Jamdani. In this regard, the remark of Hakim Habibur Rahman is remarkable:

The Jamdani industry was created during the period of Subedar Shayesta Khan. History speaks that very fine quality Jamdani was produced at Aurang for Emperor Aurangazeb and price of each of them was 31 Pound. Noted writer Abdul Karim in his book *Dhakai Muslin* has written about the use of muslin for making a special part of 'Moblus Khas' for the Mughal emperors.<sup>26</sup>

### Patronage of the Nawabs of Dhaka

The Mughal Darbar and the Mughal Subedars were not alone in providing patronage to the development of Jamdani industry. The contributions made by the Nawabs of Dhaka were also praiseworthy.<sup>27</sup> In this regard, the contributions made by Sir Salimullah and his wife Zannat Ara Begum are significant. It is learnt that till the Nawab period only white Jamdani was produced. Nawab Salimullah took the initiative to introduce coloured and *Jaridar* Jamdani. He arranged to make one type of Jamdani cloth and *Sari* with single thread of *Resham* (silk) and single thread of cotton intermingled. This special type of Jamdani became very popular at that time. The wife of the Nawab also encouraged the weavers to produce different kinds of batik, flower and design of various types and colours on Jamdani with a view to make the industry more attractive. It is learnt that she spent much of her lifetime to this work. It was she who introduced for the first time black and red batik Jamdani.<sup>28</sup>



Nawab Salimullah

Jamdani as a industry also received patronage of the Ameers and the Courtiers. The royal high officials also encouraged the industry and took advantage of presenting rare products made in their locality to the monarchs and ministers as gifts. A survey of the industries and resources of Eastern Bengal and Assam suggested that the *Maharaja* of Tripura used to get Jamdani from Dhaka at the cost of Rs. 200 each.<sup>29</sup> Jadunath Sarkar in this regard noted that 'The nobles therefore, employed the best local artisans to manufacture for them articles worthy of presentation in time for their next visit to the court.'<sup>30</sup> Uneven competition made the Jamdani industry of Dhaka the target of the discriminatory cotton policy of the British.<sup>31</sup> As a result, Jamdani industry started to lose its glory and tradition in the nineteenth century.

26 Abdul Karim, *Dhakai Muslin* (Bangla Academy, 1965) pp. 70-73.

27 For contributions of Dhaka-Nawab family, see Delwar Hassan, *Dhakar Nawab Paribar O Purba Banglar Samaj*, Palabadal, 1995.

28 Nusrat Fatema, Oitiyabahi Jamdani Karu Shilpa, *Bangladesh Asiatic Society Patrika*, pp. 67-69.

29 A Survey of the Industries and Resources of Eastern Bengal and Assam for 1907-1908, by G.N. Gupta, I.C.S.

30 Cited in Nusrat Fatema, *ibid.* p.68.

31 In England, a law was enacted prohibiting the import of good quality Muslin and other sorts from India. Apart from this, the weavers of Dhaka had to pay a special tax for *Shappa Jamdani* till 1792. See History of the Cotton Manufacture of Dacca District.



In 1824, British cotton was first imported in Dhaka and machine-made chief thread started being used to produce Jamdani along with muslin. In 1825 Mr. Huskinson though reduced duty to Tk. 10, the industry could not develop. By 1830 the plight rose to its peak.

The following figures given by Jatindra Mohan Roy depict the plight of the Industry:

One historian, in this regard, remarked about the difficult condition of the industry this way, that England's industrial revolution was possible because of the wealth plundered from this country. In fact, textile industry grew in England after destroying this country's handicraft. For self-interest, this country was turned into an agrarian one after destroying handicrafts here. As a result, the trade-based economy turned into an agro-based economy.<sup>32</sup>

Items	Dhaka-made Cotton	Machine-made cotton
No.-1 embroidered Jamdani	Rs. 25	Rs. 8
No.-2 embroidered Jamdani	Rs. 16	Rs. 5
Jamdani 'Mehipash'	Rs. 27-28	Rs. 6
'Tersa bunan' Jamdani	Rs. 12-13	Rs. 4-50
Red or Blue Jamdani	Rs. 15-16	Rs. 4-5
Jamdani Sari	Rs. 12-13	Rs. 5-50
Nayan Suk	Rs. 8-9	Rs. 5-6
Cambric	Rs. 13-14	Rs. 6-9
Coloured Jamdani	Rs. 15-16	Rs. 4-6
Mulmul	Rs. 10-11	Rs. 7-8
Saleem	Rs. 28-30	Rs. 10-15

Source: J. M. Roy, *Dhakar Itihash*, 1912, p. 19; Asiatic Researches Vol-XVII

### Jamdani Handicraft at present

The British destroyed the industry, but they could not root out totally this traditional handicraft of Bengal. With the change of time, there have been drastic changes in the production and policy of Jamdani handicraft. Despite all these, this graceful product of the traditional handicraft is still popular society's aristocratic classes as precious possession. That is why both demand and production of this traditional handicraft along with its export abroad continued till today.

### Ingredients for weaving of Jamdani

Thread or yarn, dye and 'Jari' are the main ingredients of the Jamdani handicraft.<sup>33</sup> Earlier, yarn made of local long fibred cotton was used for weaving Jamdani and for dyeing, tree-leaves, barks, alkali, mud, and juice of various flowers i.e. *Kusumfool* and fruits were used for dyeing.<sup>34</sup> But following changes and modification of processes, now no weaver use hand-made yarn dyed locally for making Jamdani. Rather at present they use imported nylon, raw silk and yarn to produce Jamdani. The major dealers of these imported yarns were: Dhakeshwari Cotton Mill, Demra, Kanchan and Kaliganj Muslin Cotton Mills.<sup>35</sup> Besides, for commercial trading of the yarns, some places like Sheikher Char, Madhabdi and Baburhat were remarkable markets. The weavers of the past used yarns of no less than 80-count for production of Jamdani. But now they work with 30-80 count yarns as there is no production of higher counts. At present, Jamdani is produced with imported coloured yarns from abroad.

### Jamdani of Rupganj

Rupganj, known for traditional weaving, is located in the southeast of Dhaka city. It is 20 kilometers away from Dhaka city. Demra with an area of 7-mile length on the west bank and 3-

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p.70.

<sup>34</sup> *Kusumfool* was produced abundantly in Dhaka district over the 19th century. During the eighties, Dhaka produced about 4000 maunds of *Kusumfool* per annum. See Kedarnath Majumder, *Dhakar Bibaran*, 1910, p.101.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

mile width beside the Sitalakshaya River was the main centre of Jamdani weaving. Following were the rural Jamdani looms of this area:

Number of looms on the east bank	
Villages	No. of looms
Sanganagar	25
Kanchpur	20
Ganjupar	100
Behakur	150
Rupashi	150
Daskhin Kazipara	400
Pechain	15
Noapara	850
Senpara	10
Khalpara	125
Abahal	25
Barabo	120
Mogarakul	300
Pabankul	100
Bhargatra	200
Khidirpur	50
Number of looms on the west bank	
Isakhali	30
Baralu	30
Paragaon	30
Bhaolia	30
Chanpara	15
Siddhirganj	500
Source: Tofail Ahmed, <i>Amader Prachin Shilpa</i> , Bangla Academy, 1990, p. 57-58	

In a survey carried out by EPIC in the 1960s, Jamdani was produced in 13 villages of Tarabo Union. The villages were: Tarabo, Uttar Rupshi, Gandharbapur, Naogaon, Tetlabo, Ariabo, Aashabo, Maikhali, Khadun, Daskhin Rupshi, Noapara, Digi, Barabo and Jatramora.<sup>36</sup>

According to a report, Jamdani is now produced in about 50 villages of Narayanganj and Narsingdi districts. Tofail Ahmed mentioned that 3,665 tantis are engaged in weaving Jamdani in these areas.<sup>37</sup> Apart from these, other villages where Jamdani is produced are Siddhirganj, Sonargaon and Monohardi beside Rupganj and in some *Jamdani-Pallis* under Araihaazar Thana. Jamdani is now also produced at Rupashi in Dhaka, in Sirajganj and Tangail districts. A survey report showing the marketing system of the past and present of Jamdani produced in 50 villages of Narayanganj and Narsingdi districts [see map]. The survey report recalled the export of Jamdani artistry: 'This specialised handloom industry in the subcontinent of India and Pakistan had attained high efficiency long before the advent of machine age and until the 19th century, this

most prized fabric was exported to Europe, Japan and elsewhere. Muslin was first introduced in England in 1666-70 AD. French, British and the Dutch started trading in muslin after setting up their offices in Dhaka from that period'.<sup>38</sup> Like muslin, the export market for Dhaka's Jamdani also expanded. It can be mentioned here that in 1782, 35,729 pieces of muslin along with 110 pieces of Jamdani were exported to France by five merchant ships. In other times, muslin worth crores of takas was exported annually to Europe alone. In addition, sufficient number of muslin was kept ready for the Emperors of Delhi, their Begums and the rulers of different provinces of India along with kings, princes and noblemen. Though the two prominent sale centres or *Aurang* were at Demra and Tarabo till the end of company rule, at present Noapara and Demra are the two main commercial trading centres for Jamdani. It may be mentioned that Tarabo ceased to be the market-place and Noapara emerged instead as a new trading centre during the Pakistan period. For the last 15/16 years though, Noapara existed as market but its high toll rate helped Demra emerge now as

36 Survey of Jamdani Products Manufacturing Units, EPSIC, Dacca, 1967.

37 For details of Muslin see Abdul Karim, *ibid*, Hameeda Husein, *Textile Traditions of Bangladesh?* Dhaka, 2006.

38 Interviews with the cloth merchants of Islampur, New Market, Gaosia.



A Jamdani Hat

the recognised trading centre for Jamdani. Every Friday, Jamdani is traded openly at the Demra High School ground from 6 AM to 10 AM and businessmen, coming from different areas, buy Jamdani there for trading. And other affluent ones used to supply Jamdani to different prominent market-places including Islampur, New Market and Gaosia Market of Dhaka city.<sup>39</sup> In 2007, a 'Jamdani Pallihat-corner' was set up at Noapara under Tarabo Union of Rupganj Upazila in Narayanganj. The 'Pallihat-corner' runs business in Jamdani every Friday from the morning in more than two hundred shops.

#### Jamdani as seen by the present-day weavers

wek! KgPaŋj kŋi x  
 I~ŋ i PiY ani  
 th Kvŋ I~ŋ ŋkLvŋ  
 tm Kvŋ ŋkŋlv Kni  
 gv j 2x fi Ki  
 Aj 2x i Ki\

ŊXvKvi GKRb ZuZ ŋkŋxi KvR i i gŋŋv

Visva karma Dhaleshwari  
 I touch my Ostads 'feet  
 The work the Ostad teaches  
 I learn that work  
 Mother Laksmi support me  
 Banish the inauspicious!

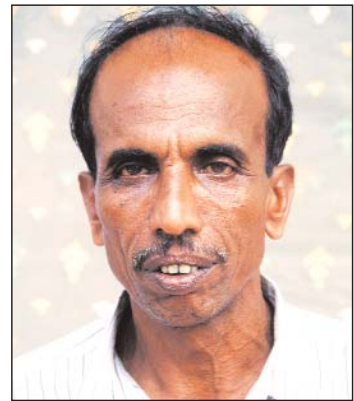
—Oath of an ancient Dacca weaver.

39 Firoz Mahmud, "Jamdani" in Henry Glassie-Firoz Mahmud, *Living Traditions*, Cultural Survey of Bangladesh Series, 11 (ASB, 2008) p. 357.

**Taribullah:** Among the elderly Jamdani weavers, Mr. Taribullah (75) of Barab, Rupganj is in his profession for more than 60 years. He has seen many ups and downs of this weaving industry. According to him, this *tant* (weaving industry) was once located in Sonargaon area but owing to some reasons, changing of river course is one of them, compelled the *Karigars* to change their site in the past. This *tant* consisted of 2-30 personnel. The master weaver and one or two *tanti* have shishya disciples. According to Taribullah, many *tantis* have left Dhaka and they have started this trade at various places including West Bengal.

**Golam Moula:** Aged about 55, Golam Moula inherited this business from his father. Their *tant* was first established in the 1930s. He has got some *karigars*, who work under his able supervision. 2 *karigars* are able to make one piece of Jamdani in 2 weeks. The prices of Jamdani varied from Tk. 2 to 4 thousand, he mentioned. Many of his *shishya* or disciples have learned craftsmanship and started business of their own.

**Showkat Ali and Enamul Haque:** Firoz Mahmud has mentioned two names in the book ‘Living Traditions’ –showkal Ali and Enamul Haque, who are considered to be good craftsmen of this time. Showkat Ali has been working with this profession since boyhood and has now become a master. He has participated in many exhibitions and fairs sponsored by the Government and Non-Government organisations. At the invitation of Shilpakala Academy, Showkat participated in demonstrative weaving in New Delhi, Calcutta and Kerala in India. In 2000, he was commissioned by the Bangladesh National Museum in weaving some specimen of Jamdani Saree for permanent preservation in the Museum. In 2002, he also participated as a Jamdani weaver in the 36th Annual Folklife Festival, Washington, D.C., in the United States.<sup>39</sup>



Showkat Ali

Enamul Haque also started this job at an early age. At the outset, he learned this craftsmanship from Noor Husain and then underwent weaving job at Golam Moula’s Factory. From 1995, he started his own business and now possesses 5 looms with 3 workers. Like Showkat Ali, he has also worked for the National Museum and participated in the international Festival at Washington DC, USA.<sup>40</sup>

Table: Number of Persons Engaged in Jamdani Industries in the 1960s

Class of employees	No. of employees from the family	Percentage	No. of employees hired	Percentage	Total	Percentage of class of employee
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Male	1935	54	1678	46	3613	82
Female	546				546	12
Children	14	5	255	95	269	6
Total	2495		1933		4 442	100

Source: EPSIC, *ibid.*

39 Firoz Mahmud, “Jamdani” in Henry Glassie-Firoz Mahmud, *Living Traditions*, Cultural Survey of Bangladesh Series, 11 (ASOB, 2008) p. 357.

40 Firoz Mahmud, *ibid.* pp. 357-358.



**Table 2: Area and population in the villages where jamdani products were manufactured in the 1960s**

Sl.	Name of the Villages	Area in Acres	Total Population
1.	Tarabo	279	1,876
2.	Uttar Rupshi	427	2,814
3.	Gandharbapur	271	2,380
4.	Noagaon	383	617
5.	Tetlabo	270	555
6.	Ariabo	198	355
7.	Mashabo	311	534
8.	Maikuli	127	436
9.	Khadun	289	801
10.	Dakshin Rupshi	85	689
11.	Noapara	115	1,386
12.	Dighi Barabo	562	1,905
13.	Jatra Mora	84	388
	Total	3,401	14,736

Source: Survey of Jamdani Products Manufacturing Units, EPSIC, 1967.

**Table 3: Range of employment in Jamdani industries**

No. of Workers	Total No. of Units	Percentage
1	---	---
2	524	45
3	198	17
4	155	13
5	28	2
6	113	10
7	28	2
8 and over	127	11
	1173	100

Source: EPSIC, *ibid.***Table 4: Type of Buyers of Jamdani Products**

Sl. No.	Buyers.	Total units	Percentage
1.	Local <i>Faria</i>	170	15
2.	Shop-keeper	14	1
3.	<i>Faria</i> and local market.	430	37
4.	Local market	473	40
5.	<i>Faria</i> , Shopkeeper and local market.	72	6
6.	Shopkeeper and local market.	14	1
		1173	100

Source: EPSIC Survey Report, p.33.

**Guilds used by the professionals**

### Products and countries of origin



*Arabia, coffee*



*Bokhara, rugs*



*Africa, ivory and fruits*



*India, cottons*



*China, silks*



*China, porcelains*



*China, tea*



*Molucca, spices*



*America, potatoes*



*America, tobacco*



Greek women attaired Muslin cloths alike Indians



The Finish merchants buying cloths and other goods from the English traders



## 12. Katan

†Puj i emb, Zvi Kvh©cwi cwiU  
 †gwnbxi gtbvni v? †ebvium mwiU\  
 -mj "ajb Kve"

**Its origin:** Tradition of Bangladesh's textile industry is age-old. Muslin of Bangladesh was linked with Babylon, Egypt, Greece and Rome in the ancient times. Most in the mummies were wrapped with muslin at the closing of the eighteenth royal family of Egypt.<sup>1</sup> Though there was no specific evidence in this regard, proofs beyond any doubt were present in the writings of Kautiliya's *Arthasastra* about the fine cloth of Vanga.<sup>2</sup> In *Amarkosh*, 'Patrona', a sort of cloth, has been described as white or washed 'kouseyo' or 'resomi' cloth. Dr. Nihar Ranjan Roy considers *Urna Patrona* from *Patra* or *Andy* or *Muga* kind of resomi.<sup>3</sup> Cloth made with resom silk and threads of gold and silver was known as *Golabatan* in Bangladesh.<sup>4</sup> It is also known that the weavers of Baliadi, Dhamrai and Abdullahpur used to weave beautiful 'Golabatan' saree till the second decade of the twentieth century. *Golabatan* was also produced at Bajitpur, Egarasindur and Kishoreganj of greater Mymensingh. In fact, the riverbanks of the old Brahmaputra were famous for textile products since ancient time. Many trade centres like Egarasindur and Dagdaga were developed for trading these products. Nittanandya Das wrote in his poem:

GMvi umÜi Avi `M`Mv `v†b  
 ewYR" weL"vZ Bnv me†j vK Rv†b)<sup>5</sup>

In the exhibition of 1902, *Golabatan* produced in Bajitpur was comparable to that of textile produced in Dhaka, as narrated by Kedarnath Majumder.<sup>6</sup> The *seres* community who produced silk for the first time did not live in China but were the indigenous people of Rangpur, as presumed by James Taylor in 1847.<sup>7</sup> Silk used in Benarasi reflects that tradition. Bangladesh in the seventeenth century was known as a 'storehouse of silk'. However, a report reveals that the industry declined considerably during the British period.<sup>8</sup>

The influx of displaced people coming from India's Uttar Pradesh started weaving *Benarasi Katan* at Malitola, Becharam Deuri, Dakshin Mausundi and Lalmohan Saha Street of Dhaka in the 1940s.

**Benarasi Katan Weavers at Mirpur:** In the 1950s, the Muhajees started their weaving of Katan at Mohammadpur and Mirpur.<sup>9</sup> More Muslim weavers migrated after the creation of India and Pakistan in 1947 and settled in Mirpur after coming from Benaras. As they started weaving *Benarasi*, the Biharis known as *Muhajees*<sup>10</sup> toeing the same line also began the same. Some

1 Durga Das Lahiri, *Bharat Barsher Itihas*, 1914, p. 152.

2 Kangle, R.P. (tr.) *The Kautilya Arthasastra*, part-ii, (University of Bombay, 1963) p. 115

3 Roy, N. R., *Bangaleer Itihash*, Calcutta, 1373 B.S.

4 Tofail Ahmed, *Dhakar Banijjik Karukala*, ASOB: 1991, p. 6.

5 Nityanandya Das, *Prem Bilas*.

6 Apart from Mymensing areas, *Golabatan* was also produced at Baliadi, Dhamrai and Abdullahpur of Dhaka district. See Kedarnath Majumdar. *Dhakar Bibaran* (Calcutta, 1910) p. 116.

7 James Taylor, *Journal of the Asiatic Society*, Calcutta. January, 1847.

8 Misc. Report, BSB, Rajshahi, p. 3.

9 Tofail Ahmed, *ibid*.

10 For details of Muhajeer Economic group, See census of Pakistan, 1951. Vol-8, East Bengal by H. H. Nomani, Karachi.



A artisan weaving Katan

weavers leaving Benaras settled in Karachi and started weaving cloth there. Dhaka District Gazetteer referred some to *Benarasi* factories in the 1970s.<sup>11</sup> Some of the Benarasi weavers left for Pakistan after independence in 1971 and at the same time import of Katan from Karachi also came to a halt. But the vacuum was immediately filled up with the initiatives taken afresh by some newcomers at Mirpur from different parts of the country with the help of the remaining weavers. As a result, the residential areas of Mirpur Section 10, 11, 11/2 and 12 emerged as 'Katan weaving area', popularly known as *Banarasi para*. According to the Katan weavers' organization, 'Tantidal' there were 750 factories with a total of 8225 looms in the 1990s; that has now increased to 10,000 looms with the involvement of 40,000 workers.<sup>12</sup>

**Tanchi Katan of Tota Munshi:** Apart from *Benarasi Katan* at Mirpur, 'Tanchai' Katan weaving industry has also been developed in the rural environment at Guthia, a village, 6 kilometers

11 According to District Gazetteer, these factories were: 1. Benares Silk industries (13. Rajani Bose Lane) 2. Dacca Weaving Factory (13 Rajani Bose Lane) 3. East Textile Industries (Narsingdi) 4. Jalalabad Industries (293 Nawabpur) 5. National Silk Industries (7/3 Chittaranjan Avenue) 6. Pakistan Industries Co-operation (148, Mitford Road) 7. Sunrise Cotton Industries (240, Tejgaon Industrial Area) See S. N. H Rizvi, Dacca District Gazetteer, 1970, p. 119.

12 Tofail Ahmed, *ibid.* pp. 36-38.

southwest of Tongi. In 1976, one Tota Munshi started weaving in this village. Crape woven saree was woven there. There were 30 to 35 the weaving houses in that village. After running for four years, weaving of cloth came to an end. Tota Munshi's son, Mizanur Rahman started weaving *Tanchai Katan* with only four looms in 1985. More than 400 looms owned by 80 to 85 people run in the village now. The skilled weavers usually earn Tk 5,000/5,500 per month while others get Tk 2,500/3,000; children as workers earn Tk 1,000/1,500 and female workers get Tk 1500/2,000. Scarcity of electricity is a major problem here as alleged by the local weavers who made an appeal for setting up the weaving industry on 25/30 acre *Khas* lands at Goshalia in the east with a view to rehabilitating the industry. *Tanchai Katan* is also produced at Narsingdi and at nearby places of Kanchpur. At Mirpur 10, 11 and 12 sectors, no buildings have been constructed in a planned way along the roads leading inside from the main road. Weaving has been going on in these areas either in owned or rented houses or by using the open spaces for stretching yarns. Most of the looms are run in rented houses in Mirpur.



A Dhaka woman attired in Katan

**Benarasi Estate at Vashantek:** Following the demand of weavers, the government in 1987 allotted 42.60 acres of land at Vashantek of Mirpur and accordingly a 'Benarasi Estate' was set up there. According to a research carried out by Dr. M.A. Latif and Dr. Pratima Pal, there were 372 factories having 3542 looms at Mirpur in 1985-86.<sup>13</sup> Among the people involved with this industry, 78 percent were non-Bengalis and 19 per cent were Bangladeshis.<sup>14</sup> There were 750 factories of 750 owners at Mirpur as revealed by the organization 'Tantidal' of the Katan weavers in 1990. Now the number of looms is assumed to be 10,000 or more. Unlike other weavers' community, the weavers of Mirpur have not inherited their profession. For circumstantial reasons, they have taken to this weaving profession for a few generations. Bangladesh's known silk weaving areas were Nawabganj and Shibganj, where 67 percent weavers were Hindus and 33 percent were Muslims. All the weavers of Mirpur are Muslims.<sup>15</sup> The silk artisans have earnings from agriculture besides weaving, while the weavers of Mirpur have their 93.2 per cent income from weaving.<sup>16</sup> Per head income of Tk 9,555 comes from weaving annually. The workforce engaged in weaving usually includes 56.5 per cent male, 6.5 per cent female and 37 per cent child-labourers.

Like 'Jamdani', the same process of fixing legs on a hole is adopted in weaving *Katan*. The loom used for weaving 'Katan' is called 'Throw Shuttle Loom' and this loom is more expensive and complicated than that of *Jamdani*. *Jackard* or *Jacket* is used for getting the *saree* designed while weaving.

13 See Final Report on Supply-side Study on Sericulture, BIDS, Dhaka, 1986, pp.158-159.

14 Enamul Kabir Siddiqui *Benarasi Tant Shilper Atit O Bartaman*, in *Smarak on Expo-1990*, Bangladesh Tant and Resham Board, p. 25.

15 Tofail Ahmed, *ibid.*

16 Final Report on Supply Side Study, *ibid.*, p. 189.



Katan Palli, Mirpur

**Capital:** The house in which the factory is located, looms and other elements constitute the fixed asset, while raw materials, woven and half-woven *sarees*, cash amount and the dues to be paid form the current asset of a weaving factory. As stated by weavers, the structure of fixed capital and working capital at Mirpur in the 1990s was as follows:

Fixed capital per unit	: Tk 40,851
Loom	: Tk 5,791
Working capital per unit	: Tk 29,508
Loom	: Tk 4,183
Total per unit	: Tk 70,359
Total Loom	: Tk 9,974

The estimated amount will be at least three times higher than that of in the 1990s.

The government introduced 'loom-credit' among the weavers in 1984 with a view to resolving the crisis of capital and undertook various programmes for providing import facilities of yarn, dye and other chemicals through groups formed with the marginalised weavers and owners of the loom factories. The *Katan* and *Benarasi* weavers also get those benefits. As a result, the weavers concerned started to improve the quality of saree by using high quality imported foreign yarn, silk-yarn, *jari* and dye at cheaper prices.<sup>17</sup>

17 Enamul Kabir, *ibid.*



**Production:** According to an estimate of BIDS, the annual production was 1,25,400 yards of full-silk and 3,44,378 yards half-silk in Mirpur in fiscal year 1985-86. The estimate shows that 21.5 per cent looms produced full-silk while 38.2 percent looms produce half-silk and 40.3 percent cloth of artificial fibre or almost nylon.<sup>18</sup>

**Cost of Production:** A survey in the 1990s reveals the cost of production of Katan craft of that decade<sup>19</sup> (see table).

Saree's name	Cost per unit	Wholesale price
Sarteen Katan	Tk. 4500 - 5500	Tk. 4800 - 6500
Jangla Katan	Tk. 3200 - 3800	Tk. 3600 - 4200
Albar Katan	Tk. 2300 - 3000	Tk. 2600 - 3200
Swarna Katan	Tk. 2500 —	Tk. 2800 —
Fency Katan	Tk. 1800 —	Tk. 2000 —
Patta Katan	Tk. 800 —	Tk. 1000 —
Jhar Katan	Tk. 600 —	Tk. 650 —

Source: Tofail Ahmed, *Dhakar Banijjik Karukala*, ASOB, p 48.

**Marketing:** Marketing of the products takes place through whole-sellers, *Faria* (agents), retailers and *Mahajan* (creditors). The whole-sellers and agents used to come and collect the cloths from the houses of weavers, as these locally available buyers have no shops of their own. They supply the cloths to the shops of whole-sellers and retailers both at a wholesale price. Generally, most of the owners of many looms do also wholesale business of cloths. The weavers sometimes sell their products to the users from their houses. They, too, supply the

cloths to the whole-sellers and retailers. Those who supply yarn on credit also get supply from the weavers following their business deals. According to BIDS research, *Farias* deal 7.1 per cent, whole-sellers and retailers 75.6 per cent, *Mahajans* 14.1 per cent and direct buyers 3.2 per cent. The big shops usually sell 100 to 200 sarees while the small ones 50 to 60 sarees every week. Sarees go to the whole-sellers of Islampur, Patuatuli, Chawkbazar and Sadarghat in Dhaka city through this process of changing hands. Some whole-sellers from Baburhat also come to buy sarees directly from the weavers.<sup>20</sup>

Marketing of Katan produced in Mirpur is confined within the country. Silk fabrics mostly cater to the domestic market. A small quantity of cloth is also exported, particularly to E.E.C. countries and the USA. In 1985-86, the export amount was Tk 29 lakh. The Export Promotion Bureau showed in 1987-88 that the export earning of silk to Norway was Tk 96,000 in 1986-87. In 1991-92, silk cloth worth Tk 15,48,000 were exported in a limited way to Germany, Switzerland, USA and Norway although the quantity of *Katan* was not specifically mentioned.

As for artisans of Mirpur, they are facing a major challenge in marketing their products as goods from other countries flood the local market and hamper the usual growth of this potential sector.

18 Final Report, BIDS, *ibid.*, pp. 190-191.

19 Tofail Ahmed, *Dhakar Banijjik Karukala*, *ibid.*, p. 48.

20 Paikers from different parts of Bangladesh used to come to Baburhat to purchase various sorts of cloth assembled over there. Katan of Mirpur was usually collected by the whole-sellers of Baburhat to meet the requirement of these Muffasil Paikers.

### 13. Traditional Food

gggbmstni gMWj fvj Lj bvi fvtj v LB  
 XvKvi fvtj v cvZ¶xi euKovi fvj `B\`  
 -tfvj v gqbvi Qov

The tradition of sweetmeat and other traditional food in Bengal is a very old one. *Padma Purana* mentioned that 6 kinds of sweetmeat were made during the wedding of *Behula* and *Lakhindar*. The old puranic stories say a sort of *Khar* or *Khand* (*Sandesh*) and *Dadhi*. Gopis are carrying curd to *Mathura* is an old legend. Abdul Hakim referred to *Firni*, *Rajbhog* and *Faluda* in his great book *Yusuf-Zolekha*.

Dhaka, as one of the Mughal cities, is known for its traditional foods of which many do not exist now. Dhaka has the name and fame for delicious foods traditionally inherited for generations mostly from the Muslims coming from the Arab countries,<sup>1</sup> Central Asia, Turkey, Afghanistan and Iran. These foods got added flavours, tastes and touches of the European food over the centuries through the Portuguese, British, French, Greeks and Armenians. Food, in fact, characterises a people or nation's affluence as well as its taste and temperament. Dhaka enjoys a unique position from that point of view, as it was fabulously rich in delicious traditional foods. Preparations of *Polao* and *Biriani* in different style were equally unique in Dhaka once, though they are now difficult to obtain due to lack of original and quality ingredients. The historians have also described the traditions of Dhaka's fruits and food items in their books. Jogendranath Gupta in his *Vikramপুর Itihash* mentioned the popular poem on Dhaka's traditional items as under:

fvlqvtj i Zvj , KuVvj , e<sup>3</sup> eü i |  
 tmbvbi MôtgtZ cÐi Kvclwi cvb<sup>2</sup> vgtj mgaj \`  
 B¶lzo gtnk¶i `x<sup>3</sup> Pu<sup>4</sup> cZvc<sup>4</sup> gwnlv`wa\`  
 weL`vZ ce¶ewa Kj v we gcj |<sup>5</sup>

#### Dhakai Bakarkhani

Dhakai Bakarkhani, the traditional bread/snack of the people of Dhaka is still very famous for its quality and taste almost in line with the past when there was great demand of it in the royal court of the Mughal in Delhi. The Turkish and Afghan Muslims were the first to arrive in the Indian subcontinent and they brought with them *tandoor* and *naan* types of bread to the local culinary. The Mughal's arrival in the 16th century introduced *shirmal*, a kind of soft bread. In the past, the *Bakarkhaniwalas* (bread-makers) used to light up tandoor after midnight to bring out the bread by morning. In origin, the name of this bread was not *Bakarkhani*. Once something similar to this

1 Arab had long trade relations with Bengal as well as India since the 8th and 9th centuries. For trade relations, see S. Moqbul Ahmad, *Indo-Arab Relation*, India Council for Cultural Relations, New Delhi, 1975, pp. 78-93.

2 The present Sonargaon areas were the producer of a special kind of *paan* (betel-leaf) that was marketed at *Sachipandariba* (Bangla Bazar) of Dhaka during the pre-Mughal time. Mahuan visited Sonargaon in 1414 and mentioned that instead of tea people used to offer *paan* for entertaining the guests.

3 *Maheswardi* was a pargana of Dhaka district mainly consisted of the present Narshingdi and Narayanganj districts.

4 *Chandpratapa* was also a pargana; mainly consisted of the western part of the Dhaka district, presently identical with Manikgonj and Tangil districts.

5 The banana of Vikrampur (Munshigonj and Mirkadim) branded, as the 'Champa Kola' is famous for its taste. Another type of banana branded as the 'Sabri Kola' is of Portuguese by the *firingis* who settled at firingibazar near Munshiganj.



Preparation of Bakarkhani

*Bakarkhani* bread was made in Kashmir; perhaps the bread-makers of Kashmir-origin were acquainted with the procedure of making *Bakarkhani*. During the Mughal time, like many other things, *Bakarkhani* was brought to Dhaka. In the past, the makers of *Bakarkhani* were Muslims but some non-Muslim *karigars* were also found in making *Bakarkhani*. It is believed that the original *karigars* of famous *Bakarkhani* used to live in Dhaka's Kashmiritola. This also reveals that they might be of Kashmiri origion. Khawza Mohammad Azam of Dhaka's Nowab family got some *Bakarkhani* from Kashmir and brought it to Dhaka at the begining of the last century. Presently, its major concentrations are at Bangshal, Lalbagh, Kashaituli, Nazirabazar, Nazimuddin Road, Roysahebazar and Agamashi Lane.

*Bakarkhani* dough of white flour and *mawa* are thoroughly mixed and kneaded for hours before stretching thin by hand over the entire span of wooden board. Then after spreading *ghee* over it, flour is strewn on. It is folded and the process is repeated several times. After sizeable numbers of such small dough are ready, they are made into bread on the board and sesame seeds are spread on it. The breads are then put inside the *tandoor*. During the process of baking, pure milk is sprinkled on them twice. This is the story in a nutshell of making pure *Bakarkhanis* here in Dhaka. But now in place of *ghee* and milk, molasses solution is added so that the bread turns reddish. Instead of *ghee*, sayabin is used now, which affects the quality and flavor of this famous *Bakarkhani* bread of Dhaka.

**Different types of Bakarkhanis:** In his book *Dhaka Pachash Barash Pahley* published in the 1940s, Hakim Habibur Rahman gives a detailed account of the variety of original food items of Dhaka along with reparations.<sup>6</sup> He mentioned the unique feature of Dhaka where, though rice is the staple food, varieties of *roti* or bread available earlier in Dhaka were really amazing; and every *roti* or bread has a history and ancestry of its own. (see table 1) According to Hakim Habibur Rahman, *Bakarkhani* used to be sent to many other places of India.<sup>7</sup> *Shirmal* has basic ingredients of flour

<sup>6</sup> See Hakim Habibur Rahman, *Dhaka Pachash Barash Pahley*, *ibid*.

<sup>7</sup> Hakim Habibur Rahman, *ibid*, p. 48.



Bakarkhani of Old Dhaka

and semolina, Persian background, soft and thick, whereas, *Bakarkhani* made of white flour and *mawa/khoia* is firm, crisp and melts inside the mouth. It is also known as *sukha roti*. Cheese *Bakarkhani* was another delicacy of the typical popular bread baked in Dhaka. In every fold, instead of ghee and flour, cheese is used to produce a different taste and flavour. Instead of cheese, *mohanbhog*, especial type of sweetmeat, or semolina or *suji halwa* was used to make what was known once as *bhigaroti* or *bhijaroti* as they were dipped in creamy milk with almond and raisins from the house of the bride to the groom as part of a tradition in matrimonial ritual. This typical *Bakarkhani* bread, however, came to an end due to the cost involved with the business. How was this soft and crispy special

type of bread named *Bakarkhani*? There is, however, a story about the naming as narrated by Nazir Hossain, a local of Dhaka in his book *Kingbadantir Dhaka*. The story goes back to 1700 A.D, when Murshid Quli Khan came to Eastern Bengal after obtaining the title 'Dewan' (Chief Officer), he brought along with him Aga Bakar Khan as a small boy. Aga Bakar grew up as a great warrior and during the reign of Nawab Shiraj-ud-Doula played a crucial role in the then Bengal. Aga Bakar was appointed the commander of the military forces in the Chittagong region and his amour was a dancer of Arambagh namely *Khani Begum*. It is presumed that the special bread prepared got the legendary name of *bakar-khani roti* after his amour's name. Another story says that when Aga Bakar was awarded the zamindari of *Bujerga Umedpur pargana*, now at modern Barisal, he got it made by special order for a long-time preservation purpose. That's why, this special type of bread is named after him.<sup>8</sup> But Nazir Hossain holds a different view that this *Bakerkhani*, to some extent, is an aberration of *Baker-Khani*- 'Khani Begum' his beloved amour.<sup>9a</sup> Aga Bakar khan was assigned to look after the Zamindari of Bujerga Umedpur Pargana in the Barisal district. He brought many Muslims to his Zamindari areas and they got settled over there.<sup>10</sup> Aga Bakar used to bring this *Bakerkhani* to Barisal areas, when he stayed over there. Thus the people of his Zamindari area were also familiar about this *Bakerkhani*. Still there is a popular saying:

XvKvB i "WJ evLi Lwlb nMj (mKj ) tj vK gvfb  
 evLi -Lwbi cob K\_v<sup>11</sup> KZ tj vK Rvfb|  
 LvBtZ gRv evLi Lwlb LvBtZ hw Pvb  
 Qpqv bvl<sup>12</sup> ev`vg w`qv XvKv kni hvb\

9 Sirajuddin Ahmed, Aga Baker, 1980.

9a Nazir Hossain, *ibid.* p. 28.

10 For details, see Delwar Hassan, (ed.) *Barisal Bibagher Itihas* (History of Barisal Division) in Barisal Bibagher Commemoration Volume, 1991, pp. 18-54.

11 Refers to the popular Romantic Story about 'Aga Bakar' and his beloved amour 'Khani' Begum.

12 One kind of boat usually used for riverine journey.



**Concentration:** It is very difficult to identify the old concentration of *Bakarkhani* makers during the Mughal period. However, it is assumed that this *Bakarkhani* was made at the old part of Dhaka, which developed during the time of Mughal nobilities. Subsequently areas like Chawkbazar, Nawabganj, Dewri, Begum Bazar, Khaje Dewan and Siddique Bazar became famous in preparing this ruti. Nowadays, it is being prepared in many places of old Dhaka and nearly 1000 shops are in operation.

### **Biriyani and Polao: A delicious Mughal Dish**

Delicious dishes of *biriyani* and *polao* made of fine rice and chicken/mutton/beef in different styles were once the attraction of the old part of Dhaka. Specialty was maintained in preparing these food items in the restaurants and hotels that still remain crowded by the connoisseurs of food or food-lovers. Various preparations of curries with mutton and beef besides Kebabs, also in varieties, were available till a few years ago. The Mughuls introduced these delicious food items. (for Mughal dishes see table 1) According to Laila Arjumund Bhanu, this was in vogue in the high society and well-to-do people of Dhaka.<sup>13</sup>



Biriyani, a Mughal dish



Haji Biriyani

the first time prepared the delicious food item. The signboard-less restaurant serves its food twice in a day – one in the morning and the other in the evening – as the place remains crowded in a

**Haji's Biriyani:** Dhaka's *Haji's biriyani* is unique and considered possibly the best in the world as international newspaper and magazines like *The New York Times*,<sup>14</sup> *Time* and *Newsweek*<sup>15</sup> carried articles on this *biriyani* as their visiting correspondents relished this food item. It's unique because of its preparation with ingredients like mutton, mustard oil and fine rice and green chilly. Situated on Kazi Alauddin Road without displaying any signboard, the *biriyani* business has been going on for three generations since it started in 1939. Its founder Hajj Abul Hossain of old Dhaka once went to perform Hajj by sea and on board the ship he for

13 Laila Arjumund Bhanu, 'Dhakabasider Khadaya Bhojan Bilas' in *Oitihashik Dhaka Mahanagari: Bibartan O Shamvabana*, edited by Dr. Iftikhar-Ul-Awwal (Bangladesh National Musum, 2003) pp. 326-328.

14 The New York Times was founded by Henry J. Raymond in 1851 and soon gained a reputation for its interpretive articles, well-balanced coverage and objectivity.

15 *Newsweek* highlighted Dhaka's delicious traditional food with special focus on Hajee Biriyani.

long queue. Grandson Haji Miaji now runs the *Haji's biriyani* business. *Haji's Biriyani* is usually served in the basket made of jackfruit-tree leaves since its inception. The another specialty is that it is cooked only for three *Degs* (copper made big pot) daily under the supervision of chef Kala Mia.<sup>16</sup> As soon as the contents of three *deg*s are finished, it is closed for the day.



Fakhruddin Baburchi (right) with his staff

**Fakhruddin Baburchi's food items:** The various food items particularly *biriyani* prepared by noted cook Fakhruddin is fabulously popular in Dhaka. Coming from Patna, India, he started preparing food initially for the students of Viqarunnessa School and College in the fifties soon after his appointment there as nightguard.<sup>17</sup> As an internationally known cook he was flown abroad a number of times for cooking foods for royal wedding ceremony in Amman, capital of Jordan, besides other important similar occasions in Karachi and Islamabad. His special *Iftar* preparations in the month of holy Ramadan attract people not

only in Dhaka but in other cities such as Kuala Lumpur and Dubai when he makes arrangement there. Delicious dishes prepared with mutton and beef are also popular. *Kanchhi biriyani* is a popular food item prepared with fine rice and mutton and is usually served in matrimonial and other ceremonies. It is also available in some special restaurants and hotels in Dhaka.

**Shahi morag-polao:** 'Morag-polao' is an item prepared with fine rice and chicken in some special restaurants in old part of the capital city and it is very popular among the people of Dhaka.

**Nanna Mia Baburchi:** 'Shahi morag polao' of 42 Bechharam Deuri Sardar Bhaban, cooked by Nanna Mia Baburchi (cook/chef), is famous as it is prepared with the help of fine rice and chicken besides spices along with almond and raisins. 'Morag mossallam', a special curry, prepared with chicken and spices attracts the food lovers.

**Nazir Mia Baburchi:** Nazir Mia of old Dhaka is also a famous cook, who is equally expert in cooking *Moragh-Poluo* and *Kanchhi Briyani*. He prepared food at the Panpacific Sonargaon Hotel, a 5 star Hotel of Dhaka, and he served over there for several years in response to their offer.



Morag-polao

<sup>16</sup> Writer's Interview with the present Chef.

<sup>17</sup> Viqarunnessa School was established by Mrs. Viqarunnessa, wife of Malik Firoz Khan Noon, the Governor of East Bengal, (1950-1953). Fakhruddin was appointed as a guard after the establishment of this school in the 1950s.

<sup>18</sup> Writer's interview with Nazir Mia, former Chef of Sonargaon Pan Pacific Hotel, Dhaka.

According to Nazir Mia, *Dhakaiya Biryani* has its special flavour and this item was very popular among the foreigners who used to come to Dhaka and stay in Sonargaon Hotel. Even Horst Muller, a professional German Chef of Sonargaon Hotel, visited old Dhaka in the 1980s to observe the preparing system of such a delicious and popular traditional food of old Dhaka.<sup>18</sup>

**Mughal foods of Chawakbazar:** Dhaka's Chawakbazar is famous especially for *Iftar* during the holy month of Ramadan since the Mughal days. All types of food items usually are available for *Iftar* still now. Thousands of people go there to buy those particularly if there is any family/social occasion. Special *Iftar* items are still prepared on these occasions almost in the same manner as they were made earlier in the Mughal period. According to Nazir Hossain, perhaps there is no other market with such a gorgeous arrangement of mouth watering, spicy and crunchy *Ifteri* items in the world.<sup>19</sup>

**Nan and Tandoor:** *Dhakaiya naan* and *tandoor* can boast of their Turkish and Afgan origin. When the Muslims arrived in India, they brought with them *tandoor* to the local culinary. Hakim tells us that this *naan* was very popular in Calcutta and Peshawar for a pretty longtime.<sup>20</sup> Some *naan* makers were brought by the Mughals for preparing *naans* and *tandoor* for the military personnel who lived in Urdu Road and other Military establishments during the Mughal era. Nazir Hossain mentioned that there was an army barrack during Mughal rule in Dhaka.<sup>21</sup> In the 19th century Ramjan Khan and Nurullah Khan, two *naan* makers of Peshawar-origin and Rastum of Upper India used to make *naan* in Dhaka. But initially only Afganis and Kashmiris residing in Dhaka were the buyers. Apart from this, some *rutis* of Dhaka were reputed for its quality. Among them Haji Karim's ruti at Haranath Ghosh Road, Sohel ruti of Khaje Dewan Road and Bhai ruti of Nazimuddin Road are famous.



Nan and Tandoor

### Sweetmeats of Dhaka

Equally known and popular to the people were a number of sweetmeat-shops spreading in the lanes and by lanes. There were variety of sweets available once in Dhaka shops of which not all do exist now. There were some names:

**British and Pakistan periods:** Gangacharun Ghosh, Maranchand (Son of Ganga Charan), Kala Chand Saha Moni of Islampur, Akali Gamdhananik (Aam patti), Binod Bihari Ghosh of Nawabpur, Ram Gosh's Sitaram Mitshannaya Bhandar at Islampur, New Sitaram Mitshannaya, Alauddin

18 Writer's interview with Nazir Mia, former Chef of Sonargaon Pan Palific Hotel, Dhaka.

19 Nazir Hossain, *ibid.* p. 312.

20 Hakim Habibur Rahman, *ibid.* p. 47.

21 Nazir Hossain, *ibid.* p. 313.





Rashogolla



Chamcham



Sandesh

Sweetmeats and Bombay Sweetmeat of Chawkbazar, Delhi Sweetmeat in front of District court, Mulim Mitsannya Bandar (not the present one), Gagan Mitsannya Bhandar, etc.

**Bangladesh Period:** Maran Chad, Alauddin Sweetmeat, Bombay sweetmeat, Adi Maran Chand, Bikrampur Mitsannaya Bhandar, Muslim sweetmeat, Mohan Chand Mitsannaya, Bonafool, Baggayakul Mitsannya Bhandar, Islamia, Grand Sweats, Sree lauxmi, Rasiklal, Jalkhabar, New Jalkhabar, Mohan Chand, etc.

**Major sweatmeat products:** *Rashgolla, Chamcham, Kalojam, Kamalabhog, Lalmohon, Chana, Amiriti, Rajbogh, Rashkadam, Rashmalai, Chana Polau, Pantua, Kancha Golla, Gurer Sandesh, Chinir Sandesh, para. Karapak, Abak, pranhara, Parijat, Ratabi, Jilapi, Motichur, Bundia, Mihidana, Balushahi, Badampak, Gajar Halua, Boot Halua, Alphantun, Hafsi, etc.*

### Curd of Ganga Charan Ghosh

Gunga Charan Ghosh (1850-1963) started his business in the sixties of the 19th century at Nawabpur. He purchased a piece of land at Lalchand Makim Lane and subsequently he was able to purchase more shops at Nawabpur. Late Ganga Charan Ghosh, the father of Dhaka's famous Maranchand Ghosh, founded the present shop at Nawabpur namely



Tok Dai



Dai of Ganga Charan Ghosh

'Maranchand'. At the outset, Ganga Charan had to compete with the sweetmeat makers coming from Upper India. The Nawabs of Dhaka were very fond of curds of Ganga Charan Gosh. The common Muslims though were very reluctant to purchase his curds, as it became popular among the Dhaka Nawabs, they, too liked his curd. Ganga Charan Ghosh had three sons namely: (1) Binod Bihari Ghosh (2) Keshob Chandra Ghosh and (3) Maran Chend Ghosh. It was Ganga Charan, who for the first time added



sugar to the curd and made it more delicious. Before this, according to Pran Gopal, Dhaka's Curd was without sweet taste.<sup>22</sup>

### Maran Chand Grandsons

Among the sons of Ganga Charan Ghosh, Binod Bihari Ghosh, the eldest son, and Marand Chand Ghosh, the youngest son, entered into the father's business.

Ganga Charan was mainly engaged in making curd but Maran Chand started preparing other sorts of sweetmeat to meet consumers' demand. After the demise of Ganga Charan, Maran Chand continued his business with the help of his sons namely Suboth Chandra Ghosh, Haripada Ghosh and Shambunath Gosh till 1965.

Their grandchildren, who are possibly running their businesses respectively, survive 'Jadabghosh' and similar famous sweetmeat-shops known for their quality and variety in the city now. Apart from sweets, curd made by Maran Chand was very much popular.



Maran Chand Ghosh



Traditional *dai*

'Alauddin Sweets' products were very popular in Dhaka till the other day though Alauddin Haluwai coming from Lacknow in 1894 had started initially selling *vaji-and-puri* in Dhaka. Subsequently, he switched over to sweetmeat business in the name of 'Alauddin Sweets'. Its Chawkbazar branch still has 'vaji and puri' while the other branches at Mouchak, Green Road, Airport Road mainly deal with sweetmeats only. In the 1980s the products of Alauddin Sweets became very popular in the Middle East, Europe and in America. Dhaka being the capital of erstwhile East Bengal and

later of East Pakistan used to get regular supply of popular brand of sweets became elsewhere in the country such as *chamcham* of Porabari and Tangail, curd of Bogra, *ghee* of Gournadi in Barisal and *Rasa-malai* of Comilla. Now in Dhaka special sweets also are available easily with the development of communication network across the country connecting Dhaka.

### Sweetmeat: As seen by elderly entrepreneurs

**Pran Gopal Ghosh:** Pran Copal Ghosh is the grandson of Binod Bihari Ghosh of 'Binod Grandsons' at Nawabpur and nephew of Maran Chand Ghosh. Binod Bihari was the elder brother of Maran Chand Gosh. Pran Gopal took his early education at Pagose High School, Dhaka. Pran Gopal is now about 80 years old. His father was Khetro Mohan Gosh, who was also engaged in their family business. At the advice of his great grandfather, Ganga Charan Ghosh, his father Binod Binari concentrated on curd making. Initially they used to make sweetless curd that is on essential

22 Writer's interviews with Pran Gopal, Grandson of Ganga Charan Ghosh.

ingredient required for preparing other food items in Dhaka. Curd was made sour and sugar-free for using in *burhani* and in other food items.

Pran Gopal was involved in this business in the early fifties. A freedom fighter, Pran Gopal fought for the cause of Bangladesh and he is very proud of it. At the outset, it was their family business in the name and style of 'Maranchand Grand Sons' till 1965. Suboth Chandra Ghosh, elder son of Maran Chand, left for Kolkata in 1965 and subsequently his other two sons also left Dhaka. It is also learnt that the sons of Maran Chand switched over to different kinds of business, other than sweetmeat. Before the partition in 1947, their business flourished in a satisfactory manner. He came to know from his uncle Maran Chand that the Nawabs of Dhaka and the 'Sardars' of the city were the patrons of their delicious curd. Like Dhaka's Nawabs, much-known Kader Sarder of Dhaka used to arrange party every month where the curd of Maran Chand was an essential item to serve the guests. Nawab Sir Salimullah, A.K. Fazlul Haq and Aatur Rahman Khan were also very fond of special branded sweetmeats.

Pran Gopal recalled that after 1947, the Muslim community was reluctant to purchase their curd. But the situation dramatically changed when the *Shah Saheb* of Paribagh asked the grandson of Gangacharan to see him. Accompanied by his father he went to visit the Shah Saheb who expressed his satisfaction about the quality of curd they produced. "It was a turning point for our business", Pran Gopal said in an interview adding that since then the Muslim community did not have any hesitation about their curd that became very popular.<sup>23</sup> Posh hotels like the Intercontinental (now Sheraton) and former Hotel Shahbagh used to get supply of curd from Maranchand to serve foreign customers.

Pran Gopal also recalled that apart from Maran Chand, Sahamoni, Binod Behari Ghosh and Ram Ghosh were also prominent in the 1940s and 1950s. According to Pran Gopal, among the Muslims engaged in the same business, Alauddin of Chawkbazar, Bombay sweetmeat and Delhi sweetmeat made a mark in the business. As the Muslims of Dhaka were very fond of sweetmeat and curd, those who were in this business received good returns of their investment.

### Milk Sale Centres

As milk is required for preparing sweetmeat, its supply regularly from the sources in the surrounding areas is vital. There were 5/6 milk sale centres in the city. Pran Ghosh on the basis of saying of his ancestors, mentioned that Goalpara, Goalnagar, Goalghat and Goaltoli were the places where the milkmen used to live. Since the Nawabi period milk was brought to sale centres in Dhaka from the neighboring production areas of Bikrampur, Narayanganj and Manikgonj. Pran Ghosh named these production centers as Sakta, Bashta, Barisur, Ruhitpur, Taltala, and Abdullahpur.



A milk sale centre

<sup>23</sup> Author's interview with Pran Gopal.

From these above mentioned production centres, milk was brought in the following sale-centers of Dhaka: a. Nawabpur; b. Moulavibazar; c. Nayabazar; d. Demra; e. Rayerbazar and f. Narayanganj. After the completion of the Dhaka-Aricha Road, milk began to come from Savar, Manikganj and Aricha. The biggest Milk 'Arath' was at Nowabpur. Matilal Ghosh, Gopal Ghosh, and Mohan Ghosh were the known figures in milk-business. Rayerbazar and Mirpur was also an important milk sale centre in the early 20th century while Moulavibazar was prominent since the Mughal period. As stated by Pran Gopal, the above-mentioned 'Aratdars' left Dhaka and some Muslim traders and small 'Aratdars' managed this business at Nawabpur.

**Dhakaia Panir:** Though popularly known as *Dhakaia Panir* originally it was produced at Austagram of Kighoreganj. Its major market was in Dhaka and Calcutta.<sup>24</sup> For a pretty long time, the preparing method of this cheese was a trade secret and no other place could come out successful in preparing quality cheese like Astogram.<sup>25</sup>



*Dhakai Panir*

**Dhaka's Patkhir:** Dhaka's *patkhir* was famous all over Bengal. In Dhaka district *Patkhir* was produced in Fatullah, Narayanganj, Vikrampur and in Dhamrai. The Rhymes of *Bhola Mayra* (b. 1775) denotes:

ggqbmstni gMvj fvj Lj bvi fvtj v LB  
XvKvi fvtj v cvZxi euKvi fvtj v `B\

Jogendranath Gupta and Jatindra Mohan Ray have given a special mention of Dhaka's *Patkhir* in their respective book.



*Dhaka's Patkhir*



*Jilapi*

**Jilapi, Amriti and Halim:** The best Jilapis in Dhaka could be found in Purnima Snack Bar, which was in Gulistan Cinema Hall Building. The Jilapis were really thick and juicy. Products of Chawk areas are also good in quality. Amriti is an traditional item which is still popular in Dhaka.

**Mama Halim:** Sold from a push cart on Mirpur Road near Kalabagan bus stand, it is the best in the town. Its taste is even better during the month of Ramadan. One or two places in Mouchak (at the intersection of Rampura road and Outer circular road) have real good *phuchkas*. The *phuchkas* of Baily Road, New Market areas are also well known.

24 Khan Bahadur Moazzem Uddin Hossain of Austogram, a minister of undivided Bengal, introduced this panir and promoted it to Calcutta and Dhaka Market.

25 Laila Arjumund Bhanu, *ibid.* p. 327.

**Khawa Daowa:** It is located at Chwak square near the mosque. Its specialties include mutton kachhi, chicken kachhi and *morog musallam*. The mooug dal is exceptional in taste.

**Star Hotel:** Star Hotel enjoys wide got reputation since the 1950s. It's on Bonogram road south of Thataribazar. They serve good *morog musallam* and chicken tikka (only in the evening). Their kachhi is also delicious.

**Ananda Confectionary:** Ananda Confectionary started on Abul Hasnat Road near the Central Jail. It isn't excatly a restaurant, but offers a variety of old town specialties like different kinds of bread including *Bakarkhani*, different types of Parata, various types of cakes, *Shami Kebab* and mutton leg roast, etc. The quality is much better than the places in new Dhaka, but the price is probably also slightly higher.

**Nirab:** Among the restaurants, Nirab is in a real shabby place on Nazimuddin Road near the central Jail, but is very popular. The place is very cheap. They serve a variety of dishes, ranging from *Ilish mancher matha* and *Shutki* to Brain *massalla* and liver *bhuna*. *Parata* and brain *massalla* is a must for new arrivals.

**Nuraani:** It's also in Chwakhazar. They don't serve anything but *lassi*. But after a good meal at *Khawa Dawoa* or *Nirob*, a glass of nice *Cool lassi* may feel good.

**Cafe Jheel:** One is opposite the press club and their other branch is near the Observer office. Their chicken jhaal fry and naan are very good. Boti kebab and chicken tikka are also delicious.

**Pithaghar:** Pithaghar is situated on Bangobondhu Avenue, opposite the stadium. Their *bhuna khichuri* and duck *bhuna* are very good. They also serve different kinds of *pithas* and *Bogurar doi*.

**Bose Cabin:** The Bose Cabin of Narayanganj has its long tradition since the thirties of the last century. Initially it was a small tea-stall near the Narayanganj Port. In the forites of the last century, Mr. Subash Chandra Bose, the vetern politician, came to Narayanganj and he has entertained with a cup of tea of this tiny tea-stall when he was confined by the British police in a steamer cabin at steamer ghat. This event made this tea-stall famous and became popularly known as the 'Bose Cabin'. Since then, for its delicious food, Bose Cabin is a popular tea-stall in Narayanganj.



Nipendra Chandra Bose



**Table 1: Dhaka's Traditional food and its origin**

Sl.	Food items	Its origin	When it was introduced
1.	<i>BakarKhani</i>	Kashmir	Sultani Era
2.	<i>Baan Rooti</i>	Baghdad	Mughal Period
3.	<i>Naan Khati</i>	Afganistan	Afgan Era
4.	<i>Naan Rooti</i>	Turkey/Afganistan	Afgan Era
5.	<i>Shirmal</i>	Agra	Mughal Period
6.	<i>Pao Rooti</i>	Local	Nawabi Era/Muhgal Period
7.	<i>Kakca (Biscuit)</i>	Persian	Mughal period
8.	<i>Kulica (Biscuit)</i>	Persian	Mughal period
9.	<i>Sohali Rooti</i>	Kashmir	Mughal period
10.	<i>Shuhan Halua</i>	Kashmir	Mughal period
11.	<i>Polao</i>	Turkey /Agra	Mughal period
12.	<i>Korma</i>	Turkey/Agra	Mughal period
13.	<i>Biriyani</i>	Turkey/Agra	Mughal period
14.	<i>Morag polao</i>	Local	Mughal period
15.	<i>Khicuri</i>	Kabul	Late Mughal
16.	<i>Mohi polao</i>	Local	Pre-Mughal
17.	<i>Bundia polao</i>	Local	Pre-Mughal
18.	<i>Tehari</i>	Local	Pre-Mughal
19.	<i>Malguba polao</i>	Local	pre-Mughal
20.	<i>Narishi polao</i>	Armenian	Nawabi Era
21.	<i>Raida polao</i>	Iran	Mughal
22.	<i>Kascehi Biriyan</i>	Lacknow	Post-Mughal
23.	<i>Kashmiri Cha</i>	Kashmir	Nawabi Era
24.	<i>Nota Cha</i>	Kashmir	Nawabi Era
25.	<i>Laddu</i>	Bombay	Post-Mughal
26.	<i>Badam Halua</i>	Bombay	Post-Mughal
27.	<i>Nanaj morabba</i>	Local	Post-Mughal
28.	<i>Tiler laddu</i>	Local	Hindu period
29.	<i>Cawn laddu</i>	Local	Hindu period
30.	<i>Murri-laddu</i>	Local	Hindu period
31.	<i>Shalgam Kalia</i>	Local	Post-Mughal
32.	<i>Dopayeja</i>	Local	Pre-Mughal
33.	<i>Dalma</i>	Turki	Pre-Mughal
34.	<i>Khatta</i>	Local	Sen-Era
35.	<i>Kimaa</i>	Upper India	Pre-Mughal
36.	<i>Dul khatta</i>	Local	Sen-Era
37.	<i>Shire Eyakhni</i>	Local	Mughal
38.	<i>Jahaji Kalia</i>	Local	Company Era /British Era

**Table 2: Dhaka Made Sweetmeats**

Places where available	Items
Savar	<i>Rajbogh</i>
Dhaka City	<i>Rasagolla</i> <i>Kanchagolla</i> <i>Cham Cham</i> <i>Lalmohan</i> <i>Kaloram</i> <i>Chanar Gaja</i> <i>Chanar Amriti</i> <i>Chanar Sandesh</i> <i>Chanar Polao</i> <i>Raskadam</i> <i>Labango</i>
Fatullah	<i>Patkhir, Khir Mohan</i>
Vikrampur	<i>Gaoaghee, Patkhir,</i>
Manikganj	<i>Hajarigur, Pataligur,</i>
Dhamrai	<i>Patkhir, Khirsa Dhadi (Curd)</i>

**Table 3: Sweetmeat from other places traded in Dhaka**

Brahmanbaria	<i>Rashamalai, Matha</i>
Porabari, Tangail	<i>Cham Cham</i>
Satkhira	<i>Sandesh</i>
Muktagacha	<i>Manda</i>
Bogra	<i>Doi (curd)</i>
Gouranadi	<i>Doi (curd), Rasogolla, Sandesh</i>
Jessore	<i>Sponge Rasogolla, Nalen gur</i>
Kishoregonj	<i>Panir</i>
Rajshahi	<i>Rasa Kadam</i>

*Source: Based on a survey*



*Barobaper Polae Khaye-A traditional Iftari item of Chakbazar*



*Dhaka's traditional Iftari items*

## 14. Maritime Business

নবরবি এমআর<sup>১</sup> বণিক  
মল্লি এমআর<sup>২</sup> হণিক

The high antiquity of Bengal's maritime-trade both inland and over-seas is proved by the *Jataka* stories, *Rigveda*, *Ramayana* sources, the accounts of Megasthenes, Strabo, Pliny and the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*.

Two factors seem to have promoted this early growth of trade and commerce, first the qualitative and quantitative development of Bengal's industries, and secondly the unrivalled facilities for movement afforded by the seacoast and river system of Bengal.

### Tradition of maritime business

The history of Bengal's maritime trade may be traced back to at least four or five centuries before the birth of Christ.<sup>1</sup> Megasthenes' account *Indika* refers to the ascent of vessels from the sea by the Ganges to Polibothra.<sup>2</sup> The excavation of Indus valley reveals that the people of ancient India were used to overseas trade in the pre-historic ages. According to R.C. Majumdar, they (people of Harappa) developed not only city-life but also international trade and that they knew most of the metals and plants, made pottery, boats and ships.<sup>3</sup> The anchor and the ship portrayed in the seal found in the Indus valley indicate that the vessels in use were deep-water



Ancient sea-going vessel of Bengal

1 R. C. Majumdar, *History of Bengal*, Vol-1, University of Dhaka, 1943, p. 660.

2 Mc. Crindle, *Ancient India*, 1901, p. 16.

3 R. C. Majumdar, *Ancient India*, p. 16.



crafts, perhaps sea-going.<sup>4</sup> Like other parts of India, Bengal was also in foreign trade from her pre-historic days. A number of *Jataka* stories mentioned merchants and commodity-laden ships in Banares and then coasting to Ceylon. The *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* suggests that the ancient Bengal maintained an intensive overseas trade with south India and Ceylon in the first century A.D.<sup>5</sup> The *Periplus* also refers to the overseas trade with China from where silk goods came into Bengal.

The *Milinda-Panha*, composed about the first century A.D. also refers to the overseas trade between Vanga<sup>6</sup> and different countries of the East. They all shipped from the market town of Ganges.<sup>7</sup> P. Wheatley mentioned, "As a wealthy ship owner scrupulously discharges his port dues and, putting forth on to the high seas, voyages to Vanga to Talkkola, China, Sovira, Suratha, Alasanda, Kolapattana, Suvarnabhumi or some other ports where shipping congregates."<sup>8</sup>

Vedic literature is replete with references to boats, ships and sea voyages. The *Rigveda* also states that the merchants knew no bounds, not even the oceans, and that they went everywhere in search of wealth.<sup>9</sup> In the *Ramayana*, one finds *slokas*, which mention several countries abroad, taken to be references to places such as China, Java and Sumatra.<sup>10</sup> The *Mahavamsa*<sup>11</sup> and other Buddhist works record the tradition that about 480 B. C. Prince Vijaya of Bengal landed in Ceylon and established an Indo-Aryan settlement there which included a good number of merchants of Bengal origin. The language of Ceylon includes many words used in the Bangla language. According to R.C. Majumdar, in later centuries, the overseas trade of Bengal seems to have increased both in volume and extent. This is probably the chief reason of the phenomenal growth of *Tamralipti* as a port of first grade importance.<sup>12</sup> In fact, in all periods the city, which controlled the mouth of the Ganges, was commercially the most important in Eastern India. We can trace a



Prince Vijaya of Bengal being landed in Ceylon

4 Radha Kumud Mukherji, *A History of Indian Shipping*, Orient Longmans, 1912, pp. 31-33.

5 Periplus, 47.

6 'Vanga' is mostly identical with the lower part of the present Eastern Bengal. During the Sena era Dacca as well as Vikrampur was included in the Kingdom of Vanga.

7 R.C. Majumdar, *ibid*, p. 661.

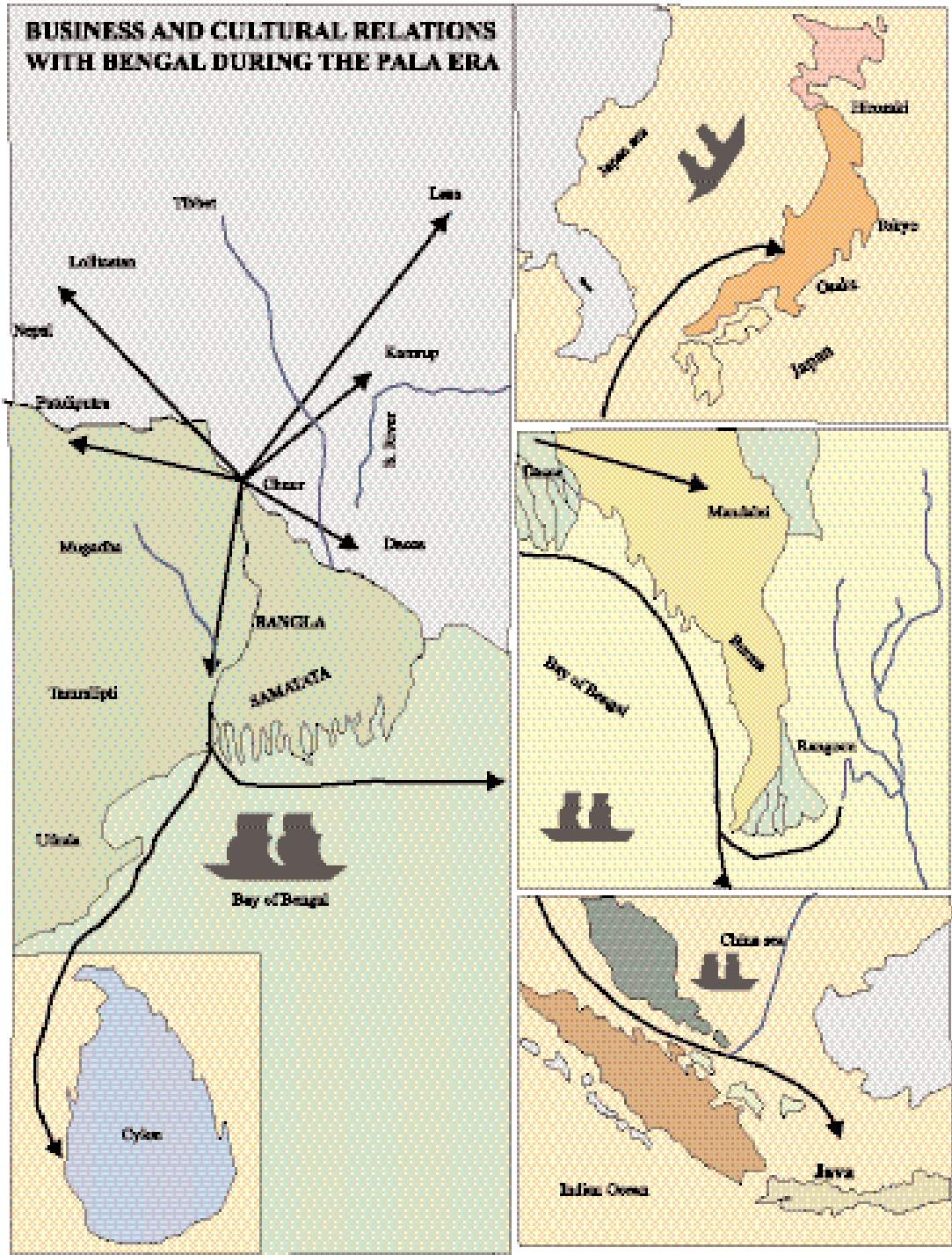
8 P. Wheatley, *the Golden Khorsonese*, Kualalumpur, 1961, p. 181.

9 *Rigveda* I. 56. 2.

10 *Ramayana*,

11 *Mahavamsa*, Translated by E. Geiger, Chapters 6-8.

12 R. C. Majumdar, *ibid*.



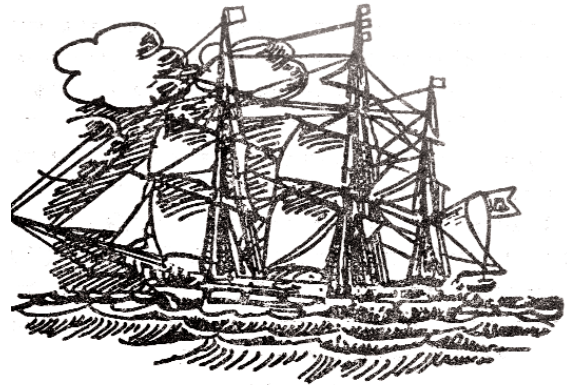
succession of such commercially important cities. *Tamralipti* down almost to the end of the Hindu period; *Sonargaon*, during the Sultani period; *Saptagrama* till the close of the sixteenth century; *Sreepur*, Bengala in the sixteenth century, Dhaka in the seventeenth century, then *Hugli* and *Calcutta*. Mahuan and other Chinese sources indicate the private maritime business of the Sultans of Bengal. The record reveals that the Sultan of Bengal sent a business mission to China with his private ships containing exportable goods and pearls.

The early phase of external trade from Bengal was operated in three directions.

- a. The first led in a southeasterly direction past the coast of Arakan to Burma and beyond.
- b. Bengal's second line of overseas trade was with the Malaya peninsula and the Far East. Ships came along the coast up to Paloura<sup>13</sup> and then proceeded right across the Bay of Bengal. Ptolomy knew this in the second century A.D.
- c. The third line of overseas trade led in a southwestern direction past the coasts of Kalinga and Coromandel to south India and Ceylon. The commercial pursuits were often combined with artistic and religious missions. It has long been believed that prototypes of the Borobudur in Java and the Ananda pagoda at Pagan, which rise in terraces, must be found somewhere in India, particularly in Bengal.<sup>14</sup> The numerous references in Chinese and Greek accounts reveal that there was active intercourse both by land and sea-routes and streams of traders and pilgrims. For over a longtime till the seventh century, Tamralipta was pre-eminently the home of rich merchants, who carried overseas trade with Lanka and Suvouraipa (Sumatra) and used to propitiate the sea with jewels and other valuable articles to ensure safe voyage across.

The tradition of ancient Bengal's trade activities is also well preserved in old Bangla literature. In the *Manasamangala* and *Candimangala*, we find vivid description of commercial activities of the traders of Bengal during the pre-Mughal and Mughal periods.

ev½b gqbvt k Kājc cŕvg  
 evŕUcj Avnj ¼v vb mBMŕg  
 wZ\_gt× gnvZx\_©AmZ Abpcvg|  
 G me mdŕi RZ m`vMi `etm|  
 R½ wW½v j Bqv Zvi v ewŕŕR` AvBŕm\  
 mBMŕgi mvayŕKv\_vq bv hvq|  
 Nŕi ewm\_vŕK mŕL bvbvab cvq\<sup>15</sup>



**„Deutschland“  
 Fregatte  
 Gebaut 1818 in Chittagong**

The first European Ship in Chittagong

13 The Sea-going boat 'Dacca-palwar' might have connection with the Marwaris traders. They got it prepared from Dhaka. Dhaka's boat building industry was reputed worldwide during Mughal time.

14 Kamrunesa Islam, *Aspects of Economic History of Bengal*, ASOB, 1984, p. 147.

15 Mukandaram, *Chandimangala*, p. 317.

Due to the changes of the river courses of Ganges, Saptagrama, perhaps, lost its importance. The Portuguese sources mentioned this port-city as the 'Porto Pequeno' or small port while they described *Chattigam* as the 'Porto Grande' or Big-port. Saptagram had a mint-house, where coins were minted for inland and overseas trading.<sup>16</sup> An unearthing of a ruined sea-going vessel and a river-port reconfirm the maritime business during medieval Bengal. Evidence reveals that traders from Persia, Arabia, Abyssinia and Europe used to visit Saptagram. Bengal's commercial relations with the Arabs in the past were a reality. In fact, Arab and Indians have been acquainted with each other from times immemorial, which lead to considerable amount of cultural and commercial exchange. The tradition and Arabian historical source claim that Arab's trade with Chittagong was carried on even in the pre-Islamic age. In the 7th and 8th centuries Arabian traders used to come to Chittagong for business. The Chittagong's culture, style of naming and once practice of writing Bangla in Arabic alphabets reveal the strong ties with Arab. Even many Arabic words in Bengali indicate the ties of Bengal with Arab countries. As soon as the maritime activities became dull, the *Shed*, *Basaks* and *Sahas sheth* traders, who were engaged in money lending, corpus and silk product business, gradually shifted for Chandannagar, Murshidabad, Hugli and Dhaka. The *Mangal Kabbaya* points to the business classes such as *Gandhabanik*, *Subarnabanik*, *Tambulbanik* and *Tantubanik*, who sailed for sea-going vessels, from Satgaon to Ceylon and elsewhere. Chand Sawdagar seeking permission from his beloved wife *Soneka* for undertaking sea trading as being a son of trader, he is no more eager to depend solely on his father's wealth. He says:

Avgi eic Rie mvayPdtbi Ckij |  
 nxi vgnb gvnibK" Avnibj fmi j tPSi Ni \

-----

evtci AmRZ ab RbYfmi LvB|  
 AvAvKi embqvbx evmYR"tK hvB\

Ùevmbqv Ktj i a=§Kmi te evmYR" K=§<sup>17</sup>

Merchants like Hirannaya and Gobhardana, who were millionaires in those days lived at Saptagram while *Chand Bene*, *Dhamapati* and *Sreemantar* were famous among the overseas traders in medieval Bengal. Among the Europeans, Portuguese started business first in Saptagram, then in Hugli. From a single port of Satgaon or Saptagram, the Portuguese merchants alone loaded thirty ships with rice, cotton-stuff, lac, sugar, long pepper, mirabolam, etc. in the third quarter of the sixteenth century, even when the port was on the decline.

By 1537 A.D. the Portuguese traders were allowed to trade at Chittagong.<sup>18</sup> They used to bring goods to Bengal from China, Malaya, Ceylon, Sumatra, Manila and exported items like muslin, cotton cloths, silk, rice, sugar, ghee, salt and saltpeter.

### Sonargaon: A port city of Bengal

After the decline of Saptagram, Sonargaon of Eastern Bengal flourished as a trade center during the capitalship of Sultani rulers. Though very little is known about the sea-going business of Sonargaon, thanks to Chinese and other travelers who gave valuable information in regard to maritime activities of Sonargaon port-city in medieval Bengal (see appendix 4.1).

16 Asoke Kumar Basu, *Gangapather Itikatha*, Kolkata, 1989, p. 142.

17 Bijoy Gupta, *Manasamangala*, pp. 120-121.

18 Asoke Kumar Basu, *ibid*.





Dau, the Arabian trading ship

Jank of Hong Kong

Jank, Chinese sea-going vessel

Ibn Bututa, who went to Kamrupa on his way to return, visited Sonargaon during the reign of Fakruddin Mubarakshah in 1346 A.D. and left an account of commodity prices of this region. Ibn Batuta disclosed that Sonargaon was an important port where the merchants of China and Java came with their ships for trade. He further wrote, “On our arrival at Sonarkawan (Sonargaon) we found a Chinese Junk (a big merchant ship) which intended to go to Java, which was a 40 days journey. We embarked on this Junk.”<sup>19</sup>

The owner of this ship was a moor (Muslim) and all the crews were Chinese. Mahuan, a Chinese traveler, visited ‘Son-na-eul-king’ (Sonargaon) in the beginning of the fifteenth century and found that traders were coming to Sonargaon from different parts of the world by sea as Sonargaon was a prosperous port-city with full of shops and product varieties.<sup>20</sup> Mahuan found a mint-house at Sonargaon where silver coins were minted, though couries were used in local business. These couries were imported from the Malayan peninsula.<sup>21</sup> The Chinese records corroborate the evidence of Ibn Batuta. The Chinese envoy states, “Sona-urh-kong (Sonargaon) is an emporium of trade where all goods are collected and distributed.”<sup>22</sup>

Sonargaon continued to be a flourishing port to the later part of the 16th century. Ralph Fitch, a English traveler, who visited Sonargaon in 1586 A. D. writes, ‘Great store of Cotton cloth goeth from hence and much rice wherewith they serve all India, Ceylon (Ceylon) Pegu, Malacca, Sumatra and many-other places’.<sup>23</sup> Fitch returned to London in 1591 A.D. In fact, his visit “thrilled London with the magnificent possibilities of eastern commerce”. Fitch accompanied with traders set out from Agra to Bengal by a 104 oaring boats.

### ‘Bengala’ the lost maritime port of Medieval Bengal

*Bengala* or *Vengala*, the lost city of Medieval Bengal, had a great importance in trade and commerce, though the historians are yet to determine the exact location of *Bengala* its trade relation with outside Bengal was a reality. Varthema and Barbosa have mentioned the city of

19 Ibn Batuta, quoted in N. K. Bhattasali, also M. A. Rahim, *History of Bengal*, Vol-1 p. 397.

20 These streets are claimed to be identical with the Panamnagar at Sonargaon.

21 Cowries used to be brought to Bengal from Maldives for trading as it was exchangeable here, especially in the eastern part of Bengal including Assam.

22 *Visva Bharati Annals*, 1945, II pp. 96-134.

23 Purchas, *His pilgrims*, x, p. 185.

‘Bengalah’ as a flourishing port at the time of their visit in the early part of the sixteenth century. There they met a large number of Muslim merchants and brisk foreign trade in cotton, sugar and other articles.<sup>24</sup> According to Barbosa, ships carrying great store of cotton cloth, sugar ginger, long pepper, etc. sailed to the Malayan Islands, Burma, Coromandel coast, Ceylon, Arabia, Persia and Abyssinia from the port of *Bengala*. Varthema says that every year fifty ships laden with cotton and silk stuffs sailed from the city of *Bengala*. In 1611, John Jourdain of East India company wrote that salts were sent from Agra to Bengala by ships having capacity of 400-500 tons.<sup>25</sup>

### ‘Sreepur Saha Bandar’

Like *Bengala*, *Sreepur* was a harbor or port city of Dhaka region before the flourishing of present city of Dhaka in 1608 A.D. Ralph Fitch also visited *Sreepur* in 1585 A. D. and mentioned it as a ‘great city’ which is also a ‘great store of Cotton cloth’. Fitch brought 180 sea-going vessels with him which carried salt and other commodities. Fitch found *Sreepur* 6 league far from Sonargaon. Vrooke mentions this place of commercial importance as *Zerepoer* in his map. Tradition says, this port city was established by the Chand Roy and Kedar Roy where the famous *Sahas* were engaged in trading. Many western travelers have given an account of *Sreepur* where rich tradition of this port city is sufficiently described. The tradition further tells that the craftsmen of *Sreepur* were adept in building sea-going big vessels. In the middle of the seventeenth century ships used to come from Malaya, Java and Far-East countries with goods. Side by, many items from here were exported to South-Asian countries, Turkey, Siberia, Arabia, Persia, Italy and Spain. Portuguese and Armenians the Mogh traders had got a strong hold on this port city.<sup>26</sup> Traveler Dazarik and Pisenta mentioned of this city in their annals. According to James Taylor, *Sreepur* was situated about six leagues to the south of Sonergonj (Sonargaon). The Portuguese are said to have settled there, about the middle of the sixteenth century.<sup>27</sup> Like many places of Dhaka region, the mighty rivers have washed away this prosperous city of Medieval Bengal.

### Wari-Bateshwar : The ancient port city of ‘Sounagora’

The archaeological objects discovered by the archaeologists of Jahangirnagar University from *Wari-Bateshwar* areas of Narshingdi district have provided a wealth of information pertaining to the sea-borne trade between the lower Gangetic parts and the Graeco-Roman Empires in the centuries around the Common Era. It was Hanif Pathan, who first brought to the attention of Dr. Nalini Kanta Bhattasali, the curator of the then Dacca Museum in the 1930s that Wari-Bateshwar was a rich archaeological site, where many objects of archaeological importance such as punch-marked coins and other artifacts were available.<sup>28</sup> Sayyid ASM Taifoor, the author of the *Glimpses of Old Dacca* presented nine punch-marked silver coins collected from the bank of an old course of Brahmaputra in the northeast corner of Dhaka district.<sup>29</sup> Bhattasali felt these were probably the earliest historical finds in the district.<sup>30</sup> The excavation reveals that the site is extremely rich in artifacts as is clearly

24 M. A. Rahim, *ibid*, p. 398.

25 See the salt route in the map.

26 For details, see Jogendranath Gupta, *Bikrampur Bibaran*, Vol-1 Dacca, 1919.

27 James Taylor, *Topography of Dacca*, 1840.

28 Henry Glassie, Firoj Mahmud. *Living Traditions*, (ASOB, 2007) p. 16.

29 Ptolemy mentioned this river as ‘Antibool’, *Asiatic Researches* Vol-XIV p. 444. Nalini Kanta Bhattasali, *Annual Report of the Dacca Museum for 1937-38*, Dacca 1936, p. 4.

30 Henry Glassie-Firoj Mahmud, *ibid*.



evident from the abundance of surface finds alone.<sup>31</sup> Though the date of minting is not clear, numerous punched-marked silver coins have been discovered at *Wari-Bateshwar*. Even iron objects have been located at 11 spots while 200 to 300 solid iron lumps have been found. Another special feature of the site is that beads of semi-precious stone have been found in thousands. On the basis of these surface finds, which certainly provide significant traces of human activity, it is evident to scholars that a trading center, if not a city, flourished in this part of Bangladesh before the Common Era. The radiocarbon dating of the charcoal samples of *Wari-Bateshwar*, tested in the Netherlands, confirms that human activity at the excavated site dates back to 450 BC.<sup>32</sup> Dilip Kumar Chakrabarti, an archaeologist of Cambridge University, termed this as the revolution in the historical archaeology of Eastern region of south Asia. Sufi Mostafizar Rahman, termed the discovery at *Wari-Bateshwar* as a vast settlement of the early historical period. The settlement reveals significant traces of an industrial as well as a trading center of ancient Bengal. These 2500 years old artifacts prove that *Wari-Bateshwar* was the ancient city of *Sounagora* referred to by the Greek geographer Ptolemy that had trade contact with the Roman Empire.<sup>33</sup>

The location of *Wari-Bateshwar* is very adjacent to the river old Brahmaputra which indicates a lost river port or city that had maritime trade with foreign countries.

31 *Ibid.*

32 *Ibid.*

33 Commander K. Sridharan, *A Maritime History of India*, Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt. of India.

### Dhaka: As the seat of maritime business

The excavation of Wari-Bateswar reveals that this region was commercially prominent during the Mauryan era. 'Davak' as mentioned by Ptolemy in 2nd A.D. is perhaps identical with the present 'Dhaka'. If it were so, then the history of *Dhaka* recedes many centuries back, requiring further reconstruction of the history of maritime trade of this part of Bengal.

As a part of inland trade, coastal business flourished before the birth of Christ. The work left by an unknown Greek, *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea* lists a series of ports studded all along the coast.<sup>34</sup> These ports also were the centres of trade and sea-borne commerce between India and the outside world. The main articles of export were precious stones, pearls, spices, muslin, etc. With the increase in maritime trade, political and cultural relations also came to be established, particularly so between India and the Roman Empire. The artifacts found at Wari-Bateswar is about 2500 years old and scholars refer it to as 'Sounagora' as mentioned by Ptolemy, the Greek geographer. This source further confirms that Wari-Bateswar or *Sounagora* had trade contacts with the Roman Empire.<sup>35</sup> As this



Ancient Bengal's maritime trade as seen by an artist

requires more research, we are not sure of exact nature of business link with Rome. But Greek sources re-confirm the existence of maritime business with south India, Ceylon, Malay, Java, Sumatra and China. Dr. Vanderkar assumes that the seagoing traders of eastern India set up colonies in Sumatra, Java and Cambodia. Picture of sea-going ships engraved in the temple of Borobudur in Java reveals the existence of ancient business contacts, especially sea-going business. Haraparashad Shertsri mentioned that the vessels had copper made eyes engraved in front of the boat and in the middle the names of the 'Bene' or traders.

During the Pala era, Savar and Vikrampur of Dhaka region were engaged in sea borne trade and the drachmas<sup>36</sup> was in circulation during the Bigrha Pala Deva. At that time the following table of Lilavati, a mathematical work, was in use to determine the value of cowries in relation to silver coins.

20 cowries	... 1 kakini
4 kakinis	... 1 pan
16 pans	... 1 drachma or silver coin
16 drachmas	... 1 nisk <sup>37</sup>

Source: A Rahim, Social and Cultural History of Bengal. p. 408.

34 Henry Glassie, *ibid*.

35 The word 'Dam' (Price) is likely to be derived from this 'Drachma'.

36 One nisk was equivalent to one diner (N. Roy, *Bangalir Itihash*, p. 136).

37 See Anecdotes of an Indian Life by Robert Lindsay (Oriental Miscellanies) 1840.



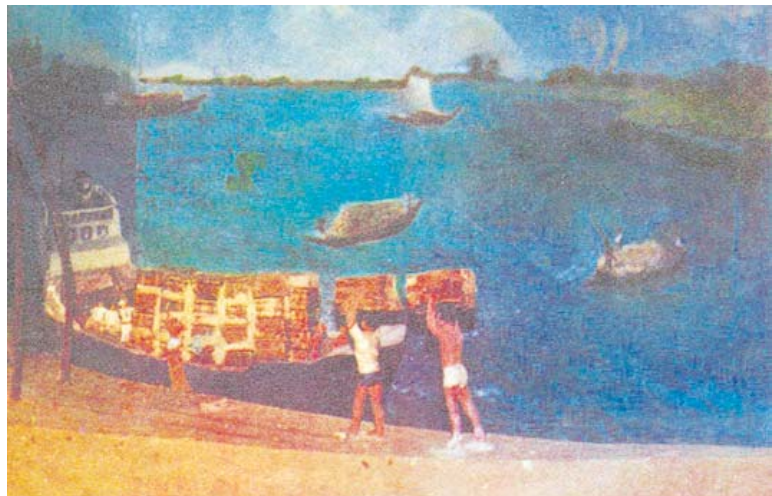
During the Muslim time, Dhaka's system of converting cowries to silver and copper coins were to some extent different from the Pala and Hindu dynasties. According to Abul Fadl, the following system of conversion prevailed in Bengal (as well as in Dhaka).

4 cowries	... 1ganda
5 gandas	... 1 budi
4 budis	... 1 pan
16/20 pans	... 1 Kahan
10 Kahan	... 1 Rupee

Source: *Ain-i- Akbari*, Abul Fadl, tr. p.138.

This system perhaps continued in Dhaka's business circles till the availability of the punch marked coins in abundance. Sylhet, once included in the Dhaka-administration, transacted this cowries for business and payment of revenue even in the late eighteenth century.<sup>38</sup> However, the fall of its price and decline in its use in Dhaka's business occurred due to the large influx of gold and silver in Bengal out of extensive maritime export-trade with the outside world. During the Sultani and Mughal periods Dhaka's external trade exchanged mainly silver and gold coins, though cowries were used only in smaller transactions.<sup>39</sup>

Cowries were imported to Dhaka by the traders who operated inland business in betel-nut or Gua at Gouhati. Tradition claims that the word Gou-hati is a corrupt of 'Gua-Hat' (Betelnut-Market). The Chinese travelers' sources confirm Dhaka's trade of cotton cloth and horn of rhinoceros with China even in the 9th century. Verthema mentioned that 50 big sea-going vessels sailed for every year from Dhaka with silk products and precious stones.



Loading goods for maritime business

Tavernier, a traveler and diamond merchant, who visited Dhaka during Shaista Khan's rule in 1666 A. D. and met him at his river-site residents found many ship and boat building craftsmen in Dhaka. The silver coin of Nasrat Shah found at Panchdona, and another silver coin found Bhatpara, Narshingdi testify an inland trade all over India.<sup>40</sup>

During Nawab Shaista Khan's regime the cape route was first discovered for trading with Europe via port city of Surat. Manuchi made a mention that Karpasa and silk cloths were sent from Dhaka

38 A. Rahim, *Social and Cultural History of Bengal*, p. 409.

39 Delwar Hassan, *Land Revenue System and Revenue Collection of Sylhet: After the Permanent Settlement 1793-1950*. in *Itihas O Ohitizha* (ed ), Itihas Samity, Dhaka University.

40 Ahmed Amin Choudhury, *Itihas O Ohitizha*, (Chittagong, 1990).

to Europe. Another source indicates that Dhaka's business during the period between 1617 and 1623, when Subedar Ibrahim Khan was the deputy Nazim of Dhaka, prospered considerably. He did the needful for safeguarding the sea-going vessels from Dhaka to other destinations. Tarafder quoted the Chinese sources which reveal that in the medieval time goods were assembled to a big market place and afterwards these were distributed to the traders who usually took initiatives to export it to other places.<sup>41</sup> Before the Mughal advent to eastern Bengal, Sreepur Saha Bandar, known as Narikool, was a river port of Dhaka. Tradition says that the Sahas, who were engaged in trading salt and tobacco in the seventeenth century, mainly occupied this Bandar. A special kind of boat namely sloop was used for the transportation of salt. Thomas, in his account of the countries round the Bay of Bengal, provides an interesting account of the shipping and commerce of this region.<sup>42</sup> The principal means of transport for sending goods was boats. Rennel mentioned that there were 30,000 boats operating in Bengal rivers for transporting of goods.<sup>43</sup> A boat normally could proceed 50 to 60 nautical miles in a fair weather in a day. Apart from the Sunderban route, Rennel prescribed a waterway from Calcutta to Dacca as under:

Calcutta Jalangi Padma (via pabna) Isamati Jafarganj Dhaleswari Dacca.

For transportation from Dacca to Goalpara, Lackya and old Brahmaputra routes were followed while reaching to Sylhet from Buriganga to Surma via Chotta Meghna route was usually used. As per Stavo, these rivers were widened and big ships could easily proceed towards the destination.<sup>44</sup> Rennel found several commodious harbours for boats at the left side of Meghna near Narayanganj. It is very difficult to identify the harbours now, but it is significant in the history of maritime business of 18th century Dhaka.<sup>45</sup> From the India of Aurangzeb, we came to know that Bengal had 4400 boats for sea borne trade.<sup>46</sup> These boats played an important role both in overseas export and import business conducted in the Bengal inland ports.

In the 18th century the maritime vessels got European technology and investment. In Dhaka and Sylhet sea going vessels were made. Robert Lindsey, the Collector of Sylhet, like other civilians, started his own shipbuilding and maritime business.<sup>47</sup>

### Shipbuilding and Boat building in Dhaka

Shipbuilding and Boat building in Dhaka was famous from the time of Akbar, which gave a great impetus to Indian shipping and ship building, especially in Bengal. Vessels were built of various sizes with various objectives i.e. transportation of elephants, for the conveyance of merchandise etc. Every ports of Akbar's empire were abounding in ships, but the chief centres of shipbuilding were Bengal, Kashmir and Dhaka.<sup>48</sup> In Bengal, Dhaka was one of the chief boat- building centres where Karigars of boat building were in abundance. Akbar's admiralty had to ensure supply of men, of efficient mariners who were experts in sea voyages. Every ship required officers and men of the following titles and descriptions.

41 Mamatajur Rahman Tarafder, Chinik Porivrajaker Dristite Muslim Bangla, *Bangla Academy Patrika*, Bhadra-Agrahayan 1368 BS, pp. 255-261.

42 Radha Khmud Mookerji, *Indian Shipping*, (Orient Longman, 1957) p. 10.

43 Rennel's Memoirs, p. 335.

44 Stavo, Voyage, Vol-1, p. 399.

45 Rennel, *ibid.* p. 37.

48 Radha Kumud Mookerji, *ibid.* p. 148.

- |                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| 1. <i>Nakhoda</i>         | : Commander of the vessel  |
| 2. <i>Maullim</i>         | : Guides the ship safe to her destination                          |
| 3. <i>Tundeil</i>         | : Chief of the sailors or <i>Khelasses</i>                         |
| 4. <i>Nakhoda-Khesheb</i> | : Assists in loading and unloading                                 |
| 5. <i>Sirheng</i>         | : Superintends the dock and launching of the ship                  |
| 6. <i>Bhandaree</i>       | : In charge of the ship's store                                    |
| 7. <i>Keranee</i>         | : Ship's clerk   |
| 8. <i>Sukangeer</i>       | : Helmsman   |
| 9. <i>Punjeree</i>        | : Looks out for other ships and land from the top of the mast      |
| 10. <i>Goomtee</i>        | : Throws water out of the ship                                     |
| 11. <i>Gunners</i>        | : Protects the ship. Numbers are according to the size of the ship |
| 12. <i>Kherwah</i>        | : Common seamen  |

Source: Radha Kumud Mookerji, *ibid*, p. 148.

According to *Ain-i-Akbari*, during Akbar's time, nothing was exacted upon exports and imports excepting a tariff taken at the ports, which never exceeded 2.5 per cent and was regarded by merchants as a perfect remission.<sup>49</sup> Every boat was charged Rs.1 per *kos* in case the boat belongs to one and the same owner. But if the boat belongs to another man and every thing in the boat to the man who hired it; the tax was Rs.1 for every 2.5 *kos*. Akbar's naval policy benefited Dhaka's



Dhaka's traditional boat building in the eyes of an artist

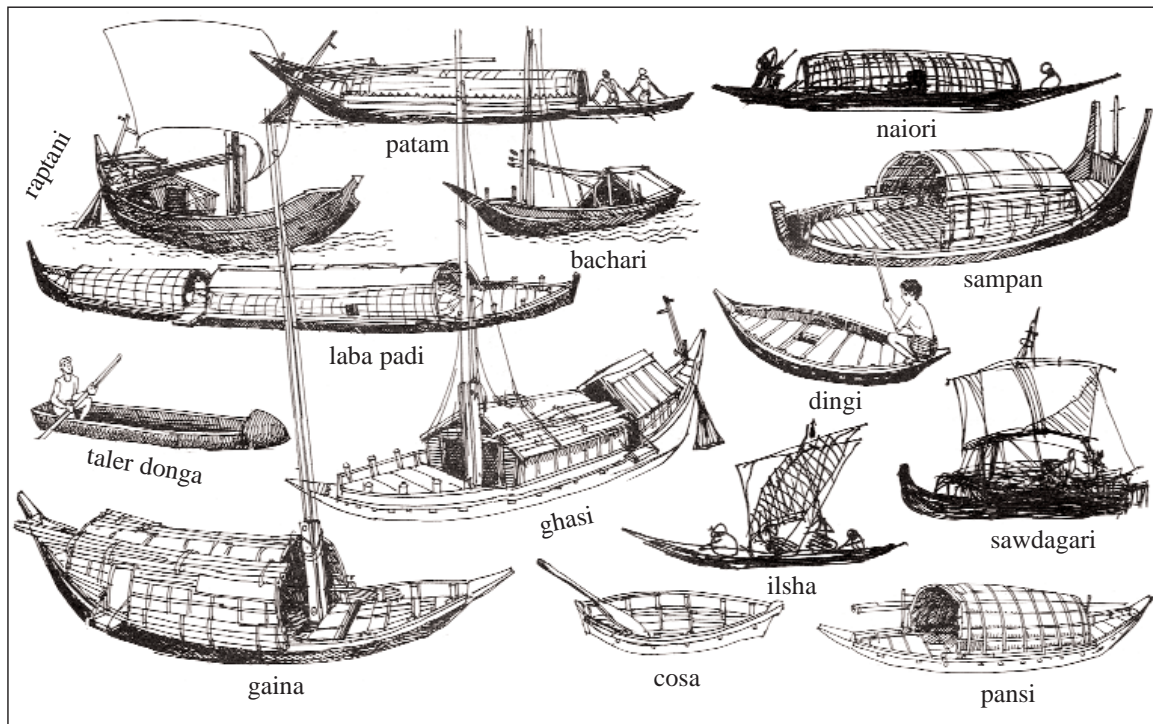
people being awarded *Jageer* for maintaining the imperial *Nowwara* or flotilla providing employment in naval fleets and in developing craftsmanship in boat and shipbuilding. The fleet was principally stationed at Dhaka.<sup>50</sup> The total expense staffing the fleet, including wages of 923 Fringe or Portuguese sailors, was estimated at Rs. 29,282 which, with constructing new vessels and repairing the old ones, amounted to Rs. 8,43,452 per annum.<sup>51</sup> Under the *Nowwara*, Dhaka

was placed the whole coast, which was liable to the invasion of the Maggs and Arakanese. According to Taylor, the *Jageers* that were assigned to the Dhaka district for the support of this naval establishment were nearly one third of its extent. Many *taluks* of the Dhaka district were granted to the people and artificers working with these fleets. During Akbar reign, naval establishment was consisted of 3000 vessels but afterwards it was reduced to 768.

49 *Ain-i-Akbari*, Gladwin's translation, p. 193.

50 Radha Kumud, *ibid*.

51 For details relating to the development of shipping in Bengal, see Grant's 'Analysis of the Finances of Bengal' in the *Fifth Report of the select committee on the Affairs of the East India Company*, Vol-i, pp. 245-247 and Taylor's *Topography of Dacca*, p. 194.



Various types of boat including Dhaka Palwar, Gaina and Bajitpuri

Imposing tax on the building of boats in Dhaka was a fruitful source of revenue. This was called *Meer Baree* and this tax varied from 8 *annas* to Rs. 1 and 4 *annas*., depending upon the size of the ships or boats. In the Dhaka district, tax was levied upon all vessels arriving at or leaving the naval headquarters whose crews were not resident of the district.<sup>52</sup> In regard to inland trade by boats these vessels were subject to taxation at Dhaka's *Shaha bandars* or at the naval points prescribed for this purpose. A boat proceeding (From Dhaka) to Moorshidabad was charged at the rate of 8 *annas* per oar, to Calcutta 10 *annas*., and to Benares R.1 8 *annas*., while boats arriving from these places were taxed at the rate of 1, 2 and 4 rupees per boat.<sup>53</sup>

*Ain-i-Akbari* also refers to the good quality boat-building facilities in the then Dhaka. The Mughals took many *Karigars* to Allahabad and Lahore from Dhaka and made big-size ships. Dhaka was quite capable in building sea-going vessels.<sup>54</sup> The timber for the building of these boats came from Sylhet, which was the great resource of timber.<sup>55</sup> The boat building of Eastern Bengal won such fame and prominence that the Sultan of Constantinople found it cheaper to have his vessels built here than in Alexandria. A Venetian traveler, Cesare di Fedrici, wrote in 1565 that 200 ships were laden yearly with salt, and that such was the abundance of materials for shipbuilding in this part of the country.

52 Radha Kumud, *ibid*.

53 T aylor, *Topography of Dacca*, 1840, pp. 198-99.

54 Panch Kari Bandapaddya (ed.) *Ain-i- Akbari O Akbharer Jibani* (Calcutta, 1957) p. 92.

55 *Fifth Report of the Select Committee*, Vol-1, pp. 444 – 445.



Not only the war-boats, there was quite a large variety of vessels built and stationed in Dhaka. State-barges for the Mughal viceroys, and two vessels magnificently fitted up had to be sent to the Emperor at Agra. These state-barges were distinguished by many cute names like *Mourpunkee*, *Muggurchera*, etc. In those days Siripur and Bakla were very prominent for boat building. During Mirjumla's Assam expedition, a good number of ships were engaged which consisted of the following:

Dhaka's boat building facilities had reached their zenith during the wartime with Pathan Zamindars and Magg-Portugusees. Though peacetime sea-borne business was reduced considerably during the wartime but boat building and other war-related business increased to a great extent. After the death of Mirjumla, the Bengal flotilla was utterly ruined.<sup>57</sup> Munawwar Khan, who stationed at Dhaka with the relics of the *Nowwara*, founded a bazar in Dhaka, which was called 'Manwar Khan's Bazar' where unemployed seamen and other naval personnel were settled down with business that was their livelihood. However, Dhaka's boat building was again revived during the regime of Shaista Khan. A contemporary Persian manuscript says:

Boats	Units	Name of flotilla
Koshas	159	Dacca Dacca
Jalbashs	48	Dacca Nowara
Ghrabs	10	Dacca Nowara
Parindh	7	Dacca Nowara
Bajrahs	4	Dacca Nowara
Patilahs	50	Dacca Nowara
Salbs	2	Dacca Nowara
Patilas	1	Dacca Nowara
Bhars	1	Dacca Nowara
Balam	2	Dacca Nowara
Rhatgiris	10	Dacca Nowara
Mahalgiris	5	Dacca Nowara
Palwarahs <sup>56</sup> and other ships	24	Dacca Nowara
Total	323	Dacca Nowara

Source: Adapted from *Fathiyyah-i- Ibriyyah*, translated by Blochman in the J. A. A. B, 1872, pp. 64-96.

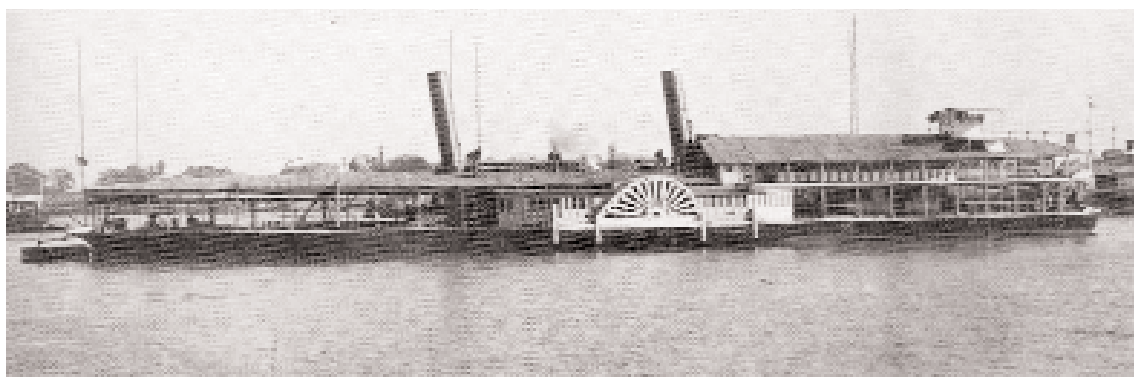
"As timber and shipwrights were required for preparing and fitting out the ships, to every mauza of the province that had timber and carpenters bailiffs were sent with warrants to take them to Dacca"

Apart from Dhaka, the other principal shipbuilding centres at that time appear to have been Hugli, Balesore, Chilmari, Jessore, Murang and Karibari, where 'as many boats were ordered to be built and sent to Dhaka as possible'. Shaista Khan appointed Hakim Muhammed Hussain, an able, learned and trustworthy man as Mansabdar who organised the Nowwara, within the possible shortest time, while Kishore Das, a well-informed and experienced clerk, was assigned with the charge of the Nowwara. Shaistakhan, thus, was able to assemble the crew, provided their rations and met needs, and collected the materials for shipbuilding and shipwrights. In order to make expedition against the Feringhi of Chatgaon, he assigned Ibn Hussain and the imperial fleet with 288 ships built in Dhaka which were placed under him. By this expedition, the Mughal naval force captured 135 ships of different sizes and types from the Feringhis.

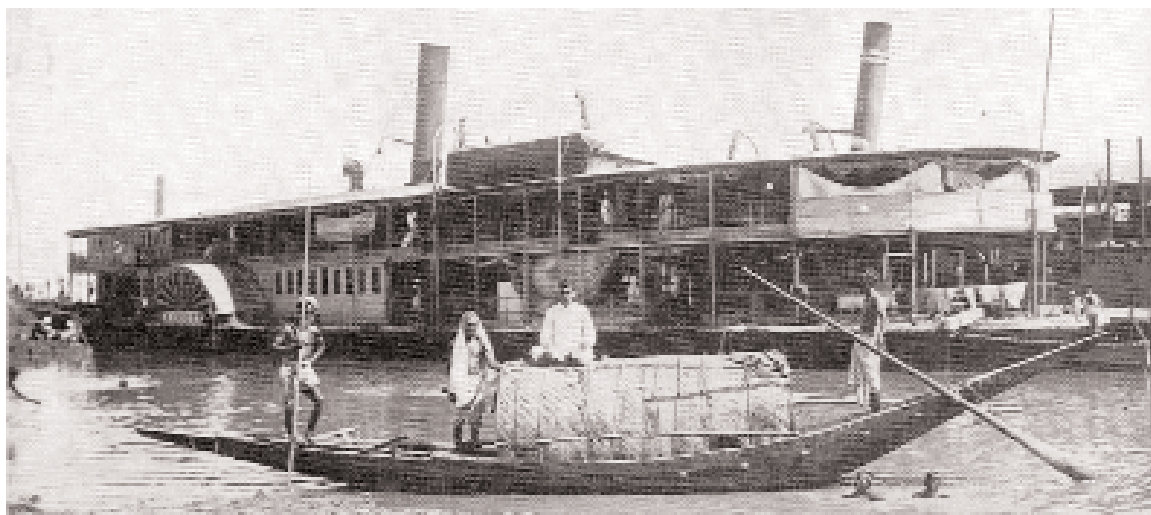
As far as the maritime commerce is concerned, after this raid, the Magg and Feringhi attacks and plunders in the Bay gradually diminished and Dhaka's maritime commerce got back its usual shape under the patronage of the Mughals. Nawab Shaista Khan, as per Bowery, imposed a sort of 'ship-money' on the mercantile community to build up the naval defense. As a result, the merchants of Jessore, Hugli and Balesore had to build sea-going vessels having capacities of 400-600 tons.

<sup>56</sup> 'Dacca Palwar' was also used in commercial purposes and found in good numbers running in the Ganges.

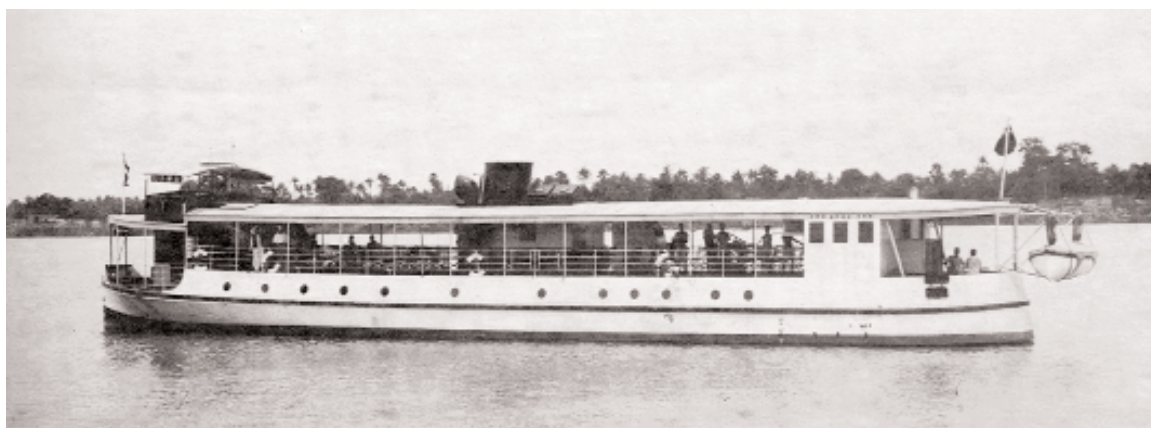
<sup>57</sup> Radha Kumud, *ibid.*, p. 163.



A IGN Company Steamer on the Assam Service in 1885



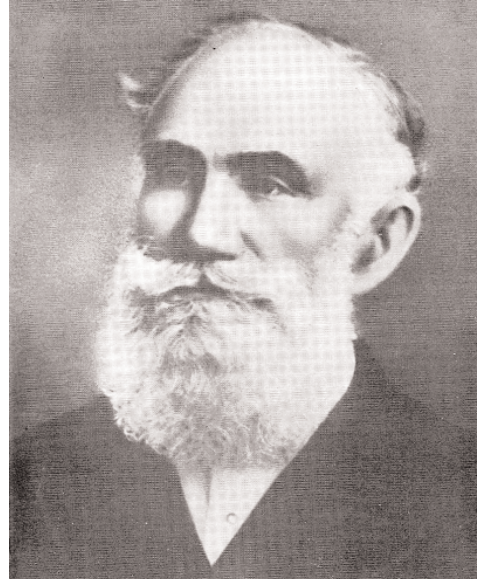
Padma Mail Service at Goalunda Ghat in 1895



The Mirkadim Ferry launch (1939)

Shaistan Khan had the strict orders to see them finished with all speed, and gunned and well manned, and send up the Ganges as high as Dhaka to protect the maritime ships engaged in sea-borne business.<sup>58</sup>

Nawab Shaista Khan had his maritime trade with outside countries. Of the Nawab's mercantile marine, Bowrey says that it consists of about 20 sail of ships of considerable tonnage that annually trade to sea from Dacca, Balesore, and Pipli, some to Ceylon, some to Tenssarim. These fetch elephants, and the rest, 6 or 7, yearly go to the twelve thousand islands, called the Maldives, to fetch cowries and cayre (coir).<sup>59</sup> Dhaka built many big size boats suitable for sea-going trade. *Patellas* was one of this kind as referred to by Bowrey. This boat was strongly built and each of them would bring down commodities weighing 4,000-6,000 Bengal munds. Another kind of boat namely *Booras* were very floaty, rowing with 20-30 oars and were used in carrying salt, pepper, and other goods from Hugli downwards, and some trade to Dhaka with salt.<sup>60</sup> Sreepur and Larikal



Captain James Hay Williamson steamer commander in the IGN Company and founder of the RSN Company in 1862

near Dhaka were famous for salt business in 17th century Dhaka. Jean-Baptise Tavernier, who reached Dhaka on 13 January 1666, saw an area inhabited for the most part by the carpenters who used to make sea-going vessels; Tavernier was highly impressed with the Galleys built by these carpenters. Some researchers consider this area identical with present *Sutrapur*. It is most surprising to see with what speed oars propel these galleys that Taverniers saw in Dhaka. Some are so long that they have up to fifty oars on each side, but there are not more than two men to each oar. Some are much decorated, whereon the gold and blue paints have not been spared.<sup>61</sup>

Tavernier's account provides us with a picture of Dhaka's boat building during the Mughal period. Though we have come to know about the quality of craftsmanship in Dhaka, very little is known about the craftsmen, who used to build such big boats or ships during the Mughal era. Tradition says, apart from Chittagong, carpenters of Naria of South Vikrampur, Salimabad<sup>62</sup> Sandiva and Bacla were famous in boat building. The nomenclature of these areas also indicates the days of naval prosperity of yester years. The word *Nao-Khoda*<sup>63</sup>, Sareng, Bhandari, Malum, Laskar, Sukani and Khalashi are either of Persian or Arabian origin and are very much familiar with the inhabitants of coastal areas. Even the businessmen of Chittagong and other coastal areas of Bangladesh were

58 A Geographical Account of Countries round the Bay of Bengal, 1669-75 by Thomas Bowrey, edited by Sir Richard Carnac Temple, Bart, series II. Vol XII, Haklüt Society Publication.

59 *Ibid.* p. 180.

60 *Ibid.*

61 *Ibid.*

62 The *Gharamis* (Carpenters) of Salimabad Pargana used to build boats for carrying salt and other commodities. The Buccla Raj Udaynarayan had to provide 'Balam' boats to Nawabs of Dacca.

63 *Nao-Khoda* is a Persian word that means the owner of a *Nao* or boat.

known as 'Sawdagar' that is also a term of Arabian origin. These traders were very respectable in Chittagong as the local proverb says:

DĒg tckv ml`wMi x, ga`g tckv Pvlv  
Aag tckv tcqv`wMi, nuRBb`v tZvqvq evmv|

The name of the boats i.e. Gorab, Kosha, Jalbah are of Arabic origin while the word Jahaj ship itself is Arabic. The balad of East Bengal also records the maritime business of her glorious past:

j`i nBtZ bQi nBj gvj g|  
tUqv %Qv RgvBti nvl %j Kg\  
(tbQi gvj g, ce½ MmZKv)

Mirza Nathan, who accompanied Subedar Islam Khan in Bengal, left a contemporary account *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi* where he has mentioned a boat, namely Thathari, used for carrying goods.<sup>64</sup> It is difficult to ascertain whether Dhaka's Thatharibazar had any connection with boat building in the past. Banjnabo in the Narshingdi district is a significant name for maritime trade in medieval Bengal. In the Buddhist Doha language *Bajnabo* means Bajra boat. It is likely that Bajra boats were built in Bajnabo.<sup>65</sup> During Akbar's time, Dhaka come under the control of the great Mughal and as and when Mansingh became the Subedar of Bengal, many businessmen from Gujrat and Coromondol extended their seaborne trade to Dhaka. After their influx into the East Bengal trade, the Marwaris and Agarwalas also followed them in the beginning of the 18th century. There is a popular belief in Chittagong that the technology of sea-going ship or boat building has been obtained from the Arab-traders who had been settled in Chittagong.<sup>66</sup>



London Port in the 19th century

64 M. I. Borha (Trans.) *Baharistan-i-Gaibi*, Govt. of Assam, 1936, pp. 127-128.

65 In the Narshingdi district many place names bear the Arabic symbol i.e. Bajnabo, Belabo, Katrabo, etc.

66 See the Address of Welcome to the Hon'ble Sir Khwaja Nazimuddin, on the occasion of the inauguration of Muslim Chamber of Commerce, Chittagong, 1936.





Singapore Port in the early 20th century



A Thiland Port in the 1930s



Sumatra Port where Bengal merchants traded over the centuries

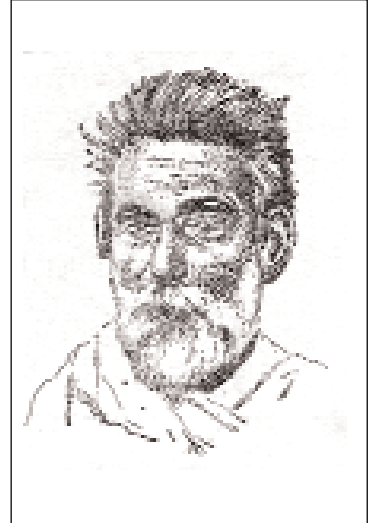
### Pioneer Entrepreneurs in Bengal



Darkanath Tagore. He had his shipping, bank, insurance and tea business



Joytindranath Tagore, had jute business



P.C. Roy, founder of Bengal Chemical Works



Hashem Ali Khan, minister of undivided Bengal. Initiated urban cooperative bank; started shipping business



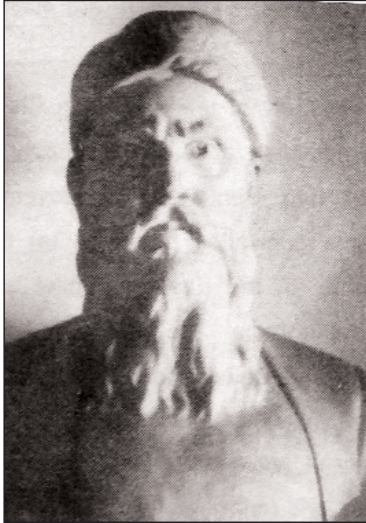
Abdul Bari Chowdhury, a pioneer in shipping business in East Bengal



Nalini Rajan Sarkar, a pioneer in hides and skins business



### Pioneer Entrepreneurs in Bengal



Rahim Prodhan, the first Bangali tea planter from East Bengal



Nawab Musharraf Hossain, a famous tea planter



Natun Chandra Singha, founder of Kundashwari Ousadalaya



D.N. Chowdhury, owner of Bangalakshmi Mills



Ranadaprasad Saha, a pioneer in jute, river transport and leather business

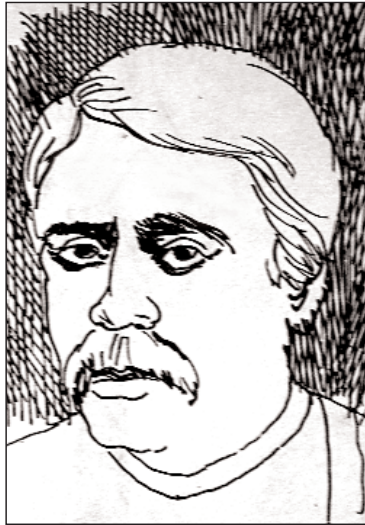


Abdul Halim Ghaznavi, a pioneer in jute business

### Patrons in Dhaka Business



Ananda Chandra Roy, Director, Bengal Bank



Dinonath Sen, who discovered power loom, punching machine, a lamp and established Dhaka Artizan School



Khaja Yusuf encouraged the Langalbandh Mela and Dhaka's Business



Fazlur Rahman, former minister and during the British and Pakistan era. Founder, New Dacca Industries Ltd



Wahiduzzaman, minister and VP All India Co-operative Bank Association



Khwaja Shahabuddin, Director Cooperative Bank and Minister of Pakistan. He initiated the construction of Dhaka-Narayanganj road



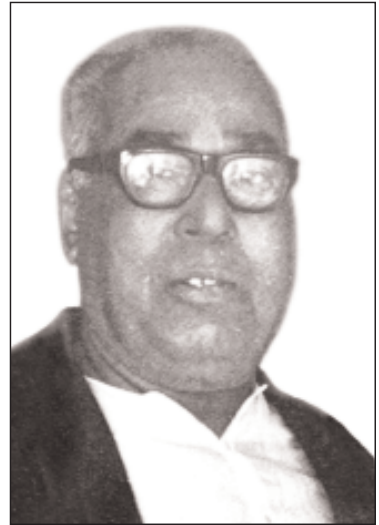
### Patrons in Dhaka Business



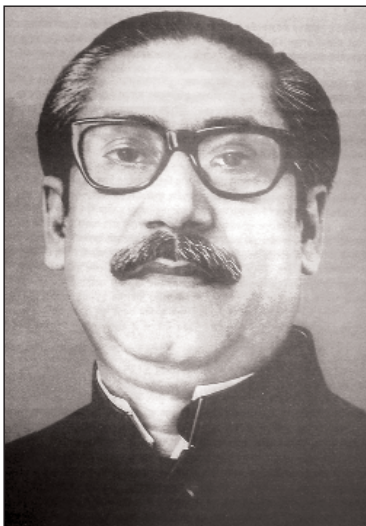
A.K. Fazlul Huq worked for the cause of development of agriculture sector of Bengal; initiated Agriculture College at Tejgaon in 1939



H.S. Suhrawardy, a renowned politician, was adviser of many trade union organizations



Ataur Rahman Khan, politician. President, E.P. Jute Growers Association; President, Pakistan Jute Federation



Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was the minister for industries in 1954 (later on President of Bangladesh) and initiated Film Development Corporation



Hafizur Rahman, Director of Textiles in the 1950s; Chief Controller, Jute Regulations, 1953



Hafizuddin Ahmed, minister and first chairman of EPIDC

### Patrons in East Bengal Business



Golam Faruk, Chairman Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation (PIDC)



A.K. Khan, former minister and Industrialist



Hamidul Haque Chowdhury, former minister, member All India Handloom Board, Central Sugarcane Committee and Textile Control Board



Nawab Habibullah, former minister. He had his business at Dhaka



G.A. Madani, Chairman DIT, who made an extensive plan for Dhaka City including development of industrial areas



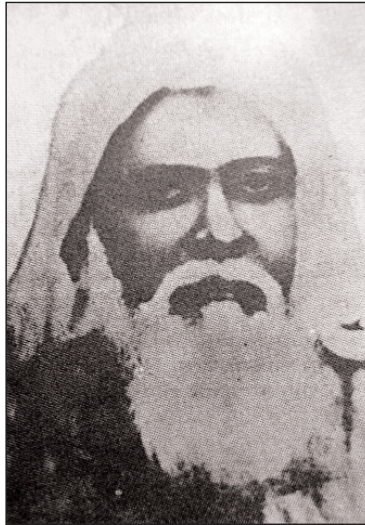
M Rahamatullah, the first Deputy Commissioner of Dhaka after partition. He initiated to rehabilitate the migrated businessmen



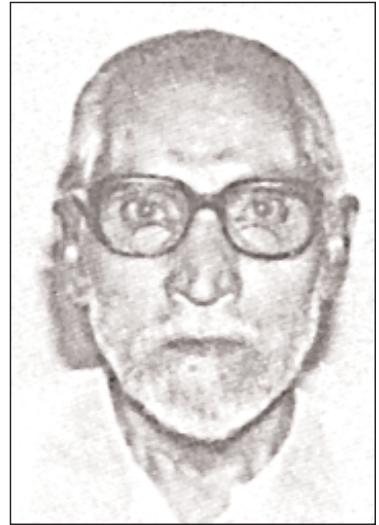
### Prominent Businessmen of Dhaka before 1947



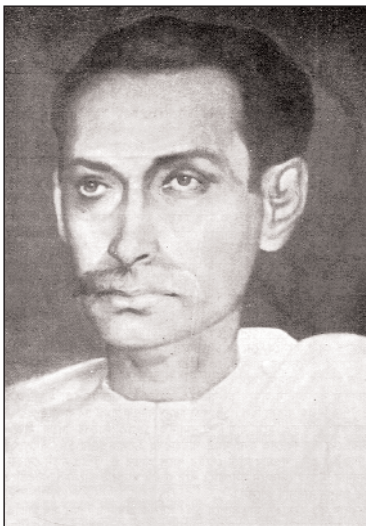
Hiralal Sen was a filmmaker and studio owner, namely Amarabati Fine Arts Association and H.L. Sen and Brothers



Hafez Mohammad Hossain, a renowned businessman of rice, hides and skins



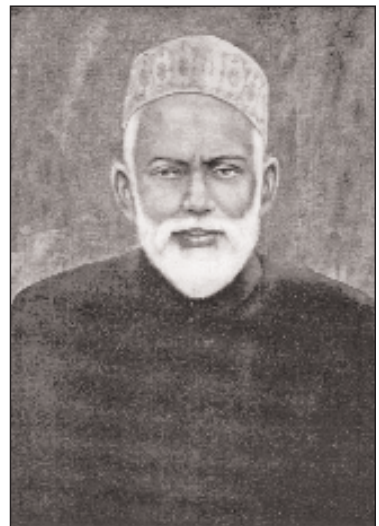
Moula Buksh, a prominent businessman. Partner, 'Town Bus Service' and established 'India Automobile Works'



Kader Sarder, founder of Lion Theatre, later known as Lion Cinema Hall

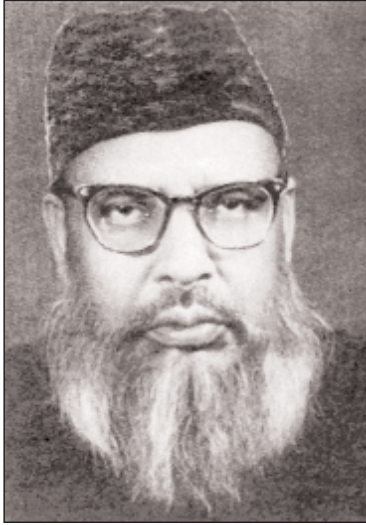


Abdul Majed Sardar, owner of Dacca Hotel



Rahim Buksh was a prominent businessman in the 1940s. He had button and comb business. He was popularly known as 'Rahim Mahajan'

### Prominent Businessmen of Dhaka in 1940s



Mufti Din Mohammad, a religious personality. He had his oil and ghee business. He motivated traders to ensure correctness in weighing goods



Fakir Chand had his *bidi* factory and textile mills



Osman Ali, a businessman of Narayanganj. His business line was jute



Khan Saheb Wasel Mollah, a famous Muslim businessman of Kolkata. He had his business at Dhaka also



Khaja Azmal made first film in Dhaka in 1930s



Trailokyanath Bose, an weaving expert and the author of the book 'Tant O Rang'



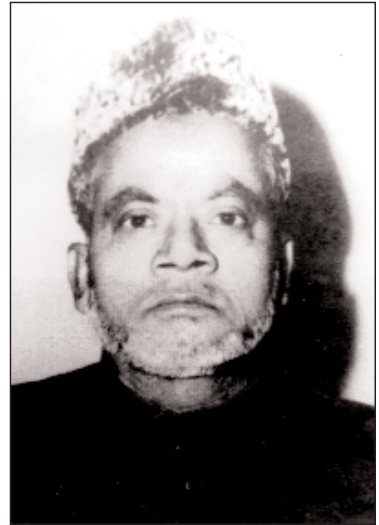
### Prominent Businessmen of Dhaka before 1947



Alhaj Sarfuddin Ahmed, owner of Islamia Library. President, Muslim Chamber of Commerce, Dhaka



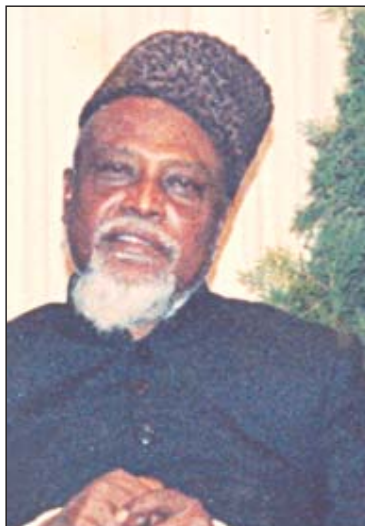
Hamidur Rahman Sinha, founder of the ACME Pharmaceutical Company



Abdul Aziz, Owner Momin Motors Co.



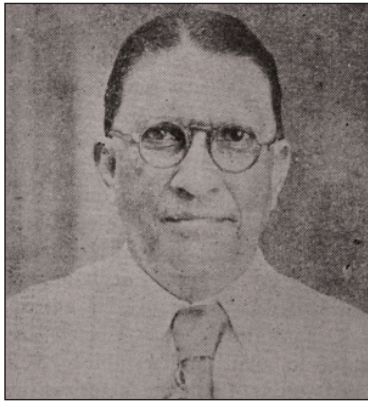
Haji Mohammad Basiruddin was the founder of an Ice-cream factory in 1940s. Importer of Glass Bengales, founder Muslim Bengales Association



Haji Ashrafuddin one of the founders of the Ashraf Textile Mills



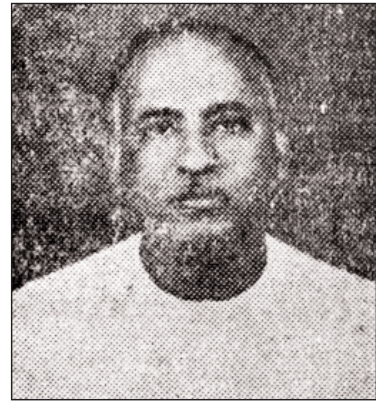
Alauddin Miah, founder, Alauddin Umbrella Company



D.N. Bose  
Chittaranjan Cotton Mills Ltd.



Abdur Rahman Bhuiyan  
A.R. Bhuiyan Co.



Golam Gaus



Hassan Askari  
Founder, Hassan Askari Jute Mills



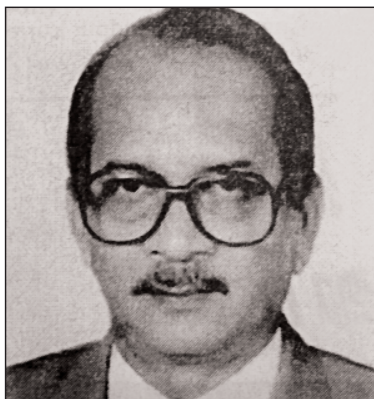
Seth Bachhraj Saraogi  
Founder, The Dacca Jute & Cotton Mills



K.D. Ahmad



Aminul Islam Chowdhury  
Founder President, E.B. Chamber of Industries



Nurul Kader  
Founder, Desh Garments Ltd.



Nitun Kundu  
Founder, Autolpi Fourniture



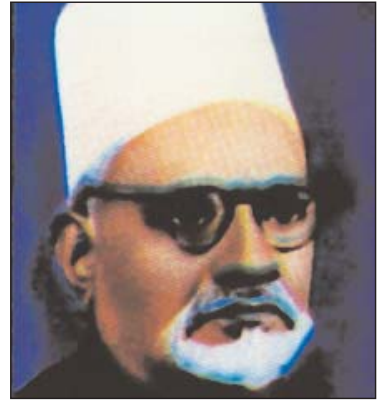
**Some business entrepreneurs, who had their business in East Bengal**



His Highness Aga Khan



Sir Adamjee Hajee Dawood



Ahmed Bawani



Wahid Adamjee



M. M. Ispahani



M. A. H. Ispahani



Y. A. Bhawani



V. H. A. Ghani



Hanif Adamjee

**Some Prominent Businessmen to 1970**



Abdul Aziz  
Nishat Jute Mills



Abdul Aziz A Sattar  
Founder, Sattar Match Factory



Abdul Ghani Jiwani  
Founder, Bawa Jute Mills



Abdul Jalil,  
President, Dhaka-N.ganj Chamber



Abdul Sattar Bhura  
Founder, Ibrahim Match Factory



Abdul Sattar  
Dacca Beverage Industries



Abdus Sattar Ahmad  
Founder, Karim Jute Mills



Hajee Ahmed Isa Dada  
R. Sim & Co.



Haji Mohammad Sabur  
Ashraf Textile Mills



**Some Prominent Businessmen to 1970**



Amin Ahmed  
Elahi Box & Co.



Dost Muhammed Mannoo  
Olimpia Textile Mills



Qazi Ghiasuddin Ahmed  
Founder, Ujala Match Factory



Hafiz Mohammed Hassan  
Dacca Match Factory



Hassan T. Bhimani  
Peoples Jute Mills



Laila Khan  
Lira Industrial Enterprise



Jatindra Mohan  
Founder, Jatin and Co.



Mohammad Bhai  
Platinum Jubilee Finance & In. Cor.



Mohammed Bashiruddin  
Jamil Soap Works

**Some Prominent Businessmen to 1970**



Md. Fizul Islam  
Handloom and Handicrafts



Md. Yakub  
Tiger Wire Products



Mohammed Noman  
Peoples Tobacco



Hajee Abdul Wahab  
Chairman, Ashraf Jute Mills



Mohammad Hanif  
Former Mayor and Businessman



Nasir Mohammed Khan  
East Bengal Board Mills



S. M. Noor  
Nabisco Biscuit & Bread Factory



Shams Kassim Iakha  
Peoples Jute Mills



Shan Ellahi  
Sikandur Industries



**Some Prominent Businessmen to 1970**



Abdur Razzak Bhuiyan  
A. Razzak & Co.



M. A. Mohaimen  
Proprietor, Pioneer Press



K. H. A. Ansari  
Mashreki Textile Mills



Ashraf Adamjee  
Star Partical Board



Edwin Charles Rebeiro  
Jute & Guny Trading Ltd.



Galam Mustafa Sarwar  
Sarwar Jute Mills



Syed Mohammed Hossain  
Dacca Wirenetting Factory



Md. Tofazzal Hossain  
Kohinoor Jute Mills



S. Nasir Ahmed  
Brahmaputra Trading

**Some Prominent Businessmen to 1970**



Serajuddin Ahmed  
Elite Chemical Industries



Rashid Ahmed  
Eastern Co-operative Jute Mills



Ahmedullah Choudhury  
Eastern Pakistan Chemical Indus.



Habibur Rahman  
Executive, Oxford University Press



Md. Sirajuddin  
Owner, Captial Bekary



Minhajuddin Ahmed  
The Asiatic Labrotories



Nazir Hossain  
Cloth Merchant and Author



Alhaj Syed Ali  
Pakistan Medical Supplies



Habib Charania  
Cyclespare Parts Manufacturing



**Some Prominent Businessmen to 1970**



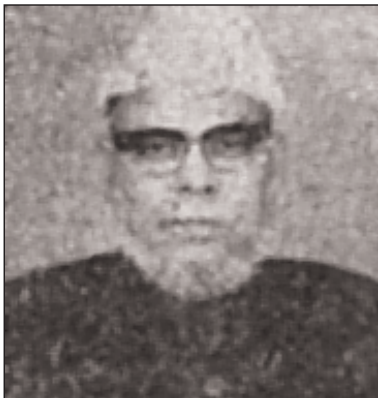
Syed Salim Uddin  
Dacca Engineering works



Abdul Jabber Khan  
Iqbal Film & Sons



Khan Ataur Rahman  
Film Director



Hafez Monir Hossain  
Hajee Monir Hossain and Sons



Mohammed Mustafa  
Shabistan cinema Hall



Mosharaf Hossain Choudhury  
Jonaki Cinema Hall



Sheikh Enam Elahi  
Pakistan Rubber Industries



Irshad Ali Khan  
Nasim Plastic Industries



KB Mohammed Shamsuddaha  
Dacca Tanneries

**Some Prominent Businessmen to 1970**



Golam Mowla  
MD, Great Eastern Insurance Co.



Khalil Omar  
Founder, Omar Sons Ltd.



Mohammed Essa  
Founder, Essa Brothers



Abdus Samad  
Insurance Personality



Sirajuddin Ahmed  
Owner Madhumita Cinema Hall



Sultanuddin Ahmed  
Alim Jute Mills Ltd.



K. M. Ahmed  
Mashiqui Textiles



Abdur Rahim  
Proprietor, Rahim Afroz Co



Dost Mohammad Jafferbhoy  
D.M. Pest Control



**Some Prominent Businessmen to 1970**



Golam Mohammad Adamjee  
Director, Fetco Industries Ltd.



Kazi Mohammad Bashir  
Director, E.P. Cooperative Insurance



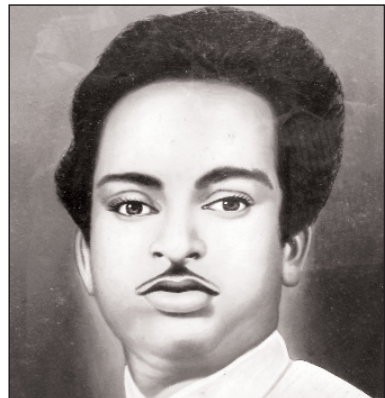
Mohammad Khalil  
Owner, Light Biscuit Factory



Mohammad Nasir Ali  
Owner, Nowroze Kitabistan



A. K. Moslemuddin Ahmed  
Owner, Pak Sci. & Chemical Co.



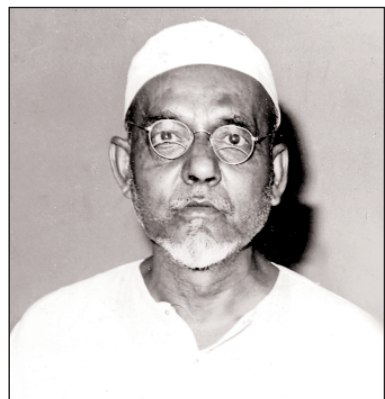
Prahalad Chandra  
Proprietor, Beauty Boarding



Md. Sakhi Mia  
Exporter and Importer



Hajee Md. Khalilur Rahman  
Importer



Hajee Abdul Halim  
Shoe Merchant

## Dhakai Kashida: Its Cultural and Economic Impact

Shayla Parveen

The word *Kashida* is probably originated from Arabian culture. The original Arabic word '*Kasad*'<sup>1</sup> was evolved as *Kashida* and used in different languages of the world. Generally *Kashida* praises favorite person or aspect in a poetic order.<sup>2</sup> A rich collection of *Kashida* was gradually developed in Arabic literature since pre-Islamic era. It enters in different language and literature along with the simultaneous spread of Islam in different countries. In India, *Kashida* was well-known at the Mughal Darbar. At that time it was based on the praises of emperors written by the official language Persian. According to the tradition, *Kashida* was a representative feature of the Mughal capital, Dhaka.

*Kashida* also refers to a kind of cloth like Muslin<sup>3</sup>, stitch work<sup>4</sup> etc in Bangla, though the people of Dhaka know *Kashida* in different ways. The holy month of Ramadan, even a few decades ago, was seemed to be the month of *Kashida*. The Rozadars (he who fasts) starts the days with *Sheheri* and at the time of *Sheheri* they are woken up by the call of *Kashida* singers. This way *Kashida* the first caller to the Rozadar of Dhaka, the call to start a sacred day of a sacred month. Ramadan *Kashida* generally emphasizes the greetings of Ramadan, glory of Allah and Rasul (SM), description of Kiamat,<sup>5</sup> etc. The *kashida* inspires the Rozadars of Dhaka with divine feeling.

We can assume that *Kashida* was revived again in the middle of the 20th century as described in the book titled *Paches Barash Pahele* written by Hakim Habibur Rahman. At that time *Kashida* was flourished gradually and patronized by the local leaders of Dhaka known as Sardars.<sup>6</sup> These local leaders along with the *Nawabs* of Dhaka used to arrange many *Kashida* functions during Ramadan. Not only that, *Kashida* singers used to knock every door of the city as far as possible. Even the youngsters from upper class society used to come out delightfully at night to sing and wake up the Rozadars during the Ramadan. These singers are inspired by religious passion as well as to achieve local popularity. To wake up the Rozadars at the time of *Sheheri* is regarded as a good and pious deed by the people of Dhaka. So the singers are regarded as honorable men in the community. The aged members of the society used to stand and wait for the arrival of the *Kashida* singers beside the road at the time of *Seheri*. While meeting the team they would distribute *halua*,

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1 Islamic Encyclopedia, vol. 7, Islamic Foundation Bangladesh, November 1989, Dhaka p. 564-583

2 Kazi Rafiqul Hoque (ed.), *Bangla Vasai Arbi, Farsi, Turki, Hindi, Urdu Shabder Ovidhan* (first part), Bangla Academy, April 2004, p. 43

3 Hakim Habibur Rahman, *Dhaka Pachash Baras Pahele*, Bangla Academy, December 1995, p.322

4 Sirajul Islam (ed.) *Banglapedia*, vol.2, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, March 2003, p. 315

5 According to different lyric or *Kalam* of *Kashida* collected under field survey.

6 Personal contact with Nurun Nahar Bibi, wife of Kader Sardar.



sweets and dates to them.<sup>7</sup> Besides this, along with the youngsters the females of the houses would stand in the verandah silently in response to Kashida procession keeping the arrangement of Sheheri late. Very often they would invite the members of the procession in their houses to hear Kashida in a homely environment. The host would welcome the singers with food and honorarium according to their level. The singers used to accumulate their honorarium received from the elders and relatives and would spend the savings for preparing and cooking rich food in a picnic mood in the day or the day after of Eid.

The development of Kashida reached its peak after the time of partition in 1947. Many Urdu speaking people migrated from different parts of India to Dhaka. These new immigrants started writing lyrics of different *Urdu Kalam* of the then popular songs of Dhaka and took it as a partial profession. They would write *Kawali* during *Razab*, *Kashida* during *Ramadan*, *Nat-e-Rasul* during *Rabiul Awal* etc with *Gazal* and *Sher-E-Shaeri*.<sup>8</sup> With this limited professional framework Kashida acquired much popularity in the cultural life of Dhaka. Thematically the rising of Kashida is a significant issue of socio cultural event in the post-partitioned cultural environment of Dhaka as a capital of East Pakistan. The thousand year's culture of India divided through 'Two Nation Theory' which generated new norms and values shaping Muslim culture where Kashida contributed as an essential element of cultural identity. The Kashida of that time had distinct difference with the pre-Mughal Darbari Kashida or Arabic Kashida. The local and indigenous elements influence the tunes and presentation of Kashida which maintain the core of the subject-matter. In this period the competition of Kashida is held in different places of Dhaka. New dimension takes place in the lyrics, tunes and presentation in view of the competitive atmosphere. Thus a new style of Kashida is written in different perspective and fusion. Though this Kalam is written in Urdu, Persian and Arabic words are also incorporated in various ways. The copyright of the



Parcha of the Kalam

Kalam is kept by the *Salare Kafela*.<sup>9</sup> The name of the authors of the Kalam is often found in the lyric, after the first para. The contemporary Hindi film song's composition are introduced in Kashida along with *Kawali*, *Shahedi*, *Marshia*, *Nat-e-Rasul*, *Variabi*, *Malkosh*, *Classical* etc to

7 Dr. Kazi Din Mohammad, *Purano Diner Dhakai Eid*, Daily Inqilab, January 2000.

8 Personal contact with Munjurul Alam, Mohammad Ali & Jumman Miah, all *Kashida* singers of Dhaka.

9. Personal contact with Manik Chand, Syed Fashi Hossain & Jumman Miah.

create more attraction and melody which is turned as a tradition now a days. Usually seven to eight singers take part in chorus. Group captain or the Salare Kafela is responsible write up and composition of the Kalam, group presentation and many other important acts of conducting the team. The competition generally held in a grand ceremonial environment. The participants used to follow proper religious manner like *Ozu*<sup>10</sup> and stand like in *Namaz*; all these practices considered as the core rules of the occasion or the *Adabe Mahfil*.



Performing Kashida

Besides the competitors, the audience are also remain careful in maintaining silence and sanctified environment of the occasion. Such competition generates huge excitement and curiosities to different age group in inter-Mohollah or area level. The audience strictly avoid different activities like smoking and others to maintain a holy and sacred atmosphere of the competition arena during the whole night of blessings and pleasure.

Most of the Kashida singers used to sing well during Pakistan period. At that time several

participant's group from each Mohollah took part in the competition. Finally the competition comprised of twenty to twenty five teams were allocated 12 minutes time for each team.<sup>11</sup> But this duration of time was flexible and often reduced to eight minutes due to excess participants, late inauguration, short duration of night etc. Besides the top winners, there are also some arrangements to give souvenirs to other participants. At the end of the competition, very often the organizers declare only the names of the winners without distributing prizes on the spot. Generally the prizes are distributed among the winners on the Eid day. The winners used to go with band party to receive the prizes. Some groups would win prizes in several competitions. The presence of the wining team with the trophy in the area inspire the proud neighbors to come and see with frolic and fun. There was some exception in distributing the prizes in this case. Some of the organizers used to distribute the prizes just after the completion of the competitions.

To some participants it was important to take part in the competitions rather than wining the trophy. While the result is declared and prize distribution ceremony is held in the same night after the competition, the winners used to go back to their *Mohollah* by singing the wining Kalam at the time of Sheheri. On the next day the neighbors of the *Mohallah* used to come and see the prizes during the Salat of Fazar, Asar and Esa.<sup>12</sup> In some cases the defeated team would challenge the organizers about the result. The organizers then sent the team to juries. The juries used to explain the various aspects of the results in front of them along with their terms and logic.

Most of the writers of kashida kalam were non Bengali.<sup>13</sup> They lived in different slums - Adamji, Mirpur, Mohammadpur and different places. Some writers were reported to have lived in Syedpur

10 Muslim preparation before Namaz.

11 Personal contact with Jumman Miah & Munjurul Alam.

12 Personal contact with Jumman Mia.

13 Personal contact with Jumman Mia & Munjurul Alam.

or Rangpur.<sup>14</sup> Among them Rajve is prominent of this time. There was a competitive mentality among the writers to gain name and fame in the society. The competition and the excitement even crossed borders of the singers towards the writers of Kalam. The writers used to be present with the team on the competition spot. The team would secure their kalam till its presentation. In some cases if the Kalam of the opponent party seemed to be better, the writer on the spot would start writing much better Kalam and provide it to the Salare Kafela for composition. Though in general perception it is of great risk to write and compose a completely new Kalam in the competition spot, the writer and Salare Kafela often used to take the risk to win the competition. Thus the competition goes through tough and tight procedures. The juries were selected on the basis of their expertise in Urdu language and religious affairs. The prominent juries of old Dhaka are Azaz, Hafez Juhur, Hafez Dehlovi, Moulana Abdus Salam, Kari Shamsul Haque, Moulana Abdul Taher, Ayub Kawal, Moulana Bashir Ahmed, Hazi Furkan of Beauty spices etc.<sup>15</sup> Some non-Bengali Writers also work as Juries.



Performing Kashida

A four-member jury board used to judge the team in four aspects such as Kalam (lyrics), Tallahfus (proper utterings), Tarrannum (tune and melody) and Adabe Mahfil (proper mannerism).<sup>16</sup> These aspects are discussed in the following way:

1. Kalam (Lyrics): The highest distribution of marks are allocated in this aspect. Before the competition day, each team had to submit their Kalam to respective organization and the organizers processed the Kalam to the juries. Sometime the participants withdraw their previous Kalam and resubmit the new one during the competition. The juries would mark the Kalam in reference to proper meaning, grammar and manner.
2. Tallahfus (Proper uttering): Tallahfus means the uttering of each word and alphabet according to Arabic Makhraj. Makhraj is a grammar used in Arabic and Urdu Languages where the uttering of words and alphabets is specified. Many Kashida artists would become looser due to poor Tallahfus though posing excellent voice.
3. Tarannum (Tunes and Melody): Tarrannum comprises the dimensions, tunes, music and melody. Members of a team have to be careful about tarrannum while presenting in chorus.
4. Adabe Mahfil (proper mannerism): Adabe Mahfil signifies certain rules and values of the competition. Appropriate dressings (*Punjabi, Pajama or Kabli and Topi*), timings and proper environment during presentation on the stage - all comprise the code of Adabe mahfil.

Five different kinds of Kashida are noted from various sources of information. They are as follows:

1. **Chand Rati Amad:** The moon of Ramadan arise with the message of Rahmat, Barkat and Magferat. The holy moon also derives the Kashida known as Chand Rati Amad. This Chand Rati

14 Abddus Samad, Apshu & Badruddin Ali, Kashida singers.

15 Personal contact with Jumman Mia & Munjurul Alam.

16 Personal contact with Jumman Mia & Syed Fashi Hossain.

Amad was sung till the fourth or fifth day of the holy month to welcome to the Holy moon. This Kashida's subject-matter is composed with the description of the blessings of Ramadan, glory of Allah and Rasul (SM). This Chand Rati Kashida was popular till the 7th decade of the last century.

2. **Khus Amdid:** The Urdu word *Khus Amdid* means grand welcome. This Kashida is presented on the salutation of holy month till the 15th day. This is also known as *Sada*, some people call it *Khus Gawal*. The subject matter of the Kashida describes the gratitude to Ramadan, highness of Allah and Prophet. In the competition this type of Kashida is rarely presented.

3. **Albida:** In the ending phase of the Ramadan month, more specifically after 16th day, this type of Kashida is sung with deep sorrow and pain. The core subject of this Kashida is the sorrows felt in the departure of Ramadan, the of martyr of Hazrat Ali, scenarios of Kiyamat etc. As the competition takes place in the last stage of the month, this type of Kashida is presented in large numbers in the competitions.

4. **Eid Mubarak:** In the day after Eid, there held an Eid procession where Eid Mubarak Kashida is presented as a main theme of the pleasure of Eid. The special feature of this Kashida is inclusion of different-musical instruments like Harmonium and Piano after the whole month of presentation without any musical instrument.

5. **Special Kashida:** This Kashida, sung by the occasional singer to wake up the Rozadars, does not follow any rules and codes of grammar and presentation.<sup>17</sup> These teams do not follow any particular Kalam. In this respect the team members are more interested to religious deeds rather than singing professional Kashida. They do not list themselves to any competition and use various compositions from Hindi movie songs.



Prize distribution ceremony

The Kashida of old Dhaka not only signify the feelings of the blessing of Allah or the contemporary conservative religious traits and cultural milieu but also represents the socio-economic perspective of one of the important cities of the sub-continent of a particular time. The language of Kashida, in its blending, adaptation, writer's philosophy, collaboration with different social organization, participants attitude etc is a testimony of the preservation of numerous untold words regarding Dhaka's past society and culture. The period in which the Nawabs of Dhaka provided help for the survival

of Kashida should also be noticeable as it was an important transitional period of the sub-continent. Dhaka's Nawabs were the beneficiary class in between the British rulers and the general people. The society, originated in the platform created by Permanent Settlement Act 1793, promoted numerous Landlords or Zamindars who led the society and influenced in almost every respect of culture and economic activities. In Bangla this new class of Zamindars were Hindus. Dhaka's Nawab, Dhonbari Zamindar and a majority of few Muslim zamindars in this land had distinct custom and culture as against the contemporary Hindu zamindars. These Muslim upper class people were the frontline

<sup>17</sup> Personal contact with Mr. Anwar Hossain, an occasional *Kashida* singer and present owner of Anwar Group of Industries.



activists behind the Bengal partition and to justify the geographical division. In this way Kashida was seemed to be one of the prominent cultural elements which articulated the norms and values of “Muslim Nationalism” or “Islamic Nationalism”. Religion or Islamic theology was perceived as a prime notion on the Dhaka’s Nawab and other Muslim zamindars and upper classes to promote “Muslim Nationalism” in place of “Bengali Nationalism”. Urdu was popular in the main city of East Bengal for many days. This Urdu language or Kashida signified as elements of Islamic culture which was different



The winning procession in the *Moholla* with trophy

from the neighboring part of India. It is noticeable that the theory “Two Nation” which divided India was integrated earlier by the similar kind of religious and theological concept. Religion contributed many things or issues like Kashida. For this reason though East Pakistan had so many problems with West Pakistan after the partition, the sovereignty of both the wings was under threat because of national language issue, the streets of East Pakistan marked with blood of language martyrs, the Kashida continued to remain popular in the cultural area and recreational event of Dhaka. National language Bangla and Dhaka’s Urdu never conflicted each other. Even during 71, the freedom fighters didn’t mind in Kashida procession at the dark night during Ramadan. Even after the Independence of Bangladesh, Kashida was not lost from Dhaka. As Urdu was an active element behind the Pakistan nationalism, the amalgamation of Urdu with Kashida was considered as natural in Independent Bangladesh. But it didn’t happen in that time. The Kashida captured strong bonding gradually with Dhaka rather than Urdu. Though the concept of Pakistan and “Two Nation Theory” are no longer accepted, the acceptance of Urdu Kashida remained same to *Dhaka* and *Dhaka Basi*. But at present Kashida is practiced within the limited socio-cultural and recreational activities of Dhaka. The melody of Kashida is heard sometimes at *Sehery* and the Kashida competition is held in a very limited way. The gradual invasion of satellite culture and urbanization have changed our culture and thus Kashida has been disappearing fast from the life in Dhaka. After the whole day of fasting, Dhakbasi do not have the recreation of Kashida like before; the singer’s voice is not heard like the past. Liberal patronization and proper documentation of the heritage “Kashida” are essential and utmost demand of the day.

### **Economic aspect of *Kashida***

To know about the economic aspect of *Kashida*, it is necessary to evaluate its origin and various evolutions through different socio-cultural contexts. The history goes back to the founding days of Dhaka as the Mughal capital. It was not merely empowering the eastern part of the Mughal Emperor; rather the setting up of the new capital in Dhaka having more significance than the fort or the army settlement in the early sixteenth century. Islam Khan, the Mughal Subadar and the founder of the capital, brought not only a big army but also a group of civilians and professionals (*Tati*, *Shakahr*, *Sarnakar*, etc) with a view to ensuring a sustainable society and the Mughal dominance along with the military invasion. The proverb ‘*Might is right*’, was not practically followed by the Subadar. He purused many things and thought of different aspects like the geo-location, people, culture etc before

the setting up of the new capital. Perhaps physical environment of Dhaka met all his requirements, which successfully helped him to establish Mughal rule in Bengal. Previously Dhaka was not a vacant or developed place, the mosque and the inscription of *Bakht Binat Bibi* is a clear example to prove that Dhaka was prosperous and potential society before Mughal invasion. Along with the socio-cultural dominance, the Mughals saw the prospect of favourable element of trade and commerce in the new capital. Utilizing the strategic location it was fairly easy to develop the new capital as a new centre of business and trade. Trade in Mughal era was entirely dependent in waterways and Dhaka was probably one of the best riverine locations connected with the sea along with most of the parts of eastern India. Business demand a sound system security which was ensured by several forts around the city like Sunakanda, Idrakpur and Haziganj. The forts ensured peaceful environment of the capital and promoted the development of the potential business center in Bengal and India. It was business which gathered people of different places and cultures in Dhaka and generated an admixture of cultures in a complex situation of acceptance and resistance. Mughal culture was obviously pioneering and dominating in the formation of a local culture developed through different norms, values and elements consisted of various culture and philosophy. Popular practice of Urdu as general language is a significant evidence which proves Mughal influences still in vogue in Old Dhaka. The new settlement initiated both by the state officials and the traders comprised certain recreational essence which played a vital role in creating and expanding a relationship between the Mughal and the others. The trend of the society was religious and it promoted recreational culture maintaining Islamic norms and values. In this regard the practice and popularity of Kashida in Dhaka had its origin in the Mughal Darbar, which is considered to be a recreational elements of crown culture. In the late medieval history professional Kawali artists were familiar in *Harem* but no data has been found regarding the professional Kashida artists, both the writer and the singer in the Mughal era. Before the British period Dhaka lost its Mughal supremacy but the fading Mughal culture was still in vogue in the life and culture of the people of Dhaka. The Kashida was re-appeared in the light of history during the partition in 1947. Dhaka was then turned as the capital of East Pakistan and the huge Muslim migrants from different parts of India tried to settle in the new capital created on religious entity. The new migrants suffered a lot for food and shelter and tried to be involved in different professions to meet their livelihood. During this time some names became well-known in the cultural milieu of Dhaka who were trying to initiate a limited scale professionalism in Kashida. Among them Hamid, Mir, Shauqat were prominent and most of them were immigrants in the new capital of East Pakistan. They used to receive payments against the write up of *Kalams* on request of *Salalre Kafela*. After receiving the payment the writer usually lost the copyright of the *Kalam* which was deliberately transferred to *Salare Kafela*. This professionalism met its hey days during the Pakistan period while organized Kashida competition took place as a popular cultural events in Dhaka during Ramadan. Most of the competitions were organized in *Mohollah* basis and generated tremendous excitement and emotions among the people. The juries of the competition would allot numbers on the basis of the merit of the *Kalam* and that was the inspiring factor of the *Kalam* writers and their payment. It is in fact opened a secondary option for the writers for earning money though in a small scale. Finally it can be concluded that the new Mughal capital, searching for its socio-economic identity, promoted business, stabilized economic and social security and thus encouraging a locally interpreted Mughal culture where Kashida became of the illuminating element still popular in the old part of Dhaka. In fact it was business which promoted the society

intermingled with different cultures and nourished its socio-cultural events where Kashida flourished as an integral part of culture and recreation. The trend became more matured with the development of professionalism among the Kalam writers during the period of Pakistan.

**Interview of Md Jumman Mia: the Kashida Singer of Old Dhaka** Kashida is well-known even in the declining culture of old Dhaka. Jumman Mia is one of the prominent singers among those who still sing and practice Kashida. Most of the fellow singers of Jumman Mia are dead, few of them still alive but incapable to sing due to old age. But old age couldn't stop Jumman Mia who had a close bonding with Kashida. Jumman goes back to his young days, takes us with him.

"The story begins in the fourth decade of the last century. A group of eight to ten members came out at the time of Sheheri to wake up the Rozadars during the holy Ramadan. They used to take *Hajak* lamp and stick for light and security against the wild dogs and foxes. Such a divine aspirations were there at their efforts to wake up the Rozadars from sleep by uttering melodious words regarding the greatness of Allah and Rasul (SM). How old I was? Seven or eight. I had tremendous desire to get involved with the group. But they were not interested to take me with them due to my young age. Moreover, they showed me the fears of wild dogs and foxes during the dark night. All these constraints failed to stop me. Besides the Seheri time, I went to the Kashida festival in the Nawab's grand palace several times. Including this I participated in different competitions in Aga Sadik road, Mirza Manna Deuri, Rahmatganj, Babu Bazar main road, Lohar Pool, Kader Sardar Theater Hall etc. During that time our Salare Kafela (group captain) was my cousin Abdur Rahman. He won lots of prizes in different competitions for his sweet voice. Two other names were also popular at that time - Mohammad Falu of Aga Nawab Deuri and Farman Ali of Hosne Dalan".



Mohammad Jumman Miah

Jumman Mia didn't have to run behind the team for many days. He was selected as Salare Kafela when he was only sixteen. Jumman's group used to sing "*Chand Nikla Hai Mahe Saimamka, Ai Mahina Hai Bara Nek Kamka*" (*the moon of Ramadan has appeared, the month of holy work is on*) on the first moon of Ramadan. Thus the Ramadan would begin Chand Raati Kashida and ends up with Al Bida Kashida. The Kashida festival would not end with the ending of Ramadan. It even took place as the main vocabulary of the Eid Michil (procession), held on the Eid Day.

"In the Pakistan period Eid Michil held with grand preparation. It took three to four hours to be completed. I used to be on the front side of the procession with Harmonium and Piano. Our Kashida generated so much pleasure that along with non-Bengali (Punjabi, Khan, Pathan etc) the local people would dance and cheer up on the road. Just after the Eid day we would arrange small scale procession in our neighboring area. The preparation covered van, Harmonium, drums and banner named after our area and group. It was a source of pleasure and amusement to the *Dhakabasi* just after the day of grand festival. People used to throw coins and money towards the vehicle as *Bawkshis*. After the *Michil* we would generally arrange party for the boys of the groups



Performing Kashida

with the money collected during the *Michil*. The whole event added lots of joy and pleasure with the holy festival of Eid.” Jumman Mia and his group would not come out every night of Ramadan. The team needed break after every single day of performance throughout the month. On the first day they used to start from the Bahar Shah Mazar located under the Babu Bazar Bridge.

“Aged members of the society would gather at the Mazar to attend the Kashida program. The first program took place beside the Mazar on the first night of Ramadan. After the program we would start our activities after taking tea from Chunnu’s shop. Our procession would start from Armanitola to Kashaituli, Tara Masjid, Begum Bazar, and ending at Chawk Bazar in the first day. Rowshon, a shopkeeper of Chawk Bazar used to serve us tea free of cost for the first day”.

The Kashida groups not only wake up the Rozadars but also provided recreation to the community at the dark of night. While passing besides any relatives or fan’s house Jumman and his team often had to halt in request of the people for taking snacks and singing songs.

“We had to respond to the call from different houses of our relatives and fans while passing through. We did not have enough time and as such the meeting was limited with little snacks. Very often we were obliged to sing for the host in this limited span of time. The upper class people used to invite us to a Kashida festival at their residence with lucrative arrangement. The general people who invited us also tried their level best to serve us. Setar Sardar and later Yaqub Sardar of Bawkshi Bazar, Sahabuddin Sardar of Imamgong all invited us as guest of kashida festival. The party was grand with Polao, Kurma and other local varieties of food and drink. The Kashida singers were highly honored by the respectable men of the society at that time. The aged people of the



community liked very much the job of calling up the Rozadars and they give us money as *Bawkshis* which was collected to spend in a function having rich food like Polao and Kurma held on the second day of Eid. Father of Jumman Mia was a cook of the British and a leader of Akhra (small community). Everybody called him Dinu Khalifa. At that time people doing prestigious jobs were called Khalifa by the people as a mark of respect. Dinu Khalifa arranged different kinds of acrobat like fire and stick play on behalf of the community during Maharram procession. At the same time he was the prime contributor of the Kashida group of the community. These reasons influenced Jumman Mia to become a Kashida singer. Not only for his interest, Dinu Khalifa had to contribute and arrange Kashida program and competition as the Sardar of the Akhra.

“After father’s death, Abdur Rahman (Salare Kafela) maintained these duties. Since my selection as Salare Kafela in Pakistan period, I have been arranging Kashida competition and providing other logistics of the program at my level. My relatives, friends, and fans of Kashida were really cooperative and they would contribute money in every event”.

According to Jumman Mia, the practice of Kashida begun in the Nawab’s period and it became an integral part of Dhaka’s custom and culture after the partition in 1947.

“After the partition, a large number of Urdu speaking immigrants from different parts of India came to Dhaka. Cultural connections were set up among the migrants and the local people due to similarity in language. Different Shaers (writers of Kashida) named Azaz, Hamid, Sarwar, Muscef earned name and fame in this period. Some Shaers used to write Kalam of Kashida, Sher Shaeri without taking money to earn popularity. Most of the migrants wrote Kalam of Kashida with a view to fulfill partially of their living cost. But they didn’t fix any rate of their Kalam, it depended on the clients wish. The Jumman Mia and his team came out to call the Rozadars even during the time of liberation movement. Neither the freedom fighters nor the invader Pakistani army stopped the Kashida procession. Moreover Jumman Mia’s team often had to face the fan listeners of Kashida where they had to sing on request.

“It was the time during liberation war, we were heading towards Bahar Shah’s Mazar with procession. All on a sudden we met Pakistan military on our way. In answer of their question we said that we are on our task to wake up the Rozadars for the seheri. We were then asked to sing for them in a cordial environment. They left us after a session of Kashida in a joyful atmosphere. The freedom fighters also didn’t have any allegation against the Urdu Kashida, the heritage of Dhaka. After independence, more specifically in post 71 period, there occurred a vacuum of Shaers as many ‘non-Bengali’ left the country. At that time Hafez Juhur wrote numerous Hamd, Nath, Gazal, Kashida without any money to meet the challenge of the time. During eighties some Bengali writers came in front like Muzib Asrafi, Asif Banarasi, Maksud Ahmed, Talib Kabir and so on. Among Talib Kabir was famous”.

At the end of long discussion on Kashida, Jumman was asked about the present condition of Kashida. Jumman Mia wore a blunt face just after hearing this question.

“Even in the 90’s we had lots of grand competition in the city. But in the last three or four years these grand competitions have turned into small scale arrangements on Mohollah basis of different areas. Now a days people don’t know Urdu so that they can’t understand meanings of Kashida”.

Still Jumman Mia thinks that the declining Kashida can be revived. If Kashida is translated and practiced in Bangla language maintaining its values of Ramadan and religious appeal, it is possible that the Kashida would remain alive in the traditional culture of Dhaka.

**Appendix**  
**Information on the Kashida Competition held in Pakistan and Bangladesh Period**

The names of the Mahallah are cited below in the following table, which comprises the name of the area, *Salare Kafela* and the representative institute in the competitions.

Organizer Mahallah		Participants Mahallah	Salare Kafela (Group captain)	Representative /Organising Institute
Pakistan Period	Bangladesh Period			
1 Bakshi Bazar	1. Bakshi Bazar	1. Bangshi Bazar	1. Hafiz (late)	
2 Husaini Dalan			2. Abdur Rahman (late)	
3 Chawk Bazar	3. Urdu Road		3. Allauddin (late)	
4 Chadni Ghat	4. Mirpur		4. Md. Jumman Mia	
5 Mirpur	5. Mohammadpur		5. Md. Manik Chan	
6 Mohammadpur	6. Kasaituli		6. Md. Harun	
7 Islampur	7. Bhatt Masjid	2. Husaini Dalan	1. Farman Ali (late)	* Haji Md.Chan Mia
• Nabab Bari			2. Kajem Ali (late)	Smritee Kashida
• Kader Sardar Theatre Hall			3. Syed Fashih Hussain	* Husaini Dalan (Panchaet)
			4. Md. Parvej Reza	* Angikar (Social Welfare Org.)
8 Raisha Bazar	8. Khaje Dewan		5. Md. Sazzad Hossain Munna	
9 Kolta Bazar	9. Hazaribagh			
10 Rahamatgang	10. Bangshal, Natkapol			
11 Banogram	11. Amligola	3. Urdu Road	1. Ayub Kawal (late)	* Shaheed Mostofa
12 S.K. Das Road			2. Ebu Kawal (late)	Kamal Smritee
13 Joginagar			3. Nazim	Kashida Party
14 Alamgang		4. Khaje Dewan	4. Monjur Alam	
15 Dhalkanagar			1. Yusuf (Son of Ayub Kawal)	
			2. Mohammad Ali	* Choto Ayub Kawal Sritee Kashida Party
16 Nawabpur Road, Tipu Sultan Road		5. Bhatt Masjid	1. Abdus Samad	* Badsha Smritee
17 Katherpul, Dhupkhola, Murgitola			2. Md. Sayeed Hossain	Sangsad
18 Lalchan Mukim Lane			3. Sharif	* Criscent Club
			4. Md. Afsar Uddin	* Shodesh Shamaj Kollan Shangstha
19 Siddik Bazar				
20 Gandaria		6. Kashai Toli.	1. Aurangzeb Babu	* Gaji Sallahuddin
			2. Kamaluddin Badsha	Kashida Party
			3. Soleiman	* Kashai Tuli Jubo
			4. Kamal Hossain	Shangha
			5. Najibullah	* Fazaruddin Smritee
				Kashida Party
				* Al Islam C Club
				* Mahabub Alam
				Kashida Party
				* Jumman Mia Smritee
				Kashida Party
21 Mill Barak				
22 Aga Nawab Road, Pakistan Math				
23 Aga Nawab Dewri				

24	Becham Dewri	7. Mill Barak	1. Fakir Mohammad (late, non-Bengali) 2. Master Shaheen son Fakir Mohammad 3. Master Shakil of	* Mill Barak Torun Oikojott * Nurul Islam Smritee Kashida Party
25	Nolgola, Jadob Narayan Das Lane			
26	Babubazar	8. Alamganj	Master Shakil	* Alamganj Kashida Party
27	Choto Katra	9. Banogram	1. Bashir Ahmed (non-Bengali) 2. Shawkat Hossain Manik (non-Bengali)	---
28	Chompatoli	10. Mohammadpur, Geneva Camp	1. Mohammad Ashraf (non-Bengali)	---
29	Merja Mennar Dewri	11. Mohammadpur, Babar Road	1. Abdul Gani (non-Bengali)	* Anando Kishor Shangho
30	Loharpul	12. Mohammadpur	1. Md. Kamruddin Banarashi (non-Bengali) 2. Maksud Alam (non-Bengali)	* Rashida Kashida Party
		13. Mirpur	Md. Nizamuddin (non-Bengli)	---
		14. Kazi Allauddin Road	Montu Rana (late)	---
		15. Tipu Sultan Road	Anwar Parvez (late)	---
		16. Aga Nawab Dewri	Md. Falu (late)	---
		17. Dhalkanagar	Dana (non-Bengali)	---
		18. Bangshal	Master Shahidullah	* Ezaz Khan Smritee Kashida Party
		19. Becharam Dewri	Fakir Mohammad (late)	---
		20. S.K Das Road	1. Kader (late) 2. Dana (non-Bengali) 3. Md. Gulzar Hossain (late)	* Ruby Club
		21. Siddik Bazar	1. Mintu (late) 2. Ibrahim	---
		22. Rahamatganj	1. Samad 2. Jinnah	---
		23. Mahut toli Lane	Abu Taleb Putul	---
		24. Gandaria	Abul Hashem	---
		25. Maulovi Bazar, Ali Hossain Khan Road	Mirza Md. Rahamat Ali	---
		26. Moghbazar	Mobarak	---
		27. K.P Ghosh Street	Md. Babu Mia	* Kamal Hossain Kashida Party
		28. Bakshi Bazar	Nizam Bashet	---
		29. Kazi-Mudding Siddiki Lane	Md. Kaishar Hossain	---
		30. Malibagh	Shahadat Hossain	---

# 8

## **The Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry: Origin, Development and Role in the Economy**

Ashraf Uddin Chowdhury

### **1. Introduction**

#### **1.1 Government-Business Cooperation**

Korean Economist B.N. Song<sup>1</sup> identifies the need for two types of leadership for economic development. One is economic leadership or entrepreneurship needed to direct productive activities. The other is political leadership needed to guide socio-political development with a view to ensuring social and political stability and bringing about institutional, educational and demographic changes conducive to economic development. This is particularly so in the early stages of development when creating an environment favourable to entrepreneurs becomes all the more important. Matured market economies like the ones in Western Europe and the USA characterised by developed social, political and economic institutions are known as entrepreneurial society where government support often implies fine tuning of existing policies and programmes. Even when left alone, the private enterprise system may well sail in the calm lake – carry on productive and innovative activities for the development of the country. But in developing countries which encounter various odds – undeveloped and unfriendly institutions and forces which cause market failures - supportive government policies are critically important for assuring business friendly environment. This had been the case in the earlier stages of development in Japan and Korea. The private enterprise system in most real world circumstances of the developing countries needs government support to cross the stormy ocean. Given such conditions business leadership and political leadership in unison can make the best of existing opportunities and take the challenge of adversity. Three aspects of government-business relationship are worth emphasizing.

- Close cooperation between government and business is growth-promoting and efficiency-enhancing.
- Close cooperation between government and business paves the way for maintaining a consistent set of goals and policy, and makes it possible to implement them in a systematic way.
- Effective promotion of the private sector by the government is a powerful mechanism not only for promoting business and economic growth but also for alleviation of poverty and raising the standard of living of people in general.

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1 Song Byung Nak (1990), *The Rise of the Korean Economy*, Updated Edition, Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York.



The business-government cooperation cannot be accomplished by an individual unit of business or a single business house. It is the collective voice of the business community that has been historically doing the job of negotiating or lobbying with the government. The formal name of the collective voice is the Chamber of Commerce or Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The US Chamber, the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Hong Kong Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Tokyo Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Seoul Chamber of Commerce and Industry, to name a few, are such time-honoured historical names.

## 1.2 Some Celebrated Chambers

Most modern chambers around the world are influential voices representing the business community of the respective countries. In the first place, the chambers provide various ways and means for members to get involved in economic activities that correspond to their diverse needs; in the second place they take positions on issues that affect economic environment of the countries concerned. In this connection, it would be useful to mention the objectives or missions of some celebrated chambers from around the globe. The service excellence of the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry<sup>2</sup> is described in the following manner - “it plays a proactive role in representing the interests of the local business community and contributing to the economic, education, cultural and community development in Singapore”. With the broader goal of furthering economic development and long-term stability and prosperity of the country, the Hong Kong Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry spells out its main objectives which are:<sup>3</sup>

- to represent the specific interests of Japanese traders in Hong Kong in relation to commercial and mercantile matters;
- to collect, analyze and distribute commercial statistics and information to interested parties;
- to organize and hold lectures, meetings, seminars and conferences so as to keep its members abreast of current business developments in Hong Kong;
- to promote understanding and friendship between its members and other locally based chambers of commerce and similar business associations.

In this connection the core missions of the US Chamber of Commerce and Industry<sup>4</sup> are worth noting for a fuller understanding of the role of some modern chambers. The US chamber is oriented towards fighting for business and free enterprise. It does so before the Congress, the White House, regulatory agencies, the courts, the court of public opinion, and governments around the world. The chamber strives to accomplish the missions through various programs and affiliates. It is instructive to give an idea of these programs and affiliates. They are:

- the National Chamber Litigation Center – the law firm that defends business interests and sues government agencies.
- the Institute for Legal Reform – the Chamber affiliate that challenges lawsuit abuse on many fronts, eg, fronts for legal reform legislation, and educates voters in state judicial and attorney general races.

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2 The Singapore Chinese Commerce and Industry, Website 2007.

3 The Hong Kong Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Website 2007, Hong Kong Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry Homepage.

4 The US Chamber of Commerce, *The US Chamber's History*, Website 2007.

- the National Chamber Foundation - the policy think-tank that drives the debate, develops the data and arguments, and influences policy options on the most critical business issues.
- the Political Program – the Chamber’s aggressive political action component that endorses, supports, raises money, and turns out the vote for pro-business congressional candidates from both parties who are engaged in key races.
- the International Division - the trade and foreign affairs experts who work to lower barriers and expand the members’ commercial interests across the globe.
- the Center for International Private Enterprise – a Chamber-led project of the National Endowment for Democracy that helps emerging nations develop free market practices and institutions which they need to succeed in the global economy.
- Trade Roots – a sustained grassroots trade education program supporting free trade legislation and helping chambers, communities, and governors assist small and medium-size companies to expand into the global market.
- the Institute for a Competitive Workforce - the Chamber affiliate that focuses on workforce development and education issues.
- Business Civic Leadership Center - an organization devoted to facilitating cooperate civic and humanitarian initiatives.

### 1.3 Sense of Direction

The bare essentials of the objectives or missions, and the role of some of the most accomplished chambers around the world have been presented above. This will help us to appreciate the objectives of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry (DCCI) in their proper perspective. The flash back would be helpful not only to know what the DCCI is about but also to see what one would expect DCCI to look like.

The economy of Bangladesh has had a chequered history. Before the birth of the country as an independent nation, it had a mixed economy. With independence, a socialist type of economy was instituted in the early 1970s. The socialist path was abandoned in the mid 1970s to pave the way towards a private enterprise system. The economy witnessed a series of reforms and adjustments over the decades. It should be of great interest to know how the DCCI responded to these critical moments of our national life.

## 2. The Making of the DCCI

### 2.1 The Process of Making

Rome was not built in a day. The lengthy process of coming into being of some celebrated chambers including the DCCI is a good reminder of the adage. It took ninety nine years of discussion – from 1782 when an entrepreneurial individual produced a paper suggesting a plan for a chamber of commerce in the Cornhill part of the city of London to 1881 when the London Chamber of Commerce<sup>5</sup> was established at Mansion House in the city of London. Since the chamber’s inception in 1881 it has had six head offices with the latest housed in 3.3 Queen Street – all located in the city of London. Coming to Asia, South Korea’s first commercial chamber, the Hanseong (Seaul) Chamber of Commerce, came into existence in 1884 but at the end of Korea’s sovereignty because of its merger with Japan in 1910, the chamber was disbanded and then with

the liberation of Korea and the passing of the Chamber of Commerce law by the Sovereign National Assembly in 1952, the Chamber gained its standing as a legally constituted economic organisation. In respect of origin and development, the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry, like many other chambers around the world, has had a chequered history.

## 2.2 Origin of the DCCI

Like many other Chambers around the globe the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry has had a chequered history. It was created in 1958 by the unification of the old Dacca Muslim Chamber and the United Chamber under the Trade Organisation Ordinance.<sup>6</sup> Since the unification of the two chambers marks the origin of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry it is desirable to go back to the origin of the two ancestors of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry. Because the two ancestors of the DCCI came into existence towards the end of the British rule in India as a logical sequence to the establishment of other chambers in the sub-continent, it would be instructive to know the condition of the time that saw the establishment of various chambers.



Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Old Bhaban

6 The Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry, *Special Issue on Silver Jubilee*: DCCI Special Publications, 1984-89.

**Some Executive Committee Members of the DCCI, 1958**



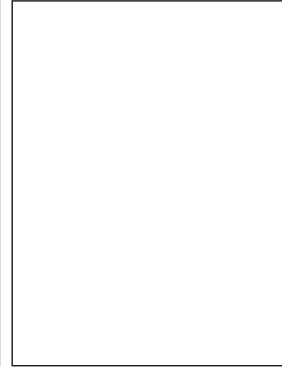
Abu Nasir Ahmad



Y. A. Bawani



Azizur Rahman Chowdhury



Akhlaque Ahmad

The concept and establishment of chambers originated and got momentum during the British rule. Patriotic feelings of the business community made them aware of the British exploitation of the sub-continent. This awareness of the business community encouraged them to have platforms of their own to represent their interest. Various chambers in the region are the institutional platforms of the business community. The Bengal Chamber of Commerce & Industry established in 1853 was a logical development of the objective conditions of the then British India. It was branched off from Calcutta Chamber of Commerce which was formed in 1834. The formation of other chambers of commerce and industry in important ports of India like Bombay, Madras and Karachi represent the subsequent developments of the process.

The Dacca Muslim Chamber of Commerce & Industry - an ancestor of the DCCI - came into being in 1936 in response to a special outgrowth of the business environment of this area. Non-Bengali and non-Muslim business people poured into Eastern Bengal in the early 1930s to do business in jute, tobacco, tea and leather. Being threatened local muslim traders and petty manufacturers formed the Dacca Muslim Chamber of Commerce & Industry to promote their cause. The Chamber opened its office in Islampur with a membership of only 25 traders. The leaders whose efforts brought the Chamber into being are late Dr. M.A. Khan, Alhaj Fazlur Rahman and Arifur Rahman.

The partition of India in 1947 caused large scale migration of local non-Muslim business people from the Erstwhile East Pakistan to India and simultaneous migration of muslim business people from various parts of India to this area. These migrated non-Bengali muslim businessmen established the United Chamber of Commerce & Industry. At loggerheads with this new competing chamber, the initiators of the Dacca Muslim Chamber & Industry dropped the word 'muslim' and changed the nomenclature to Dacca Chamber of Commerce & Industry. The government-favoured United Chamber of Commerce & Industry was a head to head competitor of Dacca Chamber of Commerce & Industry. Yet, both chambers, at times, jointly pressed for various business-related demands to the government. Finally burying their hatchets the two chambers were fused to form one chamber called the Dacca Chamber of Commerce & Industry in November 1958 to perform the following functions.

- to promote and develop trade, commerce & industry of the country.
- to put forward suggestions in the formulation and implementation of Govt. policy on import, export, investment, banking, insurance, industrial relation, fiscal measures etc.



- to represent on various advisory/consultative committees under different Ministries/ Departments/Boards concerned with trade, commerce, industry, finance.
- to comment on legislative or other measures affecting the growth & development of trade, commerce & industry.
- to provide a forum for exchange of views between members, members of Govt. agencies as well as members and delegations from abroad.
- to undertake by arbitration the settlement of disputes arising out of business transactions.
- to issue certificates of origin and authentication of documents in connection with trade and commerce.
- to collect circulars, notifications, statistical data and disseminate information relating to trade, commerce & industry to the members.
- to organize trade delegations, seminars, symposia and trade fair participation and receive business delegations from abroad.
- to act upon the memorandum of understanding with its counterpart from abroad for promotion of bilateral trade.

### 2.3 Pre-Liberation Activities of the DCCI

Initially housed in Armanitola in old Dhaka the Chamber had membership of mostly petty traders. Originally the DCCI was governed by a 12-member executive committee under the Trade Organisations Ordinance. It is important to know about the initiators of the chamber. Given below are names of the office bearers of the first executive committee of the DCCI.

**Table 1: Executive Committee of the DCCI 1958**

Sl. No.	Name, address and description of the members	Sl. No.	Name, address and description of the members
1.	H. M. Hassan Industrialist and Merchant 22, Imamganj, Dhaka	7.	Abu Nasir Ahmad Film Distributor & Exhibitor 17, Asak Lane, Dhaka
2.	K. G. Ahmed Industrialist 17, Joynag Road, Dhaka	8.	Sakhawat Hossain Merchant 18/3, Armenian Street, Dhaka
3.	Nazimuddin Ahmed Industrialist 94, Mughultully, Dhaka.	9.	Azizur Rahman Chowdhury Merchant 35, Syed Aulad Hossain Lane Dhaka
4.	Fazlul Karim Chowdhury Agriculturist and Industrialist 134, Lal Mohan Saha Street, Dhaka	10.	Akhlaque Ahmad Merchant 3/3, Johnson Road, Dhaka
5.	Z. Hami Industrialist & Govt. Contractor 13, Chandnighat Road, Dhaka	11.	Y. A. Bawani Industrialist & Merchant 35/36, Bangabandhu Avenue Dhaka
6.	Abu Ahmed Shah Import Merchant 40, Nalgola, Dhaka.	12.	A.Z.M. Rezai Karim Industrialist 31, Sir Nazimuddin Road Dhaka

#### **Names, addresses and descriptions of witnesses**

1.	Abdur Rashid Khan Executive Officer Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry 107, K. P. Ghose Street, Dhaka	2.	Khawja Ali Imam Office Secretary United Chamber of Commerce and Industry 148, Mitford Road, Dhaka.
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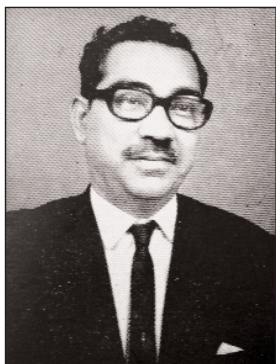


The Leader of the U.S. Trade and Investment Mission who visited the Chamber in 1968

As back as the late 1950s Dhaka was second to Chittagong as it is to-day, in respect of commerce and industry. In that period Narayanganj was the most important centre of jute and other industries. The Adamjee Jute Mills, the biggest jute mill in the then East Pakistan was located in Narayanganj. The Narayanganj Chamber of Commerce and Industry was established by the British Merchants in 1904 under the Indians Companies Act of 1882. The headquarters of the Narayanganj Chamber of Commerce and Industry was moved to Dhaka in 1950 and renamed Metropolitan Chamber in 1980. In Dhaka, several industrial units were established at Postagola along the riverside and Dhaka-Narayanganj road. Hazaribag had also developed into a big tannery area. Rayerbazar was well known as the home of pottery industry and Tejgaon developed an industrial area with small establishments of various types. Gradually other industries such as shoe, matches, iron and steel, furniture, bricks and tiles, oil, chemicals, pharmaceuticals and drugs, plastic, textiles and jewellery etc. were coming into existence. However, the land was still predominantly agricultural. Industrial products comprised less than 10 percent of GDP and that too owed heavily to the public sector corporations. Apart from providing various services to the members, the business community's voice as regards policy matters of the government could be heard only in domestic and external trading affairs and relations.

Records of the initial and pre-liberation activities of the chamber are few and far between. Annual reports, the main source of Chamber activities preceding 1967 are not available. Keeping in view annual reports since 1967 it is possible to form some idea of the chamber activities of the pre-liberation period - the period of consolidation of the organization.

A formidable task regarding service activities was to shift the chamber building to a more focal place of commercial activities. The second important consideration was to have the chamber's own building in order to avoid the drain on the chamber's finance in the form of rent as well as to get a space suitable for providing various modern services to the business members. The foundation stone of the Chamber's Building at 65-66 Motijheel Commercial Area was laid by



Syed Moshin Ali

Field Marshal Mohammad Ayub Khan, the then President of Pakistan on March 1961 and it had been a long standing demand to get it done. At the 7th Annual General Meeting of the then Dacca<sup>7</sup> Chamber of Commerce and Industry held at Hotel Intercontinental, now renamed Hotel Sheraton,<sup>8</sup> Mr. A Qasem, President of the DCCI announced that the office would be shifted to the Chamber's own building in Motijheel Commercial Area by June 1968. It was an auspicious moment when the office of the DCCI started functioning in the new building at 65-66 Motijheel Commercial Area from the first of July 1968. The new premises imparted financial stability and gave a new status to the Dacca Chamber of Commerce and Industry through its physical presence in the heart of the commercial center of Dhaka.

It is worthwhile to mention some important events of the then Dacca Chamber of Commerce & Industry before it became Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry in independent Bangladesh. A memorable event in the history of the Chamber before independent Bangladesh was the election of Syed Mohsin Ali, who had long association with the Chamber having served it in various capacities, as President of the Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry in 1968. The DCCI nominated him as its candidate to the exalted office. The victory was considered a great success of the DCCI.

Regarding the Chamber's business activities during the period, it is important to keep in mind the status of this part of the then Pakistan in relation to what was known as West Pakistan. In effect this part of Pakistan had a semi-colonial status having been deprived of its due share in most of the vital spheres of life- political, defence, economic and social. In the economic field, business activities were controlled predominantly by the West Pakistanis. Thus the DCCI's business activities were focused not only on providing better business services to the members but also and mostly on improving and increasing opportunities of this part of Pakistan in order to remove disparity in this respect.

A significant activity of the Chamber during the period was redressing the members' difficulty relating to exorbitantly high land price that constituted a challenge to setting up industry in the region. The Chamber negotiated successfully with the government. Consequently the prohibitive price per acre of land for industrial purposes came down in the late 1960s from Rs. 1,20,00,000.00 (one crore twenty lakhs rupees) to Rs. 75,000/- (seventy five thousand rupees) only. Another notable endeavour of the Chamber constituted securing the assurance of the East Pakistan Finance Minister, Dr. M. N. Huda, in getting preference for East Pakistan entrepreneurs in purchasing the disinvestment projects in East Pakistan. Among other business facilities realized by the Chamber during the period were special provision for East Pakistan in the allocation of cement manufactured in West Pakistan and stoppage of raising the lending rates for business by the commercial banks.



Mirza Nurul Huda

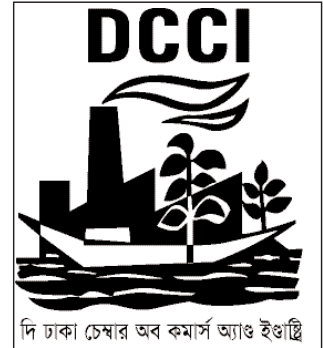
7 Dhaka had been being spelled as "Dacca" until 1982.

8 Hotel Sheraton was formerly called "Hotel Intercontinental"

### 3. The Profile of the DCCI

#### 3.1 A Dynamic Business Organizations

The Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) is now a dynamic business representative with its premises in 65-66 Motijheel Commercial Area – the nerve-centre of commercial and industrial activities not only of Dhaka Metropolis but of the country as a whole. Housed in a spacious building with most of the state-of-the-art logistic facilities, the DCCI – the largest and most active chamber of the country – has over 4000 members contributing to different business sectors of the country. It is the first point of contact for business in this country. It facilitates business for the local as well as foreign entrepreneurs and influences policy regime for a more congenial business environment.



#### 3.2 Board of Directors

The DCCI is run by a Board of Directors representing all classes of membership - General Class, Associate Class, Town Associate and Trade Group. A President, Senior Vice President and Vice President are elected for one year. At the beginning the DCCI was run by a 12-member Executive Committee. The number of the Executive Committee members rose to 16 in 1967-68 and currently it is 24. A list containing names of all Presidents of the DCCI to date should be of interest to many, and is given in Appendix -I

#### 3.3 Objectives and Functions

The basic functions of the DCCI are to promote and develop trade, investment and industrialization of the country. Some of the important functions are:<sup>9</sup>

- to give market-oriented inputs for formulation and implementation of government policies in respect of import, export, industry, investment, banking, insurance, fiscal measures, annual budget etc;
- to prepare materials for conferences relating to QTO, UNCTAD, SAPTA, SAFTA, BIMST-EC D-8, OIC-TIPS etc.;
- to represent trade, commerce and industry on various advisory or consultative committees in different Ministries and Departments of the Government;
- to comment on national and international legislative measures affecting trade, commerce and industry;
- to function as a forum for exchanging views on trade and economy among different Chamber members, Government agencies, DCCI members and local/foreign business delegations;
- to disseminate business information to members;
- to publish trade and investment related information, analysis, guide books on a monthly/yearly basis;
- to organize training courses, seminars/workshops/symposia, trade delegations, trade fairs and participation there in at home and abroad and to receive delegations from abroad;

9 DCCI 2007, *Introducing the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry*, 65-66 Motijheel Commercial Area, Dhaka.



- to undertake activities like survey, research etc. to suggest favourable business related policies
- to prepare Economic Policy Papers (EPPs) for conducting policy advocacy for the benefit of the business sector;
- to sign Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) with overseas Chambers and other business organisations;
- to prepare, implement and evaluate projects for entrepreneurship development and to deliver better need-based and diversified services to the members;
- to help women entrepreneurs to promote and expand their businesses.

### 3.4 Services

Besides these basic functions for promoting and developing trade, commerce and industry in general, the chamber provides professional services to the entire range of members. Some of these services might overlap with some of the functions already mentioned. The services rendered, are in the main:

- research and business development;
- trade and business information both electronic and paper based;
- dispute settlement;
- consultation;
- documentation;
- business matching;
- training;
- organizing fair and trade delegation;
- publication.

The Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry also perform some specific functions for the purpose of facilitating business activities as well as providing services to the members. These specific functions are enunciated in the Memorandum of Association of the Chamber. These are given in Appendix II.

### 3.5 Standing Committees

It is easy to see that the Board of Directors is single-handedly unable to dispose of the wide range of objectives and functions of the Chamber. Like the US Chamber of Commerce as also other Chambers the DCCI accomplish its missions through the yearly constituted standing committees and its various program affiliates. The Standing Committees make suitable recommendations which provide the Board with necessary input for decision making purposes. Some of the Board Directors coordinate Standing Committees representing various industrial vocations within the DCCI. It is through these Directors that the interests of the Standing Committees are presented to the Board.

The number of Standing Committees varies according to the need of the time. In 1967-68 there were five such Committees differently called “Sub-Committees”. In recent years the number has varied around 30. In 2006 there were as many as 35 Standing Committees. Back in 1998 the number was 39. In 2007, only 24 of these Standing Committees were active. The varying names and numbers of these Standing Committees give an indication of the range of activities in recent years compared to those in the 1960s. The names and brief account of the responsibility of various Standing Committees are provided in Appendix- III.

### 3.6 Means of Providing Assistance

The DCCI uses three means to provide assistance to its members. They are Methods of Representation, Services and Contacts.

Using the Methods of Representation the Chamber puts forward its suggestions and recommendations to the Government of Bangladesh on all policy matters such as industrial policy, import policy, export policy, fiscal policy and annual budget of the Government etc. On behalf of its members the DCCI has representation in various Government, semi-Government and autonomous bodies. Appendix IV contains a list of such representatives to different bodies.

The Chamber aims at providing opportunities to its members which otherwise would be almost beyond their reach if they acted on their own. Services of the Dhaka Chamber include supply of business information, documentation, tender document, e-mail, telex, facsimile, photocopy, commercial library and computer services etc.

The Means of Contacts used by the Dhaka Chamber involves discussion meetings with various Ministries, Government Agencies / Bodies, Chambers, High Commissions/Embassies and high Government Officials; the Chamber receives foreign delegations and sends its own delegations abroad and holds buyers-sellers-meet, trade fairs, exhibition etc.

### 3.7 The Secretariat

The Secretariat of the DCCI is a full fledged entity with various branches or component parts for effective day-to-day operation and provision of various need-of-the-hour services to the members.

The component parts are :

- \* Research Cell
- \* Business Institute
- \* Cooperation Arrangements
- \* DCCI-CIPE-ERRA Project.
- \* Business Information Library
- \* Business Development Centre
- \* DCCI-SEDF Knowledge Centre

The task and role of these component parts of the DCCI are briefly as follows.

**Research Cell:** The research cell of the DCCI acts as its think tank and focal point of receiving and processing information, formulating DCCI views and ideas on trade and economic issues and disseminating the same to all concerned. It undertakes statistical analysis, conducts researches and provides advisory, consultancy and dispute settlement services to the members.

**Business Information Library:** The business information library of the Chamber has a well-equipped library with a good collection of reference books on relevant subjects, commercial directories, government reports, parliamentary publications, commercial journals, financial bulletins, international tenders and magazines. The library operates modern information networks and internet services for the benefit of the DCCI members.

**Business Development Centre (BDC):** The business development centre (BDC) of the DCCI provides support service to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) at a relatively lower overhead costs.

**Cooperation Arrangements:** The DCCI has a chain of contacts throughout the world. It has cooperation arrangements with different chambers and related institutions like UNDP,



DCCI Business Information Library

UNCTAD/WTO, ITC, ESCAP, UNIDO, US AID, CBI, World Bank, ICC, GTZ, ZDH, APO, JICA, JETRO, CIPE, SEDF etc. in carrying out various joint-project activities for the creation of a favorable investment climate and promotion of trade and industry. Besides, DCCI signs Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with other Chambers of the World for promotion of bilateral trade and economic cooperation.

**DCCI Business Institute:** In order to meet the growing demand of the business community for the development of entrepreneurship and business executives, the Chamber has established the DCCI Business Institute (DBI) at its own premises. The objective of the DBI is to up-grade the skill of the business community by offering various courses to business executives so that they can avail themselves of the opportunities of free market economy. The Institute offers short-term training courses, certificate / diploma courses and conducts seminars / workshops.

**DCCI-SEDF Knowledge Center:** The DCCI and SEDF have jointly established this center for providing knowledge-based services to the SMEs. The objectives of the centre is to increase the quantity and quality of training services being currently provided by the DCCI through the DBI by using high-speed internet and other ICT facilities.

**DCCI-CIPE-ERRA Project:** This project was established in the year 1999 jointly with the Center for International Private Enterprises (CIPE), an affiliate of the US Chamber of Commerce, Washington DC, to implement a project entitled “Economic Reform and Research Advocacy (ERRA)” to create a private-sector-friendly investment climate in Bangladesh. Beside the preparation of Economic Policy Papers (EPPs) and dissemination of the same, the DCCI-CIPE-ERRA Project has a separate component for Women Entrepreneurship Development, through

which the project has been organizing workshops/training, fairs, and other activities providing business information.

**DCCI-World Trade Net Programme:** This programme works as the local point of the World Trade Net programme, run by the International Trade Centre (ITC)/UNCTAD/WHO. Under this programme, the Chamber has been organizing training, seminars to create awareness among the business community on different WTO-related issues.

**DCCI-EU/RET Program:** This Programme titled “European Technology and Services for Renewable Energy Development in Bangladesh” is being implemented by the DCCI since November 2005. The project aims at getting matching partners from EU in this sector.

**Social Welfare Activities:** Social Welfare Activities of the Chamber carries out the Chamber welfare programmes throughout the year. A DCCI Ward is operating at the Firoza-Bari Hospital, Dhaka which is maintained by the Chamber from its own fund. Besides, donations are also given in kind occasionally to this Ward. The DCCI has a Relief and Social Welfare Fund from which relief in cash and kind are offered to victims of flood, cyclone and other natural calamities. The DCCI also organizes Eid Reunion, *Pahela Baishakh*, Picnic and *Iftar* Party and other cultural events.

**Publications:** Publication is a regular activity of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry. Among its various regular publications Trade Information Bulletin, Monthly Review, Tax Guide, SME Guide, Souvenirs, Introducing DCCI, Training Calendar, Different Economic Policy Papers, Business Directory, Workshops/Seminar Reports, Fact Sheets, Project and Training Brochures and Annual Reports are worth mentioning.



Some Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry Publications

### 3.8 Membership

The Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry has, as mentioned earlier, four classes of membership - General, Associate, Town Association and Trade Group. Beginning with about 100 membership at the time of its inception in 1958, the DCCI has witnessed sharp rise in its membership. The following data present information on recent membership of the Chamber.

**Table: 2 Year-wise Membership of the DCCI.**

Member (No)	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
	3068	3246	3348	3230	3344	3278	3419	3598	3511	3908	4017	3828

Source: The Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry.



During 1996-2007, the DCCI witnessed a growth of about 25.00 percent of its membership. This means that membership has grown at about 2.25 percent per annum.

**Lines of Business:** Members come from various lines of business - import, export, indenting, manufacturing, supply of goods and service providing. DCCI membership is classified below according to these lines of business.

**Table 3: Membership Classified according to Lines of Business, 2007**

Lines of business	No. of Companies	%
Import	1624	29.2
Export	1318	23.7
Indenting	583	10.5
Manufacturing	958	17.1
Supply	687	12.3
Service	400	7.2
All	5570	100.0

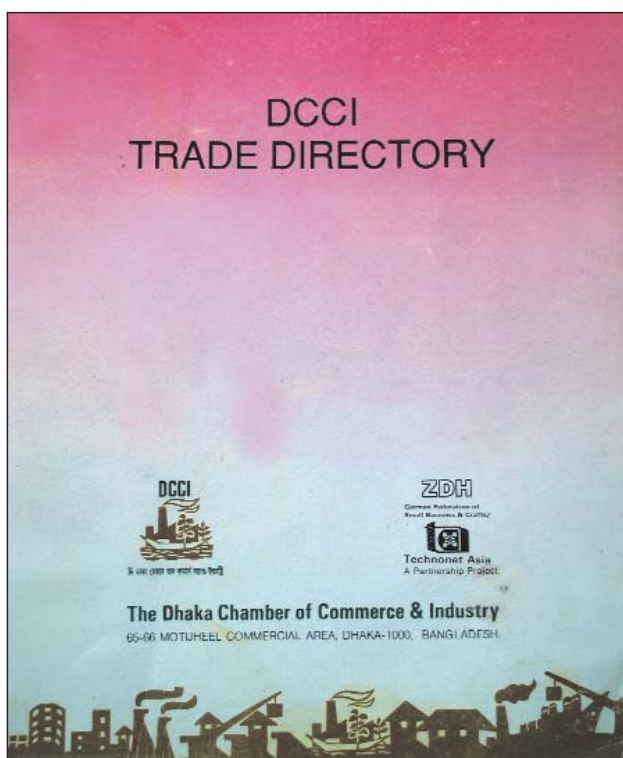
Source: The Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

The total number of firms/companies, 5570, is obviously much higher than the membership, 3828, in 2007. This is owing to the fact that many companies are engaged in more than one line of business. For example, some companies are simultaneously manufacturers and exporters while some others are service providers and importers etc. The first group of companies are recorded respectively in manufacturing and exports categories, while the second group of companies are reported respectively in the services and imports categories.

All these firms/companies are engaged in producing goods and services in the economy. In other words they are doing value additions for the economy of Bangladesh. Two broad sources of value additions are production of goods and production of services. From this perspective all manufacturing companies are creating value addition by producing goods while others - exporters, importers, indenters, suppliers etc. are creating value addition through producing services. Thus about 83.0 percent companies are creating value addition through various service activities while about 17.0 percent of the companies are doing value additions through production of various goods.

**Types of Products and Lines of Business:**

Type of products being produced or traded internationally and at domestic level are as much important as are the lines of business of the members. A huge number of goods and services are being manufactured and services provided by the members. DCCI's Members Directory 2000 gives a useful account of these products and services. The information are presented in the following table



Members Directory of DCCI

**Table 4: Lines of Businesses Classified According to Types of Products**

Types of Goods	Exporters	Importers	General Traders	Manufacturers	Service Products	All
Agricultural Products	13	18	18	16	03	68 (1.1)
Atomobiles, two wheels and fuel	13	50	56	17	23	161 (2.6)
Chemical Products, Pharmaceuticals etc,	13	120	126	88	10	357 (6.0)
Construction Materials and Sanitary Ware	6	21	45	54	106	232 (3.7)
Decorative and Handicrafts	18	07	11	07	01	44 (1.0)
Electrical & Electronic Equipment etc	27	105	109	75	20	336 (5.4)
Foodstuffs	35	44	51	55	07	192 (3.1)
Furniture	01	01	04	04	02	16 (0.02)
Gems and Jewellery	---	---	---	01	---	---
Household Items & Kitchen ware	12	26	21	49	01	110 (2.0)
Jute and Jute goods	69	14	17	18	02	120 (2.0)
Leather and Leather Items	35	12	12	45	02	108 (1.7)
Machinery, Equipment & Hardware	30	85	98	59	25	297 (5.0)
Plastic and Rubber Products	07	12	12	36	01	69 (1.1)
Services Companies and Consultants	22	32	168	48	435	698 (11.4)
Stationery, Office Equipment & Paper etc.	15	51	51	77	38	232 (4.0)
Sporting Goods and Toys	---	03	01	02	01	07 (0.01)
Textiles and Garments	176	79	90	325	38	708 (10.0)
General Merchandise and Misc.	522	605	1096	38	92	23353 (39.0)
All	1014 (16.5)	1258 (21.0)	1986 (32.5)	1014 (16.5)	811 (13.3)	6220 (100.0)

Source: The Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Members Directory 2000

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentage in total.

The table contains a good number of valuable information. First, as many as 6220 companies (the number being far greater than the total membership of 3360 in 2000 because many companies' lines of business are more than one), are engaged in creating value additions. Of these only about 17.00 percent are doing value additions through manufacture of goods while the rest are doing the value addition through production of services by various lines of service businesses. The types of goods and services the companies are producing are manifold. The broad categories of products and services are ranked according to the number of companies involved as follows:

Since the table contains information of various lines of business of members according to different types of products and services, information on each line of business for any of the product groups can be obtained. For example, agricultural goods are exported, imported, domestically traded, manufactured and serviced respectively by 13, 18, 18, 16 and 3 companies. On the other hand, number of companies importing agricultural goods, automobiles, chemical products and construction materials are 18, 50, 120 and 21 respectively and so on.

**Table 5: Ranking of Product Categories**

Products	Ranks
Textiles including garments	1
Chemical products etc.	2
Electrical & electronic equipments	3
Machinery and equipments etc.	4
Stationery and office equipments etc.	5
Construction materials & paints etc.	6

Source: The Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry-Members Directory 2000

It can be seen from the table that members involved in trading dominate the chamber's total membership - exporters, importers and general traders together constitute 70 percent of the total. Whereas members engaged in manufacturing and service providing activities are about 17 and 13 percent respectively of the total. As regards the importance of the types of products the members are involved in production and trading, general trading of miscellaneous items comes at the top. Textiles and garments come next. Other important activities are service companies including consultants; machinery, equipment, hardware and supplies; electrical and electronic equipments, accessories and supplies; chemical products, pharmaceuticals, medical supplies and minerals; stationery, office equipment, paper and pulp items etc.

### 3.9 Women Business Leaders

The DCCI has a membership of about 500 companies managed by women leaders. Providing assistance to women business leaders has become, of late, an important basic function of the DCCI. Women business leaders are important for various reasons in the world in general and in Bangladesh in particular. Firstly, the gender-inequality issue is a global issue and a special issue for a developing country like Bangladesh. In general, women receive less attention, less social recognition in all spheres of life. One of the most important reasons for this is that although they perform very useful work particularly as housewives, they do not receive money wage in return. The National Accounting System as yet does not take into account this useful and productive work in the national income. Besides, women who are engaged in paid job also receive discriminatory treatment in many cases in respect of wage and other benefits. In the business world, they were also absent in the earlier decades. Under this circumstance, the coming up of women business leaders is of great significance. The DCC has recently published, as part of its interest to help women business leaders, a profile of 894 women-headed companies called Women Entrepreneurs' Directory 2006. Most of these companies are small and medium sized. An idea of the type of

business they are doing and their product lines can be obtained from the information contained in the following table:

Product Line	Manufacturing	Manufacturing Trading	Trading	Service	Hotel	Import	Export	Total
Textile	347	47	45	35	---	05	02	48 (53.5
Garments	215	35	40	20	---	05	02	31' (3.5
Block/Batik	75	12	05	10	---	--	---	10: (11
Sewing & embroidery	30	---	---	---	---	--	---	3: (3
Nakshikatha	15	---	---	5	---	--	---	2: (2
Nylon durrie	12	---	---	---	---	--	---	1: (1
Handicraft	105	10	13	---	---	---	02	13: (14.0
Poultry/Dairy farm	45	---	05	---	---	--	---	5: (6.5
Food	30	---	10	10	8	--	---	5: (6.5
Packaging	05	---	---	---	---	--	---	0: (0.5
Electronic goods/computer	05	---	05	07	---	--	---	1' (1.8
Shop/import	---	---	05	17	---	05	05	2: (2.8
Beauty parloar	-20	---	---	---	---	--	---	2: (2.2
Service	---	---	---	35	---	--	---	3: 3.8
Others	21	15	25	05	---	--	---	7: (8.3
Total	573 (63.0)	72 (8.0)	108 (12.0)	109 (12.0)	8	14 (2.0)	10 (1.0)	89: (100

Source: *Women Entrepreneurs' Directory 2006*, The Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI).

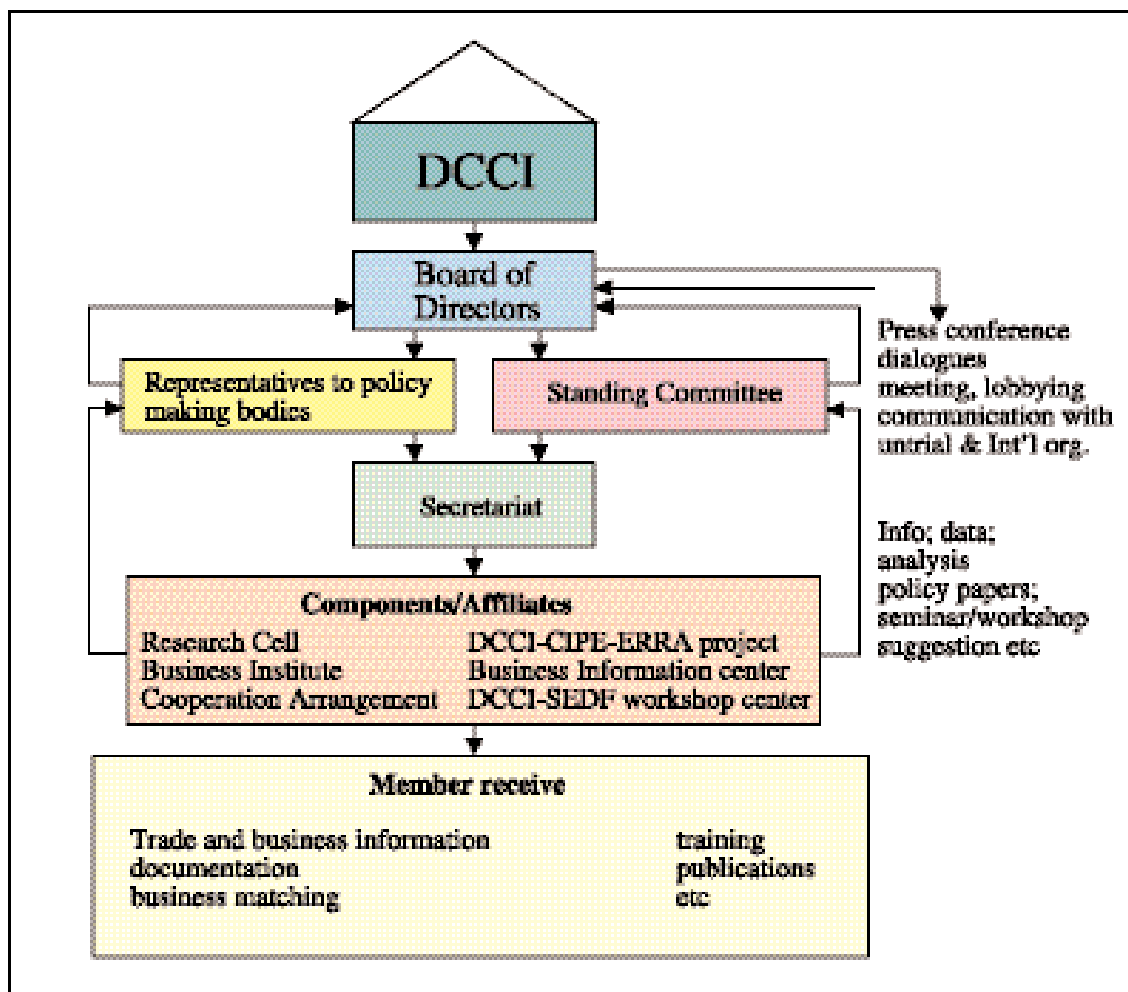
It should be noted that of the total number of companies, 75.0 percent are engaged in manufacturing and service providing activities. The rest 25 percent companies are doing trading activities in domestic and international markets. In the economics literature the term 'entrepreneur' refers to those who are engaged in producing goods and services through generation of additional capacities called capital formation. In that sense, all the 894 companies enlisted in the Directory mentioned above are not entrepreneurs although the title of the Directory implies so. Be that as it may, it is of special note that in contrast to the phenomenon of the trading class dominated membership of the DCCI where male-headed companies are predominant, the female-headed companies are mostly manufacturing companies. The next class of business leaders is that of manufacturing-cum-trading comprising 18.0 percent of the total traders and service providers - each group account for 12.0 percent of the total. Companies doing export-import activities make up only 3.0 percent of the total.



The most important product line of the companies is the textile products which account for about 54.0 percent of all product types- garments, block/batik, embroidery, *naksheekatha* and nylon rope are produced in the textile sector by the women-headed companies. Again within textile products, garments and block/batik comprise the most important products of the women-headed companies. These two goods make up 35.0 and 11.0 percent respectively of the total number of goods produced and services provided. Handicraft is also a very important product, accounting for 14.0 percent of the total products of the women-headed companies. The next important product types are poultry/dairy farming and food products. Services of various types, jelly and medicine, beauty parlour and clinics etc. constitute a small portion of the overall activities.

### 3.10 Organogram of the DCCI

A seven-coloured organogram of the DCCI., the different colours representing various stakeholders, is presented below to highlight its set-up and organs responsible to perform various activities. This is done with the aid of the following diagram.



This key diagram shows in a simplified way what the DCCI is about. The Board of Directors is the executive body of the DCCI which carries out the activities of the DCCI through various means – Standing Committees and Representatives to policy making bodies. The Standing Committees make recommendations on different aspects of business to the Board. The Representatives to the government and semi-government bodies too provide their feedbacks to the Board. The Standing Committee and the Representatives receive necessary information, analyses, strategy and data relating to policy options from the specialised affiliates or bodies of the Secretariat. The members at the base too receive these valuable business information and analyses besides training facilities from the specialised bodies of the Secretariat. These specialised services also flow to the Board of Directors directly or indirectly through the various functionaries of the DCCI. Being informed and knowledgeable, the Board of Directors arrange press conference, dialogues, and makes communication with the national and international organizations to influence policy environment for the betterment of business and development of the country.

#### **4. The Tour of the DCCI Since the Liberation**

##### **4.1 The DCCI in the 1970s**

The DCCI began its new journey in the new born independent Bangladesh with as much high aspiration and euphoria as was borne by the nation. The Executive Committee of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry which was elected in 1969-70 with Mr. Matiur Rahman as its President continued until 1971 – the year of tumultuous events like “mass upsurge in favour of the historic six-points as enunciated by Bangbandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and subsequent non-cooperation movement leading to liberation struggle which successfully culminated in the emergence of Bangladesh as an independent, sovereign country” (DCCI Annual Report 1971). It is worthwhile to mention the important role that the DCCI played for the freedom struggle of Bangladesh. The DCCI, true to its tradition as the premier trade organisation, was called upon even before the non-cooperation movement to play its role to safeguard and promote the economic interests of Bangladesh. The Dhaka Chamber strongly pleaded for framing economic planning, export and import policies on the basis of two economy propounded by six points. The members of the Dhaka Chamber actively participated and promoted the cause of liberation. The President of the Dhaka Chamber, Mr. Matiur Rahman, played a leading role in the struggle for liberation when he was Director General of Foreign Trade and Commerce of the Government of Bangladesh in Mujibnagar.



Matiur Rahman

After independence Mr. Matiur Rahman became a Minister of the Government of Bangladesh and resigned from the post of President of the Chamber in the larger interest of the business community and Mr. K. A. Sattar, a senior member of the Executive Committee was elected President of the Chamber by the Executive Committee. Under the leadership of Mr. K. A. Sattar the Executive Committee took keen interest in strengthening the activities of the Chamber including the increase of membership. The Executive Committee gave immediate attention to the post liberation economic problems of the country and offered the government a number of constructive suggestions

particularly in respect of import and export policies and barter trade etc. for speedy revival of the war-ravaged economy. The Chamber impressed upon the government the need to make provision for inclusion of the Chamber nominees on the various Advisory Committees of the government particularly the Committees concerned with policies relating to export, import and industry.

To appreciate the efforts of the Chamber in respect of its objectives and missions, it is important to keep abreast of the policy environment within which the Chamber had to tread. One has to bear in mind that Bangladesh inherited a poor and stagnant agricultural economy with 56 percent of GDP originating in agriculture while about 8.0 and 26 percents originated from manufacturing, and trade, transport and other services respectively. Superimposed on these were the scars of the war of liberation – serious damages to the underdeveloped physical infrastructure, dislocation in managerial and organisational set up and disruption in external trading relationships. The problem was compounded by the abandonment of a large number of industrial enterprises by the West Pakistani owners. The situation was marked by uncertainty, shortage of resources and economic conditions not conducive to long term private investment. The political exigency and compulsion led the government to undertake development plans within a socialist framework. This resulted in the nationalisation of almost all large and medium industries. In consequence to this move the scope of private sector and foreign investment in manufacturing was drastically delimited. The composition of the development outlay laid down in the First Five Year Plan 1973-78 reflects the preponderance of the public sector development expenditure, economic realities and social objectives of development planning.

**Table: 7 Composition of Development Outlay in the First Five Year Plan of 1973-78 (Tk in crore)**

1.	Total Development Outlay	4,455 (100.00)
	Public	3,952 (88.7)
	Private	504 (11.3)
2.	Sources of Resource Domestic	2,655 (60.0)
	External Assistance	1,800 (40.0)

Source: The First Five Year Plan, 1973-78, Planning Commission, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

It can be seen that the First Five Year Plan envisaged public sector development outlay of nearly 90 percent of the total development outlay of Tk. 4,455 crore for the plan period of 1973-78. Despite the nationalisation program and socialistic framework of development, private enterprise was still dominant in the distribution system. Besides, in the field of construction and indenting for foreign supplies, private enterprise was also active.

Under the prevailing economic system the Chamber began its activities. From the outset the Chamber took keen interest in, first, increasing its membership and rendering better

services to the members of the Chamber. Secondly, the Chamber gave immediate attention to the post-liberation economic problems and offered a number of constructive suggestions to the government for speedy recovery of the war-ravaged economy.

The post independence period - the 1970s-is marked by two great changes in the economic system of Bangladesh. The first is the Socialist path of development mentioned above in the immediate post liberation period dismantling the mixed economic system. The second is the abandonment of the socialist path and the adopting of a system of guided capitalism in the later half of the 1970s. The basic economic system was to be free enterprise. However, with regard to the key industries, the government took either a direct or an indirect part in providing guidance.





Governor, State Bank of the then Pakistan, presiding over a conference, where the Presidents of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Dhaka, Chittagong, Narayanganj, Khulna and Sylhet were present



East Pakistan businessmen's delegation meeting the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Karachi





Historic reception to Bangabandhu Shiekh Mujibur Rahman



Mr. Tarun Kanti Ghosh, Minister for Commerce, Government of West Bengal, India and Mr. K.A. Sattar President of DCCI and Mr. M.R. Siddiqui, Minister for Commerce and Foreign Trade are seen in an address of welcome on January 7, 1973

Consequent upon the change in economic system, there were policy changes to effect the change of the system in the 1970s. The inherited poor resource base of the economy began its development journey with heavy aid dependence. Initially, a large volume of imports were effected by the public sector organisation called the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB). A substantial amount of aid was being poured in from the Socialist countries particularly the Soviet Union. Food aid comprised an important component of the total aid. As regards international trade, there was a substantial amount of “barter trade” with the Socialist countries.

The barter trade encountered certain problems like irregular supply, delay in shipment and difficulty of locating the suppliers etc. Likewise, imports of goods by the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) had certain problems: the imports were not efficient and strictly demand-matching. Moreover, the quality of imported goods were not satisfactory. The DCCI was aware of these import-related problems. It advised the government to discuss with the DCCI before making barter agreements and pressed for private sector participation in the imports that were being done by the TCB. The country was heavily dependent on food aid; the DCCI realized the vulnerability of the severe food shortage underscored the need for attaining food self-sufficiency in the country. Accordingly it communicated its realization to the government.

In the wake of the change of the economic system to market orientation, marked various policy changes the transition period. The most prominent of these is the denationalization policy. The President of the DCCI Mr. Tanvir Ahmed hailed the policy change and pleaded for progressive disinvestments of nationalized industries in favour Bengali entrepreneurs. The DCCI also put forward a number of suggestions to make the newly introduced Wage Earners Scheme (WES) more effective. The Wage Earner Scheme allowed import of a list of items, mostly raw-materials for various industries at concessional rate. Side-by-side the commercial importers of the same items had to face higher import duty. To address this the DCCI urged the government to reduce import duty for the commercial importers. Formerly trade delegations to foreign countries included only government officials. The DCCI pressed for inclusion of private business people from the DCCI in trade delegations to make the purpose of delegation more effective. The DCCI's recommendations in the 1970s included some other issues as well. Among these were suggestions for development of a capital market, simplification of procedure at the customs point, simplification of rules and procedures for bank loans, establishment of Small Industrial Estates with built-in facilities and reduction of customs duty on imported goods etc.

#### **4.2 The DCCI in the 1980s**

The 1970s as a whole can be termed a decade of reconstruction of a war-ravaged economy because it was not until 1975-76 and 1978-79 that GDP and per capita income respectively had recovered to the level of 1969-70. The late 1970s was characterized by a short-lived investment boom - both public and private sector investment grew at nearly 15 percent per annum. The inflow of foreign aid, cheap credit availability and other incentives following the adoption of state-sponsored market economic system were mainly responsible for the investment boom and this also, to a great extent, gave rise to large-scale defaults of bank loans and the problem of ‘sick industries’.<sup>10</sup>

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11 President's report from the DCCI's Annual Report-1990.

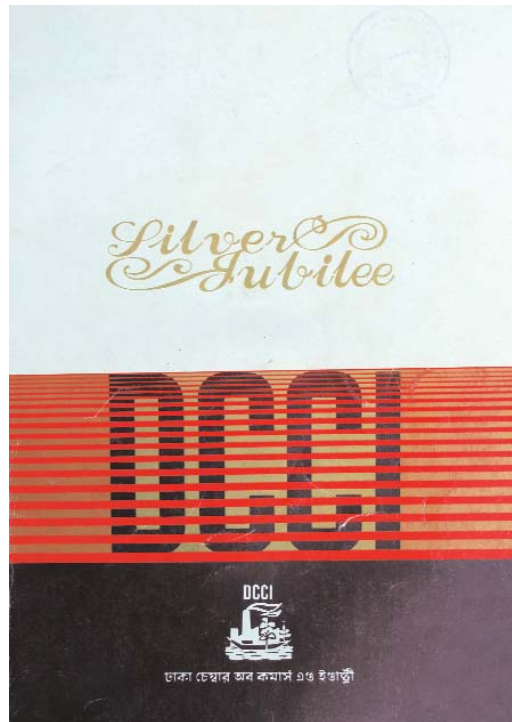


Takashi Hayakaya, leader of the high powered Japanese Economic deliegation addressing the members of the Dacca Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Sitting on his right K.A. Sattar, the President of Dacca Chamber of Commerce and Industry

The 1980s began with decline of credit availability by the development financing institutions (DFIs), deterioration of external aid climate and sloth in domestic resource mobilization. All these adverse factors led to serious macroeconomic imbalances. Against this backdrop New Industrial Policy (NIP) was announced in 1982 and policy reforms for stabilization and structural adjustment were initiated by the government along the guidelines of the World Bank and the IMF.

During the process of formulating the policy reforms the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry participated in the formulation and later in the implementation of government policies and programmes. The salient features of the New Industrial Policy relating to the Industries Ministry were: contraction of the public sector industrial corporate through disinvestments of abandoned enterprises, simplification of industrial investment schedule, broad business of the “free sector” list i.e. increasing the number of enterprises covered under the free lists, implification of the project application form, decentralization of power, and provision of fuel subsidy for the less developed areas.

The policy changes and the New Industrial Policy were hailed by the President of the DCCI. However, the DCCI presented its points of view and worked to help in the implementation of a more pragmatic industrial policy by putting in suggestions and recommendations. It held that apart from a private sector bias the industrial policy did not incorporate any definite strategy of industrialization, particularly in relation to value addition: instead of industrialization proper the policy was oriented to moving to the type of things like assembly plants with imported inputs and



Conference Room of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry



technology having little manufacturing content. There were provisions for high incentives for exports particularly the processed ones but no definitive plan or strategy for broadening the narrow base of exports. The DCCI was concerned about the rather very low utilization of manufacturing capacity 80.0 percent of which was still in the public sector. Among other things power failure, shortage of raw-materials and liberal imports under WES were seen as important causes of low capacity utilization.

The thrust of the policy reforms for stabilization and structural adjustment included mainly privatization of state-owned enterprises, withdrawal of food and agricultural subsidies, financial liberalization, and withdrawal of quantitative restrictions on imports. The reforms were meant to reduce fiscal and trade deficits in the face of squeezed aid availability.

In the end, there was credit crunch on private investment and reduced public development expenditure instead of increased domestic savings mobilization. Throughout the 1980s public savings declined due to continuous growth in revenue expenditure against a situation of stagnant revenue-GDP ratio.

The DCCI was skeptical about the greater domestic resource mobilization envisaged and expounded by the government. The basis of their skepticism was their presumption of the adverse effect due to heavily taxed budgets on trade and industry and thereby on the capacity to save. The DCCI favoured other options like cutting down non-development expenditure and to achieving more efficiency in tax administration. Generally the views of the DCCI are expressed through their expressed opinions – pre-and-post budget speech by the Finance Minister, press conference on special issues and occasions, seminars, workshops, delegation to ministries etc.

The DCCI advocated transforming the public sector industries into holding companies and selling shares of respective units to the private units for the purpose of enlarging the share market, continued to press for making the TCB imports, imports under wage earner scheme and export guarantee scheme more useful, effective and efficient. The early 1980s are marked by the initiation of privatisation of three important services – commercial banks, telecommunication (mobile service) and insurance company. This was entirely due to the successful lobbying of the DCCI. The lobbying began in the late 1970s and it bore fruit in the early 1980s.

From the middle of the decade onwards in the 1980s, the DCCI did some praiseworthy job - brought out special publications containing important writings on various lines of business on the occasion of Silver Jubilee of the DCCI. The DCCI's activities included the National Convention of Chambers of Commerce & Industry, seminars, papers on Industrialization during the Third Five Year Plan, DCCI's special monthly review of Investors' Forum etc. On the basis of these publications and the concerned convention discourses the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry put forward several useful recommendations. Some of these are as follows:

### **On Overall Policy**

- There is need for a long-term economic policy; so also the need for the continuity and consistency of the policy. National budgets and annual development programs should be realistically framed obtain the objectives of the policy.
- Amendments to the policy, objectives and programs, particularly (in the middle of the fiscal)? year should be avoided and non-development expenditures should be minimized.

### **On Industrialization**

- Complex procedures for sanctioning of projects and financing of the projects be dismantled in favour of simple procedures. Package permission system inclusive of the availability of land, power, gas, working capital, duty rebate facility on imported machinery import licence for raw-materials, tax holiday, fiscal incentives etc.? should be introduced?)
- Labour policy should be recast to ensure effective labour-management relationships.
- Institute of Entrepreneurship Development be established by the joint sponsorship of the public and private sectors for proper guidance through training of the nascent first generation entrepreneurs and would-be entrepreneurs.
- An industrial investment schedule should be adopted, after a detailed survey of the existing Industries, showing market potentials and the country's requirements.
- Incentive measures, fiscal and non-fiscal, well-grounded in different economies should be extended to support industries.
- The ratio of equity participation should be kept at a minimum of 20.0 percent for DFI loan to encourage entrepreneurship
- Bangladesh Shilpa Rin Sangstha (BSRS) should be converted into an industrial corporation in the EPID style (in addition to BSCIC) to sponsor industries with equity participation from private investors and gradual disinvestment thereof.

### **On Infrastructural Facilities**

- Larger allocation for infra-structural development should be made to realise the objective of industrialization.
- New Industrial Estates should be established not only around Dhaka, Chittagong and Khulna but also on the district and upazila levels.
- Overall power tariff should be revised to enable industries at economic level. Major PDB distribution networks should be converted into public limited companies for better management and improvement of the power supply situation.
- The entire western part of the country should be brought under gas and power network.
- Industrial plots should be made available at reasonable price.

### **On Public Private Financial Institutions**

- There should be equal opportunity for public and private banks to handle government funds instead of the prevailing 5.0 percent for the private and the rest for the public banks.
- To prevent depreciation there is need for undertaking more effective mechanism like attaching taka to SDR or a basket of currencies instead of US dollar.

### **On Trade and Commerce**

- To expand export base and facilitate production of quality goods a Product Development Institute should be set up.
- To expand markets for Bangladeshi products abroad, trade promotion centers, particularly in countries which are major trade partners should be set up. Also the Bangladeshi Missions abroad should be activated towards trade promotion purposes with given export targets.

- Customs formalities should be simplified to avoid harassment and delay of transaction.
- For better utilization of barter agreements, DCCI representatives should be included in the barter trade negotiations.?
- Bonded warehouse facilities should be extended to the exporters of the Northern part of Bangladesh.
- Adequate port facilities be created.
- Anomalies in customs duty and sales tax on items of similar use should be corrected.
- Effective measures should be taken to check smuggling operations. This is to increase government's tax revenue as well as avoid harassment of genuine traders and business - anti-smuggling drives such as raids by the law-enforcing agencies in the past resulted in mounting suffering of genuine businessmen without success in checking the unlawful practices of the mischief-makers.

Bangladesh turn to the Structural Adjustment Facility (SAF) set up by the IMF has been mentioned at the outset of this chapter. It should be further noted that Bangladesh was one of the first among a total of 36 countries to accept the highly concessional but extremely conditional loans in support of the programmes. Then again Bangladesh was among the 29 countries to resort to the Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF) launched by the IMF in 1987. Under these two sets of programmes Bangladesh followed the guidelines and targets set down by the Policy Framework Paper (PFP) of the IMF and the World Bank.

Despite the Industrial Policy of 1986 which was an extension of the New Industrial Policy and the efforts envisaged in the Third Five Year Plan along the lines of the IMF and the World Bank sponsored policy reforms, investment was restrained. This was the result of reduced public development expenditure instead of non-development expenditure and credit crunch on private investment. The mobilization of enhanced domestic resources through improved fiscal effort could not be achieved. Thus the investment GDP ratio declined impairing the growth performance. The end of the decade experienced macroeconomic strains - low per capita GDP growth, low domestic savings and high current account and budget deficits.

**Table 8: Macroeconomic Profile in 1989-90**

Per Capita GDP Growth 1980-90	Current Account Deficit	Gross Domestic Savings	Overall Budget Deficit
1.9	5.2	9.7	5.8

Source: Wahiduddin , Mahmud: Bangladesh's Economic Performance and Prospects in a Nutshell.

Despite the rather strained macroeconomic conditions, it must acknowledged that an extensive rural road networks were established in the 1980s. The government, the Fund and the Bank claimed that inflation and foreign exchange reserves were the success indicators and that aggregate and sectoral growth rates were picking up indicating "lagged response" to the adjustment measures.

### 4.3 The DCCI in the 1990s

In the 1990s Bangladesh mounted a wide-ranging policy reform programmes. The thrust of the reforms of the 1990s were aimed at moving towards an open economy. Trade policy reforms involved import liberalization and putting direct export incentives in place. The focus of the industrial sector reform was to lay the foundations for private sector-led growth. Fiscal reforms

were aimed at improving the tax-GDP ratio by increasing revenue and reducing current expenditures. Financial sector reforms under the Financial Sector Reform Programme (FSRP) were undertaken including the introduction of value-added tax for improving the functioning of the banking system.

Under a situation of macroeconomic strains and an environment of on-going policy reforms, the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry began to tread in the new decade. Mr. A. S. Mahmud, President of the DCCI amply described the situation as one of recession characterised by high oil price, increased import costs, decline of remittance, contraction of export market, deterioration of inflation condition, depreciation of taka etc. all of which left economic problems in a very complex state.

The Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry, as enunciated by Mr. A.T.M. Wajehullah in the Annual Report of 1993, hailed the policy reforms on the whole.<sup>11</sup> The two previous Presidents of the DCCI - Mr. Mahbubur Rahman and Mr. M. Yunus expressed caution's optimism on different aspects of the reform programmes and emphasized home-grown reform agenda rather than the donor-oriented one. The imperativeness of national consensus - consensus based on joint efforts of the government and opposition party in this respect was emphatically reorganized by the DCCI in view of the prevailing non-cooperation between the treasury bench and the opposition members of the parliament. As regards specific issues, unqualified blame by the government on private sector for defaults of loan and imposition of various restrictions in this regard was criticized with remarks that such moves would do harm to business. Withdrawal of subsidy from agriculture was looked upon as unwholesome; some aspects of financial reform particularly the high rate of interest was considered derogatory to export trade. Besides these, the DCCI disfavoured large-scale import liberalization. An important fiscal reform for domestic resource mobilisation in the early 1990s was the introduction of Value Added Tax (VAT). The DCCI was prompt to express specific problems connected with the introduction of value added tax (VAT) without full preparation and understanding of the method by the business people and other would-be tax payers.

The Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry proposed establishment of "Sick Industries Rehabilitation Board" for effective functioning of the sick industries. It urged the government to restore the deteriorating law and order situation of the country and to enact a long-term production-oriented labour policy the absence of which was creating problems for management of labour relation. Other proposals made by the DCCI included

- establishment of National Export Development Parishad to foster coordination and cooperation between various ministries, banks, chambers, exporters and other relevant organizations;
- establish Bangladesh Institute of International Trade to conduct studies on various problems related to international trade;
- ensure protection of infant industries and make available to the domestic entrepreneurs the kind of facilities like tariff rate, rate of interest and technological development facilities etc. that their counterparts in other countries enjoy;
- establishment of an Arbitration Committee for Rehabilitation of sick Industries;
- establishment of Export Bank;
- setting up of Export Village;
- equal opportunities for exporters outside the EPZ.

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11 President's report from the DCCI's Annual Report-1990.





Mr Joty Bose, the Chief Minister West Bengal inaugurating the India-Bangladesh Trade Meet 1987. Mr. A.S.M Quasem, Chief Guest and the President of DCCI, Mr. Bidut Ganguli , Commerce and Industry Minister, Mr. Prolay Talukder, Small and Cottage Industries Minister are seen in the picture



Mr. Aftabul Islam, the President of the DCCI shaking-hands with Mr. Mahatir Mohammad, the Malaysin Prime Minister when he was a member of the entourage with Sheikh Hasina, the Hon 'able Prime Minister of Bangladesh

Besides these, the DCCI was constantly putting its demand to realize tax concessions for certain productions, raw-material imports and exports. Among these were withdrawal of VAT from processing industries, agricultural implements such as diesel engines, pumps, spares of processing mills etc. Apart from the demand of tax concessions the DCCI was very conscious of other contemporary issues relating business activities. President of the DCCI, Mr. Ali Hossain, reported in 1996 that the DCCI was lobbying for certain important facilities which included reconstruction of the Privatization Board, one-stop service in the financial institutions, DCCI's representation on the Boards of Directors of all financial and service institutions and policy-making and consultative committees of all the ministries. Also included in the list of demands was the assurance from the government that it would not ask for the source of the money that had been utilized for investment purposes. In the subsequent annual reports of the Boards of Directors of 1997 and 1998, the Presidents of the DCCI - Mr. A.S. Quashem and R. Maksud Khan mentioned that the government accepted some of their demands. These included the policy that the government would not ask for the source(s) of money invested in business activities, establishment of Money Change Company in the private sector, establishment of a Monitoring Cell in the Prime Minister's office to maintain liaison with the line Ministries for the purpose of development of infrastructure, establishment of Product Development Council for diversification of exports, withdrawal of value added tax on export services like C&F, shifting, insurance, telephone etc. and lowering of the discretionary power of tax officials, enhancement of tax credit ceiling and lowering of duties on some raw-materials etc.

The 1990s, particularly the first half were a decade of rapid liberalization relative to some of the neighbouring countries. Annual export and import policies marked a change in policy direction. In general, export industries were encouraged and import trade liberalized. The number of commodities under import ban was greatly reduced; the overall unweighted tariff came down dramatically and so did the overall unweighted protective tariff.

The process of liberalization accompanied by business efforts particularly of the private sector helped improve the economic performance. Private investment ratio picked up from one digit in the 1980s to a double digit of about 16 percent at the end of the 1990s. Commensurate with private investment growth, the per capita GDP growth rate got up from around 2 percent in the 1980s to nearly 3 percent in the first half of the 1990s. The economy grew at over 3 percent in per capita term in the second half.

There was marked improvement in the budgetary position of the government, the budget being less than 5 percent? from about 6 percent at the close of 1980s. Also external current account deficit was brought down to a comfortable level of less than 2 percent of GDP and the inflation rate was tamed considerably.

### **The DCCI in the New Millennium**

Bangladesh is well into the 21st century - in the second half of the first decade of the new millennium. The entry into the millennium was marked by some positive developments in the macroeconomic fundamentals representing successful stabilization by means of improved domestic resource mobilization and other efforts. However, the impression should not obscure the other side of the picture. Successive bad harvests in the early 1990s and the devastating floods in 1988-89 coupled with political unrest and disruptions in power supply due to lack of timely investment in the sector had some destabilizing effects.

In the beginning of the new century world economy was marked by some outstanding events - the attacks on the World Trade Centre of USA, Iraq war, recession in the world economy, new round of trade negotiations and various meetings at different levels concerning the negotiations for new opportunities and bindings of trade under WTO, attempts to make effective some regional cooperation agreements - SAPTA, BIMSTEC, etc. sub-regional trade and investment cooperation, and bilateral free-trade talks and proposals etc.; extension of duty and quota-free access to 72 African and Caribbean countries under USTDA - 2000, and preferential treatment for the LDCs including Bangladesh by the European Union, Korea and Canada.

Against this backdrop were set some global socio-economic objectives known as Millennium Development Goals which, in the main, emphasize drastic reduction of poverty, and addressing some gender and social issues. The issues at hand for Bangladesh are realizing the Millennium Development Goals, attainment of accelerated rate of growth, taming the growing inequality of income, facing the phasing out of MFA, narrowing the trade gap etc. To these ends, the policy reforms of the 1990s were continued under the rubric of “institutional reforms” for good governance.

In the first few years of the new century the DCCI, as usual but more vigorously, performed important works relating to institutional development, policy influencing of the government and provision of services to its members. Institutional development involved, among other, things extension of office space and allotment of spaces for some officers, operationalisation of the Management Information Centre (MIS), computerization of the organization with one-to-one computer, strengthening of the security system, establishment of modern fire-fighting system etc. On policy formation and implementation thereof the DCCI leadership reemphasized the responsibility of the private sector and the role of Private Public Partnership Program (PPPP) in creating necessary dynamism in business activities. In continuation of its earlier efforts, the DCCI evaluated the achievements and constraints of different policies and sub-sectors of the economy and submitted its recommendations to different forums of the government. Some of the concrete suggestions included

- establishing a separate bank for the small and medium enterprises (SMEs)
- providing incentives for setting up agro-based industry
- providing incentives to export-oriented industries for value addition
- appointment of tax ombudsman
- fixing a target for exporting software
- increasing internet connections from 3 thousand to at least 1 million by 2003

Other recommendations related to import and export policies, industrial policy, IT policy, electronic transaction act, policy for gas uses, energy policy, account trading policy, anti-dumping policy guidelines, World Bank’s Bangladesh Country Assistance Strategy, Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA), OIC Preferential Agreement, Coal Marketing Policy, BISTEC, FTG, SAFTA, GATS (Mode-4) and so on. The DCCI claimed in the Annual Report of the Board of Directors 2003 that a large number of the DCCI’s recommendations were accepted by the government. In the following Annual Report of 2004 the DCCI President pointed out the steps taken by the government on the basis of the DCCI’s recommendations. Some of these are:

- provision of 30 percent incentive for agriculture and agro-based products.
- reducing interest on export credit
- introducing floating exchange rate
- setting up of sector-wise product councils
- taking initiatives for establishing sub-marine cable for the ICT sector
- formation of Independent Anti-Corruption Commission
- establishment of Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute (BFTI) under the public-private partnership program (PPPP)
- reformulation of WTO Cell in the Ministry of Commerce, and
- establishment of Bangladesh Better Business Forum .

In passing it can be mentioned that some of the bodies like the Anti-Corruption Commission were not functional at all until recently while some others such as sector-wise product councils, Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute and WTO Cell etc. are still not functioning well to provide desired services. However, the DCCI leadership continued to press home other demands which include taking steps to address the problems of infrastructural facilities, price hike due to corruption, political instability, lack of continuity of policies, and non-finalization of definition of SMEs etc.

Like many other years, 2007 (1) represents an eventful and memorable year (2) along the journey of the DCCI. The year marks the fulfillment of a long felt imperative - the establishment of a SME Help Line Centre and a DCCI-BRAC Bank information booth to provide its members with required information and help SME banking related information. Yet another achievement tops these events of the DCCI. It is the DCCI's winning of the "World Chambers Competition Award 2007" in the "Best Skills Development Programme" category from the World Chambers Federation (WCF) held in Istanbul, Turkey. Unquestionably this is an achievement to be proud of. Thus far we have dealt with only the important activities of the DCCI in respect of policy and programme formulation and implementation thereof through the private-public cooperation process. Although the DCCI leadership did these on the basis of the work of various committees and components of the secretariat very little has been said about the mechanism and complexities of the works involved.

### **Mechanism of Lobbying**

The Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry uses two-prong methods to influence policies and programmes of the government for improved business conditions. First, the DCCI has representations on various government and semi-government organisations and bodies that are involved in the formulation of business-related policies and programmes. The DCCI representatives directly interact with these organisations to present their viewpoints and technicalities of the policies and programmes. The other policy-influencing method of the DCCI consists of the use of several instruments by the Board of Directors such as press conference, dialogues, meetings with the Head of the Government, Ministers or Advisers, donor communities, Embassies and other important international personalities, experts, chambers, companies etc. Besides, the DCCI holds workshops, seminars and conferences etc. on important issues relating to business and in some cases social and national issues.





Mr. R. Maksud Khan, President of DCCI and other Directors met Begum Khaleda Zia, the Hon'ble Prime Minister of Bangladesh in 1995



Mr. M.H. Rahman, President and Mr. Nasir Hossain Vice-President of DCCI, members of the entourage of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina along with the minister for commerce and industry of UK are seen the picture in 1999



DCCI Golden Jubilee





DCCI Celebrating Golden Jubilee



DCCI Golden Jubilee

To get an idea of these activities attention should be given to some of the DCCI's efforts in the recent years. The DCCI leadership called on the Hon'ble Chief Adviser of the Caretaker Government of Bangladesh at the office of the Chief Adviser, and the other Hon'ble Advisers- in all there were 10 such meetings in 2007-and suggested policies for business development. The DCCI leadership also called on about 15 Embassy dignitaries and business leaders to discuss issues regarding promotion of bilateral trade and investment. In addition numerous meetings were held between the DCCI leadership and trade delegations from overseas representatives of multinational corporations etc. The number of such meetings were 20 in 2006. The standing committees - about 35 in 2006-met about 100 times to sort out problems and recommendations for different aspects of the economy. In one year, the DCCI Research Cell arranged about 40 seminars/workshops/conferences on various issues of the economy. The DCCI's other activities included a good number of publications - Monthly Reviews, Tax Guides, Directories etc.; press conferences on a regular basis on different important issues; signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with various organizations at home and abroad, and social activities which include donations to some pangu (physically disabled) hospitals, madrashas, prime minister's relief fund and a few other organizations.

### **Conclusion**

Since its inception in 1958 the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry has grown from a tiny to a big organization. It has now a membership many times the original number and representing a wide spectrum of business classes. Numerically the executive committee of the Chamber is twice the original size and the auxiliary bodies much more numerous than their ancestors. They carry out functions and provide the kind of services that would appear mind-boggling to the surviving founders of the organisation. Located in a spacious multi-storied building of its own with the state-of-the-art business and communication facilities in the hub of the commercial nerves of Dhaka as also of Bangladesh the DCCI is the most effective voice of the business community at large and an important intermediary for government-business cooperation.

The future builds on the past - consolidating past strengths and leaving behind the weaknesses. The 21st century is getting to a ruthless competitive world with new challenges and opportunities. Efficiency, productivity and quality are the key elements and buzzwords of this world. The Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry is poised for steady progress in the new phase of its journey.

On reflection, it would appear that everything was not well with the DCCI in the past. At times internal conflicts troubled the organization for which the government had to intervene in the form of appointing administrators to help run the DCCI. Also, as with other organizations, the DCCI leadership was not free from political alignment. On the whole it tended to side with the party in power. The DCCI leadership needs to take stock of these matters while preparing for its onward march into the new world.

In general the DCCI's reactions and suggestions with respect to various yearly national budgets have been focused on raising tariffs of manufacturing products and lowering tariffs of imported products. There are a good number of cases where the interests of the two types of business clashes. By way of illustration reference can be made to the producers of agro-based products and importers



of the same. While the former group of businessmen will prefer high import duty on agro-based products the latter group will stand for reduced duty. Also there are cases of clash of interest between manufactures of fabrics whose main raw-material is yarn and domestic manufactures of yarn and manufacturers of garments and manufacturers of domestic textiles producing fabric for garment industries. These are delicate issues. But the leadership must be able to weigh the opposing interests of the business people against national priority and act accordingly.

Pure capitalism which is solely based on the motivation of profit and places a high value on income, possession, appearance and lustre has given way to what is called market economy with a human face, and with environmental and social concerns. Over 40 percent of our population are poor. Their well-being should form an important consideration of the business community. So also is the environment which has been degraded with the process of development. In the same vein, social commitment should form a particular agenda of the business community. Excepting contributions during national calamities and some gifts to certain quarters on special occasions, significant social commitments remain to be forthcoming. Recently the DCCI has launched “Vision 2021” and formed a committee to follow-up and support activities of the Vision 2021 Forum to secure a prosperous Bangladesh with a per capita income of at least US\$1000 for all districts of the country. This is a thoroughly economic programme and is unquestionably a laudable one. But there is a need that the vision be coupled with some Mission following the example of the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce & Industry and some avowed Values as has been professed by the Tokyo Chamber of Commerce & Industry.<sup>13</sup>

Economic systems respond to the objective conditions of the societies and societal demands as well as requirements. The economy of Bangladesh has recognised the creative force and power of the private sector. At the same time the objective conditions of the society warrant infallible social commitment and adherence to some basic values on the part of the business to help build a happy and prosperous Bangladesh. The Mission and Values are—

Mission : \* to promote cultural and educational activities as well as social and community welfare besides economic prosperity.

Values : to stand for

\* protecting and upgrading environment, and

\* upholding the spirit and history of the War of Liberation.

‘Old order changenth yielding place to new.’ The DCCI has also undergone change and transformation. This has taken place in its service, administration, set-up and policy influencing instruments etc. To this process the DCCI has added another dimension – the change of its leadership to young and youthful hands. Supported by the experienced business community, Mr. Khaled Hossain, Mr. Salahuddin Abdullah and Mr. Khondaker Shahidul Islam - President, Senior Vice-President and Vice-President respectively of the DCCI represent the new generation of talented and vigorous leadership of the business. It remains to be seen how the leadership steers the interest of business, represents the patriotic blood of the business, honours social commitment and upholds the those values. That can ensure health for a fast-growing society.

## Appendix to Chapter Eight

### Appendix 8.1

#### List of Past Presidents

1.	Mr. Sakhawat Hossain	1959-60
2.	Mr. Abu Naser Ahmed	1960-61
3.	Mr. Y. A. Bawany	1961-62
4.	Mr. Nurul Huda	1962
5.	Mr. Mohammad Ayub	1962-63
6.	Mr. Sakawat Hossain	1963-64
7.	Mr. Ahmed Hossain	1964-67
8.	Mr. Q. J. Ahmed, C.S.P (Administor)	1967
9.	Mr. A. Qasem	1967-68
10.	Mr. Akhlaque Ahmed	1968-69
11.	Mr. Motiur Rahman	1969-72
12.	Mr. K. A. Sattar	1972-76
13.	Mr. Mirza Golam Hafiz	1976
14.	Mr. Chowdhury Tanvir Ahmad Siddique	1976-79
15.	Mr. Nuruddin Ahmed	1979-82
16.	Mr. M. A. Sattar	1982-84
17.	Mr. M. Yunus	1984-85
18.	Mr. Mahbubur Rahman	1985-86
19.	Mr. Abu Syed Mahmud	1986-90
20.	Mr. Mahbubur Rahman	1991-92
21.	Mr. M. Yunus	1992-93
22.	Mr. A.T.M. Waziullah	1993-94
23.	Mr. A. Rab Chowdhury	1994-95
23.	Mr. R. Maksud Khan	1995
24.	Mr. Ali Hossain	1996
25.	Mr. A. S. M. Qashem	1997
26.	Mr. R. Maksud Khan	1998
27.	Mr. M. H. Rahman	1999
28.	Mr. Aftab Ul Islam	2000
29.	Mr. Benzir Ahmed	2001
30.	Mr. Matiur Rahman	2002-03
31.	Mr. Fazle R. M. Hassan (A.F.A.)	2004
32.	Mr. Saiful Islam	2005
33.	Mr. M. A. Momen	2006
34.	Mr. Hossain Khaled	2007

Source: DCCI Annual Report - various issues

**DCCI Past Presidents\***



Abu Naser Ahmed (1960-61)



Y. A. Bawany (1961-62)



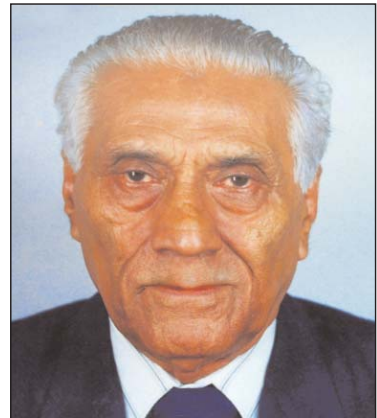
Nurul Huda (1962)



A Qasem (1967-68)



Motiur Rahman (1969-72)



K. A. Sattar (1972-76)



Mirza Golam Hafiz (1976)



Chowdhury Tanvir Ahmad Siddky (1976-79)



Nuruddin Ahmed (1979-82)

\* The photographs of Akhlaque Ahmed (1968-69), Mohammad Ayub (1962-63), Ahmed Hossain (1964-67), Q. J. Ahmed, C.S.P (1967) are not available.





M. A. Sattar (1982-84)



M Yunus (1984-85 & (1992-93)



Mahbubur Rahman (1985-86 & 1991-92)



Abu Syed Mahmud (1986-90)



A.T.M. Waziullah (1993-94)



A Rab Chowdhury (1994-95)



R Maksud Khan (1995 & 1998)



Ali Hossain (1996)



A. S. M. Quasem (1997)





M. H. Rahman (1999)



Aftab Ul Islam (2000)



Benzir Ahmed (2001)



Matiur Rahman (2002-03)



Fazle R. M. Hasan (2004)



Sayeeful Islam (2005)



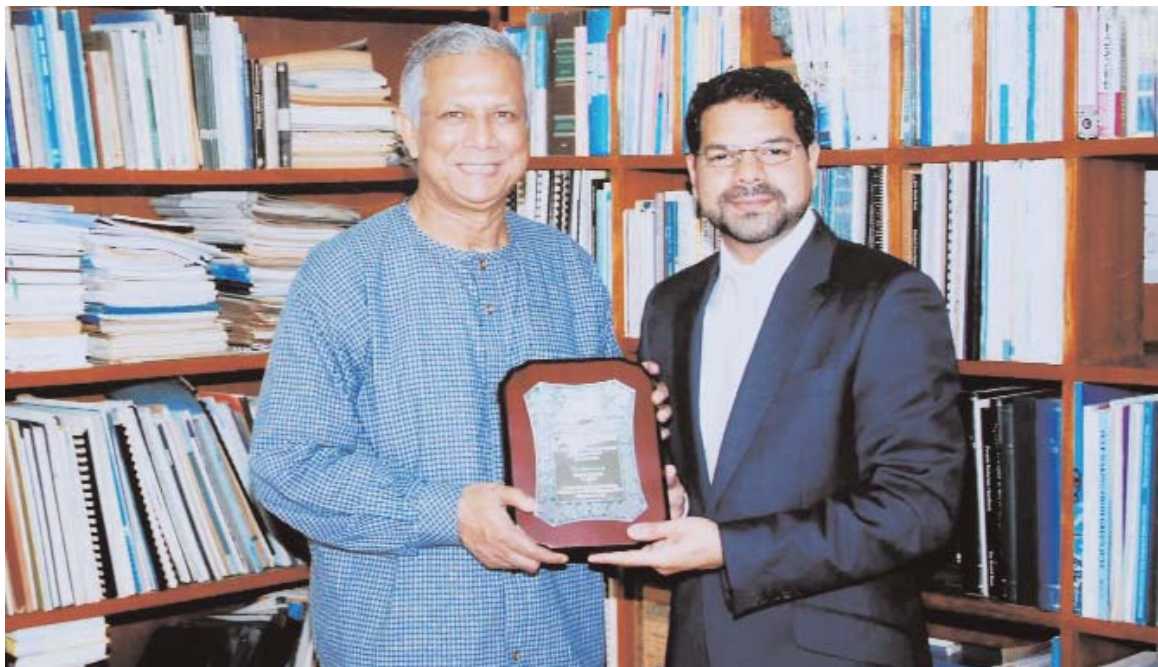
M. A. Momen (2006)



Hossain Khaled (2007-2008)



The President and Directors of the DCCI met President Iajuddin Ahmed, the President of Peoples Republic of Bangladesh



Mr. Hossain Khaled, the President of DCCI handing over a crest to Dr. Muhammad Yunus the Nobel Laureate of Bangladesh

## Appendix 8.2

### Specific Objectives of the DCCI

Memorandum of Association of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry\* incorporates some specific objectives worth noting for understanding the range of functions the Chamber is required to perform. The objectives are:

- i. to arbitrate in the settlement of disputes arising out of commercial transactions between parties willing or agreeing to abide by the judgement and decision of the Association;
2. to promote, advance and help commercial and technical education and the study of such branches of Art, Commerce and Science as may lead to develop trade, commerce, agriculture, industry and mining in Bangladesh;
- i. to acquire and undertake in whole or in part the dealing of organisations whose objects are similar to the objects of this Association;
- ii. to acquire, promote and maintain a suitable office for holding and conducting commercial transactions, meetings of members or arbitrators and other like matters;
- iii. to accept any donation, gift, contribution or subscription towards promoting and maintaining the objects of the Association and to create and provide funds and to invest and apply the same as the association may deem expedient;
- iv. to sell, improve, manage, develop, exchange, lease or let, under-lease or sub-let, mortgage, dispose off, turn to account or otherwise to deal with;
- v. to construct upon any premises any building or buildings for the purpose of the Association and to alter or improve any building upon such premises;
- vi. to invest any money and property of the Association upon such securities and in such matters as determined by the Association;
- vii. to borrow or raise any money required for the purposes of the Association upon such terms and in such manner and on such securities as may be determined and in particular by the issue of debentures charged upon all or any of the property of the Association;
- viii. to aid and to receive aid from any other Society, Association, Firm, Corporation, Company, Partnership or Person Promoting or formed or intended to promote any of the objects of the Association and to subscribe to or aid any such Society, Association, Firm, Corporation, Company, Partnership or Person with a view to obtaining any advantage or benefit for the purpose of the Association and to subscribe to any fund or Society as may be considered deserving by the Association;
- ix. to buy, sell, export or import goods of all kinds and to carry or promote or encourage any other business whether manufacturing, trading or otherwise of all sorts for the benefit of the Association or any member or members of the Association and to promote companies for any purpose calculated to benefit this Association;
- x. to act as agent or broker and trustee of any person or firm or company to undertake and perform contracts or sub-contracts and to appoint brokers or agent in Bangladesh or elsewhere for the benefit or necessity of the Association;
- xi. to draw, make, accept, endorse, discount, execute and issue promissory notes, bill of exchange, hundis, bills of lading, warrants, debentures and other negotiable or transferable instruments;
- xii. to pay out of the funds of the Association all costs, charges and expenses preliminary and incidental to the promotion, establishment, and registration of the Association.
- xiii. to acquire from time to time and to manufacture and deal in all such stock-in-trade, goods, chattels and effects as may be necessary or convenient for furtherance of the objects of the Association;
- xiv. to subscribe to purchase, acquire and hold shares, stock, debentures or other interests in any other Association having objects wholly or in part similar to those of this Association;
- xv. to deal in Government Promissory Notes and Securities, Port Trust Debentures, Corporation Securities etc;
- xvi. to devote, apply or subscribe any money, securities, stocks or shares bequeathed or made over to the Association to such charitable or benevolent objects or for any public, general or useful object or purpose as the donor may direct to where no such directions are given as the Association may in general meeting from time to time determine;
- xvii. to adjust controversies between members of the Association;
- xviii. to establish just and equitable principles in trade;
- xix. to form a code or codes of practices to simplify and facilitate transaction of commerce and industry;
- xx. to maintain uniformity in rules, regulations and usages of trade;
- xxi. to arrange for and issue Certificates of Origin, Weighment, measurement, inspection, analysis and gradation and do all such act or acts as are conducive to the objectives of the Association.
- xxii. to do all such other things as are incidental or as the Association may think conducive to the attainment of any or all of the above objectives.

\* DCCI –Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry.



### Appendix 8.3 Standing /Sub Committees

#### Sub-Committees 1967-68

- Building Sub-Committee
- Establishment Sub-Committee
- Import Sub-Committee
- Taxation Sub-Committee
- Industries Sub-Committee

#### Standing Committees

Currently there are 35 Standing Committees. A brief account of these committees are presented below:

##### Agro-based Standing Committee

This Committee examines problems and forwards recommendations for solutions of the problems relating to the setting up of agro-based industries, marketing of products, agricultural issues in the light of WTO Agreements.

##### Banking and Leasing Standing Committee

In view of the role of the bank and non-bank financial institutions in activities like exports, imports and domestic trade, the Committee identifies the problems and obstacles in conducting business while dealing with these institutions and makes recommendations for consideration of the Chamber and takes steps with the responsible authorities to address the issues accepted by the Chamber. Besides, the Committee arranges round-table meetings to discuss the credit needs of the business community from the various financial institutions.

##### Capital Market Development Standing Committee

Development of capital market is vital for the development of the private sector. The Committee identifies the capital market problems and the problems relating to FDI and domestic investment. It particularly looks at the rules and regulations in these respects and make recommendation for the needful.

##### Communication, Transportation and Traffic Control Standing Committee

Identification of transport problems of various roads of the Dhaka city and surrounding areas, particularly the problems relating to traffic jam, development of road network, development of communication is the responsibility of the committee.

##### Constitution, By-laws and Membership Standing Committee

The responsibility of this committee consists in making recommendations for any required change/addition/subtraction of rules and regulations for maintaining or accelerating dynamic activities of members, and for upholding the dignity of the constitution in keeping with the Trade Ordinance, and for holding election to the Chamber etc.

##### Customs, VAT, Tariff and Taxation Standing Committee

Making recommendations for business friendly budget is the main objective of this Committee. Income tax, import duty, supplementary duty and VAT constitute, one of the most important considerations in a budget. The Committee proposes pre-budget thinking on these.

##### DCCI Business Institute, Project Development and HRD Standing Committee

In order to impart specialized training, provide information relating to business affairs and skill-development the DCCI Business Institute (DBI) conducts various training workshops. The South Asia Enterprise Development Facility (SEDF) in conjunction with DBI organizes these training programmes, particularly training for entrepreneur development and business executives. The DBI has been equipped with modern information, technology (IT) and business related information library.

##### DITF, Trade Delegation and International Trade Fair Standing Committee

In order to promote business, trade and investment at home and abroad, the Committee arranges trade delegations, sends representatives to various trade fairs, does the advocacy work by various means for promoting sale of domestic products and services to the consumers at local and international levels etc.

##### Energy, Power, Telecommunication and Infrastructural Development Standing Committee

This Committee seeks to identify current and development issues relating to energy, power, telecommunication and infrastructure of the country for business purposes and make recommendations to solve the problems.



**Environment, Pollution Control, Global Warming and Green House Effect Standing Committee**

Development process is associated with various side-effects such as environmental degradation, global warming and green house problem etc. The Committee's lookout is to extend cooperation and assistance in formulating government policy and regulations and implementing programmes in this respect. The chamber's representatives take part in various discourses, seminars and conferences at home and abroad. The committee takes steps to communicate government policies and programmes to the members.

**Establishment and Administrative Matter Standing Committee**

The Chamber has grown to a big establishment and so is its administration. In order to maintain dynamism in the administrative work, the Committee provides guidance and recommends reforms of administrative policies. Besides, the Committee assists the Chamber in matters relating to the improvement and coordination of various activities of the Chamber Secretariat.

**Estate and DCCI Property Development Standing Committee**

Estate and other properties of the DCCI are the main sources of income of the Chamber. DCCI is involved in various construction works, development activities, purchase and maintenance of machineries and equipments, expansion, beautification and some other related activities. The committee is responsible for maintaining estate income and other activities mentioned above.

**Export and International Market Promotion Standing Committee**

Some Ministries of the government including the Ministries of Commerce, Industry etc. are responsible for formulating policies and programmes in matters of exports and international market development. The Committee is entrusted with providing assistance to these ministries in these matters. In addition, the Committee prepares recommendations made in various meetings, symposiums etc. by the participants for the expansion of exports.

**Finance and Accounts Related Standing Committee**

The Committee observes the nature and trend in the sources of income and expenditure, and supervises expenditures and sends recommendations on these matters. In addition, the Committee's lookout consists of preparation of budget, its control and recommendations relating to issues concerned.

**Housing and Real State Standing Committee**

The Committee overviews the housing and real estate business and, keeping in mind the need of the general people, prepares recommendations for consideration of the Chamber. The recommendations consist of two parts - one for the removal of constraints and the other for further improvement of housing and estate business.

**Import, Indenting and International Trade Standing Committee**

The responsibility of this Committee lies in making recommendations for removing obstructions and problems relating to import, indenting and international trade in general. The issues that are generally considered by the Committee are the rate of exchange, dealings of the Pre-Shipping Inspection (PSI), companies bondage warehouse facility, tax, value added tax etc.

**Industries and SME Development Standing Committee**

The committee, in effect, works for the small and medium industries. Small and medium industries now-a-day are regarded as very effective for LDCs like ours for industrialization in view of their employment creation capability, need for smaller capital etc. All problems relating to SME development including finance, technology, training etc. are considered by the Committee.

**Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Standing Committee**

ICT is a relatively new technology and its development is vital for modern economies. In order particularly to encourage the private sector in this matter the committee collects related information for developing a network of modern information technology (IT). The issues that are generally considered by the Committee consists of-

- DCCI automation
- documentary CD on DCCI activities
- web portal for buyers-sellers meet
- wedsigning of website.

**Insurance Standing Committee**

Insurance business has assumed important role in modern economies. There are many problems relating to insurance undertaken by traders, factory owners, garment industries and personal individuals. Problems of various

stakeholders are varied. The Committee makes recommendations regarding these problems. In the case of international market management, it is important to note the anomalies between the insurance policy of Bangladesh and those at international level.

#### **Intellectual Property Rights and Trade Marks and Patent Rights Standing Committee**

In the case of international trade and investment particularly in the globalised world intellectual property rights and trade marks are assuming ever increasing importance. Efficiently conducting business does not only depend on the allocation of resources; it depends also on the prevailing environment and laws relating to intellectual property rights and trade marks. The responsibility of the committee lies in, among other things, in the study of the present condition of intellectual property rights and in making recommendations to make the system effective.

#### **International Trade, WTO and SAFTA Standing Committee**

In the globalised world international cooperation and regional cooperation agreements play an important role in business development; market access greatly depends on the terms and conditions of the agreements. Trade and other transactions under the terms and conditions are constantly creating issues that need remedial actions. The Committee examines these conditions and, to reflect the Chamber's position, makes recommendations for consideration of the government. Bangladesh's main exports, eg, readymade garments and leather products, have not yet got 100 percent market facility for which the committee has been working.

#### **Jute and Textile Standing Committee**

Jute and textiles sector's contribution to trade in general and exports in particular cannot be overemphasized. Particularly the textile sector is an expanding and very promising one. The Committee identifies problems of business in these sectors and makes recommendations for the consideration of the Chamber.

#### **Labour and Manpower Standing Committee**

Manpower export earning is an important source of foreign exchange of Bangladesh. The Committee's tasks are to identify various constraints in the development of manpower and its exports and also other problems of the labour market. Some of the issues of consideration are

- review of labour laws
- making the exporting company competitive
- special passport for wage earners
- employment passport fee determination and making the availability of passports easy
- seeking alternatives to Police Clearing Certificate
- modernise bank services and the monitoring system for increasing foreign exchange

#### **Law and Order and Anti-Smuggling Standing Committee**

All issues relating to law and order receive attention of the Committee. In addition, anti-smuggling policy and measures remain the consideration of the committee.

#### **Library, Research and Seminar/Symposium Standing Committee**

The main activities of the Committee, are analysis of data relating to business, investment and IT; preservation and distribution of the analyses; arrangement of seminar/symposium, making papers available and developing the library.

#### **New Project Viability and Thrust Sector Standing Committee**

This committee monitors the processing of New Project Proposals in the Bangladesh Shilpa Bank. To avoid uncertainty regarding the fate of the projects due to long delay in decision making, the Committee keeps pressure on the Bank to expedite the processing. Besides this, the Committee works on the Entrepreneurship Equity Fund (EEF) and SME Fund in order to increase investment in the thrust sector.

#### **Ports, Shipping and ICD Standing Committee**

This Committee works on issues relating to infrastructural facilities in the port and also on issues related to sea ports.

#### **Privatization, Joint Venture and FDI Standing Committee**

The Committee's concerns are problems regarding privatisation, joint venture and FDI.

**Protection of Consumer Rights Standing Committee**

This committee works for social awareness regarding consumers' rights, the supply of goods and services at reasonable prices to the consumers and also preventing adulterated food supply. The committee brought important recommendations on the 'Consumer Right Preservation Law 1998'. It adopted several techniques that include posterage of stickers with various slogans.

**Public Relations and DCCI Review Standing Committee**

This Committee is entrusted with the responsibility of reviewing the work and the quality of the Public Relations Department. Also the Committee looks into the quality of the DCCI Monthly Review. In order to uphold and raise the status of the DCCI, the Committee emphasises Public Relations Policy formulation, among other things.

**Promotion, Rehabilitation and Liquidation of Sick Industries Standing Committee**

Sick industries are a great problem for the owners as well as the economy. The number of sick industries is continuously increasing and more and more people are losing jobs. The government has already adopted a policy to rehabilitate the industries. The Committee closely examines the policies implemented, monitors the performance of the industries and examines the issues that remain to be addressed in connection with these industries.

**Social Welfare, Cultural Affairs and Entertainment Standing Committee**

The committee plans and implements social welfare-related activities such as assistance for people affected by disasters, cultural activities of the chamber, Picnic, Iftar, Milad-e-Mahfil, annual dinner and annual meetings etc. of the chamber.

**Standardization and Quality Control Standing Committee**

Quality control is a problem of immense importance. Bangladesh Standard and Testing Institute (BSTI) is primarily responsible for formulation and implementation of the policies; it also conducts appropriate tests and certifies the quality of products. The Committee looks into the policies and makes recommendation for improvement of service, improvement of the quality of products and quality management.

**Tourism and Service Sector Development Standing Committee**

The main task of this committee is to make recommendations for the improvement of tourism and tour services in particular and the management of the service sector in general. Also the committee takes up issues related to the development of private sector tourism along with the public sector.

**Women Entrepreneurship Development Standing Committee**

In order to develop women entrepreneurship the Committee manoeuvres efforts to ensure facilities required for women entrepreneurship. Such requirements include organisational capacity building technology, and resources etc. Besides, the Committee works for ensuring opportunities to women and their participation in various fields of the particularly economic and social life of the country. Some of the related activities include entrepreneurship development, training, P.C. and internet training, experience sharing sessions etc.



Training Workshop of the Women Entrepreneurs

#### Appendix 8.4

##### Representatives to Government, Semi-government and Autonomous Bodies

Sl.No.	Names of Committees	Name of Representatives
1.	Bangladesh Services Ltd. (BSL)	President, DCCI
2.	Dhaka Wasa	President, DCCI
3.	Dhaka Stock Exchange	President, DCCI
4.	Titas Gas Board	President, DCCI
5.	Adviser Council (Electricity)	President, DCCI
6.	Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute	President, DCCI
7.	National Revenue Board	President, DCCI
8.	Export Promotion Bureau	President, DCCI
9.	National Industries Development Parishad	President, DCCI
10.	FTG Free Trade Group	President, DCCI
11.	Securities and Exchange Commission	President, DCCI
12.	---	President, DCCI
13.	Bangladesh Better Business Forum	President, DCCI
14.	Jute Diversification Steering Committee	President/Director, DCCI
15.	APO Society for Bangladesh	Director & Present Retd President, DCCI
16.	Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Co.Ltd.	Director, DCCI
17.	Tariff Commission	Director, DCCI
18.	S.M.E. Advising Committee	Director, DCCI
19.	National Management Committee (Dacca Int'l.)	Director, DCCI
20.	Bangladesh Standard and Testing Institute	Director, DCCI
21.	Chittagong Port Authority Advisory Committee	Sr. Vice-President, DCCI
22.	Divisional Law Disciplinary Committee (Dhaka Divn.)	Director, DCCI
23.	DWUTO Advisory Committee	Director, DCCI
24.	Dhaka Internal Container Depot	Sr. Vice-President, DCCI
25.	Dhaka Dist. Old Cloth Import Committee	Vice-President, DCCI
26.	Health Rehabilitation Welfare Trust	Directors, DCCI
27.	Dhaka District Salt Federation-2	Vice-President, DCCI
28.	Dhaka Zilla Sports Federation	Director, DCCI
29.	Dhaka District Zonal Smuggling Anti-corruption Committee	Director, DCCI
30.	Dhaka District ..... Monitoring Committee	Director, DCCI
31.	NN Commodities Demand Supply Price Evaluation Committee	Director, DCCI
32.	Ministry of Jute	Director, DCCI
33.	Kerosine Monitoring Committee	Director, DCCI
34.	Bangladesh Science and Industry Research Parishad	Director, DCCI
35.	Greater Dhaka Transport Planning & Co-ordination Board, DCC	Director, DCCI
36.	Zakat Board	Vice-President, DCCI
37.	Housing and Building Research Institute	Director, DCCI
38.	Agri-Business Development Project	Director, DCCI
39.	Developing Business Service (Jute Ministry)	Director, DCCI
40.	Dhaka Metropolitan Division Transport Committee	Director, DCCI
41.	Finalization of Export Committee	Director, DCCI
42.	Leather Industry City	Director, DCCI

Source: The Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry- Annual Report, 2007.



### Appendix 8.5

#### Important Events of the DCCI

The DCCI performs innumerable activities every year. Not all of the events and facts could be discussed in the text. Some of the important events are presented year-wise below.

#### 1967

- November** First meeting of the newly elected Executive Committee in the Chamber premises on the 13th of November. The Seventh Annual General Meeting of the Dacca Chamber of Commerce & Industry held at Hotel Intercontinental (the present Hotel Sheraton). The occasion was marked by the taking over of the responsibility of running the chamber by the newly elected President Mr. M. A. Quasem from Mr. S. J. Ahmed C.S.P. – government appointed Administrator.
- The chamber gave reception to a 26-member Economic Mission of Germany and discussed matters of mutual interest.

#### 1968

- February** Under the leadership of M.A. Raagoon Wada, President of the Central Board of Directors, National Bank of Pakistan, high officials of the Bank met the Chamber Executive Committee. The DCCI emphasised the need for extending credit to the East Pakistan businessmen. To this end, the simplification of loan application procedures and extending some autonomy to the local Board of the Bank were stressed.
- The chamber received a Trade and Investment Mission of the USA led by H. J. Cummings and discussed issues related to business interest such as possibility of joint collaboration.
- March** Visit to the Chamber of a five-member trade delegation led by Zubair S. Asgour, Vice-Chairman of the Federation of Jordan Chamber of Commerce & Industry to discuss business interest including joint collaboration.
- The shifting of the Chamber's office to its present address at 65-66 Motijheel Commercial Area is a memorable event that took place on the 24th of March, 1968.

#### 1970

- January** The Chief Controller of Imports and Exports of the Government of Pakistan visited the Chamber to discuss issues related to import policy.
- A Japanese trade delegation met the members of the Board to discuss issues of mutual interest and areas of cooperation.
- February** A trade mission from Yugoslavia met the members of the business community on the Chamber premises and discussed business issues for fostering relations between the two countries.
- August** A Thai trade delegation led by the Minister of Economic Affairs, Royal Thai Government, met the members of the Chamber to negotiate setting up a consulate office in Dacca.
- September** A 13-member Saudi Arabian trade delegation (Purchase Mission) led by the President of the Jeddah Chamber of Commerce & Industry visited the member of the Chambers.
- November** The Chief Economist of the World Bank met the Chamber President and Vice-President to discuss the condition of the economy and ascertain loss of lives and properties due to the devastating cyclone.

#### 1971

- January** A trade delegation from the Peoples Republic of Hungary visited the Chamber to explore the possibility of marketing Hungarian goods in the then East Pakistan and purchase East Pakistani products. The delegation was also to explore economic cooperation in respect of investment and various joint collaboration.
- June** The Chamber received a World Bank Mission. The President of the Chamber described the economic condition of the then East Pakistan and sought assistance from the World Bank.

#### 1972

- April** A Fact Finding-cum-Good-Will Mission of the Federation of Association of Small Industries in India met the members of the Chambers.
- A trade delegation from the Federation of Chamber of Commerce & Industry of Ceylon met the members of the Chamber.
- Mr. Othman Rist, a Swiss Ambassador on Special Mission to Bangladesh, met the members of the Chamber and pledged to use the Swiss Government's influence for repatriation of Bangladeshis from Pakistan.

May	Led by Mr. Sanjoy Sen, a 7-member Indian trade delegation visited the Chamber and discussed the possibility of joint venture investment, in areas such as engineering, electrical and mechanical.
June	Led by Mr. P. Giri, a 10-member Nepalese trade delegation visited the DCCI and discussed the need for liberal policy for promoting trade relations between Nepal and Bangladesh.
November	M. R. Prodhan, Director of the Technical Assistance Project for the Generalised System of Preference (GSP) of the UNCTAD, Geneva had a meeting with the members of the DCCI. The DCCI sought the influence of the Director to impress upon the developed countries for granting maximum tariff preferences for goods exported from developing countries in general and Bangladesh in particular to the developed world.  A 9-member delegation of the DCCI led by its President Mr. K.A. Sattar attended a convention of trade, commerce and industry at Shillong, India. The team also visited the Third Asian International Trade Fair at New Delhi.
December	A trade delegation from Egypt led by Mr. Abdul Majed Hosni visited the DCCI to discuss about possible economic collaboration between Egypt and Bangladesh  A 5-member Indian delegation visited the DCCI to explore the market of Indian plastic products in Bangladesh. A DCCI delegation met the Minister for Health, Labour, Social Welfare and Family Planning and emphasised the importance of labour relation and industrial organisation.
<b>1973</b>	
February	A World Bank top order team met the members of the DCCI to discuss the requirement of assistance from the International community for reconstruction of the War-ravaged economy of Bangladesh.
September	A 5-member trade delegation led by the Chamber President visited European countries to explore the market of non-traditional goods from Bangladesh.
November	Mr. E. B. Sarker, Secretary of the Chamber participated in a six-week seminar in Tokyo on Management of Chambers of Commerce and Industry.
October	The DCCI condemned the Israeli aggression in the Middle East and strongly denounced the nefarious act of Israel against innocent Arabs.
<b>1975</b>	
July	An 18-member delegation under the leadership of Mr. A. Sattar, President of the DCCI attended a seminar on 'Development of Small Industries' in India.  A 5-member trade delegation of the DCCI led by Mr., Mansurul Aziz – a member of the Executive Committee of the DCCI-toured Italy in connection with development and expansion of trade between the two countries.
<b>1976</b>	
September	Annual Election of the chamber held.
October	Mr. Harry Blassur, Honourary Consul of Helsinki, Finland in Bangladesh and Mr. K. A. Bari, Trade Commission Designate of Bangladesh in Nairobi Visited the Chamber.
December	Senior Vice-President of the Chamber Mr. M.A. Huq attended a Seminar in Budapest, Sponsored by UNIDO in Co-operation with the Hungarian Chamber.
December	Trade delegation from Belgium visited the chamber and discussed matters of mutual interest with the members.
March	A high-powered Japanese Economic Mission led by Mr. Takashi Hoyakaya met members of the DCCI to discuss matters of mutual economic interest.
<b>1977</b>	
March	A Trade Delegation led by Mr. Liu en from the People's Republic of China Visited the Chamber.
May	Traders' Mission from South Korea led by Mr. Choo Ho Kim, visited the Chamber.
June	A seven-member trade delegation from Nepal visited the Chamber and discussed matters of mutual interest between the two countries.
June	Visit of China Machinery Trade Delegation.
October	Mr. Chowdhury Tanbir Ahmed Siddiky, President, Dacca Chamber of Commerce and Industry, attended the meeting of all Heads of Chambers of Commerce in Istanbul, Turkey, along with the President, Federation of Commerce and Industry and President, Federation of Chamber of Commerce and Industry and President, Narayanganj Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

December	Trade Delegation from Pakistan led by Mr. Hamid Habib, Chairman, Pakistan Export Promotion Bureau, visited the Chamber and discussed matters of mutual interest with the members of the Chamber.
December	Annual Election of the Chamber held.
<b>1978</b>	
February	An Italian Economic Mission led by Dr. Giuseppe Salvatore visited the Chamber and a Dinner was hosted in honour of the Mission.
March	A Nepalese Trade Delegation met the members of the Chamber . Installation of TELEX bearing numbers 732-DAC took place in the Chamber.
June	The first issue of the 'Bulletin' of the Chamber came out. His Excellency Mr. David T. Schneider, Ambassador of the United States of America, visited the Chamber and discussed matters of mutual trade interest.
October	A high powered 8-member delegation from Japan Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (M.H.L) headed by Dr. M. Kanamori visited the Chamber. A Pakistan Trade Delegation lead by Mr. Hajee Razzak Janoo visited the Chamber.
<b>1979</b>	
March	Election of President and Vice-Presidents held.
October	GSP Team met the members of the Dacca Chamber of Commerce and Industry.
October	Members of the Indonesian cement association met the members.
October	Dr. William Travis, Professor of Economics of the University of Indiana met the members of the chamber and spoke on "Technology Transfer".
November	A delegation of the Association of Indian Engineering Industry met the members of the Chamber and discussed matters of mutual interest.
<b>1980</b>	
February	Election of the members of the Executive Committee held.
February	Election of the President and Vice-President held.
April	The Chamber accorded reception to the State Minister for Commerce Mr. Choudhury <i>Tanbir Ahmed Siddiky</i> at Hotel Intercontinental.
<b>1882</b>	
January	Election of Members of the Executive Committee.
February	An Italian Economic Mission lead by Dr. Giuseppe Salvatore visited the Chamber and a Dinner was hosted in honour of the Mission where mutual business interests were discussed.
March	Nepalese Trade Delegation met the members of the Chamber.
March	Installation of TELEX bearing number 732-DAC .
May	Indo-Bhutan Trade delegation met with the President, DCCI.
June	The first issue of the "Bulletin" of the Chamber came out. His excellency Mr. David T. Schneider, Ambassador of the United States of America visited the chamber to discuss matters of mutual interest.
October	A three member Trade delegation from Pakistan met the President of the DCC I and addressed the members. A high powered 8-member delegation from Japan Mitsubishi Heavy Industries visited the chamber. A Pakistan trade delegation visited the chamber.
<b>1983</b>	
June	A Trade delegation from Pakistan visited DCCI and addressed the members of DCCI.
November	Mr. Sydney Pereira, Trade Representative and Director and Head of Trade Mission of the Trade Representation of Portugal called on President of the DCCI.
December	The President of the DCCI laid the foundation stone of 12 storied building of the DCCI.

**1984**

- January. Commercial Secretary of Finland Embassy met the DCC President.
- Feb. The Director of 'Helsinki School of Economics' met the DCCI President.
- March A high level trade team from India met the DCCI members and a MOU was signed.
- April An eminent professor from "Guoduah Institute of the International Studies" met the industrialists and businessmen.
- December A trade team from Nepal met the DCCI members.

**1985**

- January A trade team from Singapore met the DCCI members.  
A team from 'British and South Asia Trade Association' met the DCCI President.
- March Director of "Office of International Trade" from the State Department, Washington D.C. visited the members of the Chamber.
- April Election of President and Vice-President was held.
- May An investment and trade delegation from Korea met the DCCI members.
- September A team from the "Association of Indian Engineering Industries" met the DCCI members.
- November A team from "Bengal National Chamber of Commerce and Industry met the DCCI members.
- December A trade team from Taiwan met the DCCI President.

**1986**

- April A team from Brussels met the DCCI members.
- October World Bank Chief of Dhaka met the DCCI the President.  
IDLC Managing Director met the DCCI President and other Senior members.  
A team from "Bangladesh-US Business Council" met the DCCI President.

**1987**

- March A high-level Government official met the DCCI President and Senior Vice Presidents to discuss the problems of agricultural exports.
- July A team from the "Islamic Development Bank" met the DCCI members.

**1988**

- January A Trade Team from Sri-Lanka met the DCCI members.  
An Economic and trade team from Italy met members of the DCCI.
- October A 6-member Trade team from Abudhabi met the DCCI members and a MOU was signed.
- December A Trade Team from India met the DCCI members.

**1989**

- December Election of the DCCI was held.
- May A Trade Team from Nepal met the DCCI President.
- October A 7-member Trade Team left for Indonesia to participate in the Asean Trade Fair.
- December A 3-member Cement Consultant team from India met the DCCI President and other members.

**1990**

- January A team of "Confederation of Engineering" from India met DCCI members to discuss joint Industry trade.
- March A Japanese investors' team met the DCCI members to discuss joint Industry and trade issues.
- September A 10-member trade delegation left Dhaka to take part in 'Global Business Opportunities Convention' in Japan.

**1991**

- January Election of Board of Directors of DCCI for a period of 2-years along with election of President, Sr. Vice President and Vice Presidents was held.
- July Malaysian Palm Oil representatives team met the DCCI President and other members to discuss Palm Marketing.
- September A Team from Sri-Lanka met the DCCI members.  
A Trade team from South Korea met the DCCI members.



<b>1992</b>	
February.	The President of “Maratha Chamber of Commerce & Industry” met the DCCI President and other members to discuss bilateral trade issues.
July	A Round Table on “National Budget 1992-93” was arranged by DCCI. A MOU was signed between DTZ and DCCI on Business Advisory service.
November	President of South Korean Pohang Chamber of Commerce and Industry met the DCCI President and other members.
April	A 13-member trade team from South Korea met the DCCI President and members to discuss bilateral trade issues.
<b>1993</b>	
May	The DCCI President and other members met Chamber representative from different Chambers of the country.
October.	A Trade team from China met the DCCI President and other members to discuss bilateral trade issues. A Press Conference was organized to discuss “Investment Atmosphere : Problems and Solution” for recommendation purposes.
November	High Commissioner of the UK met the DCC President and other members to discuss bilateral trade issues. Executives from NORAD visited DCCI premises and discussed bilateral issues with the DCCI members.
December	A Visiting Trade Team of the Taiwan met the DCCI President and other members.
January	A Trade Team from Nepal discussed bilateral trade issues with the DCCI President and other members.
February	A Senior Economist of the World Bank met the DCCI President and other members to discuss World Bank rules for privatization. MOU signed between DCCI and BNCCI
<b>1994</b>	
March	Election of Board of Directors of the DCCI along with election of President, Sr. Vice President and Vice-Presidents was held.
May	A Trade Team from Bengal National Chamber of Commerce & Industry met the Chamber executives A MOU was signed between the DCCI and the BNCCI.
<b>1995</b>	
January	Election of Board of Directors of the DCCI and election of President, Sr. Vice President and Vice Presidents was held.
July	A Trade Team from India met the DCCI members to discuss tourism management issues in the two countries.
August	The E-mail service was inaugurated in the DCCI library.
September	A 11-member DCCI Trade and Investment team visited EU Countries - UK, Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Italy and France. A Team of Bangladeshi Businessmen visited Pakistan to take part in the international business conference.
November	A Trade Team from Japan met the DCCI President and other members to discuss trade issues.
<b>1996</b>	
December	1995 Election of Board of Directors of the DCCI along with election of President, Sr. Vice President and Vice-Presidents was held.
July	A 10-member Trade Team from Calcutta “The Bengal Chamber” met DCCI president and members to discuss bilateral trade issues. A11-member Trade Team from Pakistan met the DCCI president and other members.
<b>1997</b>	
December	Election of Board of Directors of the DCCI along with election of President, Sr. Vice President and Vice-Presidents was held. A12-member team participated in “11th Industrial Fair” in Tripura, India.
May	A Trade Team from China met the DCCI President and other members.
June	A Trade and Investment Team from India met the DCCI President and members. A Trade Team from China met the DCCI president and other members.
August	A Seminar on “Implications of Uruguay Round” was jointly organized by the WTO and the DCCI.

**1998**

December	Election of Board of Directors of the DCCI along with election of President, Sr. Vice President and Vice-President was held.
January	A representative team from Chinese Foreign Liaison Department met DCCI members to discuss bilateral trade.
February	A 6-member team from Turkey met DCCI members to discuss bilateral trade.
March	Representatives from World Bank met the DCCI President and other members. President of the DCCI represented Bangladesh for both Government and private sector in "Trade Presentation" symposium in Geneva. A 16-member team from "Singapore Trade and Infrastructural Development" met the DCCI members.
May	A 6-member trade team from Taiwan met DCCI members.
June	The DCCI president presented a keynote paper on "Investment Opportunities in Bangladesh" jointly organized by the DCCI and the ICB of Bangladesh. A 13-member DCCI Trade and Investment team visited Myanmar and Thailand.
July	A MOU was signed between the DCCI and the 'Development' of Rome regarding trade and technical support.
August	A 10-member representative team from Myanmar met DCCI members to discuss bilateral trade. The DCCI arranged WTO regional seminar on "The Multilateral Trading System for LDCs". A Workshop on "Electronic Information Networking and 2000 Demands" was jointly organized by the DCCI and the World Bank. A 5-member Trade Development Team from the DCCI visited Thailand.
September	A MOU was signed between the DCCI and the DTZ to establish a "Product Development Centre" in the Dhaka Chamber.
October	A 20-member representative Trade and Investment team met DCCI members. A team from the Republic of Korea met President and other members of the DCCI.
November	A MOU was signed between the DCCI and the DTZ regarding extension of 'BAS'. A 8-member Team from India met DCCI members. A Team from China met the DCCI president and other members.

**1999**

December	Election of the Board of Directors of the DCCI along with election of President, Sr. Vice President and Vice Presidents was held.
Jan	A 13-member team from the Board of Directors took part in the 13th Industrial Fair '99 in Tripura, India.
February	Two trade representative teams from Pakistan and India took part in a bilateral trade expansion meeting with members of the DCCI. A 8-member trade team from Nepal held a meeting with members of the DCCI. A 4-member team from ILO met the DCCI president and other members to discuss "skilled labour creation techniques".
March	A trade representative from the West Bengal Chamber and Bengal National Chamber met DCCI members to discuss bilateral trade expansion and joint investment.
April	A 17-member trade team from Taiwan met DCCI members to discuss trade expansion and dual capital investment. A 20-member team of 'Bat Wal Chamber' from Nepal held a meeting with the DCCI. The President of the 'Bangladesh-French' Chamber of Commerce & Industry met the DCCI President and other members to discuss trade & economic relations between the two countries. A 10-member team from the DCCI attended a seminar on "Import and Export" in Tripura, India. A 9-member team from the DCCI attended a meeting of BIMTC-IC in Bangkok, Thailand. A MOU was signed between "Centre for International Port Enterprise" of US Chamber of Commerce & the DCCI. The DCCI President met members of the Abu Dhabi and the Dubai Chambers to discuss bilateral trade and enactment prospects. A 14-member team from Kerala Chamber, India met DCCI members. A representative from Ceylon Chamber met members of the DCCI. A 6-member team from Myanmar met representatives from the DCCI.

**2000**

- May A representative group of the Rowan University of the United States met the Chamber leaders.
- August SAMS Kibria, Finance Minister, spoke as Chief Guest on “Anti Dumping and Countervailing Duty Measures”  
Ex-Speaker of the Philippines House of Representatives Mr. J.S. Venescue led a 3-member representative group and met the Chamber leaders.
- November Mr. N.Kumar led a 15-member delegation of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Industry of India (BNCCI) and met the DCCI members.

**2001**

- April A trade team from ‘Guyran Wala Chamber of Commerce and Industry’ from Pakistan met DCCI members.
- September A 5-member team from China met DCCI Directors.
- November A 9-member trade team from ‘Bengal National Chamber of Commerce and Industry’, India met DCCI members.

**2002**

- January President of the DCCI attended a meeting in the Industry Ministry to discuss International Institute.  
A trade delegation from Pakistan met DCCI members.
- March A MOU was signed between the DCCI and a Sri -Lankan business delegation.  
A 12-member team from ‘Confederation of Indian Industry’ met the DCCI Board of Directors.  
The Board of Directors of the DCCI participated in the “Bangladesh single Country Fair” in Myanmar.
- September Representatives from the U.S. Embassy in Dhaka and the U.S. Department of Commerce met the DCCI President.
- October A 14-member trade team from Thailand met the DCCI members.  
A 10-member trade team from Taiwan met the DCCI members.  
A 4-member team from India met the DCCI President.

**2003**

- February A 16-member trade delegation from Pakistan met the DCCI.  
A visiting representative group of the British-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the U.S. met the Chamber.  
Mr. Matiur Rahman, President of the Chamber left Dhaka to join the NAM Business Forum in Malaysia.
- March A 8-member representative group from the DCCI visited a 8 day long Pragoti Fair in Gouhati, India.  
A Solo Trade Fair of Bangladesh was held in Myanmar.  
Leaders of the China External Trade Development Council (CETRA) met the Chamber leaders to discuss ‘trade development issues’.
- June Commerce Ministers of Uganda, Tanzania and Sierra Leon met the Chamber leaders of the DCCI.
- August The President, Vice President and Directors of the DCCI left Bangladesh for a 5 day business tour of Thailand.
- September An 8-member business delegation led by the President of the DCCI left Dhaka for a business tour of Malaysia and Taiwan.
- October Led by Mr. J. Aucling a high-powered 10-member business team visited the Chamber.

**2004**

- January Field Marshal Fidel Ramos, Former President of Philippines and leaders of the DCCI met to discuss bilateral trade between Bangladesh and Philippines.  
Executive Director of Canadian Trade Facilitation Office met the President of the DCCI at the Chamber.
- April President of the DCCI joined the Commerce Minister to participate in the Bangladesh Trade Fair held in Sydney, Australia.
- August DCCI business leaders and business leaders of Taiwan had a one to one meeting on business interests.  
President of the DCCI participated in a seminar in Geneva on Strengthening Arbitration and Mediation Services.

	A discussion session was held between the leaders of the DCCI and Mr. Rob Cruz, Chamber Specialist of the Netherlands Management Cooperation.
September	David K. Zelu, Executive Director of External Trade Council of Taiwan met the President of the DCCI in his office.
<b>2005</b>	
January	Mr. Saiful Islam, President of the DCCI met Dr. Santayanan, Chief Economist of the World Bank to discuss Asian Affairs Trade Policy and Post MFA issues.
	Women Entrepreneurship Directory 2004 was inaugurated in the DCCI.
February	Mrs. Ann Marshal, on behalf of Customs VAT Commission, presented Trade Help Desk for the convenience of business in the European Union.
	A group of four eminent trade specialists of TATA met with the President and other leaders of the DCCI.
March	A group of 17 representatives of the Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry met the leaders of the DCCI.
June	An eleven-member high powered delegation from the Unan State of China met the leaders of the DCCI. Vice-President of the DCCI and three Directors went to Putrajaya in Malaysia to participate in the OIC Trade and Business.
July	President and Senior Vice President of the DCCI joined in a discussion meeting with Margrrete Pandar, Officer, Learning Net of International Supply Chain Management, Geneva.
August	Mr. Clifford Beb, Chief of Trade Policy of the British High Commission met with the President of the DCCI.
September	Under the leadership of the DCCI President a 22-member delegation visited the Juanju State in China. President of the DCC participated in the round table meeting of the WTO to discourse on a High Level Government dialogue for development.
<b>2006</b>	
February	Mr. Hossain Khaled, Senior Vice President of the DCCI and a trade representative group visited Hanoi in Vietnam with the Finance Minister.
	President of the DCCI and a trade representative group visited Pakistan with the Prime Minister of Bangladesh.
	A meeting was held between the DCCI and an Indian Capeskil Trade Group.
March	The Senior Vice-President of the DCCI participated in the seminar “Tenth Summit of Young Entrepreneurs” in Brazil.
May	The DCCI President participated in the discussion on Business for Development Empowering, Business to Plan a Productive Role in WTO Negotiation in Singapore.
June	A discussion meeting was held between DCCI leaders and a trade representative group from the Karachi Chamber of Commerce & Industry.
July	A discussion meeting was held between the Chamber and a trade representative group from Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce & Industry.
August	A DCCI trade group headed by M. A. Momen, President of the DCCI visited China and Malaysia.
	A discussion meeting was held between a representative group from Pakistan Chamber of Commerce & Industry and DCCI members.
October	President of the DCCI and other DCCI leaders gave warm felicitation to Dr. Eunus, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, 2006.
	Mr. M.A. Momen, President of the DCCI and other business leaders met the leader of the opposition, Sheikh Hasina, in connection with the issue of transferring power to the Caretaker Government.
<b>2007</b>	
January	Mr. Hossain Khaled, President of the DCCI, met the First Secretary of the European Commission Mr. Charles Whitely and the business adviser of trade and commerce Mr. Zillur Hye. Some other leaders of the Chamber were also present
	The President of the DCCI met Mr. Raj Bakri of the Paris Chamber of Commerce & Industry.



	President of the DCCI met President of the Tripura Chamber of Commerce & Industry, India, in his office.
February	Led by the President of the DCCI, a 17-member delegation joined the Tripura Industrial Fair. President and other executive member of the DCCI met a four-members delegation from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).
March	A seven-member business delegation from the DCCI joined "International Francise Expo" Exhibition in Washington D.C.
April	A business meeting with the representatives of the Russian Federation was held at the Chamber. A discussion meeting was held at the DCCI with the representatives of the British Chamber of Commerce.
May	A meeting was held at the Chamber with a 6-member business delegation team from Thailand.
October	President of the DCCI joined in a meeting with IFC coordinator of the Washington IFC Mission at the Chamber.
<b>2008</b>	
January	DCCI Business Institute (DBI) Participated in the 2nd Education Worldwide Expo 2008 Validation Workshop on "Commercial History of Dhaka". DBI Academic Committee meeting
February	Seminar on DCCI Study on Impact Analysis of Training Activities (IATA) of DCCI Business Institute (DBI). DCCI President Mr. Hossain Khaled left Dhaka for United Kingdom, UK to attend meeting on "Global Skill needs Employer Engagement in Education and Training" Organized by British Council.
March	DCCI President attended a meeting of Bangladesh Better Business Forum at Chief Adviser's office. Mr. Mirza Azizul Islam, Finance Adviser chaired the meeting.
April	Discussion meeting with 24 members delegation from American Chamber of Commerce & Industry (AMCHEM), India. Kite flying Competition of DCCI on Golden Jubilee Celebration at Gulshan Youth Club. Seminar on "Labor Law Compliance in selected Export Industries of Bangladesh" organized by DCCI in Cooperation with German technical Corporation (GTZ).
May	Meeting on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Meeting of DCCI Review Advisory
June	3-member delegation headed by Ms. Safina Rahman, Director DCCI left Dhaka for Vietnam to attend "Global Summit for Women-2008". 16-Member delegation headed by DCCI Vice President Mr. Khandakar Shahidul Islam left Dhaka for Kunming, China to attend 16th China, Kunming Import and Export Commodities Fair 2008. Launching Ceremony of DCCI Web Portal organized by DCCI in Cooperation with Tejari, FZLLC, Dubai held at Hotel Westin. 10-Members Study Tour Team of Sequa Project left Dhaka for Germany and Belgium. Discussion meeting for preparing Initial reaction on National Budget, 2008-2009. DCCI President met Dr. Mohhamad Yunus, Chairman, Grameen Bank held at Grameen Centre. Ms. Ferdus Ara Begum, Additional Secretary (R&P) on behalf of DCCI Attended a seminar on Corporate Social Responsibility" organized by IUBAT.
July	Seminar on "Price-hike, Poverty Alleviation & Budget 2008-09". Dr. A. B. Mirza Azizul Islam, Hon'ble adviser, Ministry of Finance, GOB attended the Seminar as the Chief Guest. DCCI President had a meeting with Mr. Debapriya Bhattecharya, Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the UN offices at hotel Sheraton. DCCI Business Institute (DBI) participated 8th EDIM EXpo-2008 held at Basundhara Expo Centre at Bashundhara City.
August	DCCI President attended WTO Mini-Ministerial Meeting in Geneva Seminar of "Anti-Dumping duty for protection of Domestic SMEs". DCCI published Tax Guide 2008-2009 & held launching ceremony.

**Appendix 8.6**  
**Member Bodies of FBCCI in 2007**

**'A' Class Chambers**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Bagerhat Chamber of Commerce & Industry           | 16. Jessore Chamber of Commerce & Industry             |
| 2. Barisal Chamber of Commerce & Industry            | 17. Khulna Chamber of Commerce & Industry              |
| 3. Bogra Chamber of Commerce & Industry              | 18. Kishoregonj Chamber of Commerce & Industry         |
| 4. Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce & Industry         | 19. Kushtia Chamber of Commerce & Industry             |
| 5. Chandpur Chamber of Commerce & Industry           | 20. Manikganj Chamber of Commerce & Industry           |
| 6. Chapai Nawabganj Chamber of Commerce & Industry   | 21. Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Dhaka |
| 7. Chittagong Chamber of Commerce & Industry         | 22. Moulvibazar Chamber of Commerce & Industry         |
| 8. Comilla Chamber of Commerce & Industry            | 23. Munshiganj Chamber of Commerce & Industry          |
| 9. Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry              | 24. Mymensingh Chamber of Commerce & Industry          |
| 10. Dinajpur Chamber of Commerce & Industry          | 25. Narayanganj Chamber of Commerce & Industry         |
| 11. Faridpur Chamber of Commerce & Industry          | 26. Narsingdi Chamber of Commerce & Industry           |
| 12. Foreign Investors Chamber of Commerce & Industry | 27. Rajshahi Chamber of Commerce & Industry            |
| 13. Gaibandha Chamber of Commerce & Industry         | 28. Rangpur Chamber of Commerce & Industry             |
| 14. Gazipur Chamber of Commerce & Industry           | 29. Sylhet Chamber of Commerce & Industry              |
| 15. Jamalpur Chamber of Commerce & Industry          | 30. Tangail Chamber of Commerce & Industry             |

**'B' Class Chambers**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 31. Bandarban Chamber of Commerce & Industry    | 50. meherpur Chamber of Commerce & Industry   |
| 32. Barguna Chamber of Commerce & Industry      | 51. Naogaon Chamber of Commerce & Industry    |
| 33. Bhairab Chamber of Commerce & Industry      | 52. Natore Chamber of Commerce & Industry     |
| 34. Bhola Chamber of Commerce & Industry        | 53. Narail Chamber of Commerce & Industry     |
| 35. Brahmanbaria Chamber of Commerce & Industry | 54. Netrokona Chamber of Commerce & Industry  |
| 36. Chuadanga Chamber of Commerce & Industry    | 55. Nilphamari Chamber of Commerce & Industry |
| 37. Cox's Bazar Chamber of Commerce & Industry  | 56. Noakhali Chamber of Commerce & Industry   |
| 38. Feni Chamber of Commerce & Industry         | 57. Pabna Chamber of Commerce & Industry      |
| 39. Gopalganj Chamber of Commerce & Industry    | 58. Panchagarh Chamber of Commerce & Industry |
| 40. Hobiganj Chamber of Commerce & Industry     | 59. Patuakhali Chamber of Commerce & Industry |
| 41. Jaipurhat Chamber of Commerce & Industry    | 60. Pirojpur Chamber of Commerce & Industry   |
| 42. Jhalakati Chamber of Commerce & Industry    | 61. Rajbari Chamber of Commerce & Industry    |
| 43. Jhenaidah Chamber of Commerce & Industry    | 62. Satkhira Chamber of Commerce & Industry   |
| 44. Khagrachari Chamber of Commerce & Industry  | 63. Shariatpur Chamber of Commerce & Industry |
| 45. Kurigram Chamber of Commerce & Industry     | 64. Sherpur Chamber of Commerce & Industry    |
| 46. Lakshmipur Chamber of Commerce & Industry   | 65. Sirajganj Chamber of Commerce & Industry  |
| 47. Lalmonirhat Chamber of Commerce & Industry  | 66. Sunamgonj Chamber of Commerce & Industry  |
| 48. Madaripur Chamber of Commerce & Industry    | 67. Thakurgaon Chamber of Commerce & Industry |
| 49. Magura Chamber of Commerce & Industry       |   |

**Joint Chambers**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 68. American Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh                 | 74. Bangladesh-Norway Chamber of Commerce & Industry.        |
| 69. Australia-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry      | 75. Bangladesh-Thai Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BTCCI) |
| 70. Bangladesh-China Chamber of Commerce and Industry          | 76. Dutch-Bangla Chamber of Commerce & Industry              |
| 71. Bangladesh-France Chamber of Commerce & Industry           | 77. Japan-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry        |
| 72. Bangladesh-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BGCCI) |  |
| 73. Bangladesh-Malaysia Chamber of Commerce & Industry         |  |

**'A' Class Associations**

1. Advertising Agencies Association of Bangladesh
2. Association of Bangladesh Mineral and Purified Drinking Water Manufacturers
3. Association of Cargo Agents of Bangladesh
4. Animal Health Companies Association of Bangladesh
5. Agricultural Machinery Manufacturers Association- Bangladesh
6. Association of Travel Agents of Bangladesh
7. Association of Taxi Cab Owner's of Bangladesh
8. Bangladesh Automobiles Assemblers' & Manufacturers Association Association
9. Bangladesh Ayurvedic Aushad Shilpa Samity
10. Bangladesh Association of Banks
11. Breeders Association of Bangladesh
12. Bangladesh Auto Biscuits & Bread Manufacturers Association
13. Bangladesh Accumulator & Battery Manufacturers' Association
14. Bangladesh Association of Consulting Engineers
15. Bangladesh Association of Construction Industry
16. Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (BAIRA)
17. Bangladesh Aluminium Manufacturers' Association
18. Bangladesh Agricultural Machinery Merchants Association
19. Bangladesh Agro-Processors' Association
20. Bangladesh Association of Publicly Listed Companies
21. Bangladesh Avhantarin Poshak
22. Bangladesh Association of Software & Information Services (BASIS)
23. Bangladesh Auto Spare Parts Merchants & Manufacturers Association
24. Bangladesh Aushad Shilpa Samity
25. Bangladesh Automobiles Workshop Malik Samity
26. Bangladesh Bread Biscuit-O-Confectionery Prostutkarak Samity
27. Bangladesh Bailing Board Manufacturers' Association
28. Bangladesh Bi-Cycle Merchants, Assembling & Importers Association
29. Bangladesh Betal Leaves (Pan) Exporters' Association
30. Bangladesh Brick Manufacturing Owners' Association
31. Bangladesh Bi-cycle & Parts Manufacturers' and Exporters Association
32. Bangladesh Bidi Shilpa Malik Samity
33. Bangladesh Bus Truck Owners' Association
34. Bangladesh Cotton Association of Agents Trader's Growers & Ginners
35. Bangladesh Corrugated Carton & Accessories Manufacturers' & Exporters Association
36. Bangladesh Coal/Coke Importer's Association
37. Bangladesh CNG Filling Station & Conversion Workshop Owners Association
38. Bangladesh Craft and Giftware Exporters Association
39. Bangladesh Chemical Importers and Merchants Association
40. Bangladesh Cellophane Merchants Association
41. Bangladesh Cement Manufacturers Association
42. Bangladesh Cigarette Manufacturers Association
43. Bangladesh Cloth Merchants' Association
44. Bangladesh Crop Protection Association
45. Bangladesh Concrete Products & Block Manufacturers Association
46. Bangladesh Chemical & Perfumery Merchant Association
47. Bangladesh Chalachitra Projojak Paribeshak Samity
48. Bangladesh C. R. Coil Manufacturers & Exporters Association
49. Bangladeshiyo Cha Sangsad (Tea Association of Bangladesh)
50. Bangladesh Computer Samity
51. Bangladesh Cold Storage Association
52. Bangladesh Chasma Shilpa O Banik Samity
53. Bangladesh Cosmetics & Toiletries Manufacturers Association
54. Bangladesh Cargo Vessel Owners' Association
55. Bangladesh Ceramic Wares Manufacturers Association
56. Bangladesh Dal Babosayee Samity
57. Bangladesh Dughdha & Dughdhat Shamagri Prostutkarak & Baboshayee Samity
58. Bangladesh Dress Makers' Association
59. Bangladesh Dokan Malik Samity
60. Bangladesh Electrical Association
61. Bangladesh Engine & Bulkhead Boat
62. Bangladesh Electrical Contractors Association
63. Bangladesh Energy Companies Association
64. Bangladesh Electronics Manufacturers Association
65. Bangladesh Electronics Merchants Association
66. Bangladesh Embroidery Manufacturers & Exporters Association
67. Bangladesh Electrical Merchandise manufacturer's
68. Bangladesh Export oriented Garments Washing Owners Association
69. Bangladesh Egg Producers Association
70. Bangladesh Engineering Shilpa Malik Samity
71. Bangladesh Fertilizer Association
72. Bangladesh Foreign Exchange Dealers Association
73. Bangladesh Frozen Foods Exporters Association
74. Bangladesh Flower Growers and Exporters Association
75. Bangladesh Film Importers Association
76. Bangladesh Finished Leather & Leather Goods Footwear Exporters Association
77. Bangladesh Flexible Packaging Industries Association
78. Bangladesh Furniture Shilpa Malik Samity
79. Bangladesh Fruits Vegetables & Allied Products Exporters' Association

80. Bangladesh Grocery Business Association
81. Bangladesh Ghary Baboshayee Samity
82. Bangladesh Grey-Cloth Merchant Association
83. Bangladesh Grey and Finished Fabrics Mills Porters Association
84. Bangladesh Glitter and Glitter Yarn Manufacturer Association
85. Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers & Exporters' Association
86. Bangladesh Hosiery Association
87. Bangladesh Hard Board Dealers' Association
88. Bangladesh Hotel and Guest House Owners Association
89. Bangladesh Handicrafts Manufacturers & Exporter's Association
90. Bangladesh Hardware & Manufacturers & Exporter's Association
91. Bangladesh Homeopathic Medicine Manufacturer's Association
92. Bangladesh Horticultural Producers and Exporters Association
93. Bangladesh Herbal Products Manufacturing Association
94. Bangladesh Hide & Skin Merchants Association
95. Bangladesh Insurance Association
96. Bangladesh Indenting Agents' Association
97. Bangladesh Iron and Steel Importers Association
98. Bangladesh Iron & Steel Merchants' Association
99. Bangladesh Inland Waterways (P.C.) Association
100. Bangladesh Jute Association
101. Bangladesh Jute Exporters' Association
102. Bangladesh Jute Goods Association
103. Bangladesh Jute Mills Association
104. Bangladesh Jamdani Manufacturers & Exporters Association
105. Bangladesh Jewellery Manufacturers & Exporters Association
106. Bangladesh Jewellers' Samity
107. Bangladesh Jute Spinners' Association
108. Bangladesh Kach Dealers and Aina Babosayee Samity
109. Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers & Exporters Association
110. Bangladesh Kali Prosututkarak Malik Samity
111. Bangladesh Leasing & Finance Companies Association
112. Bangladesh Leather Goods Manufacturing Association
113. Bangladesh Lozenge Manufacturing Association
114. Bangladesh Label Manufacturers & Exporters Association
115. Bangladesh Laban Mill Malik Samity
116. Bangladesh Marine Accessories Merchants Association
117. Bangladesh Monihari Banik Samity
118. Bangladesh Motor Cycle Dealers' Association
119. Bangladesh Marine Fisheries Association
120. Bangladesh Medical Instrument and Hospital Equipment Dealer's and Manufacturers Association
121. Bangladesh Match Manufacturers Association
122. Bangladesh Mosaic Merchants' Association
123. Bangladesh Machine Made R. C. C. pipe Manufacturers Association
124. Bangladesh Motion Picture Exhibitors' Association
125. Bangladesh Mobile Phone Importers Association
126. Bangladesh Metal Packaging Manufacturers Association
127. Bangladesh Motor Parts & Tyre Tube Merchant's Association
128. Bangladesh Master Stevedores Association
129. Bangladesh Micro Sheet Manufacturer's Association
130. Bangladesh Mudran Shilpa Samity
131. Bangladesh Metal Wire and Wirenails Merchants, Association
132. Bangladesh Nursery Malik Samity
133. Bangladesh Ocean Going Ship Owners Association
134. Bangladesh Oil Mills Association
135. Bangladesh Oil Tanker Owners' Association
136. Bangladesh Photographic Association
137. Bangladesh PABX Association
138. Bangladesh Publishers & Booksellers Association
139. Bangladesh Pustak Bandhai Babosayee Samity
140. Bangladesh Pathor Babosayee Samity
141. Bangladesh Plastic Babosayee Samity
142. Bangladesh Private Clinic and Diagnostic Centers Owners' Association
143. Bangladesh PVC Compound
144. Bangladesh Paint Dyes & Chemical Merchants' Association
145. Bangladesh Petroleum Dealer's Distributors'
146. Bangladesh Plastic Drabya Prostutkarak and Exporters Association
147. Bangladesh Paper Importers' Association
148. Bangladesh Polymar Importers' Association
149. Bangladesh Poultry Industries Association
150. Bangladesh Paint Manufacturers' Association
151. Bangladesh Paper Merchants' Association
152. Bangladesh Paper Mills Association
153. Bangladesh PVC Pipe Manufacturers' Association
154. Bangladesh Pathya pustak Mudrak-O- Biponon
155. Bangladesh Plastic Packaging, Roll Manufacturers Owners Association
156. Bangladesh Paduka Prostutkarak Samity
157. Bangladesh Podder Samity
158. Bangladesh Parcel Services Owners Association
159. Bangladesh Pipe & Tubewell Merchants Association
160. Bangladesh Paikary Vojjaya Tel Babosayee Samity
161. Bangladesh Refrigeration & Air Conditioning Merchants Association



162. Bangladesh Rubber Garden Owners' Association
163. Bangladesh Rin Grohita Sarak Paribahan Malik Samity
164. Bangladesh Rubber Industries Association
165. Bangladesh Rice Merchants Association
166. Bangladesh Re Rolling Mills Association
167. Bangladesh Rice Mills Owners' Association
168. Bangladesh Restaurant Owners Association
169. Bangladesh Railway Spares & Accessories Suppliers Association Association
170. Bangladesh Resham Shilpa Malik Samity
171. Bangladesh River Transport Agent Owners Association
172. Bangladesh Reconditioned Vehicles
173. Bangladesh Shipping Agents' Association
174. Bangladesh Ship Breakers' Association
175. Bangladesh Ship Builders Association
176. Bangladesh Shoe Dealers Association
177. Bangladesh Salted & Dehydrated Marine foods Exporters' Association
178. Bangladesh Seed Grower, Dealer & Merchants Association
179. Bangladesh Specialized Hydrocarbon Manufacturers' Association
180. Bangladesh Scientific Instrument Dealers' Association
181. Bangladesh Sizing Mills Association
182. Bangladesh Sand Mining & Merchants Association
183. Bangladesh Steel Mill Owners Association
184. Bangladesh Saban Prostutkarak Samity
185. Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Samity
186. Bangladesh Security Services Companies owners Association
187. Bangladesh Sewing Thread Manufacturers & Exporters Association
188. Bangladesh Specialized Textile Mills & Powerloom Industries Association
189. Bangladesh Tanners Association
190. Bangladesh Telecom Babosayee Samity
191. Bangladesh Textile Dyeing Printing Industries Association
192. Bangladesh T. V. Manufacturers Association
193. Bangladesh Textile Mills Association
194. Bangladesh Timber Merchants' Association
195. Bangladesh Twisting Mills Association
196. Bangladesh Textile Mills Owners' Association
197. Bangladesh Tanklorry Owner's Association
198. Bangladesh Tobacco Products Distributors Association
199. Bangladesh Thihader Samity Bangladesh Thikader Samity
200. Bangladesh Terry Towel & Linen Manufacturers & Association
201. Bangladesh Unani Aushad shilpa Samity
202. Bangladesh Vegetable Oil Refiners & Vanaspati Manufacturers Association
203. Bangladesh Watch Importers Assemblers & Manufacturers Association
204. Bangladesh Weaver's Products & Manufacturers Business Association
205. Bangladesh Yarn Merchants Association
206. Cable Operators' Association of Bangladesh
207. Courier Services Association of Bangladesh
208. Coastal Ship Owners Association of Bangladesh
209. Dredgers Association of Bangladesh
210. Exporters Association of Bangladesh
211. Foreign Admission & Career Development Consultants Association of Bangladesh
212. Foundry Owner's Association of Bangladesh
213. Hajj Agencies Association of Bangladesh
214. International Air Express Association of Bangladesh
215. International Container Shipping Association
216. International Freight Forwarders Association of Bangladesh
217. Internet Services Providers' Association of Bangladesh
218. Leather Goods and Footwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association of Bangladesh
219. Launch Owners' Association of Bangladesh
220. Maize Association of Bangladesh
221. Marine Surveyors Association of Bangladesh
222. National Association of Small & Cottage Industries of Bangladesh
223. Packaging Industries Association of Bangladesh
224. Plastic & Rubber shoe Merchants Association of Bangladesh
225. Real Estate & Housing Association of Bangladesh
226. Shippers' Council of Bangladesh

#### **'B' Class Association**

227. Seafood Export Buying Agents Association of Bangladesh
228. Shrimp Hatchery Association of Bangladesh
229. Silk Manufacturer's & Exporters Association of Bangladesh
230. Tour Operators' Association of Bangladesh
231. Tea Traders' Association of Bangladesh
232. Women Entrepreneurs Association of Bangladesh
233. Youth Entrepreneurs Association of Bangladesh
234. Bangladesh Cement Traders' Association
235. Bangladesh Chini Baboshayee Samity
236. Bangladesh Chemists & Druggists' Samity
237. Bangladesh Fishing Industries Association
238. Bangladesh Pharmaceutical Importers Association
239. Bangladesh Samoikee Prokashana Samity
239. Bangladesh Samoikee Prokashana Samity

## Appendices



### Appendix 1

#### Population of Dhaka City Since 1608 A.D.

Year	Population	Sources
1608	10,0000	Estimated
1620	150,000	A. T. Chichero
1640	20,0000	E. India Company Records
1700	90,0000 (District)	James Taylor
1765	45,0000	James Rennell
1780	200,000	Hein Streefkerk
1786	2,00000	A. K. Dutta
1800	2,00000	Dr. Taylor
1814	2,00000	D' Oylly
1824	3,00000	Bishop's Heber
1830	68,800	Henry Walters
1851	6,00000 (District)	Thornton's Gazetteer
1860	9,04615 (District)	Revenue survey
1867	51,636	Informal survey
1869	10,19928 (District)	Census of Revenue Board
1872	69,212	Formal census
1881	89,358	Formal census
1891	2395430 (District)	Formal census
1901	104,385	Formal census
1911	125,733	Formal census
1921	137,908	Formal census
1931	161,922	Formal census
1941	239,728	Formal census
1951	276033	Formal census
1961	368575	Formal census
1974	1403259	Formal census
1981	2475710	Formal census
1991	6950920	Formal census
2001	9912908	Formal census

Source: Compiled from different sources as mention in the column 'source'. District figures are shown where city figures are not available.

- 1 The first official census of Bengal was carried on in the winter season of 1872 under the supervision of H. Baverly, the Census Commissioner of the then Bengal.
- 2 On the eve of partition the census figure is not beyond the doubt of accuracy.
- 3 Population increased due to migration from India.
- 4 Figure shows the population of Dhaka statistical metropolitan area.
- 5 Figure shows the population of Dhaka statistical metropolitan area.



**Appendix 2**  
**State of Multi-Lingual in the Dhaka District engaged in Trade, Commerce and other professions in 1900s**

Language Spoken	Numbers
Bangla <sup>1</sup> Language	2597728
Hindi <sup>2</sup>	39786
Oriya <sup>3</sup>	362
Khasia	5
Assamese	10
Marwari <sup>4</sup>	2
Punjabi	4
Gujrati	13
Kakani	12
Kashmiri	3
Mandari	202
Kero	22
Santali	2
Telegu	12
Tamil	1
Garol	489
Tipri	162
Coach	10131
Monipuri <sup>5</sup>	132
Brahmi	14
Persian	7
Armenian <sup>6</sup>	68
Pastu	33
Greek	5
French	12
Portuguese	7
English	332
German	2
Arabic	22
Chinese <sup>7</sup>	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>2649588</b>

1 Includes local Bengali speaking people and Tribes of Dhaka region.

2 Includes Marwaris, who speaks Hindi instead of their own dialect.

3 Oriya spoken are mainly of cleaner class in Dhaka

4 These Marwaries speak their own language

5 Tribes of Dhaka. For details, see Kedarnath Majumder, Dhakar Bibaran, 1910.

6 Armenians were in salt, hide and skin business at the initial stage. In the mid-eighteen century they entered into jute business along with other sorts.

7 Chinese were in shoe business at the beginning of the twentieth century.

**Appendix 3**  
**Size of the Weaving Population in the Bengal Presidency**

Name of Factories or regions	Total population	The total number of the weavers' houses	The period when the estimate was made	Weavers employed by the company	Weavers employed by the private traders	Total weaving population
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Dacca*	---	---	1787	---	---	40,000
Dacca	---	---	1791	6219	---	---
Dacca	---	---	1799	4951	---	---
Dacca	---	---	Average of 1791- 1799	5542	---	---
Dacca aurung only	---	---	1796	---	---	1,600
Sonargaon aurung	5000	300	1833	---	---	---
Sonargaon aurung	---	10 to 1200	1804	---	---	---
Sonargaon aurung	---		During the Company's Trade	1300-1400	---	---
Dumroy	6000	400	1833	---	---	---
Teetabaddy	---	200	1833	---	---	---
Junglebaree	---	100	1833	---	---	---
Dacca district	938,712	---	1801	---	---	---
Dacca city	200,000	---	1801	---	---	---
Dacca city	68,000	---	1833	---	---	---
Hurripaul Factory	---	---	1807	5204	9200	---
Maw & Azimghur	---	---	1803	3600	9300	---
Maw & Azimghur	---	---	1804	3500	10200	---
Maw & Azimghur	---	---	1805	2500	9700	---
Maw & Azimghur	---	---	1806	3100	9900	---
Maw & Azimghur	---	---	1807	2900	---	---
Luckipore	---	---	1796	4503	7542	---
Luckipore	---	---	1799	4165	7880	---
Luckipore	---	---	1800	4213	7832	---
Hurripaul	---	---	1827	---	---	15000
Sonamooky	---	3000	1789	---	---	4000
Santipore	---	---	1822	---	---	50,000
Santipore	---	---	1872	---	---	13,680

Source: D. B. Mitra, *The Cotton Weavers of Bengal*, Calcutta, 1978.

\* The spelling of 'Dacca' is as per old records.

#### Appendix 4

### A Petition from the weavers of Sonargaon under Dacca Factory expressing the oppressions and breach of Agreement by the company people

" From time immemorial our families have worked for the Company under *Dellolls* and *Pycars*. We received advances and furnished goods to their account. In the year 1181 (Bengalee year), Mr. Barwell took from Mr. Day and the *Dellolls*, the charge of this factory and himself gave orders to the *Dellolls*. After this Mr. Barwell and his Dewan, Narain Das, came to Sonargaon and ordered that we should make cloths equal to the muster of those made in Mr. Cartier's time and he would give us 20 percent more than we had from Mr. Cartier. We answered that the last year Mr. Gruebar offered to give us 25 Rupees advances in each hundred rupees but that a great number of weavers, cuttanies having died in the famine, the price of materials had been raised and we could not consent to Mr. Grueber's pro-position. This year, Mr. Day<sup>1</sup> ordered us to produce cloths of a better quality than the last year of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd quality and he would take them and he would give us 20 percent more than the price of last year and having made this often, he advanced us money after which Mr. Day confined us and took an obligation from us that we could not be employed for any other Merchants. After this we had made our cloths of a good quality and Mr. Day came to Sonargaon and examined them as being of the first three qualities A, B & C after which he returned to Dacca with the cloths when he rated the quality of the cloths at D, E & F and insisted that the prices should be in proportion. We complained heavily of this grievance when sepoys were ordered to beat us and drive us away. In the same forcible manner, we have been obliged to furnish our cloths for the whole year and have never had the advance of 20 per cent paid to us as agreed by Mr. Day."

*Petition from the weavers of Sonargaon under Dacca factory. Date received by the Board of Trade 10th Feb., 1775 and recorded in the Proceedings of Board of Trade (Commercial) 10th Feb. 1775, Vol. 1.*

#### Appendix 4.1

### 'Form' used by Muslin Weavers for their engagement in the Dacca factory in 1791

*The form of engagements entered into by the weavers employed under the Dacca factory for the provision of the investment of 1791 was as follows:*

"We... Weavers of the aurung..., fully understanding the contents of the Regulations of the 23rd July 1787 and 30th October 1789 engage to manufacture on account of the Company the several qualities of cloths - the threa of the warp and woof shall be properly twisted and sorted, the 32 folds shall be made well and even throughout and the cloths shall be all of the established dimensions in length and breadth."

"Our deliveries shall consist of three letters, A, B and C. Should any of them being compared with the musters be judged inferior to Co, they shall be ferreted and held in the deposit in the Cotee and we will in the course of the next Kist replace them with cloths equal to the musters. The cloths will then be returned. Should we fail to replace them with proper cloths within the appointed period they shall be sold at public auction and credit be given to us for the sales after deducting 15 percent as compensation for the interest, risk and charges. In cases, where any of us possessing more than one loom with journeymen fail in our stipulated deliveries, we will pay according to the Regulation of 30th Sept., 1789, a penal of 35 percent on the amount together with repayment of the advance received."<sup>2</sup>

Source: Recorded in the proceedings of the Board of Trade (Commercial) 10th May, 1791, prog no. 34, Vol. 92.

- 1 Mr. Mathew Day was the Collector of Dhaka. For economic condition of the weavers, see Sirajul Islam (ed.) Bangladesh District Records, Dacca, Vol-1, University of Dacca, 1981.
- 2 This sort of 'Form' was also used in the other *Arangs* under the Dacca Factory.

## Appendix 5

**Petition from the weavers Expressing their Inability to Supply Muslin due to Famine**

" Time out of remembrance, the goods of this place have been furnished to the Company by means of *Dellolls* and *Pycars*<sup>1</sup> and a fine trade allowed. In 1181 (Bengalee year) When Mr. Barwell was Chief,<sup>2</sup> Mr. Day and Bikkum Takoor having dismissed the *Dellolls* and *Pycars* received themselves the Company's advances after which Mr. Day<sup>3</sup> and Bikkum Takoor<sup>4</sup> having called us before them ordered us to bring them cloths equal to the musters of Mr. Cartier and they would give us 20 per cent more than we received from Mr. Cartier. We answered that Mr. Grueber and Bikkum Takoor wanted to give us 25 per cent the year before but we gave for answer that by the Famine a great number of people died and materials became scarce and dear and we would not consent to this proposal of Mr. Grueber's. Bikkum Takoor told us that he would have the cloths from us, that they should be equal to Cartier's musters and that we should have no more than 20 percent advances. When we heard this, we were afraid and ran away. But we were seized by force by peons and brought back when Mr. Day and Bikkum Takoor told us to make our cloths better than last and they would take from us, the letters A, B & C at an advanced price of 20 percent. Having said this they gave us money after which we did our business for the Company in security but the cloths we had of our own or belonging to merchants, Mr. Day and Bikkum Takoor forcibly took from us and for every Rupee worth wanted to give us 8, 9 or 10 annas for which reason, we would not take the money. After this, peons were placed over us and were forced to take advances and give Receipts for them and obligations were demanded from us that we would furnish no other Merchants with goods. To this, we made great objections but were forced to comply. After this, we made our cloths of the first quality or letter A when our goods were assorted into six letters".

" We complained of this, but were driven out of this Factory. Mr. Day and Bikkum Takoor took a large quantity of the Company's cloths for themselves and fixed the price at 10 or 12 annas in proportion to a Rupee which price they wanted us to take. Never any gentlemen behaved in so oppressive a manner before".

*Petition from the Dacca Weavers; no date received by the Board of Trade 7th February, 1775. Recorded in the Proceedings of Board of Trade (Commercial) 10 Feb., 1775, Vol. 1.*

- 1 A broker, the literal meaning being one who directs the buyer and seller to their bargain. Hedges's Diary denotes that 'five delolls or brokers of Dacca, had been with him went to Mr. Beard's Chamber.'
- 2 Mr. Richard Barwell, who made a fortune by private trade in salt transactions in Bakergonj.
- 3 Mr. Mathew Day was the 'Chief of Dacca.' He was re-designated as 'Collector' on 10 April, 1787. For details of Mr. Day, see Sirajul Islam (ed.) *Bangladesh District Records, Dacca District Vol-1 (1784-1787)* University of Dacca; 1981.
- 4 His full name was Bikkam Lal Thakur. He came to Dhaka from Punjab during the East India Company and became the *Dewan* of the Company. The place where he lived was known as *Bikkam Lal Thakur Bazar* and subsequently it was renamed *Luksmi Bazar* after the Goddess *Luksmi*.



**Appendix 6**  
**Muslin Factories under Dacca Arong**



## Appendix 7

### An agreement with the Weavers

[Translation of an agreement signed by a Weaver of Sonargaon and addressed to John Patterson, Commercial Resident of Dacca Factory in 1808. The correspondence included in IO Bengal Mss 4061; translated by Professor Anisuzaman, of the Bangla Department, University of Dhaka.]

*Sri Sri Ram*

Addressed to the gracious Mr. John Patterson,  
under the administration of the most gracious majesty the English Company

This letter of agreement given by Sri Rattan Kural Sau, weaver of dihi  
number 13, Aurung Sonargaon, under the Dacca Factory, resident of  
Murapara, Pargana Khalilabad in the district of Dacca, in the year 1808 A. D.  
1215 B. S.

I declare on my perfect freedom, will and desire that:

1. I shall manufacture all cloths ordered by the Company during the whole season this year, for which I receive advances and the thread of warp and woof of such cloths shall be properly twisted and sorted, their thirty two folds shall be made well and even throughout and their dimensions shall fit those set by the Company.
2. I shall throw away thread bearing iron marks while winding up thread for various sorts of cloths and shall make cloths after putting thread of good quality in the warp and woof. Should I fail to throw away iron-stained thread and should any iron marks be found after washing the cloths and at the time of praising you shall return the cloth. Alternately you shall accept the cloth after deducting from its price, according to the chief's judgment, a charge for removing the stains at the rate of two annas for each piece of cloth of letter B of the value of Rs. 10 (or below), four annas for each piece of cloth of letter B of the value of over Rs. 10 and an approximate charge not exceeding six annas for each piece of Mulmul Superfine<sup>1</sup> about 1400 48'2 cubits, Mulmul Superfine about 1800 45'2 cubits, Mulmul Cossa 20'2 cubits, Allaballee Superfine<sup>2</sup> about 1800 40'2 cubits and Allaballee Fine superfine 1700 40'2 cubits. The decision to return the cloth or to make deductions from its price shall be made according to the sweet will of the chief and I shall have no say in the matter. I further undertake to see that the cloths while in the loom do not come into contact with anything made of iron, such as knives, nails or shuttles and that nothing made of iron shall be kept together with the cloths until the latter are removed from the loom and delivered to the arang. I shall fold the cloths after ensuring that the nails used to maintain the breadth of the cloths are made of brass or fish bone and not of irons. In making the cloths and in folding these later on I shall work with such caution that their orders are not damaged in any way. I shall deliver cloths in Kora<sup>3</sup> to the aurung after fulfilling all these conditions and in accordance with the schedule of installments of deliver.
3. When the cloths are accepted in kora, on comparison with the musters in the aurung, and entered into the book, it shall be washed at my expenses and again compared with the muster and then sent at the expenses of the government to the sadar where these will be accepted into the categories found expedient on the comparison with the musters maintained there. I shall receive prices for the cloths when the praising paper, having the signature of the chief and seal of the factory, arrives at the aurung and prices shall be paid according to these fixed for various categories of cloths and according to the following particulars.
4. I shall deliver cloths of letters A and B. Should any of these be judged, on comparing with the muster, inferior to the letter B, the piece of cloth shall be returned and I shall provide its substitute without disturbing the schedule of installments of delivery.
5. I shall receive advances as mentioned below at the rate of the letter C of each piece of cloth ordered and I shall deliver cloths at the end of the period stipulated below and reckoned from the date the advances are made. After cloths are delivered in full, according to the advances given, and the praising is done in the factory, I shall immediately repay any dues that may befall according to the [running] accounts or the dues may be deducted from the advances for a second piece of cloth. I shall immediately receive fazil dues, if any. Any amount that may be due from me on account of the orders and advances and the supplies and prices of cloths or on account of cloths due shall be paid by me in cash. I shall keep with myself the running accounts on which shall be entered in the handwriting of the muhrir<sup>4</sup> of the gomasha of the aurung with date the [description of the] cloths returned and I shall show [them] the running accounts whenever asked for. The end.

## Appendix 8

### Report on the decline of the Dacca Muslin Industry

Dacca Commissioner's letter dated 2nd May, 1844

Ref :- Bard's Collection No. 100122, India Office Records.

From :- 1. Dunbar Esq,

Officiating Commissioner of Dacca

To

The Sudder Board of Revenue, Fort William.

Dated Dacca the 2nd of May, 1844.

Gentlemen,

I have the honour to acknowledge the Receipt of your Board's letter of the 6th February last no. 30 together with the copy of the orders of Govt. of the 29th of the preceding month calling for a report upon the present state of the manufacture of the fine Dacca muslin fabrics, and the expediency of adopting measures for the encouragement of the trade.

I lost no time in communicating with Mr. I. A. Price upon the subject, but that gentleman was unable to furnish any information calculated to assist me in drawing up the required report. He merely stated a few words in reply to my official communication that after having given the subject due consideration he was of opinion, that little or nothing could be done towards the revival of the muslin manufactures at Dacca in consequence of the extreme cheapness of the English goods of the same description.

Some of the native manufacturers and dealers in the city waited upon me at my request and replied freely to such questions as I thought it necessary to put to them, & Messrs. Lamb, Taylor and Wise, who have resided in Dacca for many years, were good enough to supply me with such information, as they severally possessed upon the subject. From these sources I am enabled to submit the following particulars regarding the present condition of the Dacca muslin manufactures, and I think their general correctness may with safety be relied on.

The demand for the Cotton manufactures of Dacca has been on the decline, ever since the year 1789. The value of the goods manufactured at the Dacca Arungs (Arang Avos) for exportation to Europe in the year 1799 amounted to Rs. 12,56,160-15-7. In the year 1813 it did not exceed 3 ½ lacs of rupees. In 1817 the exportation of Dacca muslin to Europe almost entirely ceased and the commercial residency was abolished. Since that time the cloth trade of Dacca has been confined to the manufacture of goods for the Indian markets and for exportation to Judda and Bassorah. With reference to the manufactures as distinct branches of industry and to the markets to which they are sent, the cloths now manufactured in Dacca may be divided into the following classes.

1st, Fine muslins, plain and flowered made of country spun thread of a finer quality than the highest number (250) imported from England and partly manufactured by Mahomedans, but chiefly by Hindoos. The very finest fabrics of the kind are comprised in this class. They are sent to the Courts of Delhi, Lucknow, Lahoure, Nepaul & ca. and also to Moorshedabad, Rungpore & other places within our territories. The annual value of this class of manufactures is estimated at half a lac of rupees. These cloths are of the most delicate texture. Instructing of them Dr. Ure (Cotton Manufactures of Britain, 1836) observes that they are fabrics to which European ingenuity can afford no parallel, such indeed as has led a competent judge to say it is beyond his conception, how this yarn greatly finer than the highest number made in England, can be spun by the distaff & spindle, or woven afterwards by any machinery. It is asserted that muslins cannot now be manufactured of the same fineness of texture as those of former days, but there is reason to think that this is not the case, and that if sufficient encouragement were given, fabrics fully as delicate as those formerly manufactured, might still be made, at all events the Dacca muslins of the present day are finer than any that have yet been made in England.

2nd, Cloths of a middle or ordinary quality used as wearing apparel. They are made almost entirely of English thread ranging in quality from no. 40 to no. 200 and are chiefly manufactured by Hindoo weavers. They are used by the higher and middle classes both of Hindoo and Mussulmans in this part of Bengal, and are exported to Calcutta, Moorshedabad, Patna, Rungpore, Dinglepore & other districts. This constitutes the Principal and most important branch of manufactures here. It may be estimated at 5 lacs of rupees annually but deducting the price of the English thread the value of the manufactures considered as a branch of industry is about 3 lacs & 30,000 rupees.

3rd, mixed cloths made of cotton & muga or tussur silk imported from Sylhet & Assam. Those consisting of the silk interwoven with the cotton work, are called Nowbuttee. The others which are embroidered with the needle are called Khosseedas. The thread used in this manufacture is almost entirely English, ranging from no. 40 to no. 100. These cloths are woven by Hindoos and embroidered by Mussulman women in Dacca. They are exported via Calcutta to Jidda and Bussorah, but chiefly to the former place. The Nacodas or supercargoes of Arab vessels, who purchase these from the Dacca merchants in Calcutta pay a tax of 10 per cent, on landing them at Jidda, I believe 3 per cent export duty is charged in Calcutta, at Jidda the cloths are purchased by merchants, who dispose of them at the great annual fair held in the vicinity of Mecca. They are worn chiefly in Arabia & Missopotemia. The value of this manufacture including the thread amounts to about 2 lacs of rupees annually, of late years there has been a considerable falling off in this branch of trade, which is ascribed by the merchants to the introduction of British manufactures into the Countries bordering on the Mediterranean.

Weaving	30,000-0-0
Embroidery	60,000-0-0
Thread	30,000-0-0
Silk	70,000-0-0
Bleaching	10,000-0-0

4th, Cloths embroidered with gold and silver thread and used as turbans. They are sent to the upper provinces and occasionally to Europe. This branch of industry is in the hands of the Mussulmans, and is valued at Rs. 16,000 yearly.

Value of Cloth	1,000-0-0
Gold & Silver thread	10,000-0-0
Embroidery	5,000-0-0

5th, Muslins & Cashmere shawls & Scarfs embroidered with silk &c. These are sent principally to Europe, and occasionally to other parts of the world. The value of the manufacture including the price of the cloth is estimated at Rs. 20,000 annually.

Value of Shawls & muslins	8,000-0-0
Of silk & workmanship	12,000-0-0

6th, Cloths called baftas, also sarees, dhotees & made by the low caste of Hindoo & Mussulman weavers, known by the name of Joogees & Joolahs. These cloths are the coarsest that are manufactured there, being of a quality of thread below no. 40 of English yarn. English thread to the amount of Rs. 50,000 is purchased annually for the manufacture of these cloths. The value of this manufacture including the price of the English thread, is estimated at one and a half lacs of rupees. The manufacture of this kind of cloth is carried on chiefly in Furreedpore and Tipperah and about Luckipore in the Noacolly district, but as the cloths are generally disposed of and sold by Dacca merchants they are reckoned among the manufactures of Dacca.

The extinction of the foreign trade of Dacca, is attributable to the modern inventions in steam and machinery introduced into the manufactures of England, whereby the spinning of thread and the weaving of cloth are effected at a cheaper rate than they can be done by the common handloom, notwithstanding the extreme cheapness of manual labour of this kind in this part of India. The same causes which ruined the export trade, have for some years past, been exerting an injurious influence of the different branches of industry, employed in the manufacture of cloths for the Indian markets. Spinning which afforded employment to a large portion of the population is now almost entirely superseded by the introduction of English yarn which can be purchased here at a cheaper rate, than country thread of a similar quality. The extent to which this branch of industry has been affected may be estimated by the fact that the quantity of English thread, imported annually into Dacca amounts to about 3 lacs of rupees in value, Weaving has been less affected than spinning but it has nevertheless much injured by the comparative cheapness of the English cloths, and the ready markets they meet within all parts of India. It is estimated that English cotton cloths to the value of one and a half lacs of rupees are annually imported into Dacca. They are not nearly so durable as the cloths manufactured here, but this consideration is little attended to. They suit the immediate wants of the purchasers and are to be had, for a much less money.

The decline of the manufactures of Dacca has been caused by the rivalry of British skill and industry. The imposition of high (almost prohibitory) duties on the importation of Indian muslins into Britain whilst the English cotton manufactures were yet in their infancy, had no doubt an unfavourable effect upon the export trade of Dacca but although the duties were considerably reduced some years ago, no increased demand of Indian muslins has resulted from the change and were the duties entirely taken off, there can scarcely be a doubt, that the British muslins from their comparative cheapness would maintain their places in the markets of Europe to the exclusion of the Dacca fabrics.



The depression of the cloth trade of Dacca being attributable to causes which cannot be met or obviated by any measures of Govt., nothing can be done for its revival. Everyone must see that so long as thread manufactured in England from cotton grown in India, can be sold in Bengal at a cheaper rate, than thread spun in the country, nothing short of a prohibitory duty on the importation of English manufactures could restore those of Dacca to their former flourishing condition. This is a measure not to be expected and we may therefore conclude, that trade already in so languid a condition, will gradually fall lower till the art of fine spinning will probably be lost, and the delicate Dacca muslins once so much prized by princes and nobles in the East, and so much admired wherever they were seen, will cease to be known.

Although the prosperity of Dacca, in connection with its cotton manufactures has passed away and although it seems certain that any attempt to restore it would be vain, much may doubtless be done, for the district by providing for the manufactures of Europe abundant supplies of raw material. This is a field which affords scope for the most extended philanthropy and in which resources of Govt. may be most advantageously employed. Products of various kinds might be raised which find a ready market in Europe. Indigo & safflower have already been introduced into the district and have in some degree helped to compensate for the withdrawal of the large capital, at one time employed on the manufactures. Hemp & flax might probably be cultivated with success, but there would appear to be no article of indigenous growth to which the soil of the district is so well suited as cotton. It is in a great measure to the superiority of the raw material, grown in this district, over that raised in any other part of India, that Dacca is indebted for the celebrity of its manufactures. Should the soil be found as favourable to the growth of the exotic, as it is to that of the indigenous cotton, there are extensive tracts of land either overrun with jungle, or occupied by crops of far less value and importance which might be advantageously turned to account in supplying this article for exportation to England.

From the appointment of Mr. I. A. Price some months since to enquire into and report upon the capabilities of this and neighbouring districts, as the site of an experiment having for its object the improved culture and manufacture of cotton, I am aware that the subject has already attracted the attention of the gov't. Monthly reports giving information as to his movements and showing the progress he has made in ascertaining the best localities for the growth of cotton, have been submitted by Mr. Price; but the matured result of his enquiries, as bearing on the final object of his deputation, has not yet been furnished, my remarks in regard to the measures best calculated to ensure an abundant supply of the raw material either by the introduction of foreign cotton or by increased cultivation of the indigenous plant, may therefore be deemed premature, yet the termination of Mr. Price's inquiries in the manner, most agreeable to the wishes of Govt. seems so probable that I venture to think a few observations upon the subject referred to, will not be considered altogether out of place.

When Govt. has once resolved to come forward, it will of course be with the certain assurance, that the object in view is one the attainment of which will require both time and money. Experimental plantations should be established in different parts of the district in order to ascertain the most advantageous modes of cultivation, and to raise a large quantity of good seed. It would not however be advisable to have the plantations on a very large scale, as they would probably be attended with expenses which the produce would not suffice to cover and on this account when they had once served the purpose of fully introducing into the district the various kinds of cotton to which the soil and the climate may be found most favorable, they might be entirely given up.

To be grown profitably, cotton must be grown by the ryots. They have their families to watch and weed, and to pick and clean. It. They have already their ploughs & bullocks for their other crops, and a few days extra labour is sufficient to bring the space required for the cotton into order, so that each individual can easily undertake the cultivation of a few Beegas (Bighas), without much additional outlay, beyond the rent of the land. The ryots too are sure to be more careful by unremitting attention to the plant when in the ground to secure a profitable return for the labour expended on it, than any one else could possibly be whose actual means of subsistence are not in some degree dependent on the produce. The ryots, however, are for the most part, I fear, too poor to be able to go beyond their accustomed outlay in agriculture; and it would therefore no doubt tend greatly to encourage & extend the cultivation of cotton, were Govt. to assist them, to a moderate extent, with loans or advances of money, to be repaid with or without interest at the close of the season. If they undertake the cultivation of more land than usual for the purpose of raising cotton, they must have money to enable them to do so, and from the mahajans or money lenders in the towns and villages, they can only get it at a most exorbitant and ruinous rate of interest.

It should be the duty of the Govt. agent in charge of the plantations to visit the different parts of the district from time to time, and to do his best to convince the ryots of the advantages likely to accrue to them from the increased cultivation of cotton. He should also be directed to supply good seed to those who wanted it and to communicate to the ryots whatever improvements in the mode of cultivation his own knowledge and experience might enable him to suggest; and the Govt. authorities at the sudder station, aided by a council of the most intelligent native gentlemen, might be authorised to grant prizes at the close of the season for the best specimens of cotton grown in the district.

The cultivation of cotton in this country to an extent sufficient to supply the whole demand for the manufactures in England and by this means to render the latter country no longer dependent on America, and other countries for its supplies of this valuable article is a subject of the highest national importance and the utmost care should be taken that nothing is left undone to ensure success. With this view, there are two things to which I would call particular attention. The first is the selection of an agent of the part of the Govt. to superintend the plantations, and effect the introduction amongst the ryots, of an improved system of cultivation. He should be one who knows his business well, and who is ready to enter upon his duties, with the purpose, not merely of earning his salary, but with the sincere desire of doing good to the ryots. The second is the absolute necessity of providing a market for the ready and immediate sale of the cotton grown by the ryots. Without this the attempt to introduce or increase the cultivation of cotton, or of any other article, is certain to end in disappointment and to throw difficulties in the way of future experiments. At present the quantity of cotton grown in this district is so small that it is readily bought up for the manufactures of the city & other local purposes. In the event of the ryots being induced to raise a much larger quantity, if care be not taken, that they can dispose of the surplus without difficulty and at a remunerating price, they will of course become disgusted and throw up the cultivation.

The necessity of affording them the ready means of getting rid of their produce, has reference more particularly to the first year or two of increased cultivation, as there can be no doubt that there will be no lack of purchasers on the spot were the character of the cotton once fairly and fully established, in the home market. The plan most likely to take with the ryots, I imagine, would be that of making advances to them, at the beginning of the season, to be repaid in the produce at its close. With reference to the provisions of the best charter, however, I am doubtful whether it is open to Govt. to adopt this score, I should think, it will require little persuasion to induce other parties to come forward. The quality of the Dacca cotton is so good, and the price at which it can be raised, so moderate, that the speculation would well deserve the attention of the mercantile Houses, and other capitalists in Calcutta.

That the ryots only require to be made aware of the advantages of sowing any particular crop, to ensure its cultivation in a large scale, is sufficiently evident from the manner in which the cultivation of sunn-paut (jute) and safflower have so greatly increased in this district. This is particularly observable in the latter article. The average crop of safflower for sometime past has been, I believe, somewhat about 4,000 maunds, but owing to a rise in the price of late, the cultivation has increased so rapidly that it is thought this year's crop will not fall short of 10,000 maunds. This may be taken as evidence of what may be expected in cotton, if properly fostered, only let the ryots see that it is their interest to grow it and it would not be easy now to fix a limit to the supply, should we (as I trust we shall) succeed in bringing some portion of the millions of money now annually paid in England for American cotton to this country. It is not unreasonable to believe that the decay of the manufacturing prosperity of the city of Dacca will be more than compensated by the prosperity of the district at large, arising from the profitable employment of the agricultural portion of its inhabitants, and the greatly increased value of its exports.

I have to express my regret that so much delay has occurred in submitting this report, but it required sometime to compare and reconcile the various items of information received from different individuals, and it will be admitted to be better, that full time should have been given to this object, than that information of a doubtful character upon a subject of so much importance, should have been laid before Govt.

Dated  
Dacca, the 2nd of May, 1844

I have the honour to be &ca,  
Sd/I. Dunbar

### Appendix 9

#### Cloth Assortments Made in Dacca Arangs

Arang	Assortments
Dacca	<i>Sarbati, Badankhas, Duriya, Kashida, Jamdani, Shabnam Raing, Allaballi Malmal, Rumal, Chikan</i>
Sonargaon	<i>Malmal, Malmal Khas, Tanzeb, Allabali, Samadlahar, Sarhad, Sharbati, Sarband</i>
Dhamrai	<i>Tarandam, Kashida</i>
Titabari	<i>Tanjeb</i>
Narainpur	<i>Tanjeb, adi, Mugadiya, Malmal, Nainsukh, Sarbati, Sarband</i>
Srirampur	<i>Khas, Dimti, Hamham</i>
Chandpur	<i>Khas, Nainsukh, Adis, Lakhori</i>
Jangalbari	<i>Tanjeb Jungle, Samadlahar thread, Guzee, Tartores, Sarband Batta,</i>
Bajitpur	<i>Nainsukh, Jungle Khas, Sarkar Ali, Sarhadkhanna</i>

Source: Hameeda Hossain, Tracing the History of Handloom Weaving in Dhaka in Eighteenth Century, in *Textile Traditions of Bangladesh*, p. 24

### Appendix 9.1

#### Arang-wise Production for the Company (volume & amount) in Sicca Rupees

Arangs		1791-2		1792-3		1793-4		1799-1800		1800-1	
		Pieces	Amount	Pieces	Amount	Pieces	Amount	Pieces	Amount	Pieces	Amount
Dhaka	Ord.	4795	93,007	9690	2,54,891			8200		3333	61,951
	Recd.	3871	68,836			7567	1,70,546.43	5000			
Sonargaon	Ord.	5925	1,00,968	7160	1,96,040.50			9770		7679	102,953.02
	Recd.	5621	85,507			6287	2,16,411.06	9692			
Dhamrai	Ord.	2440	31,833	4540	60,281					3540	4,424
	Recd.	2246	26,688			3757	57,346.12				
Narainpur	Ord.	8000	41,550	9600	46,800			8800		8300	43,218
	Recd.	6136	39,278			7244	35,479.75	7789			
Chandpur	Ord.	650	9,017	1650	18,800			1400		1345	12,880
	Recd.	530	6,458			1289	14,423.31	895			
Srerampur	Ord.			800	1,450					1951	19,447
	Recd.					461	5,240.25				
Jangalbari-Bajitpur	Ord.	2900	70,589	9790	1,54,925			7350		7013	117,630
	Recd.	2543	55,057			9217	1,28,641.50	4274			
Titabadi	Ord.	4375	45,610	7250				1797		5197	45,100
	Recd.	4182	41,199			5197	57,806.18	1641			

Source: IO Bengali MSS 4018-4047, 4049,4053.

**Appendix 10**  
**Prices of selected Assortments at Dhaka Arangs: 1753-1800**

(In Sicca Rupees)

Assortments	Quality	Measure	1753-1754	1763-1764	1788-1789	1792-1793	1800
<b>Dhaka Arang</b>							
Duriya	1500	40×2	12.0	12.0	13.75	13.50	15.0
Duriya fine	2000	40×2	25.0	25.0	26.68	26.0	29.0
Chaharkhana fine							
Super fine	2100	40×2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	---	33.75	32.36	41.0	37.16
<b>Abrawah</b>	1400	40×2	---	36.0	37.50	34.87	39.16
<b>Sonargaon Agang</b>							
Sarbati	---	40×2	---	5.0	7.0	7.0	7.50
Allaballi	1500	40×2	---	10.0	11.56	12.37	13.50
Allaballi superfine	1800	40×2	---	25.0	26.68	26.68	29.81
Malmal superfine long	1800	45×2	---	47.0	48.0	44.87	50.25
Malmal finebroad	2100	40×3	16.0	16.0	24.0	24.18	
<b>Jangalbari-Bajitpur Arang</b>							
Tanjeb Jangal fine	---	--	---	---	14.93	14.12	15.62
Sarhadkhana jangal fine	2100		32.0	32.0	32.0	37.0	31.0
Bafta	---	40×3	2.87	2.87	---	2.00	---
Sarkar ali	---	40×2	---	---	---	43.0	---
Jangal Khas	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
<b>Dhamrai Arang</b>							
Taradam ordinary	---	40×2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	6.0	6.0	7.30	7.87	8.43
Taradam fine	---	40×2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	---	10.0	11.56	12.87	13.75
Taradam superfine	2100	---	18.0	18.0	21.37	20.0	22.0
<b>Titabari Arang</b>							
Tanjeb ordinary	1600	40×2	7.75	8.0	6.18	7.0	
Tanjeb fine	1800	40×2		8.0	9.18	11.0	11.93
Tanjeb superfine	---	40×2	---	---	---	32.0 3.25	5.25
<b>Narainpur Arang</b>							
Malmal mamuli	---	40×2	---	---	---	---	---
Mahmudhiati	---	40×2		3.50	3.81	4.25	---
Nainsukh fine	---	40×2		10.0	11.0	11.0	12.0
Nainsukh superfine	---	40×2		16.0	---	16.0	18.0
<b>Chandpur Arang</b>							
Nainsukh fine	---	40×2		10.0	10.68	11.0	12.0
<b>Srerampur arang</b>							
Hamham fine	---	24×3		16.0	15.31	12.75	14.0



### Appendix 11

#### Muslin export from Dhaka in 1753

	(in Arcot Rupees)
The Emperor at Delhi (for the use of Emperor)	Rs.1,00,000
The Nawab at Murshidabad (for the use of the Nawab and his court)	Rs. 3,00,000
Jaggat Seth (the great banker) of Murshidabad	Rs.1,50,000
For Home Consumption Turanies for the consumption of upper provinces	Rs.1,00,000
Pattans	Rs.1,50,000
Armenians for Bussorah, Moeha and Judda markets	Rs. 5,00,000
Mughals: Partly for home consumption partly for foreign	Rs. 4,00,000
Hindus for home consumption	Rs. 2,00,000
English Company for Europe	Rs. 3,50,000
English individuals supposed for foreign market	Rs. 2,00,000
French Company for Europe	Rs. 2,50,000
French individuals supposed for foreign market	Rs. 50,000
Dutch Company for Europe	Rs. 1,00,000
Estimated prime cost of Dacca goods:	Arcot Rupees 28,50,00

Source: The Economic History of Bengal, Progs Board of Trade, 1st Dec. 1801, Prog no. 85, Vol. 156.

### Appendix 11.1

#### Textile exports to European markets by private Traders: 1795-1806

Year	Total Sicca Rupees	London %	Hamburg %	Copenhagen %	Lisbon %	America %	Cape	Manila	Basra & Muscat	Mocha Jeddah	Sumatra	China	Malbar Coramandel Ceylon
1795-96	94,83,284	17.4	14.3	7.3	22.9	18.4							
1796-97	74,26,752	14.4	5.8	18.4	9.5	27.9							
1797-98	57,48,617	20.6	1.7	4.5	21.6	25							
1798-99	57,74,057	15.3	5.7	9.45	7.4	14							
1799-1800	120,01,199	12.6	1.6	5.9	27.3	23.7	23	4.2	1.02	1.2	1	8.	15.0
1800-1	141,67,106	21.8	---	3.3	14.1	36.9							
1801-2	165,91,309	40.9	---	0.01	9.8	25					0.71		
1802-3	185,94,476	34.7	---	1.3	13	211.							
1803-4	161.69,478	30.1	---	3.1	15.1	33.7							
1804-5	110,85,509	11	---	4.5	22.1	22.4	---	7.7		7.13	2.8	15.	7.5
1805-6	118,49,670	2.7	---	2.8	10.2	40.1							

Source: Miburn, Vol. ii. pp. 112-14, 228-9, Home Misc., 72, 163. (Percentages have been worked out from the volume indicted in these sources).

**Appendix 12****The Export of Muslins to Europe from Dacca varied in years between 1787 and 1813**

Year						Value
1787	---	---	---	---	Rs.	3,000,000
1807	---	---	---	---	"	850,000
1813	---	---	---	---	"	350,000

Source: Nafis Ahmad, *An Economic Geography of East Pakistan*, London, 1968.

**Appendix 12.1****Showing a Comparative statement of the value of cotton goods exported from Dacca between 1817 and 1834**

Year						Rs.	Value
1817	---	---	---	---	"		1,524,974-1-8
1821	---	---	---	---	"		1,216,252-0-5
1825	---	---	---	---	"		629,183-11-3
1829	---	---	---	---	"		504,882-12-0
1831	---	---	---	---	"		360,747-5-0
1834	---	---	---	---	"		387,122-0-0

Source: Nafis Ahmad, *An Economic Geography of East Pakistan*, London, 1968.

**Appendix 13**  
**Table -a: Functions and Salaries of the Arang Establishment**

(in Sicca Rupees)

Employees	Functions	Jangalbari-Bajitpur Dhaka, Sonargaon		Dhamrai, Titabadi		Chandpur	
		No.	Salary	No.	Salary	No.	Salary
Gumashta	In charge of arang, kept accounts, gave advances, reported of DF	1	60.00	1	50.00	1	40.00
Naib Gumashta	Asst. to gumashta	1	30.00	1	25.00	1	20.00
Muqim	Inspected weavers' work in the looms, sorting of yarn						
Cash keeper	Kept cash and accounts	1	30.00	1	25.00	1	20.00
Dihidar	Supervised orders in each dihi						
Munshi	Writer/clerk	3ea	45.00	3ea	40.00	2ea	20.00
Jemadar	Guard	1ea	5.00	1	5.00	1	5.00
Peons/Barkandaz	Guard	10	30.00	8	24.00	5	15.00
Gumashta at dependent arang	As gumashta	1	15.00	1	15.00	Dhamrai only	

Source: DOR, BPC, Range 2, Vol. 5, 1774, PP. 567-8.

**Table -b: Weavers' Earnings in 1800**

Areas	1800	1808
	Chandpur weaver	Sonargaon weaver
Company's orders	328.0.0	114.10.3
Advance paid to the weaver	164.0.0	102.6.0
Paid by weaver		
Yarn (approx.)	n.a.	60.0.0
Journeyman's wages	24.0.0	24.0.0
+ Weavers' wages		82.0.0
<i>Deductions made at arang</i>		0.10.12
Washing charges	1.2.0	0.15.14
<i>Muhrir's fees</i>	n.a.	1.15.7
Fines for iron stains/yarn shortage	n.a.	0.7.6
<i>Nardeah</i> for darning		4.0.19
Total paid by weaver		86.0.19
Net earnings		28.9.4
Balance retained by the Factory (paid as <i>fazil</i> dues in 1809)		9.8.1
Actual earnings in 1808		19.1.3

Source: IO Bengali MSS, 4062. 39 Ibid., 4042, 1800, No. 60.

1 For Chandpur the payments, under separate heads, are not available.

**Appendix 14**  
**Migration of Weavers from Dhaka Arangs: 1786-87**

Arang	Houses	Looms	Weavers	Houses	Looms	Weavers
Dhaka	1560	2116	4039	1542 (- 18)	2041(-75)	3896(-143)
Titabadi	789	779	1624	608(-181)	741(-38)	1364(-260)
Dhamrai	1246	2783	492	503(-743)	906(-1877)	---
Chandpur	275	308	685	207(-74)	256(-52)	438(-247)
Narainpur	1178	1178	3112	745(-433)	722(-456)	1964(-1148)
Sonargaon	1113	1190	2956	820(-293)	902(-288)	2047(-909)
Jangalbari	355	1136	1136	664(+309)	1213(+77)	1218(+82)
Sonargaon	1113	1190	2956	820(-293)	902(-288)	2047(-909)
Jangalbari	355	1136	1136	664(+309)	1213(+77)	1218(+82)
Srirampur	323	395	608	362(+39)	501(+106)	611(+3)
Total	5443	8348	16943	5470	6879	12444

Source: 10 Home Misc. 795, p. 20.

**Appendix 15**  
**Dhaka Arangs: Pattern of Communication**

Arang	Latitude From Dhaka	Location near River (miles)	Distance from Dhaka (days)	Travelling time by River	Boat hire charges 1792-3
Sonargaon	SE <sup>1</sup> creek near Ichhamutti	Brahmaputra	2½	1	3.80
Dhamari	W <sup>2</sup> Bansi River	5¾	1-2	3.80	
Narainpur	SE	44	2-3	5.0.0	
Chandpur	SE Meghna River	39	3-4	4.8.0	
Jangalbari- Bajitpur	N <sup>3</sup> Brahmaputra mid-distance	106 90	4-6	5.8.0	
Titbadi	N Lakhia River	50	2	5.8.0	

Source: James Rennell, A Bengal Atlas, London, 1781, pp. 15-18, and 10 Bengali Mss, 4050, 1792-3.

1 SE : South East

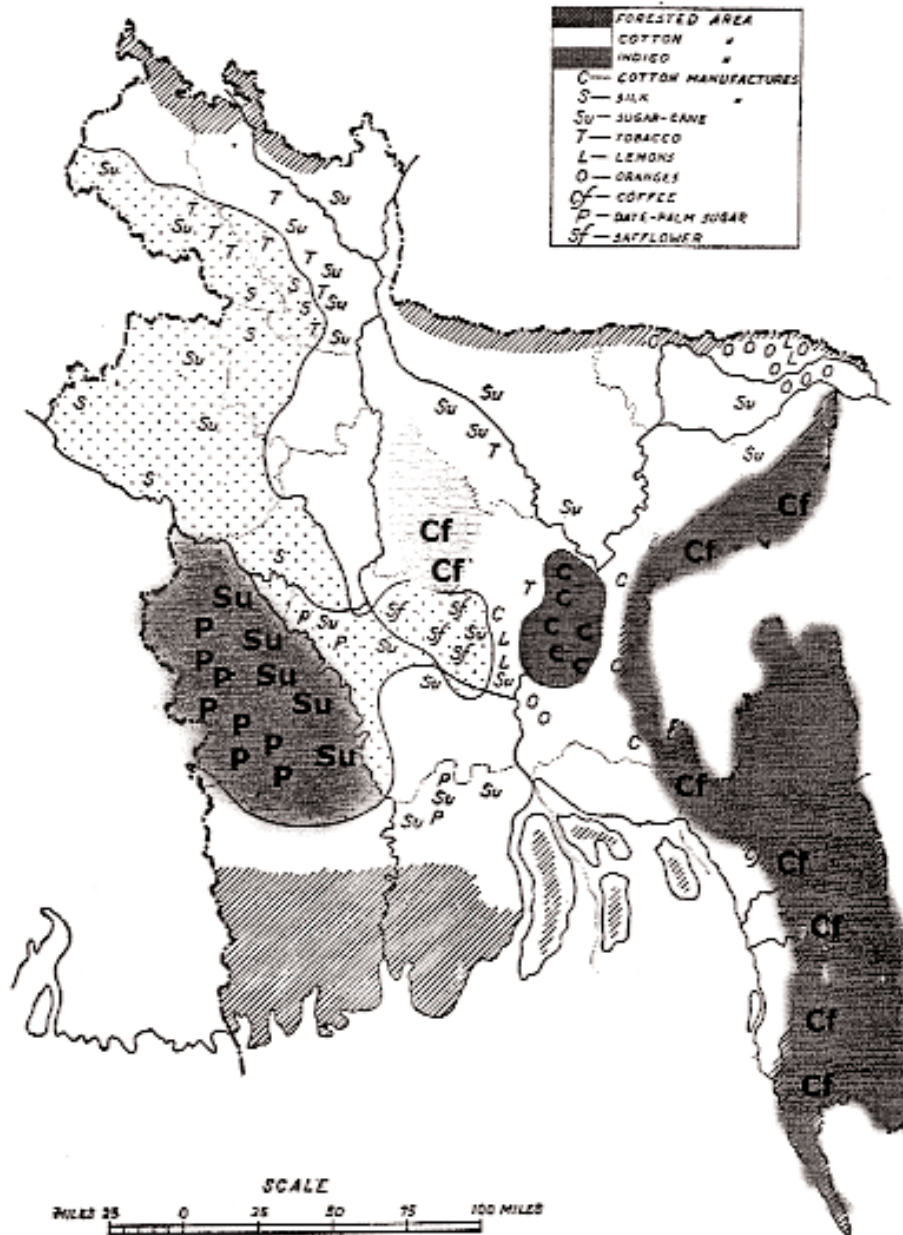
2 W: West

3 N: North



Appendix 16

# Manufacturing areas showing products in 19th century East Bengal



**Appendix 17**  
**Agricultural Products of the Dhaka district (19th century)**

Items	Country of Origin	Area Concentrated
Pineapple	America	Ghorshal, Narshindi, Madhupur, Bhawal
Betel nut	Malayan peninsula	Vikrampur, Narshindi, Kapasia, Kaliganj
Tobacco	America	Jagir (Manikganj), Golra, Baliajuri, Tara, Madebpur, Krishnapur,
Onion	Iran (Persia)	Gram Nawabganj, Harirampur, Satia, Jhitka, Beet, Dhamrai, Keraniganj, Kaliakair, Kaliganj, Gheor, Shibalaya, Shingair, Munshiganj, Sirajdikhan, Rupganj
Garlic	Iran (Persia)	Karimganj, around the banks of Ichamati, Harirampur, Manikganj, Shingair, Munsiganj, Sirajdi Khan, Rupgonj, Manohardi, Narsindi, Raipura
Banana	Java <sup>1</sup>	Rampal, Narsindi
Wheat <sup>2</sup>	Mesopotamia	Roail, Teota, Patharghata
Mustered	Indigenous	Chachartala, Malda, (Vikrampur)
Ginger	Portugal	Sonargaon, Rampal Madhupur, Dhamrai, Savar, Joydevpur, Kaliakair, Kaligonj, Kapasia, Sreepur, Tongi, Doulatpur Manikgonj, Munshiganj, Baidderbazar, Manohardi, Shibpur, Raipura
Betel-leaf	Malayan peninsula	Sonargam (Vikrampur) shilimpur, Shubachani, Tongibari, Mirkadim
Radish	America	Rampal
Jute	African Coast	Major parts of the district, except hilly areas
Coconut <sup>3</sup>	Malayan Pesinsula	Vikrampur, Rajnagar, Manikganj Narsindi
Jack fruit <sup>4</sup>	Asia	Bhawal, Madhupur Tract, Narsindhi
Sugarcane <sup>5</sup>	China	Mirpur, Rampal, Deobogh, Louhajong, Teota, Narshinghdi, Kawraid
Indigo	France	Rajnagar, Serajabad, Ishapura, Hashail, Hasherkandi,
Potato <sup>6</sup>	America	Kalatia and Ruhitpur now at Munshiganj
Abergine	America	Bachila, Ati and Rampal
Chillies <sup>7</sup>	Portugal	Meghna delta, Dhamrai, Savar, Kaliakair, Kapasia, Harirampur, Shibalaya, Loughjong, Baddiyerbazar, Rupgonj, Narshingdi
Tea <sup>8</sup>	China	Begunbari, Bhawal
Karpus <sup>9</sup>	America	Sonargaon, Kapasia, Toke, Vikrampur
Kusum fool	Indigenous	Vikrampur, Dohar Ruhitpur, Narshingdi
Shan Hemp <sup>10</sup>	Indigenous	Northern part of the district
Mango <sup>11</sup>	South-East Asia	Manikganj, Savar, Vikrampur, Joydevpur and other parts of the district

1 Rampal varieties were introduced during the Sena Era. These are Kabri, Sabri, Chini Champa, Amrita Bhogh, Martaman, Agniswar, Aita, Konaibani etc.

2 These were imported to Dhaka from Patna (Bihar) by the Muslim traders.

3 Coconut produced in abundance in the Meghna belt and south Vikrampur.

4 Tradition says, Jackfruit was produced in Assam Valley and afterward it grew at Bhawal-Madhupur Tract. It was the Arab traders who introduced this fruit in the East Africa, Java-Malay and in Sri Lanka

5 The major producing areas of Sugarcane are the two sides of Ichamati, Sitalakhya and Bramahputra river, see *Dhakar Itihas*, *ibid.* p. 29.

6 'Potato' was first introduced in the Dhaka district (Vikrampur) by Mr. Wise in 1897. Seeds of potato were sent to Dhaka Collector for distribution among the cultivators and propagandas were made to cultivate potatoes. Initially the Portuguese introduced 'Potato' in Bengal.

7 Produced abundantly by the banks of Meghna, old Brahmaputra and Lakhaya

8 Gani Miah of Dhaka's Nawab family and the Bhawal Zamindar experimentally went for tea plantations at Bengunbari and Bhawal respectively. They collected tea plants from Cachar. But after few years, this efforts were given up due to low productivity.

9 Kusum fool was used for dying cloths. This was an exportable item of Dhaka but owing to import of artificial color from England and reducing of prices from Tk. 100 to Tk. 20-30 per mund its cultivation reduced considerably. See *Dhakar Bibaran*, *ibid.*

10 Dhaka once produced Shan hemp and in 1806 the Commercial Resident of Dhaka was able to export 70,000 munds of shan hemp from this district.

11 The history of the Mango production dates back to 400 BC. Old Indian literature mentioned about mango. The Mughal Emperors used to patronise in developing 'mango-garden'. It was a symbol of aristocracy in Bengal.

**Appendix 18**  
**Product concentration in the 19th century Dhaka**  
**(Other than Dhaka City)**

Items	Area Concentrated
<b>a. Industrial &amp; Cottage products</b>	
Brass-metal	Louhajang, Dhankunia (Vikrampur) Brahmanaon, Diagaon (Vikrampur) Dhamrai
Kasha	Gouragonj, Feringibazar, Abdullahpur Shologhar, Bejgaon, Palung <sup>1</sup> , Rajnagar, Dhamri
Iron made good	Abdullahpur, Sreenagar, Haldia
Timber business	Kamlaghat, (Vikrampur)
<i>Talies</i>	Parjoar, Rayerbazar
Iron-made cannon	Sreepur <sup>2</sup>
Pottery	Nagerhat <sup>3</sup> , Rayer Bazar, Aoutshahi, Maddyapara, Bidgan, Dhamrai, Shimulia
Dying	Shibrampur, Kusumpur, Dohar
Clay made dolls	Nagerhat, Sreenagar, Damrai, Kachdia
Boats	Baghayakul, Telirbagh, Medini Mandal, Barai Khali, Kharia, Kamlahat, Ariol, Aontshahi, Tajpur, Bejgaon, Nagerhat, Nagarbagh, Bahar, Brahmanaon, Senhati, Haldia, Barakar, Burirhat <sup>4</sup>
Hand made paper <sup>5</sup>	Arial, Kagojitola, Kagajipara
Cane products	Bhaghyakul
Button	Narayangonj, Lalati, Kamargaon, Tajpur
<b>b. Cotton and Weaving</b>	
Silk cloths	Abdullahpur
Muslin	Sonargaon, Dhamrai, Vikrampur, Demra, Kapasia, Murapara
Bufta <sup>6</sup>	Kalakopa, Abdullahpur
<i>Chikan Dhauti</i>	Dhamri, Vikrampur
<i>Kashida</i>	Matuail, Sanera, Biliswer, Dagar
Katan	Mirpur
<i>Chadar</i>	Haldia
<i>Saree</i>	Paikpara (Vikrampur)
Jamdani	Noapara, Maikuli, Baihak, Nabigonj, Tarabo, Rupshi, Charpashabash, Demra Siddhirgonj
Shakha	Aoutsahi
Ghamsa	Paikpara (Vikrampur), Haldia
Dhuti	Paikpara
Lungi	Haldia, Paikpara, Ruhitpur
Sit	Haldia
Cotton cloths	Sreepur, Abdullahpur, Bharakar, Haldia. Mirkadim
Karpas	
Jewellery	Kedarpur, Vikrampur, Rajnagar, Kartikpur, SreeRampur and Idilpur Pargana, Fulbaria, Karanapara, Bhowal, Kapasia, Manikganj, Sonargaon, Vikrampur, Sutipur, Toke, Bhaktarbalir char.

**c. Sweetmeat-Molasses**

Date molasses	Baghra, Katiapara, Kamargan, Tangibari, Rampal
<i>Patkhir</i> <sup>7</sup>	Sirajdi Khan, Serejabad, Louhajong1, Manikganj.
<i>Ghee</i>	Sirajdikhan
Pulm	Bhawa
<i>Mithai</i>	Haldia
Bafellow curd	Manikganj, Rampal
<i>Patil gur</i> (Pan-molasses)	Pampal, Manikganj
<i>Chira</i>	Fatullah, Manikganj
Milk	Bhawar, Kharia, Digli, Kalma Digirpar
<i>Kadma, Batasa</i> <sup>8</sup>	Louhaganj, Rampal, Rajnagar, Sreenagar

1 Palang was included in the south Vikrampur but now in the Shariatpur district .

2 Sreepur was the Capital of Kedar Ray in the 16th century. Now Sreepur is a lost city. The Canons of Isa Khan was made at Sreepur in 1002 B.S.

3 The Potters of Nagerhat and Sreenagar used to send their products (dolls) at Dhaka during the Janmastami. Parasanna Pal and Tilak Pal were the famous potters in the 19th century. See Jogendrnath Gupta *Vikrampurur Itihas*, p. 38

4 Burirhat was famous for boat building since the Mughal period. The craftsmanship of Burirhat developed to render services to the 'Dacca Nowara' during Mir Jumla. Burirhat was also included in the South Vikrampur, though it is now under the administrative jurisdiction of Shariatpur district.

5 Arol or Arial in Vikrampur was famous for handmade paper. There were 500-600 Muslim family, who were called 'Kagoji'. It was Shaista Khan who brought 'Kagojis' in Dhaka.

6 Rajmahal, they could not perhaps survive in the city and settled adjacent areas like Aral at Vikrampur and 'Kagaji para' at Savar.

7 'Patkhir' of Vikrampur was famous for its tastes. Apart from local consumption... it was exported to Dhaka city and Kolkata in the 19th century.

8 *Kadma* and *Batasa* of Vikrampur were famous. The *Sahas* and *madaks* of Faridpur had their permanent shops in the Vikrampur's *Hats* and *Bazars*, who used to make *Kadma* and *Batasa*.'



**Appendix 19**  
**Item exported from Dhaka in the late 19th century**

Items Exported	Places where Exported
1. Brass metal and Kasha-made goods	Kolkata and other districts
2. Pottery and clay-made utensils	Silchar, Sylhet and other districts
3. Jewellery	Patna, Alahabad, Assam
4. Chilies	Assam and Various destinations
5. Horn Button	Kolkata, Burma, South Africa
6. Paan (Betel leaf)	Kolkata and various destinations
7. Ginger	Various destination
8. Dye ( <i>Kusumfool</i> )	Pabna, Kolkata, Rajshahi, Mymensing
9. Hide/Skins	Kolkata
10. <i>Dhakai Sharee/Dhuties, sit and lungi</i>	Kolkata, Assam, Patna
11. Jute	Chittagong, Kolkata for European destination
12. Jute made bags (Chalas)	Kolkata, Assam
13. <i>Masranga</i> feather	China, Burma
14. Cloths (Bufta), <i>Kashida</i>	Kolkata, Tran Turkey and other places
15. Dacca Cheese	Kolkata, Turkey
16. Indigo	Kolkata, Europe
17. Rice (fine)	Kolkata and other districts
18. Onion	Sylhet, Assam
19. Iron made goods	Chittagong, Assam, Kolkata
20. Til, Mustard	Chittagong, Assam
21. Conch-shell ( <i>Shakaha</i> )	Kolkata, Silchar and other districts
22. <i>Ghee, Pat kheer</i>	Kolkata and, other Districts
23. Filigree works	Kolkata, Europe
24. Silver made ornaments	Kolkata, Europe
25. Dhakai Soap	Different places of Eastern Bengal
26. Salt	Kolkata, Assam
27. Sugar	Assam, Arakan
28. Betel-nut	Rangpur, Assam, Arakan
29. Tobacco	Kolkata and other places
30. Fish	Kolkatta
31. Safflower	Europe
32. Shan-Hemp	Europe
33. Muslin	Afghanistan, Tran, Arab and Turkey
34. Hand made paper	Other districts

Source: Based on Topography of Dacca, *Dhakar Itihas*, *Bikrampurur Itihash*, *Dhakar Bibaron*, *Dhaka District Gazetteer*.

**Appendix 20**  
**Import in the late 19th century Dhaka Market**

Items Imported	From where imported
Grossery items, gold, silver, copper, wine, coal, iron, chrome, leather, shoe, linen, cotton, umbrella, soap, threads, Kerosine.	Calcutta and Europe
Muga silk	Sylhet & Assam
Cotton (imported)	England
Cotton (Siranje)	Mirjapur (UP)
Cotton (Voga)	Tripura, Chittagong
Pulses, cereals	Uttar Pradesh
Turmeric Kalai	Jessore, Patna
Sugar	Jaipur, Gazipur, Jessore
Molasses	Uttar Pradesh, Gaya, Jessore, Faridpur
Potato (Bombay)	Sylhet, Cachar
Conch-shell	Srilanka, Malabar, Calcutta
Segun timber, wooden products, rice (Atap) Betelnut.	Rangoon, Chittagong
Andi, Tassar, Mugar	Alipur, Jugidhopa, Assam
Rice, Balam rice,	North Bengal, Sylhet, Barisal
Salt	Barisal, Chittagong, Calcutta
Wheat	Patna
Hogla, <i>Shital Patti</i>	Barisal, Sylhet
Cane, Cane furniture, Bamboo, <i>Mullibansh</i> , <i>Khalpa</i> , <i>Tejpata</i>	Assam, Sylhet
Chillies	Tripura, Barisal
Hides skin, Brinjal, Oanir,	Mymensing, Sylhet, Assam
Tobacco	Purnia, Rangpur, Coochbihar
Tea	Assam, Coochbihar, Sylhet.
Kerosene oil, Candle	Burma, Calcutta
Ivory	Burma
Coconut	Khulna, Barisal, Noakhali
Coal	Raniganj

<sup>1</sup> First Textile Cotton was imported in Dhaka in 1824.

<sup>2</sup> Voga Cotton was produced in the hilly areas of Tripura.

**Appendix 21**  
**Agricultural and Industrial Fairs on the Dhaka Products (1851-1924)**

Year	Venue	Item Exhibited	Remark
1851	London	Dhakai Muslin	London News paper praised 'Dhaka Muslin'
1862	London	Dhakai and England Made muslin <sup>1</sup>	Dhakai's one was declared fine
1864	Kolkata	Deushali Ox <sup>2</sup>	Selected the best one
1864	Dhaka	Muslin & Filigree work	
1866	Paris	Dhaka's Ornaments	Compared with Greek artisans
1878	Dhaka	Agriculture Fair. Exhibited Agro Products of the district	Awarded best products of Oxes, Goats, Horses, Hens, Food items, Jute, Sugarcane, Agri-equipments
1880	Dhaka	Agriculture Fair. Exhibited Agro Products	Initiated and Patronised by the Dhaka Nawabs
1881	Dhaka	Agriculture Fair	Fair used to hold every year
1882	Dhaka	Agriculture	"
1883	Dhaka & Calcutta	Dhaka's Filigree works, <i>Paan dan</i> , Attardan etc.	"
1884	Dhaka /Alipur	Agriculture Fair	Dhaka's product Exhibited
1885	Dhaka	Agriculture Fair	"
1886	Dhaka	Agriculture Fair	"
1887	Dhaka	Ornaments Exhibited	During Janmashtami
1888	Dhaka	Agriculture Fair	Held yearly
1889	Dhaka	Agriculture Fair	"
1890	Dhaka	Agriculture Fair	"
1891	Dhaka	Agriculture Fair	"
1892	Dhaka	Agriculture Fair	"
1893	Dhaka	Agriculture Fair	"
1894	Dhaka	Agriculture Fair	"
1903	Delhi	Mandila work of Filigree	Developed this craft in 16th century
1905	Calcutta	Industrial Fair	'Bulbul' was awarded the best indigenous Soap
1915	Savar	Cotton Cloth Fair	
1916	Dhaka	Industrial Fair	Visited by the Lt. Govn. of Bengal
1920	Dhaka	Charka Exhibition	Inaugurated by M. Ghandi
1920	Digiharpar	Cottage Product	Organised by the Swadeshis
1922	Mulgarh	Charka Exhibition	Organised by the Swadeshis
1924	Dhaka	Industrial Fair	

Source: Based on various reports, Dacca Prakash, Dacca News, Dhakar Itihas, Dhakar Bibaran.

<sup>1</sup> Imitation of Dhakai muslin was then made in England and exported to India.

<sup>2</sup> J.P. Wise of Dhaka exhibited his *Deoshali Ox* and this was selected the best among the Cattles were shown in the Exhibition. This sorts of Cattles were brought to Dhaka by Nawab Shasta Khan from Deoshal, India.

## Appendix 22

### A letter of Major James Rennell which denotes the state of Dhaka city and its trade in 1765

The name of James Rennell deserves to be remembered with gratefulness. He was undoubtedly one of the great men England had sent to India in the 18th century which was the most interesting period of the British occupation of India. He was the first Surveyor-General of India and from him sprang the vast edifice of the Survey of India. The large number of maps and books which he had published show him to be an indefatigable worker in the field and a man of rare abilities.<sup>1</sup>

The following private letter of this great man will, therefore, be found of great interest. It was purchased by the late Rao Bahadur D.B. Parasnis from Messres. Maggs Brothers of London and is now preserved in the Historical Museum at Satara in the Bombay Presidency. It is of 8 ½ pages, quarto size, and is wholly written in his own hand.

Rennell does not give the name of the person to whom the letter was written but from the very affectionate terms in which it is written and from the reference to Mrs. Burrington, Mrs. Sampson etc. in the concluding portion of the letter there can be no doubt that it was addressed to the Rev. Gilbert Burrington of whom and whose family Rennell thought and spoke with the tenderest affections. Many were the messages he sent to Mrs. and Miss Burrington and to old Mrs. Sampson; and the midshipman's letters invariably ended with 'love to the dear children'.<sup>2</sup> Rennell has also not noted the exact place from which the letter was written; but from his mention of the date we can know that it must be Dacca which he always fixed as his head quarters during the recess season.<sup>3</sup>

We know that he had returned to Dacca on the first of August 1765<sup>4</sup> after his third expedition for surveying the Megna and Baramputrey and that he had left it on 13th October 1765 on his 4th expedition for making a general map of Bengal Provinces with all expedition as ordered by Lord Clive.<sup>5</sup> In the commencing portion of the letter Rennell gives a somewhat detailed Geographical account of the Kingdom Bengall, spell as per records with special reference to the river Baramputrey, one of the largest rivers in the world and to the large City of Dacca with 4,50,000 inhabitants. He then refers to the battles and conquests of Buxar, Benares, Allahabad and Kora, the latter of which were won by the valour of General Carnac.

The letter reveals the open nature of Rennell when he states "I think the circumstance concerning the decline of my health will be best concealed from my mother, although she must be convinced that it is the necessary consequence of fatigue in so hot a climate as this and indeed between you and I, my dear friend, I have been guilty of some excesses which I fear have been of bad consequence to me. However I begin to know better, though indeed as Mr. Lissac Brikerstaft says

1 A complete biography of James Rennell has been published by Sir Clements R. Markham under the name "Major James Rennell and the Rise of Modern English Geography" in 1895 and a brief sketch of his career is given in the introduction of his Journals published as a memoir of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Vol. III, No 3 in 1910.

2 Markham's Major James Rennell, p. 17

3 *Ibid*, p. 46.

4 Memoir A. So. Bo, Vol. III, p. 48.

5 *Ibid*, p. 51.



young fellows seldom know the value of health or other valuable blessings till they have lost them.” Rennell was also prepared to blame his own countrymen when he says-We may easily account for its (of Dacca) decline by the continual wars which have of late years wasted the whole country and in the fomenting of which we have had too large a share.

*Dear Sir,*

Bengall (Dacca)  
August 31st 1765

I had the pleasure to write to you in December last by Mr. Topham.<sup>6</sup> Which letter I hope you have received. I have not yet been favoured with any letters from you, which gives me much uneasiness. I have been constantly employed in journeying the country since the time I wrote last, so that my new map of Bengall begins to make a figure, as I have gone over a square of 27 Degrees of Longitude by 3 of Latitude and during my last Expedition, I was in sight of the Tartarian Mountains.<sup>7</sup> The Kingdom of Bengall, Particularly the Eastern front is naturally the most convenient for trade within itself of any country-in the world; for the rivers divide into just a number of Branches that the people have the convenience of water carriage to& from every principal place. The principal rivers are the Ganges and Baramputrey, the former coming from the N. W. parts of Indostan and the latter from the S. E. parts of great Tartary; I am now employed in tracing the latter towards its source ; but shall have a number of barbarious nations to pass through, and some of them are extremely jealous of Europeans.<sup>8</sup>

The size of the Ganges has been very much magnified by those Historians who make any mention of it, and on the contrary, the Baramputrey one of the largest rivers in the world, has been scarce taken notice of. The Baramputrey 60 miles from the Sea is in some places 72 miles broad, the water at the same time quite fresh and palatable; the Ganges is from half a mile to 3 1/2 miles broad and is navigable for boats of 150 Tons 740 miles above the mouth; its stream is not very rapid, scarce exceeding the rate of 5 miles an hour during all the above mentioned space. It abounds with Turtle and fish of many different kins, and alligators or crocodiles are so plenty that you may frequently see 20 of a day; however they are so far from agreeing with the common descriptions of them, that they are excessive shy, and never were known to go ashore in quest of their pray. I have not seen any of them that were more than 25 foot long.

There are few towns of note in the province of Bengall, but the villages are innumerable; in the camp of 150 miles I could not discover one brick house, all the country houses being built of Bamboos and mats. The cities are very large, and of these there are in the Kingdom of Bengall, Muxadabat<sup>9</sup> Patna, Dacca and Calcutta. I have only as yet seen the two latter ones: Dacca is near

6 He had been a mid-shipman with Rennell on board the ‘Brilliant’ and it was through his influence that Rennell received a commission as Probationer Engineer at Calcutta, on 9 April, 1764 and was ordered by Mr. Vansittart, then Governor of Bengal, to make a survey of the delta of the Ganges, Cf. Memoir A. S. Vol. III Intro. p. 1

7 i.e. the Himalayas, the name of Himalaya was then unknown and Rennell called them by this name.

8 This fear proved true in the case of Rennell himself. For in the month of February 1766 when he was busy with his survey operations on the frontier of Bhutan he was very seriously wounded by a local tribesman. (Cf. Markham’s Life of Rennell, p.47 and Memoir A. S. B., p. 74) .

9 i.e., Murshidabad.

4 miles long and 2 ½ miles broad, being built along the side of the Eastmost branch<sup>10</sup> of the Ganges. It was once a very flourishing city, and indeed has at this time a considerable trade; but nothing in comparison of what it had about 70 or 80 years ago. We may easily account for its decline, by the continual wars which have of late years wasted the whole country, and in the fomenting of which we have had too large a share<sup>11</sup>. The buildings of Dacca are very mean, altho mostly of brick. They are mostly of one story only; so that you may imagine that the number of inhabitants is no way proportioned to that of our European cities; I think they compose the number of inhabitants to be only 450,000. Dacca has only a small fort built according to the Indian method for its defence so that a few years ago it was pillaged by less than a 1000 facquires.<sup>12</sup>

The country for near 70 miles round Dacca is entirely overflown during the months of July, August and September, so that the towns and villages are only so many small islands and have a communication with one another by small boats. This phenomenon is occasioned by the overflowing of the Ganges and Baramputrey and without it the country would be parched up during the Whole year. The food of the country people being entirely rice, their annual inundation saves them the trouble of watering their lands, and keeping them in the state required for the production of that grain.

Calcutta is somewhat less than Dacca, but being the Chief European Settlement, the building are much more elegant than those of Dacca, or indeed any other City in Indostan. Muxadabat, the Capital of Bengall is much larger than Dacca and is in a very pleasant situation during the dry season. Patna lies towards the western frontier of Bengall and is said to be the richest of the four: its diminutions are nearly the same as those of Muxadabat.

I don't know whether Benaras ought to be reckoned in the territory of Bengall; it is a very fine opulent city and formerly had an University in it.

Perhaps you would hardly believe that there are 50,000 square miles of level land in Bengall and that there is not a rock or stone to be met with throughout that space, however it is certainly very true.

I gave you in my last<sup>13</sup> some account of the battle betwixt our army and the Vizier near the City of Benaras. Thy worthy friend Mr. Carnac was at that time at Calcutta, being most unjustly suspended from his duty by order of the E. I. Co.; presently afterwards he received from the same gentleman a commission appointing him a Brigadier General in the Companys Service and in March he again took Commands of the Army which had then penetrated a considerable way into the Viziers Dominions. [The Viziers Dominions are situated on the banks of the Ganges and Jemna, and extend almost from Agra to Benaras.] Benaras fell to the conquerors in consequence of the Battle of Baxar (near Benaras), and Iliabad<sup>14</sup> the Vaziers Capital was given up soon after. This City is reported to be one of the best built, as well as the strongest in Indostan. The Capture of these two places brought in a immense booty to the Captors, most of the principal officers making very handsome fortunes. On the 3rd of May, General Carnac engaged the Vazier at Corahengabad<sup>15</sup> on the Banks

10 Locally called by Badiganga (Buriganga).

11 Rennell's open mind in making this statement deserves to be noted.

12 These must be the same 'Sanashi Fakirs', a tribe of Bhutan, while fighting with whom in 1776 Rennell was seriously wounded. See footnote 8 above.

13 Nothing is known of this letter. It must have been written after 23 October, 1764 when the famous battle of Buxar referred to here was won by the British under Major Munro against Mir Kasim.

14 i.e., Allahabad.

15 i.e., Lora.

of the Jemna and gained a complete victory, thereby getting possession of all the Vaziers will appear to be a very extraordinary one. The Mogul <sup>16</sup> himself was present at the battle of Buxar, and after the defeat of his Vazier<sup>17</sup>, came into our camp, where he has remained ever since. However he is little more than a cypher, nor indeed was he much otherwise before that Battle, the Vazier having the command of the army, and indeed the reins of Government.

Lord Clive arrived here in the beginning of May <sup>18</sup> and in July set out for Iliabad, in order to treat with the Vazier. The success of his Lordships' negotiations is not yet known but we hear that the Vazier is to have his country restored, on conditions of his paying the expenses of the War, which in fact, he was the cause of these expenses amount to no less than £ 1,200,000 sterling, or what the people of Indostan call a crore of Rupees, that is 100 lacks, each lack 100,000 Rupees.

I believe that I informed you in a former letter that Mr. Carnac was an old acquaintance of my Barnac Consins,<sup>19</sup> and that my cousin sent out a recommendation of me to him. Mr. Carnac has behaved remarkably genteel to me, and constantly favours me with his correspondence. He has likewise recommended me to His Lordship, so that it will be my own fault if I am not successful. Mr. Palk <sup>20</sup> has likewise favoured me with another recommendation, and I am happy in having the approbation of my employees.

I do not enjoy my health now as well as I have heretofore, but am in hopes that I shall recover it. If not, I hope to be wise enough to prefer health to riches, and retire to my native country with competence, instead of affluence.

I intended to say something about the Climate of Bengall, but forgot it in the body of my letter. I have not experienced a greater degree of heat than what made the thermometer rise to 93, or cold lower than 54; however the air during the months of December and January appear to us to be as sharp as that in England during the month of March. You may easily find whether the degree of heat and cold will you bear the same proportion as I have mentioned. We had about 120 rainy days during the last twelve months. The rainy months are part of June, the months of July and August, and part of September. During the rainy season we seldom see two dry days following.

I am in hopes that this will find you all in perfect health. I have thought it needless to write to my mother and sister when you will be able to give them ample satisfaction with regard to my situation and prospects. I think the circumstance concerning the decline of my health will be best concealed from my mother, although she must be convinced that it is the necessary consequence of fatigue in so hot a climate as this is, and indeed between you and I my dear friend, I have been guilty of some excesses<sup>21</sup> which I fear have been of bad consequence to me. However I begin to know her though indeed as Mr. Isaac Brikerstaff says, young fellows seldom know the value of health or other valuable blessings, till they have lost them.

16 The Emperor Shah Alam II.

17 Shujaudaula, the Nawab Vizier of Oudh.

18 On 3rd May, 1765.

19 Dr. Thomas Rennell, the rector of Drewsteignton, was a distant cousin of James father: James was not well-treated by these people in his bad days and he used to call the sons of this Doctor by this name c. f. Markham, p. 12.

20 Mr. Robert Palk was Governor of Madras in 1763 and Rennell had become his friend when he was serving in the Madras Navy.

21 This is another instance of the openness of Rennells mind.

I have had some thoughts of getting a partner (if I could meet with an agreeable one) but I find that families are so very expensive in this country that I am afraid to venture; so that I must endeavour to mortify those desires till my arrival in England.

I am pleased to present my best respects to Mrs. Burrington and Mrs. Sampson, and my love to the Children, likewise my respects to my friends at Slade.

I had almost forgot to mention my late promotion, which was that of Attenant and Sub-Engineer in the month of January last.

There has lately been pulished in England a History of the War of Comandoll and I find that the same author (Mr. Orme) intends to give the Wars of Bengal in his second volume; if the second volume should answerable to the first I may venture to recommend it as the best book of its kind.

I have little more to say, my dear friend, but that I shall wait very patiently the arrival of the next ships, hoping to hear from you; and to assure that I am with the greatest truth and sincerity.

Your very affectionate, and obedient servant,  
J. Rennell

Place, so as eventually to have much time  
if assisted by foul winds in his return to  
the assistance, from Port Jackson. Another  
advantage will be, that if pleasant winds  
prevent the prosecution of the voyage of  
Discovery, after the arrival of the ship at  
Port Jackson, we shall have so much  
done at all events; & it will be known  
to future investigators, where to expect  
bullets and traps.

Page C. C. The perpendicular line of the  
River is omitted.

Page P. D. If I mistake not this is a  
branch of soundings of the New Zealand  
Tribute, to a great extent. If so, it would  
be a good thing to know the depths & quality  
of ground, in & near between the River & the  
River, to assist in correcting the former,  
without making I land on either side.  
I mention this, because this paper may  
perhaps be frequented by future visitors.  
If you please send but little  
make of any importance.

Yours truly  
J. Rennell

H 78-3

Hand writing of Major Rennell



**Appendix 23**  
**List of Mills in East-Bengal in 1930s**

Sl.	Name of the Mill	Location	Paid up Capital
1.	Acharya Profulla Chandra Cotton Mills Ltd. <sup>1</sup>	Khulna	1,43,750
2.	The Dhakeswari Cotton Mills Co. Ltd.	Narayangonj	2401,430
3.	Luxi Narayan Cotton Mills, Ltd.	Narayangonj	848,934
4.	The Aswini Kumar Cotton Mills <sup>2</sup>	Faridbad (Dhaka)	20,00,000
5.	The Bengal-Assam Cotton Mills <sup>3</sup>	Narayangonj A.C.	2500,000
6.	The Bengal Cord and Cotton Mills, Ltd. <sup>4</sup>	Dacca	500,000
7.	The Chittaranjan Cotton Mills Ltd.	Narayangonj	30,00,000
8.	Deshpriya Cotton Mills Ltd. <sup>5</sup>	Chittagong	38,000
9.	Jayanti Cotton Mills Ltd. <sup>6</sup>	Nawabpur (Dacca)	Not avilable
10.	Luxmi Spinning and Weaving Mills Ltd. <sup>7</sup>	Narayangonj	10,0000
11.	Muslim India Cotton Mills Ltd. <sup>8</sup>	Narayangonj	1,00,000
12.	New Model Cotton Mills Ltd. <sup>9</sup>	Mymensing	15,0000
13.	The Tripura Cotton Mills Ltd. <sup>10</sup>	Comilla	25,00000
14.	Jatindra Mohan Cotton Mills Ltd	Chittagong	20,00,000
15.	National Weaving Co. Ltd. (wounded up in?)	Kishoregonj	1,50,000
16.	East Bengal Jute and Cotton Mills	Dhaka	50,00,000
17.	Mohini Mills Ltd.	Kustia	13,99985

Source: Cotton Mill Industry in Bengal, Bulletin no-75, Govt. Of Bengal, Dept of Industries, 1937.

- 1 The Company was registered in October 1931 and Commenced preliminary operations in July 1936, the managing agents being Messrs. Bengal workers Association, Ltd. It was a weaving concern and produced dhuties, shirtings, longcloth, other sorts of grey and bleached piece-goods, coloured piece-goods etc.
- 2 The Company was registered on 24th February 1933, and it received permission from the Registrar of Joint stock Companies to Commence business on 23rd December 1933. The first managing agency-The Barisal Commercial Syndicate was dissolved owing to voluntry resistration.. As certain disadvantages were felt in having the Company at Barisal its registered office has since been transferred to Dhaka and Dacca Economic Council was its managing agent.
- 3 The Bengal Cotton Mills Ltd. was registered on 9th March 1934 with its head office at Narayangonj. Mr. A. Sobhan was its secretary. It was under construction in 1940.
- 4 The Company was registered in 1937. The managing agents of the Company were messrs. Roy Moojomder and Co. With their head office at larmini street. Dacca.
- 5 The Company was first registered under the name and style 'the Chittagong Cotton Mills Ltd'. with its head office at Chittagong, but after the death of Mr. Jatindra Mohan Sen Gupta the name has been Changed.
- 6 As per collectors report, the office was situated at Nawabpur Road but the mill did not came in to existence in 1937 rather the managing agent was touring in the Muffasil to sell share.
- 7 The Company was registered in 1936 with its office at Narayangonj. Messrs. Textile Trust. Ltd. was The Managing agent.
- 8 Muslim Indian Cotton Mills Ltd. was registered in 1936 with its mill sike at Narayangonj. M/S Muslim Industrial syhdicate was the managing agent.
- 9 The new model Cotton Mills, Ltd. was registered in 1936 with its office and mill site at Mymensing and its managing agents were M/S Roy and sons.
- 10 The Company was registered in 1931 with its office at Comilla. M/S Committee Workers Union was its managing agents. But nU could not go on operation.

**Appendix 24**  
**Statement showing the Weaving Schools in Dhaka Division in 1939**

School	Year of Establishment	Student till 1939	Student Passed till 1939	Nos of student adopted Weaving profession
Dhaka	1929	249	144	77
Patgram (Dhaka)*	1919	-	-	-
Tangail	1917	521	350	165
Nandina (Mymensing)*	1919	653	622	598
Haluaghat (Mymensing)*	1927	448	411	312
Gopalganj (Faridpur)*	1927	422	381	298
Kamarkali (Barisal)*	1927	423	423	304
Harinfulia (Barisal)*	1927	434	419	339

\* These are Peripatetic Weaving Schools

Source: Adapted from the Administrative Report of the Department of Industries, Bengal, 1938-39

**Appendix 24.1**  
**Bengal State Aid received by the Dhaka -Entrepreneurs in 1940s**

Applicant's Name	Amount prayed for	Sanctioned Amount	Purpose
Babu Sudhnsu K. Munshi	Rs. 9,000	Tk. 9,000	For hire purpose of Ghose's spinning machinery
Associated Printing works	Rs. 5,000	Rejected	For manufacturing of Playing Card and Cardboard box
Babu Bholanath Sengupta	Rs. 1,000	Rejected	For Spinning and Weaving Factory
S.C. Banerjee and P.C. Chakrabarty	Rs. 5,000	Rejected	For sugarcane crushing and Oil mill industries
Babu Shyam Charan Rishidas	Rs. 360	Rs. 250	For Leather tanning industry
Babu Haripada Chakravarty	Rs. 1,000	Rs. 500	For Pottery industry
Maulavi Shafiuddin Khan	Rs. 300	Rs. 200	For Handloom weaving Industry
Prasanta Match Factory	Rs. 10,000	Rejected	For development of the Factory
Bengal Brass works	Rs. 5,000	Rs. 2500	For development of the Factory at Dhamrai
E. Bengal Tannery and Trading Co. Ltd.	Rs. 5,000	-	For starting a Tannery
Maulavi Abdus Sobhan and others	Rs. 600	Rs. 500	For starting a pottery Factory
East Bengal Rice Mill	Rs. 10,000	Rs. 1800	For working Capital
Babu Baikuntha N. Roy Chowdhury	Rs. 1900	-	For Tannary Industry
National Pottery Works	Rs. 5,000	Rs. 5,000	For development of the pottery factory

Source: Report of the Board of Industries, Bengal, 1935-40

**Appendix 25**  
**Banks Operated in East Bengal in 1940**

Sl. No.	Name of the Bank	Head Office	Branches
1.	Dass Bank	Dass Nagar	Sylhet, Dinajpur,
2.	Bengal Central Bank Ltd.	Kolkata	Dhaka, Narayanganj
3.	Nath Bank Ltd.	Kolkata	---
4.	Comilla Banking Corporation	Kolkata	Brahmambaria, Barisal, Comilla, Court Branch (Comilla), Chandpur, Chittagong, Dacca, Faridpur, Hajeeganj, Khulna, Mymensing, Jalakati Narayanganj, Tangail
5.	The Comilla union Bank	---	
6.	The Associated Bank of Comilla Ltd.	Agartala	Sreemagal, Narayanganj, Shamsnagar, Dacca, B.baria
7.	Hazardi Bank Ltd.	Kolkata	Mirkadim (Dhaka), Bagerhat, Khulna, Habiganj.
8.	Bank of Calcutta Ltd.	Kolkata	Dhaka
9.	Dinajpur Bank	Dinajpur	Dinajpur, Rajshahi
10.	Bengal central Bank Ltd.	Kolkata	Dacca, Rampur, Pabna, Bogra, Narayanganj
11.	Bank of Commerce Ltd.	Kolkata	Khulna, Doulatpur, Bagerhat, Dhaka
12.	Central Calcutta Bank Ltd.	Kolkata	Dinajpur, Nilphamani, Syedpur
13.	Bank of Calcutta Ltd.	Kolkata	Dhaka Dopnar, Nilphamar, Narayanganj, Meherpur,
14.	Kuber Bank Ltd.	Kolkata	Dhaka, Rajshahi, Bogra, Bagerhat
15.	Bengal Bank Ltd.	Kolkata	Jessore, Bagerhat, Charmaguria, Natore, Noagaon.
16.	Great Bengal Bank Ltd.	Kolkata	Narayanganj, Barisal
17.	East India Commercial Bank Ltd.	Kolkata	Sylhet
18.	Southern Bank Ltd.	Kolkata	Khulna
19.	City Bank Ltd.	Kolkata	Mymensing, Narayanganj
20.	New Standark Bank Ltd.	Kolkata	Mymensing, Faridpur, Tangail, Khulna, Sylhet, Chatak, Comilla

**Appendix 26**

**Banks operated in Dhaka (1947-1970)**

- |                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1. State Bank of Pakistan            | 21. Pioneer Bank Ltd.                           |
| 2. Habib Bank Ltd.                   | 22. Tripura Modern Bank Ltd.                    |
| 3. The Muslim Commercial Bank Ltd.   | 23. United Bank of India Ltd.                   |
| 4. National Bank of Pakistan         | 24. United Commercial Bank                      |
| 5. Allied Bank Ltd.                  | 25. Hind Bank Ltd. (Narayanganj)                |
| 6. Bank of Commerce Co. Ltd.         | 26. Industrial Development Bank of Pakistan     |
| 7. Bengal Central Bank               | 27. The Union Bank Limited                      |
| 8. Calcutta Commercial Bank          | 28. Narayanganj Central Co- operative Bank Ltd. |
| 9. Central Bank of India Ltd.        | 29. United Bank                                 |
| 10. Central Bank (Dacca) Ltd.        | 30. Ismailia Co-operative Bank                  |
| 11. Comilla Banking Corporation Ltd. | 31. East Pakistan Provincial Co-operative Bank  |
| 12. Comilla Union Bank Ltd.          | 32. Eastern Marcentile Bank                     |
| 13. Dacca National Bank              | 33. Commerce Bank                               |
| 14. Dacca Union Bank                 | 34. Bank of Bhawalpur                           |
| 15. Eastern Union Bank Ltd.          | 35. Muslim Commercial Bank                      |
| 16. Imperial Bank of India Ltd.      | 36. Standard Bank                               |
| 17. Moha Luxmi Bank Ltd.             | 37. United Bank of India                        |
| 18. Lloyds Bank Ltd.                 | 38. National Grindlays Bank                     |
| 19. Nath Bank Ltd.                   | 39. Central Bank of India                       |
| 20. National Union Bank              | 40. State Bank of India                         |

**Appendix 27**

**Insurance Companies Operated in Dhaka (1947-1970)**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Eastern Federal Union Insurance Co. Ltd.         | 32. Marcentile Mutual General Insurance Co. of Pakistan |
| 2. General Insurance Co.                            | 31. Homeland Insurance Co.                              |
| 3. General Insurance Society                        | 32. Oriental Mutual Life Insurance                      |
| 4. Habib Insurance Co. Ltd.                         | 33. Eastern Insurance Co.                               |
| 5. Hanover Fire Insurance Co.                       | 34. United Insurance Co. of Pakistan                    |
| 6. Indian Life Assurance Co. Ltd.                   | 35. Adamjee Insurance Co.                               |
| 7. Indian Life Insurance Co.                        | 36. Central Insurance Co.                               |
| 8. Metropolitan Insurance Co.                       | 34. Khaibar Insurance Co.                               |
| 9. Muslim Insurance Co. Ltd.                        | 35. East Pakistan Co-operative Insurance Society        |
| 10. National Fire & General Insurance Co.           | 36. The Eastern Federal Union Insurance Company Ltd.    |
| 11. New Hamp Shire Insurance Co.                    | 37. The Indian Life Assurance Co. Ltd (1892)            |
| 12. New India Assurance Co.                         | 38. The Pakistan General Insurance Co.                  |
| 13. Oriental Government Security Insurance Co.      | 39. Atlas Insurance Co. Ltd.                            |
| 14. Oriental Life Insurance Co.                     |   |
| 15. Pakistan General Insurance Co.                  |   |
| 15. Pakistan Motor Owners Mutual Insurance Co. Ltd. |   |
| 16. Pakistan National Insurance Co. Ltd.            |   |
| 17. Premier Life & General Assurance Co.            |   |
| 18. Scottish Union Insurance Co.                    |   |
| 19. Alico Insurance Co. Ltd.                        |   |
| 20. Hanover Fire Insurance Co.                      |   |
| 21. Metropolitan Insurance Co.                      |   |
| 22. Muslim India Insurance Co.                      |   |
| 23. National Insurance Co.                          |   |
| 24. Ideal Life Insurance Co.                        |   |
| 25. Co-operative Insurance Society of Pakistan      |   |
| 26. Asian Mutual Insurance Co.                      |   |
| 27. Premier Insurance Co. of Pakistan               |   |
| 28. Alfa Insurance Co.                              |   |
| 29. New Jubilee Insurance Co.                       |   |
| 30. International General Insurance Co. of Pakistan |   |
| 31. Crecent Star Insurance Co.                      |   |

**Registered in India**

1. New India Insurance Co.
2. British India General Insurance Co.
3. Hindustan General Insurance Society
4. Oriental General Insurance Co.
5. Life Insurance Corporation of India

**British Companies**

1. Egle Star Insurance Co.
2. Allience Insurance Co.
3. Quisland Insurance Co.
4. Naruitch Union Life Insurance Co.
5. Parl Assurance Co.
6. Prudential Assurance Co.
7. Royal Exchange Assurance

**American**

1. American Life Insurance
2. Hanoever Fire Insurance



**Annexure 28**  
**State-owned enterprises in 2007**

Sector	No. of Enterprises	Title of Enterprises
Industry	6	Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation (BTMC) Bangladesh Steel & Engineering Corporation (BSAEC), Bangladesh Sugar & Food Industries Corporation (BSFIC) Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) Bangladesh Forest Industries Development Corporation (BFIDC) Bangladesh Jute Mills
Corporation	5	Bangladesh Oil, Gas & Mineral Resources Corporation Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA) Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA) Chittagong Water and Sewerage Authority.
Transport and Communication	10	Bangladesh Shipping Corporation (BSC) Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC) Bangladesh Biman Corporation Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) Cittagong Port Authority Mongla Port Authority Chittagong Dock Worker's Management Board Mongla Dock Worker's Management Board Bangladesh Land Port Authority and Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge Authority
Trade	3	Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) Bangladesh Jute Corporation (BJC) Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB)
Agriculture	2	Bangladesh Fisheries Development Corporation (BFDC) Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC)
Construction	4	Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipaksha (RAJUK) Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) Rajshahi Development Authority (RDA) Khulna Development Authority (KDA)
Service	14	Bangladesh Mukijoddha Kalyan Trust Bangladesh Film Development Corporation (BFDC) Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC) Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation LBSCIC) Bangladesh Civil Aviation Authority Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) Rural Electrification Board (REB) Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Authority (BEPZA) Bangladesh Handloom Board Bangladesh Sericulture Board Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) Bangladesh Tea Board Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC), and Export Promotion Bureau (EPB)

Sources: Bangladesh Economic Review, 2006, Finance Division, Ministry of Finance.

## Appendix 29

## Prices of essential commodities in Bengal over the Ages

a. Commodity Prices in Bengal during the Maurya period<sup>1</sup>

Items	Unit or quantity	Prices
Rice	Per mund	1 Anna
Edible Oil	Per mund	8 Annas
Ghee	Per mund	12 Annas
Pulses	Per mund	1 Anna
Salt	Per mund	2 Annas
Sugar	Per mund	10 Annas
Cloths <sup>2</sup>	5 pcs	1 Anna

Source: Based on 'Artha Sastra'

c. Prices of Essential Commodities in Bengal during the Sultan Alaudin Khalji<sup>4</sup>

Commodity	Price	Unit
Rice	5 Jital	Per seer
Cloths	1 tanka 4 Jital	40 yards
Pulses	5 Jital	Per seer
Salt	1 Jital	5 seers
Sugar	½ Jital	1 seer
Gur	1 Jital	1 seer
Ghee	½ Jital	1 seer
Oil	1 Jital	3 seers

Source : K. M. Ashraf, Life and Conditions of People of Hindustan, 251

## b. Prices in the Accounts of Ibn Battuta

80 Delhi ratls of paddy at 8 dirhams.3  
 25 ratls of rice = 1 silver dinar.  
 1 md. (modern) rice = 1 anna. 9 pies.  
 1 ratl ghee = 4 dirhams = ½ dinar = 8 annas.  
 1 md. (modern) ghee = 1 rupee and 7 as.  
 1 ratl sugar - 4 dirham = ½ dinar- 8 annas.  
 1 md. (modern) sugar- 1 rupee and 7 annas.  
 1 ratl sesame oil- 2 dirhams = 1/3 dinar = 4 annas.  
 1 md. (modern) sesame - 11 annas. and 6 pies.  
 1 ratl syrup (honey) -8 dirhams = 1 dinar = 1 rupee.  
 1 md. (modern) syrup - Rs. 2 and 14 as.  
 1 Milch cow-3 silver dinars = 3 rupees.  
 1 fat ram - 2 dirhams = 4 annas.  
 8 fat fowls - 1 dirham = 2 annas.  
 1 fat fowl - 1 anna.  
 15 pigeons -1 dirham = 2 annas.  
 15 yards of fine cotton cloth = 2 rupees.  
 A beautiful slave girl- 1 gold dinar = 10 rupees.

## d. A Comparative study of the prices of articles in Bengal

Articles	Ala al Din Khalji	Muhammad Tughlaq	Firuz Shah Tughlaq
Rice 1 md. (40 seers) <sup>5</sup>	¾	10 annas.	¾
Wheat 1 md. (40 seers)	5 annas. 6 pies	9 annas.	6 annas.
Barley 1 md. (40 seers)	3 as.	6 as.	3 annas.
Ghee (butter) (40 seer)	¾	¾	Re. 1 and 9 annas.
Sugar 1 md. (40 seers)	15 annas.	Re. 1 and 4 annas.	Re. 2 and 3 annas.
Mash 1 md. (40 seers)	3 annas. 9 pies	¾	¾
Moth 1 md. (40 seers)	2 annas. 3 pies	¾	¾
Peas 1 md. (40 seers)	¾	3 annas.	¾
Beaf, mutton 1 md. (40 seers)	¾	3 annas. 3 pies	¾

Source : A. Rahim, Social History of Bengal, Karachi, 1969)

1 Based on Artha Sastra by Kautilya in 400 B. C.

2 During the Maurya period Dhaka's cloth was known to all over India including Rome.

3 One ratl- 1 md. of that time = 28 lbs. or 14 seers of present time. Silver dinar- 8 dirhams - 1 rupee approximately.

4 Alaudin Khalji prescribed the prices of the essentials as a part of his measure in controlling commodity prices.

5 In giving prices converted the maund of that time, which was 14 seers, into the present maund of 40 seers. It has been also reduced the Jitals into the present maund of 40 seers. Also reduced the Jitals into rupee on the basis of 64 Jials a rupee. The value of Jitals varied from 48 to 64 to a rupee of that time. According to Firishhta (I, p. 199) , a tanka was equal to 50 Jitals. See K. M. Ashraf- Life and Conditions of people of Hindustan, p.251.

**e. Prices of Essential Commodities in Bengal: 1700-22**

Articles	Quantity Mund Seer	Rs.	Price
Rice (fine)	2	---	1
Rice (Medium)	4-5	---	1
Sugar	2	13	9-10
Butter	1	---	4-5
Oil	1	---	
Chillies	1	---	5
Sora	1	---	5

Source: Diary and Consultation Book 1708-1722, Sixth Report, 1782.

**f. Prices in between 1737-1757 in East-Bengal**

Items	Quantity Muund	Prices Seer	Rs. Anna	Ganda
Rice	---	1	---	5
Chillies	---	1	---	5
Gur (Molassess)	---	1	---	10
Salt	---	1	---	10
Onion /Garlic	---	1	---	10
Karpus	---	1	---	5
Kalai	---	1	---	5
Oil	---	1	3	---
Ghee	---	1	4	---

Source : Dinesh Chandra Sen, Brihat Banga, Vol-2.

**g. Commodity Prices in Bengal in 1762**

Item	Price Per mund
Rice (Ordinary)	Rs. 1.25
Rice (Medium)	Rs. 1.56
Pulse	Rs. 2.25
Jute	Rs. 250

Source : Narendra Kumar Sing, Itihas Gabeshana, 1988

**i. Price list of Rice and Jute in Bengal: 1870 to 1912**

Year	Rice (per mund)	Jute (per mund)
1870	1.37	4.75
1890	2.97	3.37
1891	3.28	3.62
1892	3.40	4.09
1893	3.90	4.00
1894	3.52	4.03
1895	3.00	4.06
1896	3.79	4.19
1897	4.75	3.89
1898	3.73	3.93
1899	3.12	4.15
1900	3.56	4.83
1901	4.11	4.39
1902	3.83	4.30
1903	3.47	4.83
1904	3.31	4.82

1905	3.78	5.60
1906	5.13	7.41
1907	5.75	6.88
1908	6.00	5.79
1909	5.33	5.77
1910	4.42	6.10
1911	4.78	7.10
1912	5.27	7.94

Source: Compiled from various Government sources and contemporary papers .

**j. Price list of Rice in Bangladesh (1913-1952)**

Year	Rice (per mund)
1913	5.31
1914	5.63
1915	5.81
1916	5.44
1917	4.69
1918	4.19
1919	7.38
1920	7.25
1921	6.63
1922	6.00
1923	5.50
1924	5.25
1925	6.44
1926	7.00
1927	7.19
1928	7.50
1929	6.63
1930	6.00
1931	6.00
1932	4.06
1933	3.31
1934	2.63
1935	3.00
1936	3.25
1937	3.50
1938	3.63
1939	4.00
1940	4.94
1941	6.00
1942	7.19
1943	24.25
1944	18.16
1945	12.06
1946	15.63
1947	21.69
1948	25.88
1949	18.31
1950	18.81
1951	20.38
1952	22.10

Source: Compiled from various Government sources and contemporary papers.

**k. Price list of Commodities in Bangladesh 1953 to 1971 (Per mund)**

Year	Rice	Jute	Salt	Sugar	Ghee	Maida	Atta
1953	23.56	10.69	10.00	44.00	217.74	---	21.65
1954	14.00	125.25	9.00	44.00	250.25	---	15.69
1955	15.62	15.25	7.81	42.00	241.90	---	18.19
1956	24.61	22.19	7.62	37.94	240.00	---	21.81
1957	28.61	28.31	10.06	47.62	241.00	---	20.00
1958	28.67	24.31	9.80	---	---	---	12.00
1959	30.19	16.37	10.00	53.60	---	21.60	12.00
1960	31.19	19.25	10.00	54.80	294.00	---	21.80
1961	29.30	47.25	10.80	54.80	307.50	---	20.80
1962	30.21	23.33	10.80	60.00	326.50	---	---
1963	32.28	25.51	11.20	61.20	308.00	---	---
1964	28.94	27.91	12.40	65.00	333.30	---	---
1965	30.07	31.24	12.60	65.60	334.00	---	---
1966	36.00	30.50	12.20	64.60	344.00	---	---
1967	45.90	35.15	12.60	64.60	365.00	---	---
1968	44.32	27.00	13.60	---	381.00	---	---
1969	44.64	45.27	---	66.63	---	---	---
1970	44.64	39.45	---	83.33	---	---	---
1971	42.50	41.50	22.00	85.00	500.00	48.00	33.00

Source: Based on District Gazetteers and other Govt. publications.

**l. Price list of Commodities in Bangladesh (1972-1983) (Per mund)**

Year	Rice	Jute	Salt	Wheat	Sugar	Ghee	Maida	Atta
1972	69.39	45.71	18.40	30.00	84.80	552.34	48.80	33.30
1973	98.99	54.62	18.20	30.00	84.80	836.72	48.80	33.60
1974	170.67	74.96	92.00	50.00	160.00	1093.58	68.80	55.20
1975	184.59	95.39	110.00	55.00	230.4	1279.31	75.00	55.20
1976	133.65	104.64	61.00	70.00	256.00	1355.69	76.00	76.00
1977	150.85	133.69	68.80	70.00	260.00	1387.25	106.00	76.00
1978	176.09	149.98	65.60	80.00	260.00	1753.58	121.00	76.00
1979	216.11	131.16	47.40	90.00	328.00	2253.50	137.20	99.20
1980	233.48	130.33	48.40	104.00	328.00	2393.00	173.00	135.40
1981	254.43	136.00	51.80	101.43	480.00	2497.00	187.60	142.80

Source: Based on Gazetteers and Newspapers.



**m. Naraingunge & Dacca Price Current in 1876**

						21 June,	1876
Bees Wax	...	Rs.	64	0	@	65 per	Md.
Do. Do. mixed	...	"	55	0	@	56 0	do
Barley	...	"	1	0			do
Betelnut Manickchunde	...	"	5	6	@	5 10	do
Do Roypoora	...	"	5	4			do
Boot Gram	...	"	1	10	@	1 14	do
Chillies (dry)	...	"	6	4	@	7 8	do
Copper New Plate	...	"	45	0			do
do old	...	"	30	0			do
Cotton	...	"	16	8			do
Do with seeds	...	"	5	12		0 0	do
Cutch Mowgha	...	"	13	8	@	14 8	do
Ghee 2 <sup>nd</sup> quality	...	"	26	0	@	27 0	do
Gold leaf (China)	...	"	16	10		per	per
Gold Mohur (New)	...	"	0	0		per Bhurees	
Gunny Bags Poobah	...	"	15	0	@	15 8 per	100
Do. do Bickrampore <sup>1</sup>	...	"	15	0			do
Do. Do Cosoorah	...	"	0	0			do
Hides Dead	...	"	150	0			do
Do Killed	...	"	250	0			do
Indian Rubber ball	...	"	43	0		per	Mds.
Do Do cake	...	"	40	0			do
Iron English	...	"	4	8	@	5 0	do
Do Swedish	...	"	71	0	@	8 0	do
Jute	...	"	2	13	@	2 14	do
Do Inferior	...	"	2	8	@	2 10	do
Kallye	...	"	1	2			do
Lime	...	"	7	0	@	7 100	Mds.
Linseed	...	"	2	11	@	2 12 per	Md
Moogh	...	"	2	12	@	2 13	do
Mustard Oil.	...	"	11	0	@	11 4	do
Do Seed	...	"	3	9	@	3 10	do
Paddy	...	"	1	2	@		do
Pepper	...	"	18	0	@		do
Rice, Inferior	...	"	1	13	@	1 14	do
Do Roymookhee	...	"	2	3	@	2 4	do
Do Autub	...	"					do
Safflower	...	"	38	0	nominal		do
Do Inferior & mid	...	"	22	0		0 0	do
Salt	...	"	4	4			do
Shell Lac	...	"	40	0	@	50 0	do
Stick Lac	...	"	18	0	@	22 0	do
Seed Lac	...	"	25	0			do
Dacca Soap	...	"	13	0	@	14 0	do
Sugar Hemp	...	"	None				do
Teel Seed	...	"	2	14			do
Tin of Rung	...	"	35	0			do
Tobacco Leaf	...	"	13	0	@	13 4	do
Do. Do. Inferior	...	"				6 0	do
Tuemicric	...	"	5	4	@	7 0	do
Wheat Champaporree	...	"				2 7	do
Do. Gungajullee	...	"				2 2	do
Zienc	...	"				14 0	do

Dhaka's Vikrampur produced jute made Gunny Bags in the early 19th century. These bags were sold in the *melas* and also exported to other places. Poet Iswar Gupta found a good number of production centres of Gunny Bags in Vikrampur while he visited East Bengal in the middle of nineteenth century.

### Appendix 30

#### Poem on price-hike in the nineteenth century Dhaka

Price hike in Bengal was a regular phenomenon. Following the Mutiny of 1857 and after handing over the power of the East India Co. to British Raj there was a serious upturn in the price of rice in Bengal. Radha Raman sheel, a contemporary poet wrote a poem on price-hike as the price of rice increased from previous 80 paisa to Rs. 1.43 permund in 1860.<sup>1</sup>

‘ê‘gĵ’’ eĵ× melqK KueZv  
i vav i gbkxj

AviM tZj AvU tmi UvKvq tctqñ0  
tm tZtj GLb nvq tm tZj GLb,  
wZb tmi UvKvZl bv nq NUb|  
ceŵci GK tetU Aŕgĵ’’ jŷ|  
GLb j ŷVi ‘ti tj tMt0 Av,b|  
tftZv evOvj xi mvi fi mv ZÊj |  
wet`k Pvj vtbv Zvrv ntqt0 fÊj |

AviMtZ UvKvq wQtj v `p Kuo tmi |  
AvUtmi cvBvKv-A`tói tdi |  
NZ Qvrv gvLb wK Kwi e Avnvi |  
kvK-fvZ tLiq Kvj KvUv nj fvi |  
Gw tK lw tK `ŷ tK gvi v hvB  
evOvj xi fvtM’’ mĵ eyS Avi bvB|  
- i PbvKvj 1860

1 For price of essentials over the ages, see Appendix.



### Appendix 32 Dhaka's Local Weights and Measures

Like land measure, Dhaka had her different types of weights and measures by items and locations. Weights are in two types- 'Kutchra' and 'Pucka'. In the 'Kutchra' 60 tolas make a seer while in Pucka 80 tolas make a seer. In Dhaka, the following mode of weights and measures were practiced over the ages.

#### Kutchra seer

60 tolas = 1 seer  
78 tolas = 1 seer<sup>1</sup>

#### Pucka seer

80 tolas = 1 seer  
82 tolas = 1 seer  
84 tolas 10 annas = 1 seer  
90 tolas<sup>2</sup> = 1 seer

In case of retails and wholesale, the measures were found different. A Poa or quarter to a seer to Ada seer or half seer was given extra per mund, which was called Labar or Chalak. Sometime this offer extended to 1/4 seer over Purchasing of 5 munds. This system was very useful to the traders as they used to Purchase goods at a higher tolas, i.e. 82 to 90 tolas, to a seer and sold it at a 80 tolas a seer. It usually gave them to a good profit margin in selling goods at the same rate they purchased. Dhaka's standard weight is as under<sup>3</sup>

4 dhans	= 1 rati
8 ratis	= 1 masha
12 mashas	= 1 tola
16 chhataks	= 1 seer
5 seers	= 1 pasuri
8 pasuris	= 1 mund

Source: B. C. Allen, Eastern Bengal District Gazetteers 'Dacca' Allahabad, 1912.

A. L. Clay mentioned that the weights and measures used in Dhaka district are the same that are used in the whole of Eastern Bengal.<sup>4</sup> But this observation, perhaps, does not reflect the actual state of local weights and measures followed by the local traders in the different parts of Eastern Bengal.

**However, the following diagram comprehends the local weights and measures at a glance.**

Mund	Pasuri	Seer	Chattak	Tola	Masha	Rati	Dhan
1	8	40	640	3200	38400	307200	1,228800
	1	5	80	400	4800	38,400	153,600
		1	16	80	960	7680	30,720
			1	5	60	480	1920
				1	12	96	384
					1	8	32
						1	4

Source: Adapted from A. L. Clay, *ibid*.

The tola is used in weighing gold and silver, jewels, spices, medicines, thread, and fine cloth.

The cloth measure now in general use in the English yard, i.e. 36 inches, which has superseded the old Sultani gaj of 36 ½ inches,<sup>1</sup> and the Company's gaj of 39 ½ inches.<sup>2</sup> The very fine muslins were sold by weight called dukhi, the price rising in proportion to the decrease of weight, the length of the cloth, and the number of threads in it. Thread is weighed in scales, resembling the Danish balance.

- 1 During the Taylor's time some items were measured by 78 tolas, while some of the items by 80 ½ totals to a seer.
- 2 At Mirkadim and Serajdi Khan Bazar Gur (molasses) was used to sell by 90 tolas to a seer. See Jogendranath Gupta, *Vikramপুর Itihas*, Vol-1.
- 3 Gold, silver, spices, medicines, thread and fine cloths have its separate mode of measurements.
- 4 A. L. Clay, *ibid*, p. 65
- 1 Sultani gaj was introduced during the Sultani period in Bengal and it was in force before introducing of the company gaj.
- 2 Company's gaj was determined with the 3.5 inches higher than that of the standard *gaj*. It means, at the time of measurement, weavers were compelled to give 39.5 inches of cloth to *Paikers* or *Dalals* instead of 36 inches.



### Appendix 33

#### Land Measures of Dhaka

The land measures of the Dhaka district previously were in the mannerly of Acre-Rood and Pole system. It was specially for the Government surveys but subsequently Bigha-Khada and Chatak measurements were introduced. In spite of that different mode of land measurements were followed in different parganas like Vikrampur, Sonargaon, Chandra Pratap,<sup>1</sup> Maheswardi<sup>2</sup> Bhawal and Parjoar.<sup>3</sup> Some places used to follow Drun, some used Khada and the rest places followed Bhigas.

##### a. The *Drun* measurements are as under

3 Krant	= 1 kura
4 Kuras	= 1 ganda
5 gandas	= 1 kani
4 Kunis	= 1 kani
	or 20 gands
16 kanis	= 1 drun

A 'nal' is used in measuring drun with the length of 7 to 9 haths. An area enclosed by 24 nals by 20 nals are equal to a drun.

##### b. The *Khada* measurement

4 Kak	= 1 kara
4 Karas	= 1 ganda
7 ½ Gandas	= 1 pakhi
16 Pakhis	= 1 khada

The measuring 'nal' of this measurement is 6 to 8 hath in length. 6 nals ´ 5 nals = 1 pakhi

##### c. The *Bhiga* measurement

4 kara	= 1 ganda
20 gandas	= 1 dhara or Dhur
20 dhur	= 1 khada
20 khada	= 1 bigha

There are two bighas in use, one of 100 cubit squire, equal to 2 roods 2 perches and 179 ½ feet; and the other of 100´ 80 cubits equal to 1 rood 26 perches and 31 ½ feet.

##### d. Local Vs. Standard measurement.

It is to be mentioned that local measurement is different from the standard, the Government one. On the other hand, in ordinary measurements, there is no standard cubit or Haat, it varies as the length of forearm of one person varies from that of another. A Kuni or one quarter of a Kani in Vikrampur, was equal to a kani in Sonargaon Pargana, and a common Pakhi in Chandraprata or Manikganj, Bhawal, Maheswrdr or Narshindi areas and Parjoar. A pakhi is sometimes called a Kani. There were Kutcha and Pucka measures. They were respectively known as Kashuri and Shahi. According to Clay, by the former rent was usually calculated and charged, and by the latter land was used to sold.<sup>5</sup> A Kutcha or Kashuri Kani is equal to four-fifths of a pucka or Shahi kani. Formerly, all measurements in Government mehals appear to have been made by the measurement in use in the locality in which the land measured was situated.

In Government estates, measurements are ordinarily made with a chain 30 feet long; and the area is calculated by the Government standard bigha of 14,400 square feet. i.e.

9 square feet	= 1 kauri
4 kauris	= 36 square feet
	or 1 ganda
	20 gands or
720 square feet	= 1 kada
	20 kadas or
14400 square feet	= 1 bigha

Source: Kedernath Majumder, Dhakar Bibaran, 1910.

1 Chandrapratap was consisted of the present Manikganj Areas.

2 Maheswardi included present Narashindi areas.

3 Parjoar pargana was on the south-west of the district.

4 Measurement by bighas previously was chiefly confined to Indigo and Safflower lands, but now a days it is mostly in common use.

5 A. L. Clay, *Principal Heads, History and Statistics of the Dacca Division*, (Calcutta, 1868) p. 51.

**Appendix 34**  
**Metric System of Weights and Measures<sup>1</sup>**

**1. Mass**

1 Grain	= 0.000 06479891 kilogram
1 Tola	= 0.0116633038 kilogram
1 Seer	= 0.933104 304 kilogram
1 Maund	= 37.32417216 kilogram
1 Ounce (troy)	= 0.0311034768 kilogram
1 Pound (avoirdupois)	= 0.45359237 kilogram
1 Hundred weight (UK)	= 50.802 34544 kilogram
1 Hundred weight (USA)	= 45.358237 kilogram
1 Ton (UK)	= 1016.0469088 kilogram
1 Ton (USA)	= 907.18474 kilogram

**2. Length\***

1 Inch	= 0.0254 Metre
1 Foot	= 0.3048 Metre
1 Yard	= 0.9144 Metre
1 Mill	= 1609.344 Metre
1 Nautical mile (UK)	= 1853.18
1 Foot	= 0.304799 Metre

**3. Area\***

1 Square inch	= 0.00064516 Square metre
1 Square feet	= 0.092 90304 Square metre
1 Square yard	= 0.83612756 Square metre
1 Square mile	= 2589.110336 Square metre

**4. Volume**

1 Cubic inch	= 0.000160 387 064 cubic metre
1 Cubic feet	= 0.023316 846 592 Cubic metre
1 Cubic yard	= 0.764554 857 984 Cubic metre
1 Gallon (UK)	= 0.004546 087 Cubic metre
	= 4.546087 Litre
1 Gallon (USA)	= 0.003785411784 Cubic metre

**Unit of Measurement**

1 Foot	= 0.3048 metre
1 Megawatt (gw)	= 1Million Kilowatts
1 Mile	= 1.6093 km
1 Inch	= 2.540 centimetre (cm)
1 Square feet	= 0.0929m <sup>2</sup>
1 C.M.	= 0.3937 inch
1 Square mile	= 2.590 km <sup>2</sup> 1
1 Metre	= 3.281 ft.-1.094 yd.
1 Acre	= 4.047 m <sup>2</sup> = 0.404678 hectare
1 Yd.	= 36 inches - c.9144 metre
	= 0.6214 mile
1 Hectare	= 2.4711 acre 1 Km.
1 Imp. gallon	= 4.5425 litre = ( 1.2 U.S. gal.)
1 Litre	= 0.22 gallon
1 Pound (Ib)	= 453.592 gram
1 Lb.	= 0.4536 kg.
1 Long ton	= 2240 lb = 1016.047 kg.
1 Kg.	= 2.205 lbs.
1 Tonne	= 1000 kg.

	= 3.785411784 Litre
1 Bushel (USA)	= 0.035 239 07017 Cubic metre
	(2 150.42 cubic inches)
1 Barrel (for petroleum)	= 0.158 987 294 928 Cubic metre
1 Acre-feet	= 1233.482 Cubic metre

**5. Temperature**

1 Degree Fahrenheit	= 9/5 (T-459.67) kelvin (k)
1 Degree Celcius	= T-273.15 Kelvin (k)
1 Degree kelvin	= t+273.15 degree Celsius (°c)
	= 5/9 (F+459.67) degree Fahrenheit (°F)

Where T= Temperature in Kelvin:

T= Temperature in Celsius

F= Temperature in Fahrenheit

**6. Force**

1 Pound-force	= 4.448 221615260 5 newton
1 Poundal	= 0.138254 954 376 newton

**7. Pressure**

1 Barometric inch	= 3386.388640 341 Pascals
of mercury	
1 Inch of water	= 249.08891 Pascals

**8. Energy**

1 British thermal unit	= 1055.05585262 Joules
1 Foot-pound-force	= 1.355 8179483314004 Joules

**9. Power**

1 Square feet	= 0.092 903 Square metre
1 Acre	= 4046.8468 Square metre
1 Horse-power (UK)	= 745.699871 582 270 22 Watts
1 Horse-power (Europ)	= 735.49875 Watts
	= 0.404 68458 Hectare
1 Ton of refrigeration	= 3516.852842 67 Watts

1 Maund	= 82.29 Ib. - 37.3261 Kg.
1 Barrel	= 34.9726 Imp. gal.
1 Seer	= 2.05725 Ib. - 0.9331 kg.
1 Long ton of crude	
1 Tola	= 180 grains troy-11.6625 gram
Oil petroleum product	= 7.9 barrels for most types.
1 Standard cubic feet	
1 Chhatak	= 0.0625 seer-58.31 gram
(SCF) of gas	= 1 cubic feet at 60 F saturated with
1 Bale of Jute	= 400 lbs. water
1 Crore	= 10 million
1 British thermal unit (BTU)	= 0.2928 watt-hours
	= 0.252 kilo calories
1 Lakh	= 0.1 million
1 Million BTU	= 293 kilo Watt hours
1 Hali	= 4
	= 252000 kilo calories
1 Megawatt (mw)	= 1000 kilowatts (kw)
Heating values of fuels	
Firewood	= 6500 BTU per Ib. average
moisture content	

Bagasse	= 3200 BTU per Ib. 50 percent moisture content
Cowdung	= 3700 BTU per Ib. 50 percent moisture content
Coal	= 12,500 BTU per Ib. of Bituminous coal
Natural gas	= 941 BTU per standard cubic feet (average)
	= 1936 BTU per standard cubic feet of Bangladesh (Titas) gas.
Kerosene	= 19800 BTU per Ib.
Motor spirit	= 20500 BTU per Ib.

**Electricity voltage and cycle in Bangladesh**

Voltage = 220-240

Cycle=50

Source: Government Ordinance No Ed/Cd/34/82-131 dated 31-8-82

\* For Survey of Bangladesh only

**Abbreviations and notations**

(...)	nil of insignificant	Imp.	imperial
Sr.	Seer	(e)	estimated
md.	maund	(p)	Provisional
£	Pound sterling	(r)	revised
\$	U.S. dollar	m.t.	metric ton
Ib.	pound (weight)	n.r.	not reported
Cft.	cubic feet	n.a.	not available
Sq.	Square	n.e.c.	not elsewhere classified
Sft.	Square feet	P. area	Pourashava
(municipality) area		Yd.	yard

- 
- 1 Bangladesh adopted metric system of weights and measures from 1.7.1982. For convenience of readers, we are printing below the relevant portions of the ordinance passed in this respect by the Government, NO. Ed/CD/34/82-131 (200) dated 31/8/82 in full.

**Appendix 35**  
**Natural Calamities of Dhaka Region Since 1662 A.D.**

Year	Calamities	Affects
1662	Famine	During Mir Jumla a severe famine occurred and affected Dhaka. People died in thousands because of high prices of commodities.
1684	Famine followed by a flood	Dhaka streets were under wrist deep of water and boot. Rice was sold 16 seers per rupee against of 8 muands per rupee earlier.
1773	Earthquake <sup>1</sup>	Affected Dhaka district.
1762	Earthquake	The rivers and khals were silted and lost navalities of these rivers and <i>khals</i> of Dhaka region.
1767-70	Famine	Affected Sonargaon and Kapasia, Dhaka city and Vikrampur.
1775	Earthquake	Dhaka's <i>khal</i> was blocked and interior riverine transport was disrupted.
1781	Famine	Caused death of many people just before the harvesting.
1784	Famine	Occurred owing to a succession of failure of crops. Balda khal affected mostly.
1784-85	Drought	Affected eastern part of the Dhaka district.
1787	Famine	Hundreds died of starvation on the Dhaka street. Districts' death-tolls figured a 60,000.
1788	Flood and Famine <sup>2</sup>	Famine continued and also affected by flood.
1812	Earthquake	<i>Khals</i> were blocked, Dhaka's Tejgaon was badly affected.
1833-34	Flood and Famine	Affected south part of the district and damaged crops badly.
1850	Inundation	Affected of the district.
1865	Drought/preceded the famine	Affected aman corps and prices of essential went up.
1866	Famine followed by drought	Affected the district. Well remembered in the memory of elderly people of Dhaka.
1870	Flood, followed a famine	Affected Vikrampur and other parts of Dhaka.
1873-74	Scarcity of food	Unusual price hike in the district
1876	Strom & Earth quake	Affected the district. Cyclone hit Narayanganj and Vikrampur.
1884-85	Famine	Affected Bengal including Dhaka
1888	Tornado	Called as the 'Dhaka Tornado.' Affected Vikrampur severely
1890	Famine	Affected Dhaka, Nayayanganj and Manikganj
1897	Earthquake	Affected Dhaka city
1902	Tornado	Affected entire Narayanganj belt.
1906	Famine <sup>3</sup>	Rice was sold at Tk. 10 per mund in August 1906.
1907	Famine	All over Vikrampur affected. Price of rice increased.
1910	Famine	Drought caused famine in Vikrampur.
1919	Crops were damaged	Resulted famine in Dhaka.
1943	Great Bengal Famine <sup>4</sup>	During the Second World War like other places of Bengal, Dhaka experienced a severe famine. The price of rice shot up from Rs. 6 to Rs. 60 per mund Dhaka's Munshiganj and Narayanganj were the most affected areas. Several <i>Langar Khans</i> were opened to face the situation.
1947	Famine	Food crisis in Vikrampur.
1948-49	Famine	Starvation due to Govt. policy. Rice was sold at Tk. 45 per mund in Dhaka



Year	Calamities	Affects
1951	Famine	Khulna and Sylhet were badly affected and there was price hike in Dhaka mark
1953	Food crisis	Affected Dhaka region
1954	High flood <sup>5</sup>	Affected Dhaka city and Narayanganj severely.
1955	Flood	The flood caused extensive damage to the standing crops and properties.
1961	Cyclone	A devastating cyclone swept over the district causing a good deal of damage in city and Dhaka district.
1962	Flood	Dhaka experienced twice the severity of the flood. Damaged standing crops.
1965	Cyclone	A severe cyclonic storm swept over Dhaka district. One lac people were render homeless; 41 killed. Most affected area was N. Ganj. 70% dwelling houses were damaged.
1966	Flood	The city of Dhaka was affected mostly and 6100 people took shelter in 130 reli camps.
1974	Famine	After liberation Dhaka had to face the post-war situation and owing to flood th prices went up and made a hard-ship and scarcity in food etc.
1987	Flood	This flood affected 46 districts including Dhaka. Narayanganj. Munshig Manikganj, Narshindi were seriously damaged. 51 persons were dead Manikganj.
1988	Flood <sup>6</sup>	It was a devastating flood which 84% of the total land in Bangladesh affected about 600 lives were taken away. Dhaka city's 80% area went under water 400 camps were opened. Narayanganj, Narshindi, Gazipur, Manikganj v affected seriously.
1991	Flood	A flash flood occurred in the district. Dhaka city's low lands went under water increased sufferings to the people.

- 1 For details, see 'A Catalogue of Indian Earthquakes from the earliest time to the end of A.D. 1869' Mem G. S. L. Vol-XIX, part 3. Also see Earthquake by Dutton, 1904.
- 2 The famine reached its height in April 1788, when in many parts of the district there was scarcity of rice. Between nine and ten thousand persons were fed daily by public contribution, but numbers died of starvation. It is estimated that sixty thousand persons were died by the inundation and subsequent famine. The loss of property occasioned by this calamity was very great. The landlords were unable to pay their revenues, and subsequently, from the loss of cultivators and cattle, their lands remained untilld for a considerable time. Several fiscal divisions were deprived of three-fourths of their inhabitants, who either died or emigrated, and the lands were in consequence soon overrun with jungle and infested with wild beasts.  
W.W. Hunter, Statistical Account of Bengal (Dacca district), pp. 103-104.
- 3 This famine affected southern part of the Dhaka, Faridpur and Backerganj district; Asutosh Mukopaddya wrote a poem Durbikheye in Bharati, Jaistha, 1315 B.S.
- 4 The Dhaka district was normally deficit in rice. It depended on imports from neighboring districts or Burma routed through Chittagong or Calcutta ports. But during the second world period, the denial policy as a measure of defence against probable invasion by the Japanese and the Occupation of Burma by them completely stopped any such import. This resulted, like other part of Bengal, a severe famine in Dhaka. Asoke Mitra, ICS, the then subdivisional officer of Vikrampur has given a painful descriptions of this famine in his 'Memoirs' 'Tin Kuri Dash'. For details, see Kalicharan Ghosh, Famine in Bengal 1770-1943, Calcutta, 1944; B. M. Bhatia, Famines in India, 1860-1965, Bombay, 1967; J. N. Uppal, Bengal Famines of 1943, the American Response, Delhi, 1943. Also see, Sketches on Bengal Famine by Zainul Abedin; Shyamaprasad Mukerjee, Rastra Sangram O Panchaser Manantar, Calcutta, 1350 B.S.
- 5 For the Flood of 1954-55, see S.N. H. Rizvi, Dacca District Gazetteers 1969.
- 6 For details, See seminar papers on Floods in Bangladesh: Bangladeshi Views, Bangladesh Engineers Institution, 1992; also see Bruce Curry, *History of Calamities in Bangladesh* (1974-1988); Hossain Zillur Rahman, DND: *A Peoples Saga*, BIDS (Dhaka), 1988.

## Appendix 36

## হিহাভের নবস্তরের ছড়া।

ত্রিপুরা জিলার বরনাখাত পরগণা হইতে সংগৃহীত হস্তলিখিত কতিপয় প্রাচীন গ্রন্থের সহিত এই ছড়াটি পাওয়া গিয়াছে। ইহাতে কোন তারিখ বা রচয়িতার নাম নাই। এই ছড়ার সহিত আরও যে সকল গ্রন্থ পাওয়া গিয়াছে তাহার সকলগুলিই ১৫০ বৎসরের পূর্ববিকার লিখা। এই ছড়ার শেষ শ্লোকে হোসেন আলি নামক যে জমিদারের নাম করা হইয়াছে, তিনি পাটনার নবাববংশসম্বৃত নীলদা হোসেন আলি। ইহার পূর্বপুরুষগণ ত্রিপুরায় ইহাদের বিপুল জমিদারীর শাসন সৌকার্য্যার্থ পাটনা হইতে বরনাখাত পরগণার অন্তর্গত খোজা গ্রামে আসিয়া স্থায়ীভাবে বসবাস করিতে থাকেন। ইহারা মোগল পরিবারভূক্ত ছিলেন। বংশ বৃদ্ধির সহিত ইহাদের কেহ কেহ পাটিকার পরগণার অন্তর্গত বড়কামতা নামক স্থানে আসিয়া বাস করিতে থাকেন। খোজা ও বড়কামতায় ইহাদের জরুহৎ সরোবর, ইষ্টক প্রাচীরাদি, মসজিদ ও পাকা কবরাদির ধ্বংসাবশেষ অজ্ঞাপি বর্তমান রহিয়াছে। ইহারা খোজা নামক স্থানে দেওয়ানী ও মৌজদারী আদালত স্থাপন করিয়া বিচার কার্য্যও সমাধা করিতেন। মীর্জা হোসেন আলি কবি ও কালীসাধক

ছিলেন। তাঁহার রচিত শ্রীমাসঙ্গীত আঞ্জিও গায়কের মুখে ক্রমত হওয়া যায়। দশখালা বন্দোবস্তের কাগজ পত্রাদিতেও মীর্জা হোসেন আলির নাম পাওয়া যায়। এই বন্দোবস্তের মাসে ১৫১৬ বৎসর পূর্বের ইষ্ট-ইন্ডিয়া কোম্পানীর শাসনের পঞ্চম বর্ষে ইংরাজী ১৭৭০ ও বাংলা ১১৭৬ সালে বঙ্গের সর্বত্র যে ভীষণ দুর্ভিক্ষ উপস্থিত হয়, তাহাই হিহাভের নবস্তর নামে আখ্যাত হইয়া থাকে। এই সময় মীর্জা হোসেন আলি বর্তমান ছিলেন। এই ছড়ার সহিত ইহার নাম যুক্ত থাকায় এই ছড়াটি যে হিহাভের নবস্তর উপলক্ষেই লিখিত হইয়াছে তাহা নিঃসন্দেহেই বলা যাইতে পারে। এই ছড়াটি আদ্যন্ত পাঠ করিলে ইহাই প্রত্যক্ষ হয় যে রচয়িতা স্বয়ং বতসুর প্রত্যক্ষ করিয়াছেন, ইহাতে কেবল তাহাই লিপিবদ্ধ হইয়াছে। কাজেই তাঁহার প্রদত্ত বিবরণ কেবল খল বিশেষের সহিতই নিবন্ধ রহিয়াছে। ইতিহাসের পাঠক মাজেই অবগত আছেন এত দারুণ দুর্ভিক্ষে বাংলার সর্বত্র যে ভীষণ সংহারলীলা প্রকটিত হইয়াছিল তাহাতে সমগ্র বঙ্গের এক তৃতীয়াংশ অধিবাসী মৃত্যুমুখে পতিত হয়। এরূপ ভীষণ লোকক্ষয়কারী ঘটনা সমগ্র ভারতের ঐতিহাসিক যুগে আর

কখনও সংঘটিত হয় নাই। উক্ত ছড়াটি নবস্তরের সময় লিখিত হইলেও বাংলার অতি সামান্য অংশের সহিতই সংশ্লিষ্ট। তথাপি ইহা হইতে বাংলার তৎকালীন অবস্থার সামান্য পরিচয় প্রাপ্ত হওয়া যায় বলিয়া ছড়াটি মুদ্রিত করিবার লোভ সংবরণ করা যায় না।

লেখকের ভাষা ও বর্ণ বিজ্ঞাসের উপর কোন-রূপ হস্তক্ষেপ না করিয়া ছড়াটি এখানে অবিকল উদ্ধৃত করা হইল।

শ্রী বৈকুণ্ঠনাথ দত্ত।



## প্রথম পৃষ্ঠা।

প্রথম গ্রাসাড়া মাসে গাঙ্গে (১) দিল টান।  
 বড়ই গীরন্তে বেচিল পুরান ধান ॥  
 রাউস হইব করি ভরসা আছিল খানি।  
 আচম্বিতে আসিল ডাকাইতা কোনার (২)  
 পানি ॥  
 মারিল রাউস ধান কীল (৩) হইয়া হইল বন্দ।  
 বেচইয়া মারিল বিকী কাটা (৪) কৈল বন্দ ॥  
 গ্রাবন মাসেতে লোকের আছিল ভরসা।  
 গেলই আউশা ধান হইবেক পোঁসা ॥  
 উপজাল বান বিষ্টী নিতি বরে বড়ি।  
 খেতে কী থাকিব যান মাংসে ঘর বাড়ি ॥  
 পুন কৈয়া মসে করি গোদন লইয়া।  
 নৌকা চড়ি টান দেসে চলিল কান্দিয়া ॥  
 তার মৈন্ধে কেহই নৌকা ডুবিয়া মৈল।  
 নৌকা না পাইয়া কেহ বরে পড়ি রৈল ॥  
 গ্রাবন গইয়া (৫) গেল আসিল ভাদর।  
 ইষ্টী কুটুখ বন্দু জনে ছাড়িল যাদর ॥  
 ভগিনি জদি ধনি হএ নিধনিয়া ভাই।  
 এক সন্দা খাওয়াইলে বোলে আর সন্দা নাই ॥

কোনই গীরন্ত বেছে ফেরিয়া কপাএ।  
 টেকার জিনিষ বেছে সাত আট গ্রানায় ॥  
 ৩য় পৃষ্ঠা।  
 ভাষা গীতল খাল পাথর জার জে ছাড়িল।  
 ইসব মেছিয়া তার বংশ জীল (১১) ॥  
 জার না গাড়িল এহি তার উপাএ কী।  
 বিকাএ বিকীএ পুত্রধন সিকা বিকাএ যি ॥ (১২)  
 পৌষ মাসেতে লোকে হুকাইয়া হইল কান্দি।  
 আসা (না) আছিল লোকে এহি দিন (না)  
 জাইব রাট ॥

## ২য় পৃষ্ঠা।

বন্দু জনের বাড়িত গেলে দিছে কোলাকোণি।  
 এহি দিনে হইতে দেখী নাচাএ আকী (৬)  
 তোলা ॥  
 আশীন মাসেতে লোকে হইল দুফিত।  
 খাইল কাঙ্গালি সবে জে ছাড়িল সন্ধিত ॥  
 কটীক জুতি (৭) দাও কাহি বেহিলেক  
 আর বোছে তুলা।  
 খড়ম পীড়ি বেহিয়া লুকে না পাইল কুল ॥  
 একেত ডাকাইতা পানি ডাকাইতা হাকিম।  
 মারিল মনিসা সব এই ছুই জালিম (৮) ॥  
 কার্তিক মাসেতে পানি গেল হুকাইয়া।  
 সেসেই অমে লোক অমের লাগিয়া ॥  
 মাগিলে না পাএ ভিক্ষা গুজীলে  
 না পাএ থানা।  
 বাপ মাএ বেটা বেটা ছাড়িল বাসনা ॥  
 বর্ধমান বেটা বেটা ছাড়িল বাপ মাএ।  
 আশা স্থানে মাগে বন্দা ইদিন দেখাওক না ॥  
 আগরিন (৯) মাসেতে লোকে কেহ ধান কাটে।  
 টেকা কোড়ি গাটে (১০) করি চলি জাএ  
 হাটে ॥

..... আর বেটা বেটা  
 শিশুগণের দুখ দেখী পরাশি জাএ কাটা ॥  
 চৈত্র মাসেতে লোকে কালীই ডাকে।  
 পটিম দেশের লোকের চিনা কাণ্ডন পাকে ॥  
 কেহ খাএ কেহ চাএ কিছু ঠাণ্ডা হৈল।  
 পূর্বা দেশের লোক সবের কাণ্ডন বোর মৈল ॥  
 গজামোণ্ডল বরদাখাতের লোকে দুখ ছিল  
 কি।  
 এই ছুই পরগনার মৈন্ধে ডাকাতির  
 বলে জী ॥ (১৫)



না গেল পাখিট রাট রহিলেক ঠেকী ।

তার মৈকে কেহই দিল আপ্ত নিকী ॥

দাক্ষন অমের গোড়া সহিব ক্ষেমাতে ।

দেসেই মরে লোক হাটে যার পোখে ॥

যদি মাসেতে লোকের অমের পোরা অতি ।

বড় ভাল মাইনামে (১৩) হারাইল জাতি ॥

পুরুষে ছাড়িয়া গেল আপনা রূপশি ।

কেয়ং বেছিয়া খাইল দাস তার দাসী ॥

মান নিল পানিএ হাকীমে নিল গর ।

বেতচবিজে রান বন্দি বাড়ি মরে জর ॥(১৪)

কোনই রায়ত পলাইয়া জাএ জরে ।

কোন ঠাই দেখিচ রাম—কুণ্ডে পরি মরে ॥

মাঝ গইয়া গেল আমিল ফাগুন ।

কাপাল ঘরের সবেল না ছাড়ু আগুন ॥

সালুক আনে গেজ আনে আনএ চেজরা ।

দিন অস্তে রাতে বেতারা বন্দি খাএ হোগরা ॥

দশ পাচ মনিস্য মরে এক এক ঘরে ।

আইল ডাকাইতা পানি বংশ মজাইবারে ।

চতুর তিতে হইল ঠাণ্ডা আশ্বরের শেখ ।

শুন কহি সাহেবে যে কোপে পাইল দেশ ॥

ধর্ম জরি আছিল সাহেব হোসন আলি ।

কৈলকাজা চলিয়া গেল বানজীরে দি মালী (২০)

৪র্থ পৃষ্ঠা ।

চতুরদিকে কিছু ঠাণ্ডা হইল বৈশাখে ।

দক্ষিনেতে ঠাণ্ডা কালী (১৬) রাখিয়াছিল

আগে ॥

পূর্ব দেশে বড় (১৭) হইল উত্তরে লোচা

কানী ।

পছিমেষ্টে বড় চিনা আড়া হইল পুনি ॥

বেগনিয়া (১৮) সকলে বেগন পাইয়া ছিল ।

কেবল হাসুকা (১৯) জন পড়িয়া মরিল ॥

জ্যৈষ্ঠ মাসেত লোকে (পায়) জুগু মিঠা আম ।

ভরগা না আছিল লোকের এহি দিন

দেখিবার

টান দেশের মনিস্য সব হইল তরাতর ।

উত্তরে মনিস্য গর মরিল বিস্তর ॥

ছোট বর বেয়ামে বিকাশে শএ কালির নাম ।

সাহেবের হইত জমীদারি দেওয়ান দুজ ভরাম ॥

ধর্ম দেওয়ান দুজ ভরাম জানে নানা ছন্দি ।

রাগে গিয়া কৈলকাজা বানজীরে কৈল বন্দি ॥

মারিয়া লরাইল রায়ত রাজ্য কৈল খালি ।

কাগজ বুজীয়া তারে বিদায় করিল ॥

১। নদীতে। ২। অগ্নিকোণ। কবিঃ বাসস্থান হইতে অগ্নিকোণে ডাকাতিয়া নামক নদী প্রবাহিত দেশাদিতে অতি পূর্বে সময়ে প্রায়শঃ ডাকাইতি হইত বলিয়া হয়তঃ “অগ্নিকোণ” “ডাকাতিয়া কোণ” বলিয়া উল্লিখিত হইয়া থাকিবে। সাধারণ লোক এজপ ভাবে “সাগরিয়া কোণা” শব্দটিও ব্যবহার করিয়া থাকে। ৩। সংশোধিত পাঠ ছিল, ধলট অর্থে। ৪। তুলা বড়। ৫। গত হইয়া। ৬। অগ্নি। ৭। ফটিক তুলা ভন। ৮। অত্যাচারী। ৯। সংশোধিত পাঠ অগ্রহায়ণ। ১০। গির, গ্রহি। ১১। জীবিত রহিল। ১২। কত। পুস্তকের মূল্য যত কমার মূল্য তাহার চতুর্বাংশ ছিল। ১৩। মধ্যম। ১৪। মুহূর্তী ১৫। জীবিত রহিল এই অর্থে নী শব্দ প্রযুক্ত হইয়াছে। ১৬। হোমসাবাদ পরগণার তেলপাই রেগুতে টেলনের নিকট হোগরা গ্রামে ঠাণ্ডাকালী স্থাপিত। এখানে পৌষ সংক্রান্তিতে মেলা হয়। ১৭। সংশোধিত পাঠ “বোর” একপ্রকার বাসস্থিক ঘান। ১৮। যে কুবক ভেরণের কবি করে। ১৯। ভাবী। ২০। কর্তব্য।

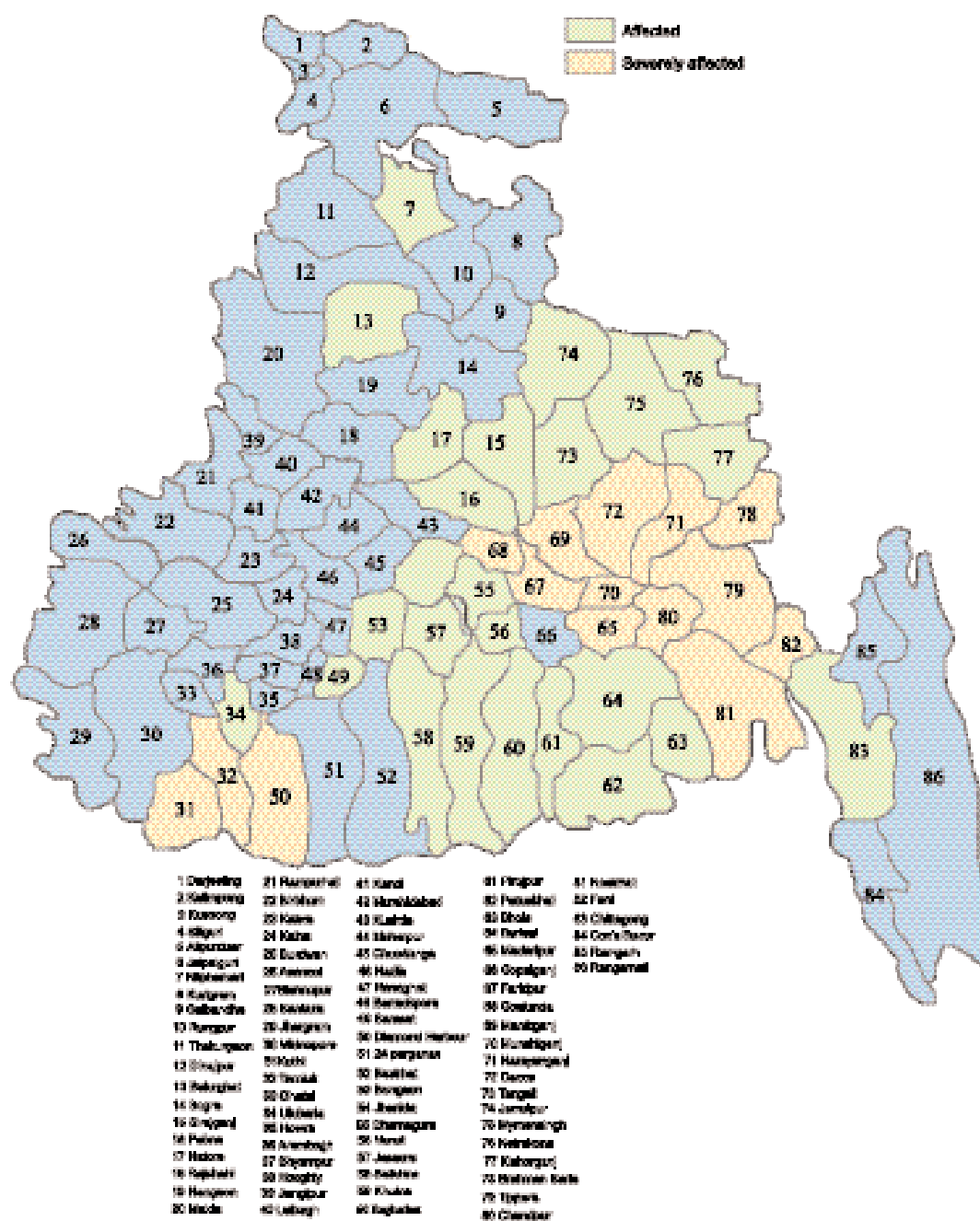
গল্পবর্তী সংখ্যায় এই কবিতার আধুনিকরূপ ব্যাখ্যা সহ প্রদত্ত হইবে।



Appendix 37



## Appendix 38

**BENGAL FAMINE IN 1943**

### Appendix 39 Some Contemporary poem on Bengal Famine

In the cold weather of 1769 Bengal was visited by a famine whose ravages by generations failed to repair. This affected Bengal as well Dhaka severely. English historians, treating of Indian history, have naturally little to say regarding an occurrence which involved neither a battle nor a parliamentary debate. Mill, with all his accuracy and minuteness, can spare barely five lines for the Subject and the Famine Commissioners confessed themselves unable to fill in the details.<sup>1</sup> Although the stifling summer of 1770 the people went on dying. The has bandmen sold their cattle; they sold their implements their agriculture; they devoured their seed-grain; they sold their sons and daughters, till at length no buyer of children could be found; they eat the leaves of trees and grass of the field; and in June 1770 the Resident at the Durbar affirmed that the living were feeding on the dead. Day and night a torrent of famished and disease-stricken wretches poured in the Cities. Dhaka like other 18th century cities experienced such a situation.<sup>2</sup> At the out set of the famine, a young civilian landed in Kolkata was John shore. The Scenes of 1770 left an impression on his mind and this horrors 1770 found expression in verse. It is to be regretted that the only non-official description we possess by an eye-witness is a metrical one; but should be remembered that Jhon shore's poetry adheres as closely to the facts as many men's prose:

'Still fresh in memory's eye the scene I view,  
The Shrivelled limbs, sunk eyes, and lifeless hue;  
Still hear the mother's shrieks and infant's moans,  
Cries of despair and agonizing moans,  
In wild confusion dead and dying lie;-  
Hark to the jackal's as midst the glare of day  
They riot unmolested on their prey!  
Dire scenes of horror, which no pen can trace,  
Nor rolling years from memory's page efface.'<sup>3</sup>

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1 We have not yet been able to obtain any details of the great famine in Bengal of 1770'-Papers, relating to the famine in Bengal and orissa, 1866. p. 228.

2 For details, see W. W. Hunter, *Annals of Rural Bengal*; K. Mazumdar, *Dhakar Bibaran*, 1910.

3 *Memoir of the life and Correspondence of John Lord Teignmouth G (John Shore)*, by his Son. Vol. I, pp.25-26. 8 Vol. London, 1843.

### Appendix 40 A contemporary Song on Dacca Tornado

The Tornado of 1888 was a violent one and made a great havoc to the Dhaka city and its environs. Kushai Sarker, a folk-poet of Dhaka has given a pen-picture in his poem *Jharer Gaan* as under:<sup>1</sup>

#### Stoi Mvb

Ckṭi i Acvi ṁbj v eṣv fvi 2 AvtQ mva<sup>1</sup> Kvi |  
 eyR evDiṣc Gtj b nmi ṁbeṁi tZ ai v fvi \  
 1294 mṭb Pṭi gvtmi 26 ṁṭb kṁberṭi mÜvi cṭi  
 LÜ cḡ q nq mAvq| NY<sup>2</sup>evqyGBṭm teṭM Nḡṭi Dṭv D×  
 fṭṭM meciṭZ GK kâ WṭK ṛBṭj tj vṭKi PgrKvi |  
 cṁÖg nBṭZ Zcṭvb PBṭU nvRvi xevM ṁ qv Dṭv tLi x  
 Ni Avi tgBṭUṭKvṭv KZ teBṭiṭQ Acvi |  
 evÇvbMi evMj cṭi beveMÄ Pṁ<sup>3</sup>evRvṭi hZ Ni ṁMqvṭQ  
 cBṭi mSL<sup>4</sup> v Kiv bvRvq Zvi |  
 ṁmKṭmb tṭiṭ Avgvj tMj v, cḡek Kṭi j vj evṭMi  
 ṁKj v, ṁmcb RLg KZ ,tj v gṭi GKRb nvLj v<sup>5</sup> vi |  
 ṭmLvḡ nBṭZ Zcṭvb QḡṭU cṭi Gṭm PṁbṭṭvṭU i grMÄ GK  
 PvcṭU tṭiṭ GBj PKevRvi |  
 tṭiṭ tRj Lvḡv bwi Z ṭKvYv teMg evRvi ṁ<sup>6</sup>ṭQ nvbv  
 tgṁMÜj x KṭqLvḡv ṭ<sup>7</sup> vKvbNi tṭiṭ Avi Kgvi Uj x  
 th Ae<sup>8</sup> v ṁKQybv ṭiṭLṭQ Av<sup>9</sup> v bv<sup>10</sup> v Lv<sup>11</sup> v ṁZb Ae<sup>12</sup> v  
 ṁvj vb ṭKvVv GKvKvi |  
 eskṁevRvi mṁRe i ṁL evej evRvi ṁṭq SvKṭ teṭM  
 ṁ<sup>13</sup>ṭj ṁṭṭYgṭx eyṁM<sup>14</sup> v nBṭe cvi | cvi nBṭZ Sṭi i gṭL  
 cBṭi ṁQj hZ ṭbSkv AvÜmvi qv NY<sup>15</sup>evṭK KBṭi  
 ṭMṭQ Pi gvi |  
 hZṭj vK ṁMqvṭQ gvi v Rbṭmṭṭi ṁQj ai v ṁ<sup>16</sup> vKvi  
 KBṭi ṁRṁAiv XvKv nBj cY<sup>17</sup>evṭ | GB ṭh beve  
 ewoi KṁERvÜ ṭKivṭQ me j ÜfÜ Avi ṭKivṭQ LÜ?  
 tṭiṭṭQ tj vKvi KṁÜvi |  
 evṂvb ṁQj cwi cY<sup>18</sup>ṭKṭiṭQ me ṁQbṁfḡḡṁ<sup>19</sup> me<sup>20</sup> me  
 kb<sup>21</sup> ṁKQyṁPṭb bwi Zvi | j ṭṭ UvKvi ṭh isgnj

ṭmLvṭb ci  
 nBj cḡj tṭṭj ṭQ Qv<sup>22</sup> tṭiṭ mKj ṁKQyṁṭ<sup>23</sup> bvB evmvi |  
 KZ ṁvj vb ṁMṭQ ṁ<sup>24</sup>iv KZev ṭi qvṭQ Lvi v  
 ṁ<sup>25</sup>ṭiṭQ me Av<sup>26</sup> vi Lvi v ṭ<sup>27</sup> ṁLṭZ meKṁZ AvKvi | bṂ<sup>28</sup> Lvḡvq  
 cḡek  
 Kwi tṭiṭṭQ Avj vṭqi Nox bṭṭeṭ<sup>29</sup> i AvDfvi x Zvi v  
 ṭṭṭṭQ ṁḡ<sup>30</sup> vi |  
 DVḡṭq Qv<sup>31</sup> me l g Sṭi ṁḡṭq ṭMṭQ ṁ<sup>32</sup>vbṭ<sup>33</sup> ṭ<sup>34</sup> Bi  
 Lvḡv tṭiṭ Kṭi nZ<sup>35</sup> v GKRbvi | beve ewoi eü  
 tj vṭKi nBj gi Y igY eveyṭMve<sup>36</sup> Si nBj gZi i Kvi Y  
 ṁ<sup>37</sup> G RqP<sup>38</sup> v<sup>39</sup> cṭj Rṁḡ<sup>40</sup> vi  
 bvRvbx ṭKvḡ K<sup>41</sup>ṭṭṭṭi bwi Ri eveyKvḡ Qvṭi Avṁṭṭq  
 ṁ<sup>42</sup>ṭ<sup>43</sup> ṁṭbi Zṭi G Sṭi nBj msnvi ṭKvZvj xi evi<sup>44</sup> v  
 tṭṭj mvdvix evRvṭi Pṭj Rvevi Kṭj tṭiṭ ṁbj Kṁḡḡ  
 kh<sup>45</sup> v ab mṁvvi |  
 ṭmLvṭb tṭiṭ eüZi tṭṭj ṭQ ewi<sup>46</sup> v Qvcvi Kṁei vṭRi  
 Mj xi ṁṭi tṭiṭ ṁMṭQ mvi v mvi cUqṭṭj x ṁMṭq Sṁvi  
 fḡḡKṭi Kvj xevox Zeyṭm Aṁṭṭj kṭi x ṁṭi AvṭQ gv  
 Avgvi |  
 cṁÖg ṭKvYv ṁ<sup>47</sup>ṭQ tṭṭj ṭ<sup>48</sup>ṭṭ<sup>49</sup> Z Qv<sup>50</sup> AvṭQ SBṭj  
 meṭṭ<sup>51</sup> gvi c<sup>52</sup> Zṭj cḡ ṭq ṁK Kṭi Zvi Rṁewj ṭṭj i  
 ṁ<sup>53</sup>ṭṭ meciṭZ Ni ṁṭbi AvÜv ṭKix Zṭe Dēvcvēv  
 Dovṭ<sup>54</sup> Q dṭmi AvKvi |  
 hvBqv Kṭj R ṭṭj ṭ<sup>55</sup> v<sup>56</sup> i eṭṭ tṭṭj cṭevi ṁMṭQ  
 Pṭj ṁḡYṭq bvBn Zṁvvi ṭKn ṁMṭQ Wv<sup>57</sup> vi Lvḡv ṭKn j ṁMṭq  
 nj<sup>58</sup> x Pbv ṭKn ew<sup>59</sup> qv ṭZbv ṁ<sup>60</sup>ṭZ AvṭQ Rj ṁ<sup>61</sup> vi |

Ṇ KkvB mi Kvi, bvbmea Mvb, XvKv 1892

A Poor peasant has lost his all seasonal crops and Jute due to devastating flood. Now he is afraid of his zamindar who might call at anytime for his rent. He fervently prays to the God to save him from such as distress.

eb<sup>62</sup> v ṁḡṭq KṁeZv  
 AvDm ṭMj , cvÜi ṭMj , Wṭṭj v Avgb avb |  
 Rṁḡ<sup>63</sup> vṭi i cote Zj e, Kṭe Acgṁb |  
 cṭYi ṁ<sup>64</sup> i ṭKD teṭSbv, Pj ṭe fṭY tj bv<sup>65</sup> ṭ<sup>66</sup> bv,  
 nvgiv ṭLv<sup>67</sup> v, Gḡḡb KBiv giṭev GṭK GṭK |  
 Zṭg ḡṁ nṭi bvi vR, Avi ṭK AvBL<sup>68</sup> v ṁ<sup>69</sup>ṭL |  
 -fvi Zel<sup>70</sup> 1325

1 For detailed account of this Dacca Tornado, see the article of Dr. Crumbier, the Civil Surgeon of Dhaka in Journal of the Asiatic society of Bengal Vol- LVII, No. 2, 1888 .



### Appendix 41 Hats and Bazars of Dhaka in the 1960s

The number of *Hats* and *bazars* in the district of Dhaka is very large. The northern part of the district is comparatively higher than the southern and eastern parts. Paddy, vegetables and fruits are grown in the northern part, while jute and deepwater aman paddy are grown in the southern and eastern parts. Timber, firewood and bamboo are available more in the northern part. Shown below the *hats* and *bazars* in the district; the principal commodities found in the market are noted against each *hat* and *bazar* which are shown under the Jurisdiction of old police stations and sub-Divisions.

S. I	Name of Hats/Bazar	Location	Principal commodities handled
<b>Dacca Sadar North Subdivision</b>			
1	Sripur	P.S. Sripur	<i>Aman</i> and <i>aus</i> paddy, timber, mustard, cattle and jute.
2	Barmi	"	
3	Kaoraid	"	Paddy, barley, mustard and jute.
4	Rajbari	"	Paddy, barley, mustard and jute.
5	Mawna	"	Paddy, barley, mustard and jute.
6	Mirzapurhat	P.S. Joydevpur	Paddy, timber, mustard and cattle.
7	Joydevpur	"	Paddy, timber, mustard and cattle.
8	Tongi	"	Paddy, timber, mustard and cattle.
9	Savar	P.S. Savar	Paddy, barley and jute.
10	Raniganj	"	Paddy, barley and jute.
11	Bagdhunia	"	Paddy, barley and jute.
12	Dhamrai	P.S. Dhamrai	Paddy, pulses, barley and jute.
13	Sadullahpur	"	Paddy, pulses, barley and jute.
14	Dhantara	"	Paddy, pulses, barley and jute.
15	Fulbari	"	Paddy, pulses, barley and jute.
16	Ashulia	"	Paddy, pulses, barley and jute.
17	Kasimpur	"	Paddy, pulses, barley and jute.
18	Pubail	P.S. Kaliganj	Paddy, mustard and jute
19	Katrgani	"	Paddy, mustard and jute
20	Ghorasal	"	Paddy, mustard and jute
21	Char Sindur	"	Paddy, mustard and jute
22	Kaliakair	P.S. Kaliakair	<i>Aus</i> and <i>aman</i> paddy, barley and mustard.
23	Fulbaria	"	<i>Aus</i> and <i>aman</i> paddy, barley and mustard.
24	Konda	P.S. Savar	Paddy, barley, mustard and jute
25	Kapasias	P.S. Kapasia	Paddy, jute, sugarcane, mung, chillies and mustard.
26	Dyshya Narayanpur	Do.	Paddy, jute, sugarcane, mung, chillies and mustard.
27	Rayed Hat	Do.	Paddy, jute, sugarcane, mung, chillies and mustard.
28	Nayar Bazar	Do.	Paddy, jute, sugarcane, mung, chillies and mustard.
<b>Dacca Sadar South Subdivision</b>			
1.	Nawabganj Hat	P.S. Nawabganj	Paddy and barley.
2.	Kamarganj Hat	Do.	Paddy and barley.
3.	Kalakopa Bazar	Do.	Paddy and barley.
4.	Bagmara Bazar	Do.	Paddy and barley.
5.	Agla Bazar	Do.	Paddy and barley.
6.	Baruakhali Hat	Do.	Paddy and barley.
7.	Bandura Bazar	Do.	Paddy and barley.
8.	Meghula Bazar	P.S. Dohar	Paddy and barley.
9.	Debinagar Hat	Do.	Paddy and barley.
10.	Ati Hat	P.S. Keraniganj	Paddy, onion and garlic, barley and cattle.

11. Kalatia Hat	Do.	Paddy, onion and garlic, barley and cattle
12. Rohitpur Hat	Do.	Paddy, onion and garlic, barley and cattle
13. Khagail Hat	Do.	Paddy, onion and garlic, barley and cattle
14. Barisur	Do.	Paddy, onion and garlic, barley and cattle
15. Painer Hat	Do.	Paddy, onion and garlic, barley and cattle
16. Bibir Bazar	Do.	Paddy, onion and garlic, barley and cattle
17. Zinzira	Do.	Paddy, onion and garlic, barley and cattle
18. Tejgaon	P.S. Tejgaon	Paddy, onion and garlic, barley and cattle.
19. Sultanaganj	Do.	Paddy, onion and garlic, barley and cattle.
20. Mirpur	Do.	Paddy, onion and garlic, barley and cattle.
21. Baraid	Do.	Paddy, onion and garlic, barley and cattle.
22. Kayelpara	Do.	Paddy, onion and garlic, barley and cattle.
23. Kawranbazar	Do.	Paddy, onion and garlic, barley and cattle.
24. Meraida Hat	Do.	Paddy, onion and garlic, barley and cattle.

#### Manikganj Subdivision

1. Manikganj Hat	P.S. Manikganj	<i>Muan.</i>
2. Atigram Hat	Do.	<i>Muan.</i>
3. Balirtek Hat	Do.	<i>Muan.</i>
4. Bachamara Hat	Do.	<i>Muan.</i>
5. Jabra Hat	P.S. Ghior	<i>Muan.</i>
6. Ghior	Do.	<i>Muan.</i>
7. Saturia Hat	P.S. Saturia	<i>Aman</i> , jute and barley.
8. Umanandapur Hat	Do.	<i>Aman</i> , jute and barley.
9. Kantapara	P.S. Harirampur	<i>Aman</i> , jute and barley.
10. Lesraganj Hat	Do.	Jute, <i>aman</i> , and barley, wheat.
11. Jhitka	Do.	Jute, <i>aman</i> , and barley, wheat.
12. Dhulsura	Do.	Jute, <i>aman</i> , and barley, wheat.
13. Uthali Hat	P.S. Shivalaya	Rice, paddy, jute, pulses and milk.
14. Zafarganj Hat	Do.	Rice, paddy, jute, pulses, milk and milk products.
15. Nabi	Do.	Rice, paddy, jute and pulses.
16. Maluchi Hat	Do.	Paddy, Jute, milk and milk products.
17. Chandhar Hat	P.S. Singhair	Rice, paddy, jute, pulses and vegetables.
18. Serumia Hat	Do.	Paddy, vegetables, jute, poultry, pulses, fish, milk and milk products.
19. Charigram	Do.	Rice, paddy, pulses, jute, vegetables, fish, milk and milk products.
20. Baira Hat	Do.	Rice, paddy, jute, poultry, and vegetables.
21. Joymantab Hat	Do.	Paddy, jute, fish, milk and milk products poultry and vegetables.
22. Singair Hat	Do.	Rice, paddy, poultry, jute, pulses, milk and milk products and fish.

**Munshiganj Subdivision**

1. Munshir Hat	P.S. Munshiganj	Banana, jute, sugarcane, potato, oil seeds, tobacco, cattle and vegetables.
2. Mirkadim	Do.	Banana, jute, sugarcane, potato, oil seeds, tobacco, cattle and vegetables.
3. Makkuhati	Do.	Banana, jute, sugarcane, potato, oil seeds, tobacco, cattle and vegetables.
4. Rekabi Bazar	Do.	Banana, jute, sugarcane, potato, oil seeds, tobacco, cattle and vegetables.
5. Chitalia Hat	Do.	Banana, jute, sugarcane, potato, oil seeds, tobacco, cattle and vegetables.
6. Dighirpar Hat	P.S. Tangibari	Jute, chillies and paddy.
7. Baghi Hat	Do.	Rice, fish and vegetables.
8. Purnahat & Bazar	Do.	Rice, fish, milk and vegetables
9. Arial Hat	Do.	Rice, fish, pulses and vegetables.
10. Baligaon Hat	Do.	Jute, paddy and til.
11. Siddeswari Bazar	Do.	Jute, oil seeds and vegetables.
12. Betna Hat	Do.	Rice, fish and vegetables.
13. Dighali Bazar	P.S. Luhajang	Jute, fish, milk and vegetables.
14. Kannaksar Bazar	Do.	Jute, fish, milk and vegetables.
15. Simalia Bazar	Do.	Jute, fish, milk and vegetables.
16. Josaldia Hat	Do.	Jute, fish, milk and vegetables.
17. Nawpara Hat	Do.	Jute, fish, milk and vegetables.
18. Husaindi Hat	P.S. Gazaria	Jute, fish, milk and vegetables.
19. Rasulpur Hat	Do.	Paddy, rice, jute and cattle's.
20. Taltala Hat	P.S. Gazaria	Paddy, rice, jute and cattle's.
21. Serajdikhan Hat	P.S. Sirajdikhan	Fish, boat and jute, rice, paddy and vegetables.
22. Ichapura Bazar	Do.	Rice, fish, milk and vegetables.
23. Giriganj Hat	Do.	Paddy, rice, cattle, etc.
24. Imamganj Hat	Do.	Cattle.
25. Rajanagar Bazar	Do.	Cattle, fish, milk
26. Syed Hat	Do.	Cattle.
27. Mohanganj Bazar	Do.	Cattle.
28. Srinagar Hat	P.S. Srinagar	Jute, fish, rice, milk and vegetables.
29. Deulbhog Bazar	P.S. Srinagar	Jute, fish, rice, milk and vegetables.
30. Bhagyakul Hat	Do.	Jute, fish, rice, milk, timber and vegetables.
31. Bagra Hat	Do.	Jute, fish, milk and vegetables.
32. Kolapara	Do.	Jute, fish, milk and vegetables.
33. Sholaghar	Do.	Jute, fish, milk and vegetables.
34. Bittara	Do.	Jute, fish, milk and vegetables.
35. Sibrampur	Do.	Jute, fish, milk and vegetables.
36. Baherghata	P.S. Sirajdikhan	Betel leaves.

**Narayanganj Subdivision**

1. Baidyer Bazar	P.S. Baidyer Bazar.	<i>Aman, masur</i> and jute.
2. Baradi Hat	Do.	Fish, vegetables, <i>gur</i> , cows and goats.
3. Kalagachia Hat	P.S. Araihasar	<i>Aman, masur</i> and jute.
4. Monohardi Hat	P.S. Monohordi	<i>Aman</i> , sugarcane and jute, <i>gur</i> , fish, milk, cattle, goat and horse.
5. Narayanganj	P.S. Narayanganj.	<i>Aus, aman</i> , sugarcane and uarn, jute, salt, milk, fish etc.
6. Siddhirganj	P.S. Fatullah.	Poultry, fish, eggs, vegetables, spices and dals.
7. Uddabganj	P.S. Baiderbazar	Vegetables and fish.
8. Gopaldi Bazar	P.S. Araihasar	Jute, paddy, rice, spices, pulses, mustard seed, Mill, fish poultry and groundnut.
9. Narsingdi Bazar	P.S. Narsingdi	Jute, banana, <i>aman</i> , masur, sugarcane, tobacco, simul yarn and handloom cloths.
10. Ghoshgaon	P.S. Monohardi	Sugarcane and jute.
11. Hatiardi	P.S. Fatullah	Vegetables, spices, poultry, eggs, rice, paddy, cattles, hides and skins.
12. Lakhpur	P.S. Shibpur	Vegetables, jute, rice, paddy, eggs, mustard seeds, spices, cattle, poultry and goat.
13. Denga	P.S. Rupganj	<i>Aman, masur</i> and jute, fish, vegetables and spices.
14. Madhabdi	P.S. Narsingdi	Jute yarn and handloom cloth, rice, paddy, eggs, poultry, cow, goat and vegetables.
15. Murapara	P.S. Rupganj	Bamboo and wood.
16. Panchdona	Do.	Vegetables, poultry, paddy, milk, fish, rice, etc.
17. Raipura	P. S. Raipura	<i>Aus</i> and <i>aman</i> , potato, onion and garlic, banana, jute and handloom cloth.
18. Methikanda	Do.	<i>Aus</i> and <i>aman</i> , potato, onion and garlic, banana, jute and handloom cloth.

- 1 Now an Industrial belt and headquarter of the Gazipur district.
- 2 Now a separate police station. In the 1950s it became an industrial zone.
- 3 Developed to an industrial center after liberation.
- 4 Developed to an industrial area in the 1960s. European businessmen started their factories here in the 17th century.
- 5 Now a separate police station. Kedarnath mentioned it an important Hat in the first decade of the 20th century.
- 6 Now one of the biggest wholesale center as well as commercial center of Dhaka.
- 7 A famous Hat of Manikganj, located a foodgodown here.
- 8 A small river port. Traders from Pabna, Tangail, Mymensing, Faridpur used to come here on Hat days.
- 9 Munshir Hat is named after the name of a Munshi, who started this hat. There is a popular saying that the name of the 'Munshigonj' district is derived from the name of this 'Munshi'.
- 10 A famous business center from the Mughal period. *Paan* and cattles are traded largely.
- 11 During the Hindu period 'Makku's were made here for the local *tantis*. Rennell's Atlas mentioned this.
- 12 Rekabi Bazar was famous from the Mughal time.
- 13 Once local made paper was traded here. Local kagojis were engaged in making hand made papers.
- 14 An old commercial center. Once it was famous for jute and timber business.
- 15 Rajanagar or Rajnagar was founded by Maharaja Rajballab. It was a famous *Bandar* during the 18th and 19th century.
- 16 Srinagar Bazar was established by the 'Kundu' Zaminders of Baggyakul. Previously a portion of it was belonged to a local Muslim Zaminder of Vikrampur. Kundus exchanged this land for setting up a bazar here.
- 17 Narayanganj is a port city now. This port city became commercially important at the end of the 19th century. Became an industrial center since the 1920s of the last century.
- 18 An important mart for trading cloths of different sorts. *Paikars* from different places used to come for wholesale purchasing since the beginning of the 20th century. Madabdi is a reputed cloth market of Bangladesh. For origin and development of this market Chapter 6.



# Appendix 42

## Some poems which express the state of business and craftsmanship over the ages

IRb

IRtb Kgvq e`vUv `vtgtZ Pov|  
 gP`e`vUv i buB Kg,KvE-Ävb,  
 hmv gL Avtm etj , bv i vL m=šib|  
 temPevi Kvtj t`q Nvto PvcvBqv,  
 Av`vtq Kvtj efm gv\_vq Pmıcqv|  
 wRÄvmtj tKvb my`Ei buB,  
 K\_vq K\_vq i`aywbRi eovB|  
 gq`v temPtj e`vUv bxtP tj tL NZ,  
 Aoi temPtj cp tj tL tmB gZ|  
 e`v`cPv m`vgvj wKvb Kg`ti,  
 i`v`vq i wLqv e`vP Av,tbi`ti|  
 mZ`K\_v Kvti etj bwin Zvi Rvbv,  
 wq`v KBevi Kvtj wKš`tlvj Avbv|  
 wbin f`vovi gZ ZtKfZ nvi tj ,  
 cPÜ g`vovi gZ ZvntZ wRvZtj|  
 fno AvtQ, gpo bvB, Pqv i`ayKno,  
 Kj mx bv tRvtU hvi , Mtj w`M`wo|  
 wnmve wvj vtq j q Kovq Kovq,  
 IRtb Kgvq e`vUv `vtgtZ Povq  
 Nim mMi,  
 Nfvi Zel,keY 1325

RvgvB-Iöx (XvKvB avZ)

tR`wö gvtm löxepx hwo Kwi Kti|  
 RvgvB RvgvB ewj tdti Nti Nti\  
 citi tcvlvK me nti Zvi Z|  
 Pjti kti evox Avgvi minZ\  
 cuij XvKvB avZ Dvmb Dvoj|  
 KwgR wci vb tcsiM KZ Mvq w j|  
 Kvi tCU mR cvq, AvOvj Avzjx  
 KvUqv wej vZx wmwZ evovq gvajx|  
 Nioi wKj Mtj , UüvtK\_vtK Nio|  
 tKvgti tmvbvi weOv, nvZ tng Nio|  
 -c`msMä; `xbeÜzigT

e`emv-ewYR`

e`vb fipb fiv wecj evRvi,  
 tKbv tePv Kti tj vK nvRvi nvRvi  
 weiea ewYR` tcvZ tkvfv Kti NvU,  
 mvvi mvvi i`nqvQ evnv`vi KvU|  
 `xbeÜzigT, -my abx Kve`

KvtUqv weL`vZ MÄ, KZ gnvRb,  
 mvvi mvvi NvtU Zwi ewYR` evnb,  
 mvvi lv gmbv gM Kj vB gmyi,  
 Pvj tOvj v`ei vRZ tnv i`fi fi|  
 `xbeÜz mij abx Kve`

wenbgq

mB Zwi m`vMi fvmvq mVMti,  
 mgaj Zvib Avkv-i wL Mvb Kti,  
 mgxKiY gnKvti mšwi mVMi,  
 DcbvZ A`fcvZ wej vZ-wfZi,  
 ti kg-Kmgdj ml`ZÜj,  
 wej vtZ temPtj nte wefe wecj,  
 mgq my`i eU,`i g`bq,  
 wÜY nBte j vf bwinK mskq,  
 ewj qmQ wenbgq AvmbZ emb,  
 mZv RZv Qvi Kuv gvi v j eY,  
 tm me Avmte hte Kvj KvZv-Kj,  
 ewYtR`i gnvj z`nte AÜKj,  
 Avevi Kvi e j vf wenbgq KZ,  
 kPxbv\_-mg gL ie AweiZ|  
 -Öv`k KmeZv, `xbeÜzigT

ZuZ

ÖZmZi Nti wQj GK tetÖi Qvbn|  
 Lvq`vq w`h hvq ZuZ Nti Zvi Lvbn|  
 mpx ZuZi tQtj Kex j wMj|  
 Zvi GKw tetÖi Qvbn,ZvtZ gvi j\  
 GKw b ZuZi tQtj wMqndj nvU|  
 tmvbn tKvj v tetÖi minZ cti tMj nvU\Ö BZ`w

e`i

Pi Kv Avgvi fvZvi cZ Pi Kv Avgvi bwiZ,  
 Pi Kvi t`šj tZ Avgvi `pvti ev`v nvZx  
 tQtj i t`vj vq cv, Pi KvZ nvZ,  
 GB tRb Zug fvj wMbz`vZ|  
 fvi Zel,Avkpb, 1325

ki tZ ce@½

Kvš-Kvqv K.L.K fvgv Ku\_vi Ztj i`tq,  
 tmvbvi t`cæRtM efm oK tMfR wbtq|  
 üKvi i te Dtv etj numij -civ weie,  
 `ögb cvtU w`tZ nBte tmvbvi bvK Öwe|  
 K.L.K etj , hmv Pvl, we tZvgvq Zvb,  
 gnvRtbi nvZ t`tK hvi i`lv cvB|  
 Öfq wK ZvtKÖ weie Ktn, bt`w`tq bvov,  
 Avgvi KvQ cwmVq w`I, tcvUq Ki tev Zvov|  
 Ggb Kvtj Mfxi`ti WvKtj v Kvj ymgqv  
 cvU weWktq efm AvQ, Gm UvKv wbv|  
 Kvj yetj Öt Ltj weie, dRi bv ntZ  
 tNvti tcv WvKtQ t`vti, hvi S`vUv nvZÖ|  
 weie Kq, ÖhvIbv Zug tnmij i tKvtY  
 ej tev Avwg Kvj tK Zug, tMfP g`vRevb|  
 kt Ankpx Kgi gÜj  
 fvi Zel,`KwZK 1325

### Appendix 43 Fairs and Melas of Dhaka

#### Fairs in Dhaka (Sadar)<sup>1</sup>

Name of fair	Place	Occasion -Period	Products Available
1. Malibagh Mela	Malibagh	Baruni 1&2 Paus	Toys, pottery, products made of bamboo and iron
2. Jinjira Mela	Jinjira, Keranigonj	Dol Purnima	-do-
3. Nayanpara Mela	Kamlapur	Last day of Chaitra	-do-
4. Suvaddya Mela	Suvaddya, Keranigonj	1 Baishak	-do-
5. Mirpur Mela	Mirpur	-do-	Toys, plastic goods, bamboo products, cane products, sweetmeats
6. Digao Mela	Digao	-do-	-do-
7. Golartek Mela	Golartek	-do-	-do-
8. Badda Mela	Badda Bazar	Last day of Chaitra	-do-
9. Shyampur Mela	Shyampur	-do-	-do-
10. Barodia Mela	Steamerghat	-do-	-do-
11. Chin Mela	Kandi	1 Baishak	-do-
12. Chin Mela	Paltmara	do-	-do-
13. Hatkhola Mela	Hatkhola Road	Kirtan 18 Baishak	-do-
14. Tantibazar Mela	Tanti bazar	Washing full-moon	-do-
15. Ashram Mela	Savar Harinath	7 Falgun	-do-
16. Sakharibazar Mela	Shakharibazar	Maghisaptami in Magh	-do-
17. Hatkhola Mela	Hatkhola Mahaprakash Math	14 Falgun	-do-
18. Kazitola Mela	Debnath Lane	Yearly Mela	-do-
19. Nurullapur Urs Mela	Dohar	-do-	-do-
20. Rabidas Mela	Wari	-do-	-do-
21. Razarbagh Mela	Razarbagh	-do-	-do-
22. Banglabazar Mela	Banglabazar	-do-	-do-
23. Gobindapur Mela	Nababgonj	-do-	-do-
24. Shambhunath Mela	Kathaltali	-do-	-do-
25. Rathjatra Mela <sup>2</sup>	Dhamrai	Ashar	An important fair of Dhaka from time immemorial. Toys, Tamboo and wooden products, kasa, pital products, pottery available other recreationls
26. Maharram Mela*	Azimpur	In Maharram	All shorts of toys, plastic goods, sweetmeats, bamboo products etc.
27. Durgapuja Mela	Shyambazar	In Ashwin	-do-
do shakari Bazsar	-do-	-do-	-do-
28. Ramkrishna Middion Road	-do-	-do-	-do-
29. Dakeswari Road			
30. Eid Mela	Chawkbazar Annual	During 2 Eids	-do-
31. Eid Mela	Kamalapur	-do-	-do-
32. Shamvunath Mela	Kathaltoli	3 days in Paus	-do-
33. Eid Mela	Victoria Park	During 2 Eids	-do-
34. Suvaddya Mela	Keranigonj	In Paus	-do-
35. Baishakhi Mela*	Bangla Academy	New year's, day 1 Baishak	A big fair. Toys, bamboo goods, pottery, sweetmeats, handicrafts, books are available

36	Maharram Mela *	Husseni Dalan	In Maharram	-do-
37	Doljatra Mela	Rathkhola	In Falgun	-do-
38	Maghipurnima Mela	Kamalapur	In Magh	-do-
39	Rathjatra Mela*	Tanti Bazar	In Ashar	-do-
40	Chaitra Mela	Keranigonj	In Chaitra	-do-
41	Manikmiar Mela	Keranigonj	12-13 Paus	-do-
42	Paus Mela	Keranigonj	Paus Sankranti	-do- and village products
43	Paus Menla	Manoharpur	-do-	-do-
44	Sripanchami Mela	Bazarmath	In Magh	-do-
45	Teker Mela	Keranigonj	In Magh	-do-
46	Barovitar Mela	Nazitpur kalatia	In Paus	-do-
47	Kholamuraghat Mela	Kholamura	-do-	-do-
48	Paus Sangkrantic Mela	Muhitpurbazar	-do-	-do-
49	Ratjatra mela	Ruhitpur Rathjatra	In Ashar	-do- and local product of lungis, sarees etc.
50	Sangkranti Mela -	do-	In Chaitra	-do-
51	Paus Mela	-do-	In Paus	-do-
52	Rathjatra Mela	Rampal Rathjatra	8 Ashar	-do-
53	Burashir Mela	Burashirbari	Jhulan 13 Sraban	-do-
54	Mainat 'Ors' Mela	Dohar 'Ors'	30 Vadra	-do-
55	Dhakeshwari Mela	Dhakeswari Bari	Puja 31 Vadra	-do-
56	Book fair (Boi Mela)	Bangla Academy 3	in February	Mainly books & other handicraft items around the fair
57	Ekushey Mela	Shishu Academy 4	-do-	Various products and books published by Shisu Academy,
58	Baishakhi Mela	Dhanmondi ground	1 Baishak	Toys, pottery, plastic products, sweetmeat items handicrafts
59	International Trade Fair Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Annual	In February		Products of participated companies of B. desh and abroad and other items normally gathered to a international fair.
60	Nabanna Mela	Shishu Academy	1 Baishaak	-do-
61	Banni Mela	Baghmara Bazar	In Chaitra	-do-
62	Paglar Mela	Galimpur	In Paus	-do-
63	Sangkranti Mela	Komargonj	In Chaitra	-do-
64	Nawabgonj	-do-	-do-	-do-
65	Durgapur	-do-		-do-
66	Kasumuddin Mela	Nababgonj Annual	In Chaitra	-do-
67	Sadhur Mela	Savar Bazar	In Magh	-do-
68	Sangkranti Mela	-do-	In Chaitra	-do-
69	Baishakhi Mela	Savar	1 Baishakh	-do-
70	Sangkranti Mela	Savar Bazar	Paus Sangkranti	-do-
71	Savar	-do-	-do-	-do-
72	Rathjatra Mela	-do-	In Ashar	-do-
73	Katlapur, Savar	-do-	-do-	-do-
74				
75	Durgapujar Mela	Savar Bazar	Durgapuja in Ashwin	-do-
76	Rabindra-Nazrul Mela	Shilpakala Aacademy	In Jaistha	-do-
77.	Dhaka Boimela,5	Bijoy Sarani	Dhaka city	---
78.	Snan Ghata Mela	Near Tongi	On Chaitra Sankranti	-do-
79.	Chin Mela	Gharasal	In Baishak	-do-
80.	Shekar Char Mela		Chaitra Sankari	-do-
81.	Ghalaghat Snan Fair	Lakhpur Astami Snan		

Source: Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation, Dhaka 1996.

Fairs in Narayanganj				
	Name of fair	Place	Occasion Period	Products Available
1.	Kanchan Mela	Rupgonj annual	In Kartik	Furniture & products made of bamboo, cane, and other handicrafts
2.	Paus Mela	Golakandai Winter	In Paus	-do-
3.	Chashara Mela	Chashara	Death anniv.	in of Bara Peer
			In Zamadius-sani	-do-
4.	Akhrar Mela	Deovogh	1 Baishakh	-do-
5.	'Urs Mela	Gabtol	'Urs' in Kartik	-do-
6.	Baburail Mela	Baburail	'Urs' In Rajab	-do-
7.	Krishi-Shilpa Mela	Osmany Stadium	Winter in January	-do-
8.	Baishakhi Mela	Godnail	New year in Baishak	-do-
9.	Barek Sarderer Mela Jaalkuri	Kartik mela	In Kartik	-do-
10.	Shah Saheber Mela	Jaalkuri Annual	Urs in December	-do-
11.	Siratun-nabi Mela	Kadamrasul	1-15 Rabiul Awal	-do-
	Siratun-nabi			
12.	Astamisanan6	Langalbandh	In Chaitra	Handicrafts, food items, shakas, Toys, cane products dhalis sarees gamcha and others
13.	Kahindir Mela	Kahindir Annual	Urs 1-7 Falgun	-do-
14.	Ramchadri Mela	Ramchandri Sangkranti	In Chaitra	-do-
15.	Jhaogara Mela	Araihaazar	In Magh	-do-
16.	Araihaazar Mela	Araihaazar	1Baishakh	-do-
17.	Pravakardi Mela	Prakardi	Annual Urs in Agrahayan	-do-
18.	Eitbarodir Mela	Eitbarodi	Annual Urs	-do-
19.	Handicraft Mela*	Sonargaon	1 Baishakh	All handicraft items, toys, silver and plastic products, pottery, traditional sweets, local made cloths etc.
20.	-do-	Sonargaon	winter in January	-do-
21.	Battalar Mela	Mongalergaon	1-3 Baishakh	-do-
22.	Ashramer Mela *	Barodi Bazar	19 Jaistha	-do-
23.	Mahajampur Mela	Mahajampur	1-7 Paus	-do-
24.	Gastalar Mela	Hamnchidi Paglagas	In Baishakh	-do-
25.	Adampur Mela	Adampur	14 Falgun	-do-
26.	Mill-Mela	Dhakeswari	In Chaitra	-do-
27.	Muharram Mela	Zimkhana	In Muharram	-do-
28.	Kushiara Mela	Narayanganj	9 Sraban	-do-
29.	-do-	-do-	Sangkirton in Agrahyan	-do-
30.	Handicraft Mela	Sonargaon	exhibition in Chaitra	-do-
Fairs in Narsindi				
	Name of fair	Place	Occasion Period	Products available
1.	Baishakhi Mela	Narsindi	1-3 Baishak	Tolys, pattery, local made cloth, handicrafts, food items etc.
2.	Baul Mela	Natun Lanchghat	Baul's birthday in Magh	-do-
3.	Kalibari Mela	Chinispur Sadar	In Jaistha	-do-
4.	Janmasthami Mela	Panchdona	In Vadra	-do-
5.	Bishnupriya Mela	Ashram	13 Jaistha	-do-
6.	Vatpara Mela	Vatpara	New Year in Baishak	-do-
7.	Nehabo Mela	Nehabo Sadar	1-3 Baishakh	-do-



6. Vatpara Mela	Vatpara	New Year in Baishakh	-do-
7. Nehabo Mela	Nehabo Sadar	1-3 Baishakh	-do-
8. Changao Mela	Changao Sadar	1 Jaistha	-do-
9. Chaikandi Mela	Chaikandi Sadar	2 Jaistha	-do-
10. Baishakhi Mela	Debal Gastala	1 Baishakh	-do-
11. Sangkanti Mela	Naokaghat	In Chaitra	-do-
12. Baishakhi Mela	Saatpara	2 Baishakh	-do-
13. Baishakhi Mela	Kachari Road	3 Baishakh	-do-
14. -do- Angorkhola	-do-	In Baishakh	-do-
15. Fakir Mela	Lakursi Annual	In Jaistha	-do-
16. Jasore Akrar Mela	Jasore, Shibpur	-do- in Falgun	-do-
17. Joynagar Mela	Joynagar	1-3 Baishakh	-do-
18. Purbakhola Mela	Thana Complex	1-4 Baishakh	-do-
19. Kirtan Mela	Manohardi Bazar	In Magh	-do-
20. Astami snan Mela	Hatirdia Astami	In Falgun	-do-
21. Baishakhi Mela	Manohardi Bazar	1 Baishakh	-do-
22. -do- Chalakchar	---	8-9 Baishakh	-do-
23. Kasba Mela	Kasba 'Urs'	14 Vadra	-do-
24. Manohardi Mela	Manohardi	14 Agrahayan	-do-
25. Jamity pagal Mela	Manohardi	In Falgun	-do-
26. Lakhpur Mela	Palash	1 Baishakh	-do-
27. Razib Barir Mela	Debidarpara	22 Chaitra	-do-
28. Gastala Mela	Sadhur Bazar	1 Chaitra	-do-
29. Varniakhela Mela	Rajadi	15 Kartik	-do-
30. Sitla Mela	-do-	1 Chaitra	-do-
31. Barabokundu Mela	Palash	3 Paus	-do-
32. Ghorashal Mela	-do-	1 Baishakh	-do-
33. Baghdi Mela	-do-	-do-	-do-
34. Kartatil Mela	-do-	-do-	-do-
35. Chin Mela	Ghorashal	-do-	-do-
36. Pagalnather Mela	Raipara	1 Baishakh	-do-
37. Raipura Bazar Mela	Raipura	In Chaitra	do-
38. Samata Mela	Morjal	1 Baishakh	-do-
39. Baishakhi Mela	Raipura	-do-	-do-
40. Astami snan Nurpur	---	In Chaitra	-do-
41. Shah Iraner mazar Mela	Belabo	In Falgun	-do-
42. Harisangan Bazar Mela	Baznab	2-4 Baishakh	-do-
43. Binnabaid Mela	Binnabaid	In Falgun	-do-
44. Charkasim nagar Mela	Belabo	In Chaitra	-do-
45. Amlar Bazar Mela	Binnabaid	1 Baishakh	-do-
46. Sallabad Bazar Mela	Sallabad	23-27 Sravan	-do-
47. Sallabad Bazar Mela	Sallabad	11-15 Paus	-do-

#### Fairs in Munshiganj (It was fair of international standard)

Name of fair	Place	Occasion Period	Products
1. Kartick Barunir Mela*	Guzara ghatr char	Kartick	
2. Manasha puja Mela	Sadar Road	in monsoon in Ashar-Sravan	
3. Manasha Puja Mela	Sirajdikhan, Taltola	-do-	-do-
4. -do-	Sirajdikhan Bazar	-do-	-do-
5. -do-	Tangibari	-do- 15 days	-do-
6. -do-	Gazaria Bazar	-do-	-do-
7. -do-	Srinagar Bazar	-do-	-do-
8. -do-	Lauhajang <sup>7</sup>	Vadra 1 month	-do-

9. Bangla New Year Mela Lauhajang		Bangla new year 15 days	-do-
10. Rathjatra Mela	-do-	7 days	-do-
12. Jhuian Mela	Louhajan	In August	
11. Kadam Paglar Mela	Lauhajang Sadar Kadam	Paaglar 'Urs'	-do-
12. Baishakhi Mela	Baligaon Bazar Bangla	New Year	-do-
13. -do-	Aldi Bazar	1 week	-do-
14. -do-	Rikab	1 Baishakh	-do-
15. Dashami Mela	Kamalaghat	In Kartik	-do-
16. Rampal Dighirmela	Maghipurnima in Magh	-do-	
17. Shekher Nagarmela	Shekhernagar	Last day of Chaitra	-do-
18. Maijpara	Maijpara	-do-	-do-
19. Taltola Mela	Taltola	Bangla 1-3 Baishakh	-do-
20. Syamsiddi	Syamsihi	1&2 Baishakh	
21. Bhagyakul	Galaya Bhagyakul	1 Baishakh	
22. Kukutia Galaya	Kukutia	7 Baishakh	
23. Rajnagagur Galara	Rajnagar	1 Baishakh	
24. Srinagar Baraikhali	Galaya Srinagar	2-7 Baishakh	
25. Danyamara Galaya Fair-Danyamara		on Chaitra Sankranti	
26. Serajdigha Galaya Fair Serajdigha		1 Baishakh	
27. Kola Galaya Fair	Kala	2nd Baishakh	
28. Lchhapura Galaya Fair Lchhapura		1 & 2nd Baishakh	
29. Gaodia Mela	Gaodia Mela	1-8 Baishakh	
30. Nagerhat Mela	Nagerhat	1-7 Baishakh	
31. Kanakshar Mela	Kanakshar	1-3 Baishakh	
32. Kumarbhog Galaya	Kumarbhog	1-3 Baishakh	

**Fairs in Manikganj**

Name of fair	Place	Occasion Period	Products
1. Bijoy Mela	Manikganj stadium	13-24 December	-do-
2. Baishakhi Mela College Ground		1-4 Baishakh	-do-
3. Raasmela	Betila	9 Agrahayan	-do-
4. Rathmela	Kalibari	19-26 Ashar	-do-
5. Kalu Shah Mela	Saturia	'Urs' 10-17 Chaitra	-do-
6. Dolmela Betila		23 Agrahayan	-do-
7. Raboni Snan Mela *	Shibalaya	12-14 Chaitra	-do-
8. Paus Mela	Katigram sadar	In Paus & Magh	-do-
9. Burir Mela	Garpara	In Baishakh & Jaistha	-do-
10. Purnimar Mela	Baniajuri	Full moon in Magh	-do-
11. Radha-Mela	Kalta	Parbon in Chaitra	-do-
12. Muharram Mela	Batamuri	1-10 Muharram	-do-
13. Muharram Mela	Garpara	1-10 Muharram	-do-
14. Durga Mela	Arichaghat	In Ashwin	-do-
15. -do-	Manikganj	-do-	do-
16. Mashail Mela	Mashail	13 Magh	-do-
17. Bethila	Manikganj	RathJatra	-do-
18. Dighi Urs Mela	Manikganj	18 Magh	-do-
19. Kalipujar Mela	Matri-Jogason	Puja in Kartic	-do-

**Fairs in Gazipur**

Name of fair	Place	Occasion Period	Products
1. Ratjatra Mela8	Rajbarikhola	Annual in Ashar	-do-
2. Baishakhi Mela	Rajbarimath	1 Baishakh	-do-
3. Rathjatra Mela *	Bhawal	In Ashar	-do-

4. Fani-Paglar Mela	Porabari.	29 Ashar	-do-
5. Shitladevi's Mela	Joydebpur	1 Jaistha	-do-
6. Snanghata Mela	Tongi	15 Chaitra	-do-
7. Baishakhi Mela	Arichpur	New Year in Baishakh	-do-
8. Kodda Mela	Kodda	15 Chaitra	-do-
9. Pagaler Mela	Kaliakaoir	In Paus & Magh	-do-
10. Kathaltoli Mela	Kathaltoli	30 Vadra	-do-
11. Kaliakoir Mela	Kaliakoir	28 Jaistha	-do-
12. Baruni Mela	Targaon	1 Baishakh	-do-
13. Astami Mela	Ghi-ghat Astomi Snan	In Chaitra	-do-
14. Kalibarir Mela	Panbaraid	1 Baishakh	-do-
15. Rajbarir Mela	Rajbari	In Chaitra	-do-
16. Chatianir Mela	Chatiani	-do-	-do-
17. Baruni Mela	Kheyaghat	Paus mela in Paus	-do-
18. Kunja Mela	Kauchan	Annual in Falgun	-do-
19. Dalanbazar Mela	Chupair Durgapuja in	Ashwin	-do-
20. Baktarpur Mela	Baktarpur	In Paus	-do-
21. Baishakhi Mela	Bhawal	1 Baishakh	-do-
22. Kaoraid Mela,	Kauraid-	1 Baishakh	-do-

Source: Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation, Dhaka 1996 and S. N. H Rizvi, *District Gazetteer*. Dacca, 1969, p. 256.

- 1 These fairs are of mostly conventional and held regularly in the recent past. But due to scarce of open-space and other practical reasons many of them, now a days, have been lost its importance and disappeared.
- 2 This famous mela is being held on the occasion of Rathpurnima and lasts for 10-15 days. During this mela, fine cloths were brought here for trading purpose (See, Jatindra Mohan Roy: Dhakar Itihash, 1912, p.115)
- 3 Bangla Academy 'Boimela' was first introduced after independence in 1972.
- 4 Shisu Academy Mela begun in 1972.
- 5 Apart from *Ekushey Boi Mela*, a book fair under the patronisation of National Book Centre, Dhaka, has been introduced since its inception at *Bijoy Sarani* in 1995. This book fair is known as 'Dhaka Boimela' which is being held in different venues of Dhaka during the winter season.
- 6 In the mid of 19th century, this mela was known as *Chitra Baruni Mela*. Presently it is popularly known as *Langalbandh Mela*. The Hindu devotees from all over India used to come to this holy place every year on the occasion of Asoka Astami for taking bath or purifying dip and one day is devoted to bathing; lasts only for three or four dagol. See, *AL Clay, History and Statistics of the Dacca Division*, Calcutta, 1868, p. 77. Kedarnath mentioned that about 25000 people used to assemble here and this was the second biggest fair in the district. (See, Kedarnath Mazumdar, *Daccar Bibarana* (1910) p-103, James Taylor also cited that the panchamighat fair was famous for Hindu festival (James Taylor, *Topography of Dacca*, 1840, p. 5).
- 7 Lauhajang Mela used to hold at the adjacent house of Pal Choundhury, the famous business family of Eastern Bengal. In the whole month of *Vadra*, business men from Dhaka, Barisal, Faridpur, Mymensing, Comilla and Sylhet came with their products. A rich cultural shoire also held under the Patronisation of Pal Choudhuries of Lauhjang. See, Ambica Charan Ghosh, *Bikrampur Itihas*, 1895.
- 8 This Mela is also known Joydevpur Mela.

#### Appendix 44

#### List of the Laws in force in Bangladesh in respect of Industrial matters.

##### A General

1. The Transfer of Property Act, 1882
2. The Negotiable Instrument Act, 1881
3. The Contract Act
4. The Carriage by Air Act, 1984
5. The Railways Act, 1870
6. The Common Carriers and Carriage of Goods by Land, Air and Sea, Act.
7. The Insolvency Act, 1938
8. The Insurance Act, 1938
9. Arbitration Act.
10. The Sale of goods Act, 1930
11. The Customs Act, 1969
12. The Imports and Exports (Control) Act, 1950
13. The Companies Act, 1994
14. The Partnership Act, 1932
15. The Trade Marks Act, 1940
16. The Patents and Designs Act, 1911
17. The Copyrights Ordinance, 1962
18. The Income Tax Ordinance, 1984
19. The Value Added Tax Act, 1991
20. The Foreign Private Investment Act.
21. Bangladesh Standards of Weights and Measures Ordinance, 1982.

##### B Industrial Labourers and Employees

1. Apprenticeship Ordinance, 1962 and Rules, 1967
2. Bangladesh Hotels and Restaurants Ordinance, 1982 and Rules, 1986.
3. Bengal Payment of Wages (Procedures) Rules, 1938
4. Children (Pledging of Labour) Act, 1933
5. Chittagong Hill-Tracts (Labour Laws) Regulation, 1954
6. Chittagong Hill-Tracts Employment (Record of Services) Regulation, 1959.
7. Coal Mines (Fixation of Rates of Wages) Ordinance, 1960.
8. Companies Profits (Worker's Participation) Act, 1968.
9. Control of Employment Ordinance, 1965 and Rules, 1965

10. Dock Labourers Act, 1934 and Regulation, 1948
11. Dock Wokers'( Regulation Employment) Act, 1980
12. Employment of Children Act, 1938 and Rules, 1955
13. Employers' Liability Act, 1938
14. Employment (Record of Services) Act, 1951 and Rules, 1957.
15. Employment of Labour (Standing Order), Act, 1965 and Rules, 1968.
16. Emigration Ordinance, 1982.
17. Fatal Accident Act, 1955
18. Factories Act, 1965 and Rules, 1979.
19. Factories (Exemption) Rules, 1969
20. Inland Water Transport (Regulation of Employment) Act, 1965
21. Industrial Relation Ordinance, 1969 and Rules, 1977
22. Industrial Relations (Regulation) (Repealed) Ordinance, 1984.
23. Industrial Statistics Act, 1942
24. Maternity Benefit Act, 1939
25. Maternity Benefit (Tea Estates) Act, 1950
26. Minimum Wages Ordinance, 1961 and Rules, 1961.
27. Minimum Wages Rates for Hotels and Restaurants, 1979.
28. Newspaper Employees (Conditions of Services) Act, 1974.
29. Payment of Wages Act, 1936 and Rules, 1937
30. Road Transport Workers' Ordinance, 1961 and Rules, 1962.
31. Services (Pay and Allowances) Order, 1985.
32. State-owned Manufacturing Industries Workers' (Terms and Conditions of Services) Ordinance, 1979.
33. Shops and Establishment Act, 1965 and Rules, 1970
34. Tea Plantation Labour Ordinance, 1962.
35. Workmen's Compensation, Act, 1923 and Rules, 1924.
36. Workmen's Compensation (Registration of cases) Rules, 1953.
37. Workmen's Compensation (Transfer of money) Rules, 1935.



**Appendix 45**  
**I.L.O. Conventions adapted in Bangladesh**

Convention No	Year
1. Hours of Work (Industry)	1919
4. Night Work (Women)	1919
6. Night Work of Young Persons (Industry)	1919
11. Right of Association (Agriculture)	1921
14. Weekly Rest (Industry)	1921
15. Minimum Age (Trimmers and Stokers)	1921
16. Medical Examination of Young Persons (Sea)	1921
18. Workmen's Compensation (Occupational Diseases)	1925
19. Equality of Treatment (Accident Compensation)	1925
21. Inspection of Emigrants	1926
22. Seamen's Articles of Agreement	1929
27. Marking of Weight (Packages Transported by Vessels)	1930
32. Protection Against Accidents (Dockers) (Revised)	1932
45. Underground Work (Women)	1935
59. Minimum Age (Industry) (Revised)	1937
80. Final Articles Revision	1946
81. Labour Inspection	1947
87. Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize	1948
89. Night Work (Women) (Revised)	1948
90. Night Work of Young Persons (Industry) (Revised)	1948
96. Free Charging Employment Agencies (Revised)	1949
98. Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining	1949
105. Abolition of Forced Labor	1957
106. Weekly Rest (Commerce and Offices)	1957
107. Indigenous and Tribal Populations	1957
107. Discrimination (Employment and Occupation)	1958
116. Final Articles Revision	1961
118. Equality of Treatment (Social Security)	1962
114. Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards)	1976
149. Nursing Personnel	1977

Source: ILO publications.

#### Appendix 46 Process of Salt Production

Producing salt in Bangladesh is a very old tradition. It had been produced mainly by solar heat. The *Malangis* of the coastal-belt used to prepare salt as an indigenous product over the ages. In 1765, the Society of Trade formed, which involved East India Company officers in salt business. Other company officers deployed in Dhaka, Armenians, Nawabs of Dhaka and Portuguese were engaged in salt business. Dhaka, Narayanganj, Larkul, Louhaganj, Nalchity were the important trade centre while Bhulua, Sandwip and Salimabad were the main producing centres of salt.



Ploughing of the *Khalari* lands



*Mada*- Mixing of saline water and clay



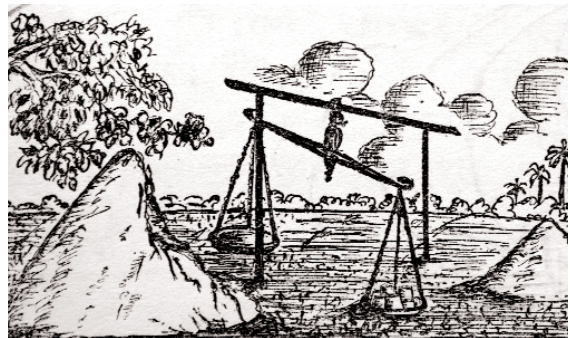
Heating in the *Tadal*



*Khalari* lands



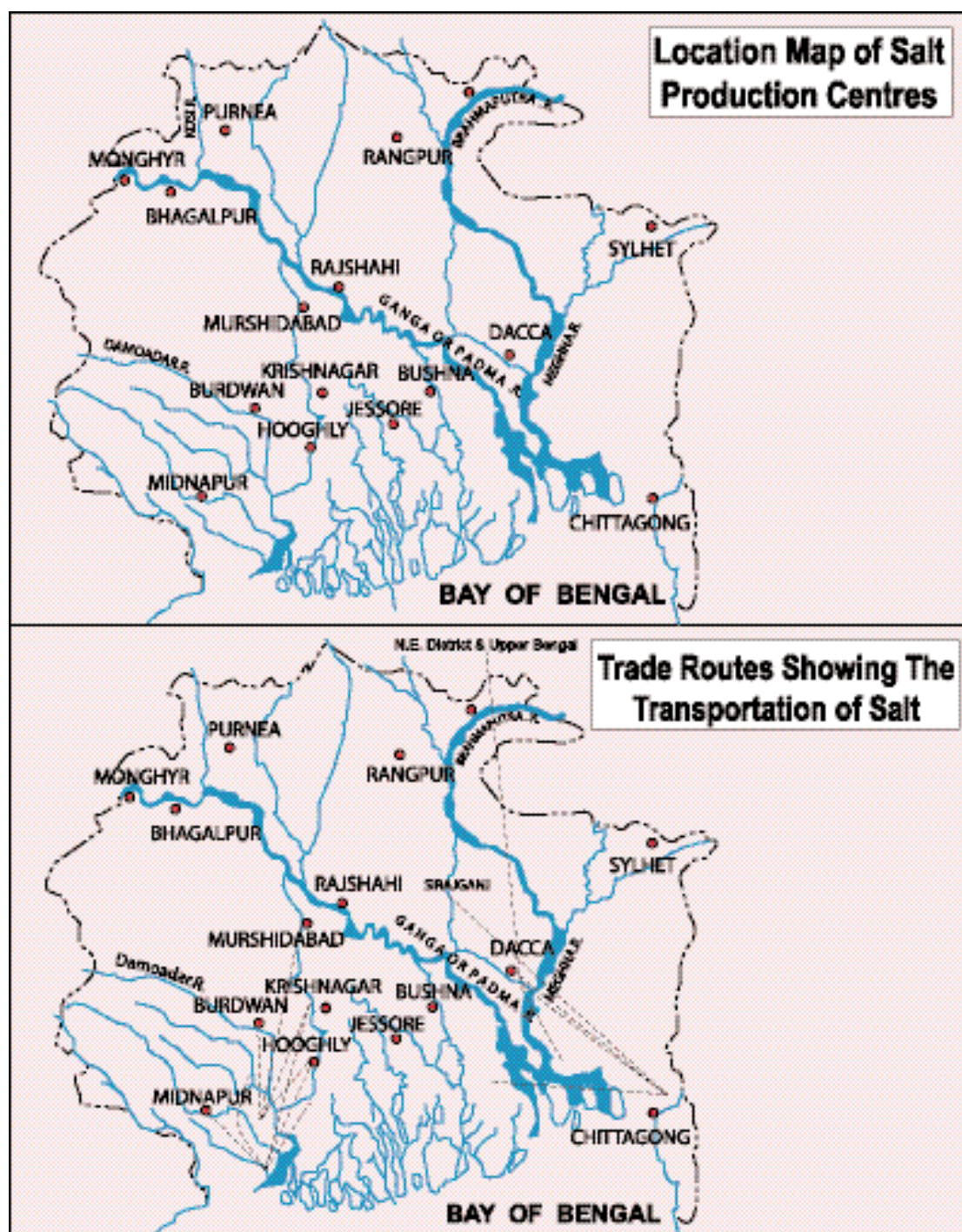
An outer view of a *Tadal*



Weighing salt



Appendix 47



### Appendix 48 Process of Silk (Reshm) Production

Silk has a history of many centuries but it is now difficult to determine when the silk begun to be produced in Bengal. Bengal's port like Sonargaon and Dhaka traded silk to a great extend, though Dhaka did not produce any silk but traded silk inflowed from other places. Silk producing rural households of Bengal took care of the initial three stages of productions - mulbury cultivation, silkworm rearing and reeling of raw silk etc.



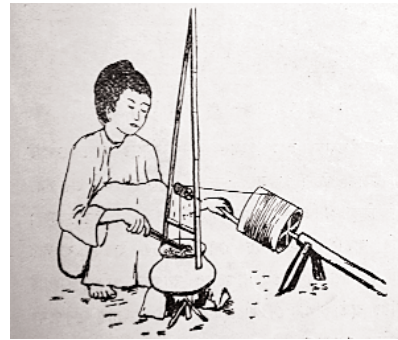
Burmese cutting system



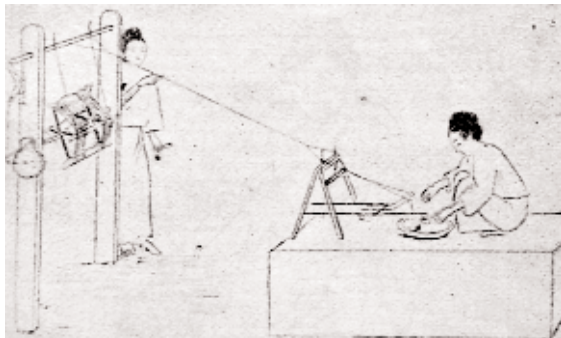
Another cutting proces in Burma



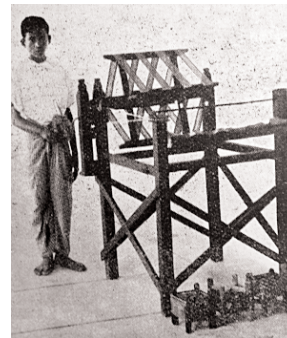
Process in a hand machine



Japanese cutting system



Bengal's traditional system



Another machine for processing



#### Appendix 49 Process of Tea Production (Old Method)

Tea was first known in China as early as 2737 B.C. Atish Dipankar of Dhaka's Vikrampur was entertained with a cup of tea when he first visited to Tibbet. By 1610, tea was brought to Europe and rapidly became fashionable drink. In the late 19th century, Bhawal Raj and the Dhaka Nawab's initiated tea plantations in Dhaka but the output was not up to the mark. After the partition, East Bengal inherited 133 tea garden and many of these tea gardens have their principal offices in Dhaka.



Plucking of tea



Carrying tea



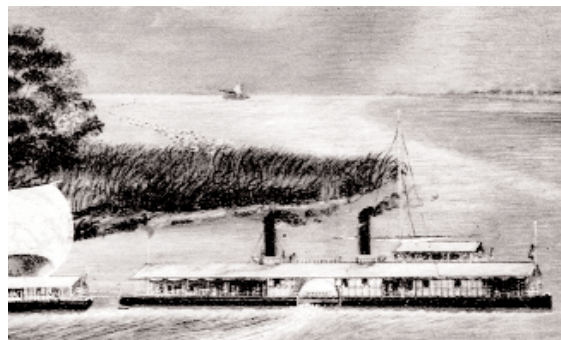
Old method of rolling



Hand sorting



Drying over a charcoal fire



A steamer with Tea Chests and Tea Garden Labour

### Royal involvements in Trade and Commerce



Alauddin Khalji, who fixed up the price of essentionls and used to punish the shopkeepers who did not abide by the rules



Sher Shah, who built the Grand Trauk Road from Sonargaon to Punjab to facilitate the traders and common people. This road crossed the Dhaka city near present Kawranbazar, where a *Sarai* was established for the wayfarer



By a Forman, Empror Akbar provided trade facilities to the Portuguese and abolished the *sayer* system



Manshing, who developed imperial *nowwara* and promoted boat building at Dhaka and also established a *Mughal thana* and a fort during his stay in Dhaka in 1602-04



Dhaka was named *Jahangirnagar* after Jahangir's name. He allowed the European merchants to have tax- free trade in Bengal



Shah Suja, who rented out 20 shops at Bara Kutra



### Royal involvements in Trade and Commerce



Isa Khan and Bhawal Ghazi met Emperor Akbar. Isa Khan patronised the weavers of his dominion while Bhawal Gazi brought a good numbers of *Tanti*, who settled in Kapasia areas in the 16th century



Emperor Shahjahan, who visited Dhaka in 1624 and on returning made Mulsin of Dhaka more popular in the Royal Court. He allowed Europeans to carry out business



By issuing a Forman, Emperor Aurangzeb allowed trading to other places including Bengal by paying duties in 1680 A.D.



Mir Jumla was engaged in Salt business in Dhaka by selling at higher prices through holding. He used to obtain information from the Company businessmen regarding the yearly requirements of Salt to be exported from Dhaka



Shaista Khan, who extended more facilities for trading to the Portuguese and did not permit Willam Hedeges to have trade in Dhaka

### Royal involvements in Trade and Commerce



Murshid Quli Khan, who shifted capital from Dhaka to Murshidabad. He also took local artisans, traders to Murshidabad. He used to punish *Beparis* and *Mahaldars* if prices of rice would go up. He initiated to make the Dhaka Chawkbazar modern.



During the Naib-Nazimship of Sarfaraj Khan, Dhaka became plentiful in foodgrain. His Dewan Jashwabant Khan re-opened the West Gate of Dacca as the rice was again available 8 munds for a rupee.



Alivardi Khan lifted the trading barriers as he beleived that trade would enrich his tax volume and enable him to ran the administration smoothly. He had good relations with the Hindu bankers and businessmen



Mir Qasim waived the internal taxes both for the Europeans and local merchants



Nawab Siraj al Daulah confronted the English Traders and asked them to refrain from erecting any Fort but it was in vain. It resulted the battle of Pallasey which decided the fate of Bengal



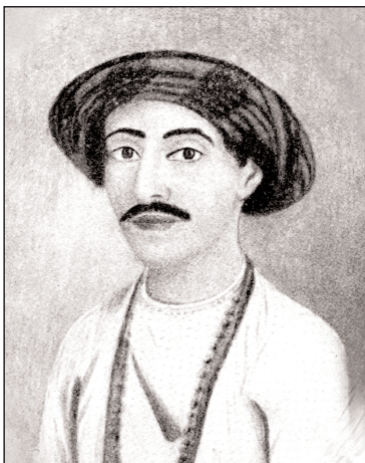
As per agreement with Mir Jafar in 1763, The East India Company got permission to have tax free trade in Bengal. Rs. 2½ percent was fixed as tax on salt.



### Royal involvements in Trade and Commerce



Raj Vallab collected taxes at the rate of Rs. 4300 each from the English and the French traders for trading in Bengal. He fled away from Dhaka with the revenue he collected



During Reza Khan's time, taxes were often levied twice on the same commodity. He enjoyed monopoly business during the great famine in 1769-70.<sup>1</sup>



Nusrat Jung, Naib Nazim of Dhaka. He wrote the *Tarkhi-i-Nusrat-Jungi* (the history of Dacca), the first of its kind



Jesharat Khan, Naib Nazim of Dhaka (1765-72). He was a Persian and many Persian traders settled in Dhaka during his time



Nawab Shamsuddaula tried to organise himself against the East India Company. Bishop Heber met him and gave a pice of fine muslin cloth and ivory made walking-stick to Nawab.

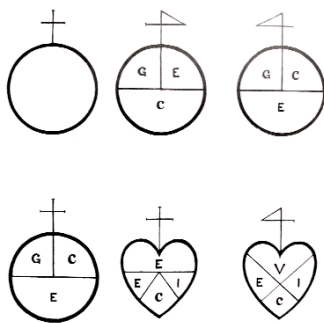


During Nawab Kamruddaula's time Hindu Mahajan class further developed. He used to take loans from the *Sahas* and *Basaks* of Dhaka. Chinese traders influxed in Dhaka.

1 Local tradition says:  $\text{†} \text{†} \text{ki} \text{ mg} \text{ } ^{-} \text{gij} \text{ } \text{†} \text{†} \text{bqv} \text{ ev} \text{Rv} \text{†} \text{†} \text{,}$   
 $\text{†} \text{†} \text{k} \text{ Qvi} \text{ Lvi} \text{ } \text{†} \text{†} \text{Mj} \text{ } \text{†} \text{†} \text{Rv} \text{ Lvi} \text{ } \text{†} \text{†} \text{†} \text{†} \text{†}$   
 $\text{GK} \text{ } \text{†} \text{†} \text{†} \text{†} \text{ } \text{e} \text{ } \text{emvq} \text{ } \text{ } \text{vg} \text{ } \text{Li} \text{ } \text{Zi}$   
 $\text{†} \text{†} \text{Qv} \text{†} \text{†} \text{†} \text{ } \text{†} \text{†} \text{†} \text{†} \text{ } \text{nj} \text{ } \text{fq} \text{ } \text{†} \text{†} \text{†} \text{†} \text{†}$

### Some Insignia of the East India Company

#### The Company's "Aishans"



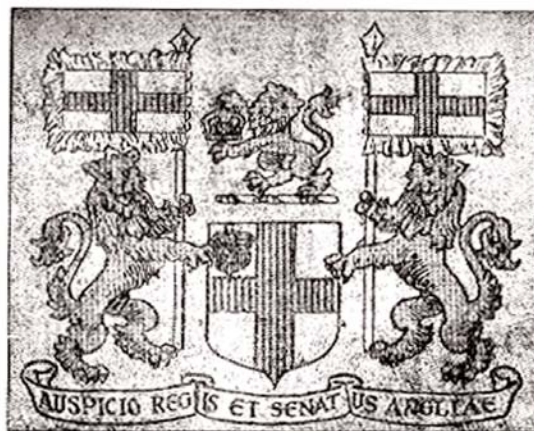
A takma of old East India Company

#### The Company's "Aishans"

FROM ancient times merchants marked their bales and cases with a special mark, generally the initials of the owner. Piety, or superstition added a cross over the mark (fig. 1), and this addition came to be converted into the sign 4, possibly because the cross was completed by the equilateral triangle, which was the symbol of the Trinity.

The title of the East India Company was originally "The Governor and Company of Merchants of London Trading to the East Indies," and its bale-mark accordingly bore the letters G. C. E. Dr. John Fryer in his "New Account of East India and Persia" (1698, p. 207) gives fig. 2 as "The Company's mark upon all their goods, bales and parcels"; but he, or his engraver, transposed the letters and inverted the 4, as will be seen from the examples which follow (figs. 3 and 6), and also from those which are reproduced on pp. 72, 73, and 75 of Sir George Birdwood's "Report on the Old Records of the India Office" (second reprint, 1891). A letter of March 14, 1658 (Letter Books, Vol. II, p. 69) gives the mark correctly as in fig. 3. This seems to have been used from the beginning until at least 1685, or even as late as 1700 (see Factory Records, Surat, Vol. 40). In 1639 the form illustrated in fig. 4 occurs; and Sir George Birdwood quotes a second example in 1648.

The English East India Company, founded in 1698, used the form as in fig. 5. The United East India Company's mark is shown in fig. 6. V standing for "United"; and this form may be seen on the muskets and other weapons, dated 1780 and 1781, in the trophy of arms on the first floor of the India Office. It will also be found on the Company's copper coinage from 1791 to 1794.



A takma of New East India Company

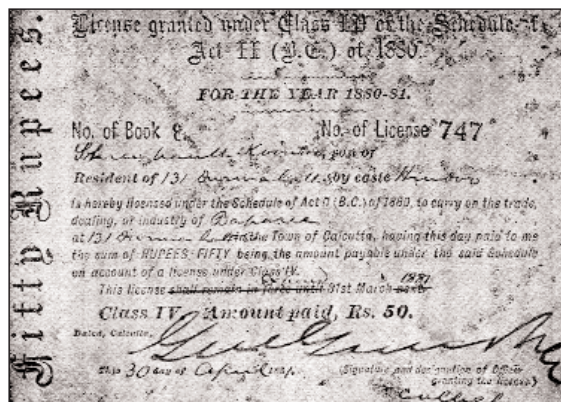


Logo of the Nawabs of Murshidabad



East India Company on the eve of acquisition of Dewani

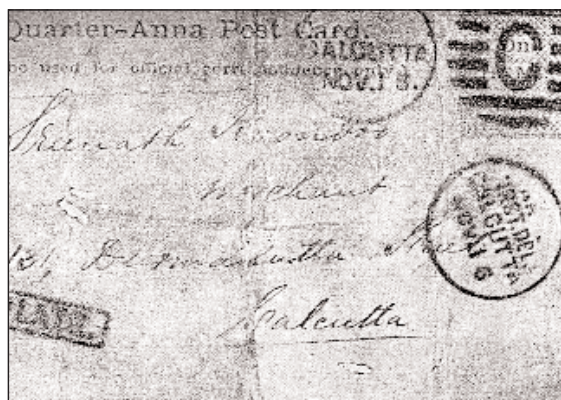




A business licence issued in 1880-81



Seal of Dewani Sadar Adalat



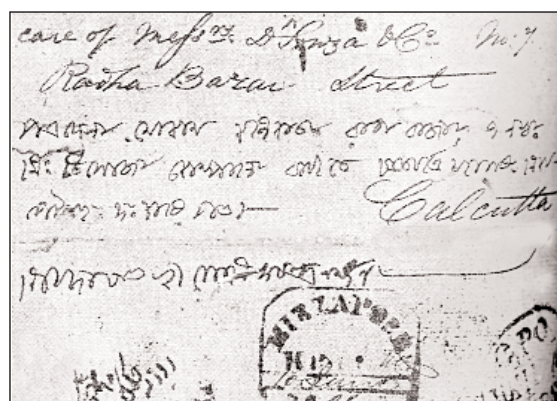
A post-card used in the State Service



The first post-card issued by the  
East India Company



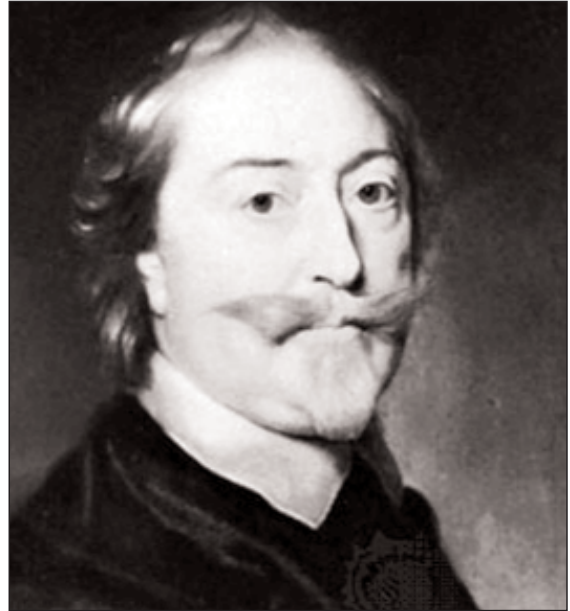
Stamp paper worth Rs. 8 used in Dhaka during the East India Company



A facsimile of an envelope-less letter was in use during the East India Company



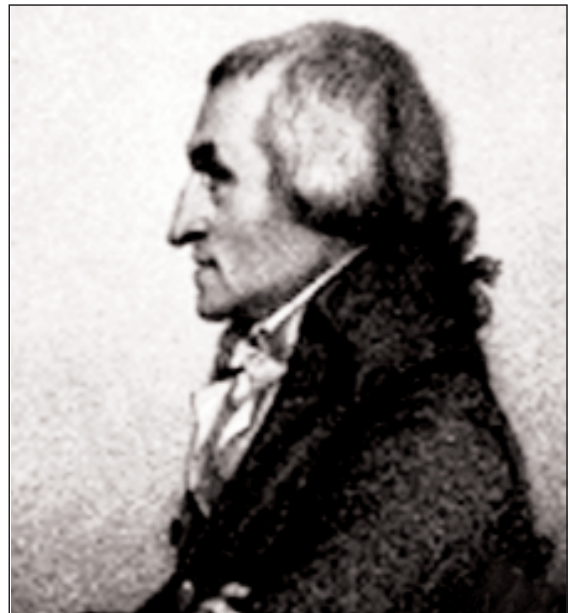
Vasco-da-Gama, who paved the way for trading in India for the Portuguese and other European merchants



Sir Thomas Roe, who sought permission for trading in India for the East India Company



William Hedges, who visited Dhaka in 1682 and met Shaista Khan to obtain permission for trading but this attempt was in vain. Hedges left an interesting diary on his Dhaka visit



James Rennell, who mapped the waterways of Bengal to facilitate easier water route to the company traders, had his headquarters at Dhaka. He prepared several maps and left a memoirs on life and living of the people of lower Bengal

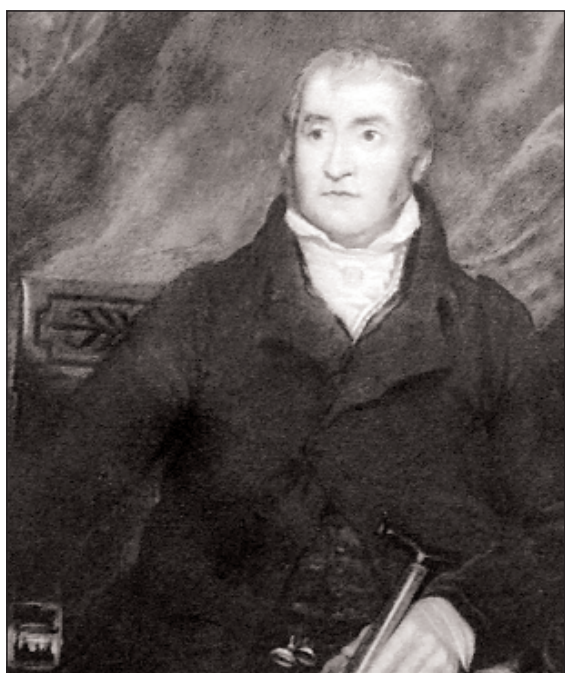




Jane, wife of Major Rennell, who assisted Rennell in preparing maps on Dhaka and its environs



Niky Pogose, who was a zamindar and indigo planter of Dhaka



Thakeray, who was engaged in business in Dhaka and Sylhet. He was popularly known as 'Sylhet-Thakeray'

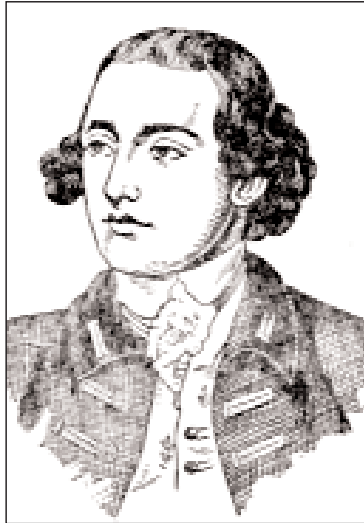


Richard Barwel, the Resident of Dhaka, who was engaged in salt business in Dhaka and Barisal

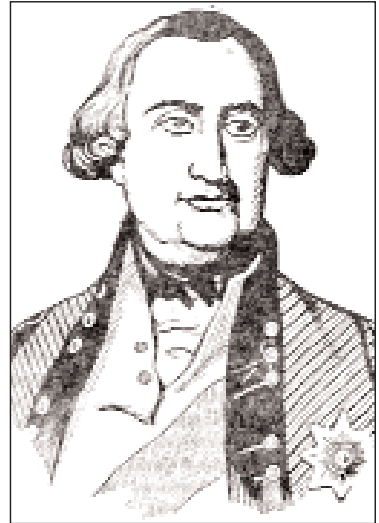
### Company Involments in Trade and Commerce



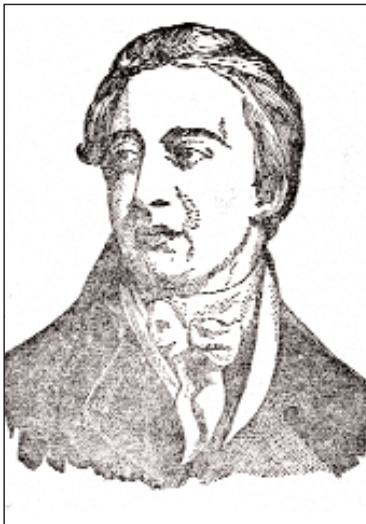
Lord Clive who prohibited the private business of the company servants. He formed a business co-operative council to compensate the civilians but the Board did not approve his proposal.



During the time of Warren Hastings, Reza Khan, Naib-i-Nazim of Dhaka was removed. The Board of Revenue was established. The Regulating Act was passed and Governor-Generalship was introduced.



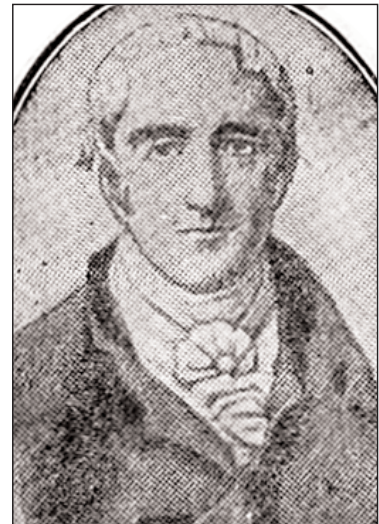
Lord Cornwallis stopped the Illegal Trading of the Company Servants. He instructed the English merchants to bring salt aboard their ships from South-Indian ports on way to return to Bengal's ports. This affected the Bengal's salt business.



William Bentinck abolished the East India company's monopoly business with China, imposed tax on Opium, reduced salaries of the company servants. He showed keen interest in plantation of tea in India, brought Tea plants from China.



In order to expand trade and commerce, Lord Dalhousie established Railway system in India. He opened new route to England through the Red Sea, which developed an easier maritime business with Europe. He also Established public works, Telegraph department and introduced postal stamp in India.



Lord Wellesley who reduced the number of Civil Servants of the East India Company was interested in lending money at the high rate of interest. He established Fort William College in 1800 A.D.



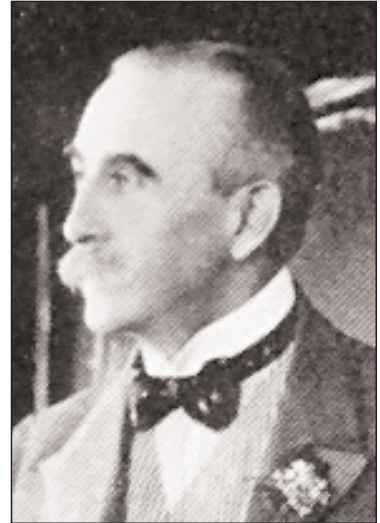
## Company Involments in Trade and Commerce



Lord Canning developed income Tax system, introduced Currency Notes (Paper money) and enacted the Bengal Rent Act, 1859.



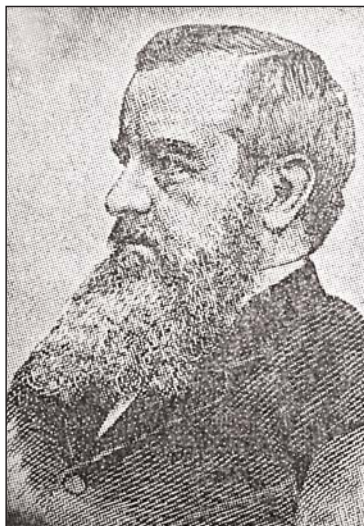
The first regular census of Bengal was carried out during the Lord Mayo. Suez Canal was opened during his time and it reduced the distance between India and Europe considerably



Lord Minto's administration was marked by a very widespread movement known as 'Swadeshi Movement'. Many indigenous entrepreneurs established *Swadeshi* enterprises



Lord Lytton endorsed the liberal trade policy of Northbrook and allowed free trade all over India. Excise duty imposed in cloth earlier was waived. Formed Famine Commission and introduced Famine Code.



Lord Ripon established Agricultural Department in Bengal, reduced Excise duty on salt. He waived duty on coarse cloths and enacted Local Govt. Act. He carried out the 2nd Census in 1881.



Bengal was partitioned during Lord Curzon's time with an assurance to improve Chittagong Port as well as the condition of the Muslims of Eastern Bengal.

### Landed Aristocrats, who Shifted from Business to Zamindari



Mir Ashraf Ali, a zamindar of Dhaka. Bishop Heber, who visited Dhaka in 1824, gives an interesting account of his meeting with this 'Premier Nobleman of East Bengal'. Mir Arshaf Ali, while he owned 3 lakh *bighas* of land, thought that he was in the midst of poverty



Kwaja Alimaullah, who shifted his business from Sylhet to Dhaka. He purchased several zamindaries in Dhaka, Bakergonj, Mymensingh and Comilla districts



Bhawal Raja Kali Narayan Choudhury, who was engaged in supplying elephants to the East India Company and initiated tea plantation in Dhaka. He purchased the indigo factory of Mr. J.P. Wise



Raja Sreenath Roy of Bhaggyakul, who was the pioneer in jute and foodgrain business. Also operated steamer services namely 'East Bengal River Steam Company'. He established a 'Economic Museum'





Raja Janakinath Roy, who promoted jute business and influenced Lord Carmichael in developing the jute sector in East Bengal



Kishorelal Roychowhury, who's ancestor Jaganath Roy Choudhury was a business man, had salt business at Nalchity, Sirajganj and Chittagong in the mid 18th century



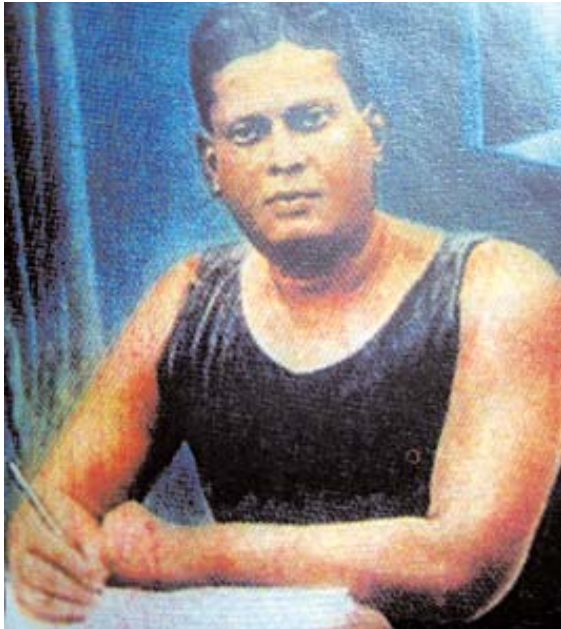
Ruplal Das was a famous business man and zamindar during *Swadeshi* movement. He intended to establish a cotton mill but finally it was not set up. Provided Capital to the European Jute Traders



Rada Vallaba Das's ancestors were famous *Podders* in Dhaka. Possessed zamindari and *Mahajni* business to a great extent. Also owned 'Kaotyle Brick Field'



**Landed Aristocrats, Many of them had their Business Link and Social Bontrol in Dhaka**



Narendranath Roy Chowdhury,  
a zamindar of Baldah



Raisuddin Ahmed Siddiqui,  
zamindar of Baliadi



Mir Golam Mostafa,  
a zamindar of Dhaka



Kazi Zahirul Haq of  
Dhaka's famous Kazi Family





Syed Golam Hossain,  
a zamindar of Dhaka



Syed Hasan Ali, a zamindar of Dhaka  
A city lane is named after him



Kazi Alauddin, a zamindar of Dhaka,  
A city road is being named after him



Abul Khairat, a zamindar of Dhaka  
A city road is named after him





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