

Chapter-V-C

Education

I

Before the coming of the British, a popular, indigenous system of education was running in India. As in other parts of the country the education in the district of Malda during pre-colonial period was also confined to the small schools called pathsalas, mukhtabs, and tolls. The modes of teaching of those institutions were primitive and clumsy. Hamilton gives a detailed description of the education system of the district before the coming of the English. According to him, the elementary education of the children's used to be imparted in the village pathsalas. The teachers were known as gurus. The teachers were paid by the students and entirely depended upon them for their livelihood. The average number of students or scholars did not exceed 12, and the fees were 1 to 4 annas. The children usually go to schools at the age of five years and are instructed to read and write which seems to be an excellent method.¹ So far as the content of learning is concerned, generally agricultural accounts, commercial accounts and some vernacular works were taught in local / regional languages. For example initially they started their education with tracing letters on the flour with a pencil. After five or six months they could read and write. They were then taught the basics of arithmetic. Arithmetic were partly divided into two parts one for agricultural purpose and other for commercial affairs. The vernacular works and the medium of instruction were Bengali. For the Hindu students who wished for higher education had to attend chatuspathis which were locally known as choubarris under the guidance of Adhyapakas. Adhyapakas generally came from Brahmin caste and had enjoyed rent-free land so that they could continue to instruct the students free of cost. In this stage along with literature the students were taught grammar, poetry and law. Children of Hindus and Muslims together attended pathsalas. The number of mukhtabs was very small. The medium of learning of the mukhtabs were Persian. Because of the necessity of Persian language for those who wished to attain fortune in the government service the Hindus and Muslims both were frequented to mukhtabs.² Regarding the clientele of this education, William Adam observed that "Commercial accounts... are chiefly acquired by the class of money-lenders and retail traders, agricultural accounts....by the children of those families whose subsistence is exclusively drawn from the land, and both

accounts by those... who expect to gain their livelihood as writers, accountants, etc".³ It is significant to note that neither Sanskrit nor Arabic books were used for teaching in those schools. It is thus clear that before coming of the British, there existed numerous pathsalas or elementary village schools education in the length and breadth of the district.

II

The East India Company exercised their administrative power in the region of Malda from the year 1765,⁴ but until the late fifties of the nineteenth century there were no government aided English school in the district; not even any school of vernacular language which is somehow supported and guided by the government. John Ellerton of the Guamaty factory on his own initiative established some primary schools in his locality as early as 1803 and taught his pupils in vernacular language.⁵ This was the first attempt by any Europeans for the spread of education in the district. Yet, some others missionary schools were there for the purpose of religious teaching in vernacular language, out of which, two were at Bholahat and Mahespura, opened in April 1812 and the other at English Bazar in May in the same year.⁶ William Carry also started a school at Madanabati of Bamongola thana but unfortunately after the tenor of Carry school was closed.⁷

Hitherto education has been largely neglected by the Company, except for a little patronage of Hindhu and Muslim learning: the Charter Act of 1813 inaugurated a new era in the history of Indian education. It empowered East India Company to spend one lakh of rupees per year for educational purposes out of the surplus revenues.⁸ Secondly, the Charter Act of 1813 also allowed the missionaries to travel across India with a condition that there would be a conscious "encouragement of the learned natives of India and the revival of and improvement of literature: the promotion of knowledge of the sciences among the inhabitants of that country".⁹ (Previously, missionaries could not legally operate within company territory). Both the steps taken by the Charter Act of 1813 created a wave for western education in India subcontinent. In the year 1823 a committee of public instruction was appointed. This committee sought to encourage the learning and literature respected by the people and to foster higher education as it was then understood, but no attempt was made to arrange for any general system of education. Under Lord William Bentinck the cause of English education, which had hitherto been promoted mainly by the

independent efforts of missionaries, rapidly gained ground: and in 1835, under the influence of Macaulay, it was decided that the medium of learning in higher schools would be English. In 1837, the abolition of Persian as the court language gave a great stimulus to the study of English. The committee of public instruction was replaced in 1842 by a Council of Education. The celebrated educational Dispatch, issued by the Court of Directors in 1854 gave a further impetus to the education in India¹⁰ with an objective to spread European science and knowledge. This objective was to be achieved through the medium of English language in the higher education and through vernacular language for the general mass of the people. This was followed by the appointment of a Director of Public Instruction in Bengal and of a certain number of inspectors and sub-inspectors of schools in 1855 and finally the establishment of a regular department of Public Instruction.¹¹ Sir George Campbell's scheme of educational reform in primary education was introduced in 1872.¹² He made an honest attempt to establish a good system of primary education by introducing certain changes in the existing one¹³ under which grants were given in aid of schools hitherto unaided and many of the indigenous rural schools called pathshalas were absorbed into the departmental system.¹⁴ He made an arrangement to give money as 'grant-in aid' to every indigenous school masters and provide scholarships for the primary schools. It was proposed by Campbell to place the financial management and the administration of the primary schools in the hands of the District Magistrate and Sub-divisional Officers. The aim and objective of his scheme was not only the extension or expansion of primary schools but also their improvement.¹⁵ After 12 months of the introduction of this scheme initiated by Campbell, the administrative report of Bengal in 1873-74, shows that Sir George Campbell's scheme of primary village schools has continued to make great progress.¹⁶ From that date the progress of education in Bengal has been rapid and sustained.

III

As far the district of Malda is concerned, in the year 1835, one higher Hindu school, 10 common Hindu schools and two Persian schools were there.¹⁷¹⁷¹⁷ The first attempt was made in 1848 when the Board's report for Bhagalpur Division decided to select six stations for establishment of six Government Vernacular Schools, out of which, one at English Bazar and other at Sheebgunge of the same district.

Accordingly, In January, 1848, Malda Sudder Station School came into existence. Initially, the then Deputy Collector and Magistrate of the district Mr. F. B. Kemp was vested with the responsibility of supervision and administration of the school. Sri Hurranchunder Guttuck, a man of excellent character appointed as teacher. The Commissioner of Bhagalpur observes that “the endeavors used for establishing the Government Vernacular Schools have succeeded better in Maldah than in any other district of his division, and he attributes this principally to the previous exertions of Mr. Ellerton and others, and of Mr. Bell, a former Deputy Collector of the district, to the superiority of the school masters, the great interest taken in the school by the present Deputy Collector and Magistrate of the district Mr. F. B. Kemp and the circumstances that the district is one in Bengal, the inhabitants...to be more desirous of school learning...however, he evidently considers the results in his division far from satisfactory”. English Bazar is a small town, taking this into consideration, it must be said that the average daily attendance of the school at Sudder Station in the first year was 55, which is more than satisfactory as compared to other schools of the Bhagalpur Division as shown by the table no. 1. The report of Public Instruction for the year 1863-64 informed that the school is done well. The condition of school improved day by day and it was in a very fair state of efficiency. The teacher of the school was a good scholar and concerned to improve the performance of his students.¹⁸

The schools mentioned bellow in the table 1 were the first Government Vernacular Schools to be started in the district of Malda

Table-1

List of Schools in Bhagalpur Division		
District	Station	Average daily attendance
Tirhoot	Durbungah	Vide text
	Lalgunge	
	Dulsing Serai	
Monghyr	Sudder station	25
Bhagalpur	Sudder station	27
Purnea	Sudder station	41
	Nathpore	Unknown
Dinajpore	Sudder station	89
Maldah	Sudder station	55
	Sheebgunge	15

Source: General Report on Public Instruction in the Lower Provinces of the Bengal Presidency for 1847-48, (Calcutta: Military Orphan Press, 1849), 174-176.

The number of schools of the district has been increased to 12 at the end of the year 1857¹⁹ which was not satisfactory as compared to the other district of the Bengal Presidency and stand at the bottom of the list as shown by the table No. 2.

Table-2

Comparative Statement of number of schools in each district in the Lower Province of Bengal Presidency								
District	Hooghli	Nuddea	Burdwan	Midnapore	Murshidabad	Rajshahi	Birbhum	Malda
No. of Schools	50	17	45	60	46	17	36	12

Source: General Report on Public Instruction in the Lower Provinces of the Bengal Presidency for 1856-57, (Calcutta: John Gray, "Calcutta Gazette" Office, 1857), 56.

A number of schools of various categories were opened at the close of the year 1863-64. The number of schools has risen to 16 and the total number of students enrolled in various schools during the year was 988.²⁰ The following table illustrates the progress of education in the district of Malda during last few decades. But it must be received with caution as far the number of students is concerned because they have been compiled from the appendices to the General Reports of Public Instruction.

Table-3

Educational Statistics of Malda district for the year 1870-71								
Nature of Schools	No. of Schools	Total No. of Students	Hindus	Musalmans	Station	Expenditure		
						From Govt.	From other source	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Govt. English School	1	110	98	12	English Bazar	2589	1208	3797
Govt. School (Vernacular)	3	178	157	21	Malda Sadar	248	250	498
					Sibganj	233	108	341
					Aridang	187	43	230
Aided School Middle Class (English)	3	142	114	28	Nawabganj	377	400	777
					Kaliachak	638	901	1539
					Bangabari	122	170	292
Aided School Middle Class (Vernacular)	10	495	420	136	Aiho	141	218	359
					Kasimpur	168	262	430
					Chandola	168	404	572
					Gamostapur	194	451	654
					Heatpur	216	325	541
					Maharajpur	168	306	474
					Pukhuria	144	254	398
					Khanpur	168	192	360
					Nagharia	117	313	430
					Sarbari	240	434	674
Total	17	925				6118	6239	12366

Source: General Report on Public Instruction in the Lower Provinces of the Bengal Presidency for 1870-71, (Calcutta: The Bengal Secretariat Press, 1871), 12-42, W.W. Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Bengal*, Vol-VII, (Delhi: D. K. Pub. House, 1974), 118-121.

The above statistics shows that the number of schools has increased to 17 and the number of students was 925. Though, Hunter mentioned one additional aided vernacular middle class school with 61 students and total 18 schools with 986 students in the same year.²¹ However, the greatest portion of increase was in Government aided vernacular schools of which there were none in the first half of the 19th century. A significant feature of the statistical table is that being a number of 46 percent of the whole population of the district acquired by the Mahamaddan population but there were only 20 percent students attended the schools in 1870-71. However, the proportion is rising steadily.²² It is also revealed from the above table that except Malda Zillah School, the grant from the Government was not encouraging other schools of the district. Even though Malda is a backward district, taking this into account it must be said that the overall progress of the district in this direction is satisfactory. In chorus, it must be remembered that we are talking about only those schools, who were the recipients of Government aid and subject to Government inspection. In addition a large number of unaided and uninspected schools were there²³ to be absorbed into the new Government system announced by Sir George Campbell. After the introduction of Campbell's scheme, the administrative reports of Bengal of 1875 shows that the number of schools within the district has increased to 123 and the number of students on the rolls on 31st March in 1874 were 4,246.²⁴ The total number of schools therefore increased tremendously and the numbers of students were more than twofold during the last year of the new system.²⁵ In 1887, the District Board created under the Bengal Local Self-Government Act took over the local direction of primary education superseding the old District Committee of Public Instruction.²⁶ Following table gives almost a clear idea of progress made in this direction after the introduction of Campbell's scheme.

Table-4

Statement showing the number of Public Schools and Students					
Year	Schools	Students	Year	Schools	Students
1900-01	346	11802	1911-12	527	20009
1901-02	350	12797	1912-13	553	20462
1902-03	381	13330	1913-14	619	21020
1903-04	475	15547	1914-15	639	22067
1904-05	447*	14392	1915-16	724	24482
1905-06	465	14182*	1916-17	709	24683
1906-07	418*	12782*	1917-18	752	25525
1907-08	363*	12435*	1918-19	759	24528*
1908-09	421	16085	1919-20	741	24437*
1909-10	447	17471	1920-21	791	26588
1910-11	505	19257	-	-	-

Source: Bengal District Gazetteer, Malda District, Statistics, 1900-1901 to 1910-1911, B. Volume, Table-24, Calcutta: The Bengal Secretariat Book Dept, 1913, 26. & Bengal District Gazetteer, Malda District, Statistics, 1911-1912 to 1920-1921, B. Volume, Table-23, Calcutta: The Bengal Secretariat Book Dept, 1923, 26.

The above table shows that in the following years of Campbell's scheme a good number of indigenous schools were absorbed to the scheme and many new schools were opened under the patronage of Government along with people's contribution. Apart from Government patronization, a large number of schools were opened during the time of freedom movement with a view to spread national education. The above mentioned table shows that, in the year 1900-01 there were only 346 schools of various categories with a total strength of 11,802 students but the number of schools raised to 791 with strength of 26,588 students in 1920-21. It means within the period of twenty years, the progress made in this direction was more than twofold. The star mark in rows indicates the decrease in number from preceding years. It was mainly due to the closing up of upper primary and lower primary schools. It was the general condition of education in the district of Malda. Urban centers' are normally looked upon as seeds of new thoughts in the domains of

education, arts, literature, and politics, as the focal point of a process of cultural change or culture-bound climate.²⁷ That might be true in English Bazar town during our period of study. Now we turn to look into the educational and other cultural or institutional activities of the English Bazar town specifically.

III

When we talked about the condition of education of the town, the first name in this direction obviously is Malda Zilla School. The contribution of Malda Zilla School in the history of education of the district is absolute. Situating in a backward district, the performance of the school is exceptional. From the very beginning, the alumni of this school established themselves in worldwide and played a larger role in our society. So without the reconstruction of the history of Malda Zilla School, the discussion would not be complete. The date of foundation of Malda Zilla School is 1858. It was a direct outcome of the Charles Wood dispatch of 1854, which proposed to setting up of at least one Anglo- Vernacular high school in every district and it was of this policy the town English Bazar has been selected for establishment of one such school. Before setting up, the Zilla School was previously allotted for Sylhet but in consequence of increase rate of schooling fees and the existence of one or two private schools in the same station was found not to be as flourishing as could be wished. Therefore, it has finally ordered to be shifted to English Bazar, in the district of Malda in 1858.²⁸ At first the school was started on a small scale but gradually it gained stability. A local committee has been set up to run the administration of the school. The Committee continued to take a lively interest for the welfare of the school. The ordinary business of the school is conducted by their secretary. During the academic year of 1859-60, the Committee was glad to report that the school is flourishing well. Considering the state of backwardness of the district in terms of education, the number of students attending the school is quite satisfactory. The head master and the other teachers of the school were efficient, energetic and much attentive in the performance of their respective duties.²⁹ The courses of study were those laid down by the Department of Public Instruction. A sample question was found in the Report of Public Instruction in Bengal for 1863-64.³⁰ The total strength of the first academic year was 51³¹ and the very next year it rose to 64 of whom 60 were Hindus and 4 were Musalmans.³² Within a short time of three years the number of students of the school was increased almost to its twofold and at the close of the

year 1863-64, there were 108 boys attending the school.³³ In spite of the enhanced fees structure the increase in number of students has been taken place. But in the next five or six years the admission of the students into the school was not remarkable. In the report for the year 1870-71 shows that during the year the total students were 110, which was little high in respect with the previous years.³⁴ In the year 1863, an additional teacher has been appointed with a salary of Rs. 50. At that time, the pay of the head master was Rs. 125, Rs. 25 less than the usual pay structure furnished for the post of head master. Sri Babu Gobindo Chander Mitter, the head master of the school, has discharged his duties efficiently, and under his able guidance the number of students attending the school was increased.³⁵ Next to Babu Gobindo Chander Mitter, Babu Rajani Nath Chattopadhyay has taken the charge of headmaster of the school, who was also dutiful and energetic.³⁶ The condition of library of the school was not very extensive but there were some good books in the library.³⁷ Though, it was improving day by day.

The school started its journey within the building premises in which the present Superintendent of Police of Malda resided. Initially, the school house consists of two central rooms and a verandah all round. It was too small to accommodate the increased number of students. Therefore with a view to enlargement of the school-house the committee raised Rs. 180 as subscription from various sources. However, it needed to be supplemented by additional required rupees of not less than 800 from the Government.³⁸ Finally, in the year 1897, when Ms. J. N. Gupta was the District Magistrate, the school shifted to present campus on Rajmahal road having 11 rooms and one hall attached to courtyard till now which is known as the main building. It was during the time of J N. Gupta two hostels for Hindus and Muslims were constructed³⁹ but now both are merged together.

From the very beginning, by virtue of the post the District Magistrate was the president of the Governing Body of the school. He was vested with the responsibility of supervision and administration of the school. They continuously take a lively interest for the welfare of the school. However, from 1858 to 1900, except few, the name of president are not found. Among the notable president of the school of the 19th century was Mr. Revanshow. From 1872 to 74, he discharged the responsibility of the school. He is the writer of the book "Gaur: its Ruins and Inscriptions". Another notable man was Umesh Chndra Batbell. He was an eminent academician

and friend of Sri Rajanikanta Chakraborty, Sri Radheschandra Seth and Sri Haridas Palit.⁴⁰ Following table furnishes the names of presidents of the Governing Body of the school who made great contribution to the development of the school.

Table-5

Name of the President of Malda Zilla School	
Name of the President	Tenure
Mr. Revanshow	1872-1874
Mr. L. L. B. King	1875-1876
Mr. Umesh Chndra Batbell	1876-1894
Mr. G. L. Gupta	1895-1896
Mr. J. C. Price	1899-1902
Mr. B. Dey	1903-1905
Mr. Jonsten	1916-1918
Mr. G. I. Lambourn	1918-1920
Mr. J. Peddy	1926-1929
Mr. M. O. Carter	1929-1931
Mr. J. N. Talukdar	1932-1934
Mr. B. Sen	1934-1936
Mr. Jams M.	1940-1942
Mr. S. Smith	1942-1944
Mr. H. Gordan	1944-1945
Mr. R. Sinha	1945-1946
Mr. G. S. Kalhan	1946-1947

Source: Dr. Prodyut Ghosh and Onkar Choudhury, ed. *Sardha Satabarse Maldah Zilla School*, (Kolkata: Aloka Publishing House, 2007), 23-25.

It has been mentioned earlier that there was a Government vernacular school at Sadder Station of the district which established in January 1848.⁴¹ It was in the premises of present B. ed. College. In the year 1905 this school has been merged with Zilla School. As a result the roll strength of the school had increased suddenly. Under the patronage of headmaster Dr. Anamul Hoque a museum was built in 1943-44. Many historical and archaeological remains were there but unfortunately now the

museum is closed.⁴² Since the establishment, a good number teacher of admirable qualities served the school as head master. But all their names could not unfortunately be found. The following are found from various sources:

Table-6

Name of the Head Master of Malda Zilla Scholl	
Babu Gobindo Chander Mitter,	1863-1864
Babu Rajani Nath Chattopadhyay	1870-1871
Sri Sibnath Bhattacharya	Not found
Sri Shyam Dulal Dutta	1891 (9 month)
Sri Bindulal Bondhopadhayay	1891 (3 month)
Sri Mohini Mohan Basu	1892-1893
Sri Kedar Nath Ghosh	1894-1895
Sri Sasadhar Roy	1896-1897
Sri Surendra Nath Singh	1897
Sri Golok Chakraborty	1897-1900
Sri Nilmani Ray	1900-1902
Sri Harimohan Sen	1902-1903
Sri Ishan Chandra Sen	1903-1907
Sri Rakhal Das Bondhopadhayay	1907-1910
Sri Rajkumar Das	1910-1915
Sri Nabin Chandra Bose	1915-1916
Sri Abinash Ghosh	1917-1925
Md. M. Ali	1926-1930
Md. Sadruddin Ahamed	1931-1932
Md. M. Arsad	1933
Sri Dhirendranath Choudhury	1934-1941
Md. Khaliur Rahaman	1941-1942
Dr. Anamul Haque	1942-1945
Md. Sufi Hussain Ali	1946-1947

Source: Dr. Prodyut Ghosh and Onkar Choudhury, ed. *Sardha Satabarse Maldah Zilla School*, (Kolkata: Aloka Publishing House, 2007), 23-25.

An unprecedented incident happened in the history of Malda Zilla School was the murder of Sri Nabin Chandra Bose, the headmaster of the school in 28th of January, 1916. Probably, Sri Nabin Chandra Bose played the role of informer to the British Government regarding the revolutionary activities of the students of the school. That is why he had to pay for this by his life. It happened in the heart of the town, to the south of the Circuit House compound, the maidan is crossed by a pathway running almost due west and east. It was beyond all disputes that the headmaster was murdered at a point near its junction with Mukdumpore Road between 5:45 P.M. to 7 P.M.⁴³ While returning to home from his friend's house, the headmaster was stabbed and reportedly he expired on the spot. He was also one of the approvers of Dacca Conspiracy Case which had led to the arrest of several revolutionaries in 1910.⁴⁴ Mahendra Nath Das was wrongly accused and the session Judge sentenced him to transportation for life.⁴⁵

The students from Malda Zilla School took active part in national movement. During the time of Swadeshi movement they raised a fund by collecting one anna from every student, called 'Student Anna Fund' from which they brought Swadeshi goods from Calcutta and sell it to the people of the town. Notable alumni of Zilla School like Sri Radheschandra Seth, Sri Bepin Behari Ghosh, Md. Nur Bux and others not only opposed the partition of Bengal but gave leadership to the movement.⁴⁶ The students of this school also took part in Revolutionary movement. Sri Girija Mukerjee, Sri Priyonath Ghosh, Sri Shanti Gopal Sen, Sri Atul Chandra Kumar, Sri Sourendra Mohan Misra and many others were notable freedom fighters of this school that played glorious part and dedicated their life for the cause of mother land.⁴⁷ Apart from taking part in freedom struggle the Alumni of the school played an important role to spread national education. Along with other parts of Bengal, the 'Malda Jatiya Shiksha Samiti' was started in 6th June, 1907. Bepin Behari Ghosh of Zilla School was its founder secretary and Prankrishna Bhaduri was its president. While both Radheschandra Seth and Moulavi Md. Nur Bux as its vice-president. The main objective of Malda Jatiya Shiksha Samiti was to spread mass education. Many night schools, primary schools and libraries had been set up⁴⁸ in this connection, in different parts of the district but unfortunately none of those survived.⁴⁹ The primary schools of Kutupur, Dharampur and Kaligram may be referred to as examples of the success of the Samiti.⁵⁰ The discussion would be

incomplete without mentioning the name of Prof Benoy Kumar Sarkar, alumni of Zilla School, who ranked first in the Entrance Examination of the Calcutta University in 1901 appearing from the Maldah Zilla School and got the Ishan Scholarships at the B. A. Examination studying in the Presidency College of Calcutta.⁵¹ He was one of the chief initiator of Malda Jatiya Shiksha Samiti. His contributed a lot to the spread of national education. 14th January 1947, Malda Zilla School conducted her last meeting before Independence. It was a general meeting presided by District Magistrate G. S. Kalhan.⁵²

IV

The first girls' school to be started in the town is Barlow Girls' School. Some academicians of the town organized themselves to open girls' school for educating the girls of the district. But at the time of its establishment, they had to face antagonism from the orthodox Hindu and Muslim communities. Subsequently, they overcome and proceed and finally in the year 1871, the school was established in the name of 'Malda Girls School'. Initially, the school was started within the building premises of present Muslim Institute, as a pathshala and then it shifted to the west of present Malda Madel Madrsa and the north of the Present B. D. O. office of English Bazar town. In 1936, it again was transferred to the north of the Zilla School and in the same year, the school purchased a land of two bighas and 12 katha from the Honorable Chairman of English Bazar Municipality where the school is presently situated. Finally in 1942 the school was shifted in present building. At first, there were 42 students of which only 6 were from Muslim community. In the very first year, the school was received her first donation from Maharaja Manindra Chandra Nandi of Kasimbazar. He gave Rs. 500 for the development of the school. In early days the school was faced trouble for want of money. At that time the district was under Bhagalpur Division. In the year 1886 the death of the Commissioners of this Division, Mr. G. S. Barlow, created a grief among some of the residents of the town. To commemorate him they set up 'Marlow Memorial Committee' and collected Rs. 500 to build a hall in the town. In 1887, the organizing committee of 'Malda Girls School' decided to appeal to the 'Barlow Memorial Committee' for the contribution of that fund to the development of the school. At that time Smt. Nirmala Koar, was the secretary of 'Malda Girls School'. In response to the appeal, the 'Barlow Memorial Committee', under the Chairmanship of Sri Upendra Nath Ghosh,

unanimously decided' to transfer the total fund to 'Malda Girls School' with certain condition on 15th March, 1887. The most important condition of the committee was that the school will be named after the name of Mr. G. S. Barlow. Thus, the school was renamed as 'Barlow Girls' School'. In 1879, the school received its first grant from Government of Rs. 5 per month. In 1924 the school converted into middle vernacular school⁵³ In 1929, it was upgraded and raised to the status of Middle English School. In 1938, the school was recognized by the University of Calcutta as High School.⁵⁴ In 1939, the school admitted only 171 students and the number of teachers were 11.⁵⁵

V

Next important institution of the town was Malda Model Madrasah. The date of foundation of Malda Model Madrasah was 1915. But the process to create awareness among the Muslims of Malda for education had started a long before. It was apparent from the different census reports during the latter half of the 19th and 20th century that the Muslim population of the district was nearly half of the total population of the district. Hunter also echoed the same thing and stated that 'in Malda the Hindu and Muslim population were evenly balanced'.^{55a} But the percentage of education among the Muslim of the district was less as compared to the Hindus. It was in this background a sense of identity among the Bengali Muslims arose which manifested/ventilated through the various religious reform movements. Wahabi movement was one of the important movements which created the great enthusiasm in Malda. Gradually, this movement served as the platform for political voice of the Muslim people. The inevitable result of this movement was the growth of consciousness among the Muslim mass of the district⁵⁶ which gradually turned to the formation of several social organization especially among the urban-elite Muslims. Malda educational committee was one of them. It was initiated by Md. Abdul Gani Sahib of English Bazar. To create a sensation among the Muslims of the district he thought about the formation of educational committee. Keeping this view in mind he constituted a reception committee and invites the people of the district in a meeting at the house of Munshi Payary Md. Sahib in 19th January, 1913. In this regard the committee circulated a letter among the people of the district in which they praised the British rule and asked for the need of formation of district educational committee for the spread of modern education. This event was a

landmark in the history of Islamic education in the district. From this meeting a permanent educational committee for Muslim people has been constituted along with office bearer. Moulavi Md. Taimur was elected as the president and other important office bearers were Moulavi Abdul Gani-Secretary, Moulavi Ashak Hoque and Moulavi Md. Nur Bakhs were Joint-Secretary and Munshi Payari Mohan as its treasurer. A press-release was made after the meeting. In one of the meetings of this committee Moulavi Abdul Gani Sahib placed a proposal for establishment of a Junior Madrasah at Maldah. That was in the year July, 1914 and it was unanimously accepted. Finally, it came into existence in 1915 later to be renamed as 'Malda Model Madrasah'. The chief architect behind this was Moulavi Abdul Gani Sahib and his hard work. In the beginning, It was started at Mirchak and later with the help of the then District Magistrate, Deputy Inspector of School Moulavi Md. Taimur and Moulavi Saiyad Hussain Ali, a piece of land was managed at its present premises. It was popularly known as the land of Government Police Club and finally the school shifted at its present place. The present old building of Malda Model Madrassa was constructed in the year 1925 at the cost of Rs. 23,879. It was planed and estimated by the then P. W. D. Engineer of Malda and esteemed writer Abid Ali Khan. After the establishment, the committee convened her first meeting on 14. 04. 15 which was presided by J. N. Roy. Among other distinguished members who attended the meeting were H. Ali, Khan Saheb Kader Bakhs, Md. Taimur, Ishak Choudhury, Laljan Ukil, Abid Ali Khan, Saiyad Jahir Khan and Md. Abdul Gani. In this meeting it has been decided that-(1) a junior Madrasah up to the 4th standard will be opend at English Bazar, (2) four qualified teachers will be appointed at a pay of Rs. 20-25 for English teacher, Rs. 20 for Second Moulavi, Rs. 20 for Third Moulavi, and Rs. 20 for Head Pundit. (3) Resolved that Rs. 7 be set apart for a servant & Rs. 3 for contingencies. Lastly it also decided that steps will be taken to secure a plot of land for the erection of the Madrasah building. It is found from the admission register that in 2nd April 1915, five students were admitted. Within December of the same year it raised to 68. Apart from the town the students from various places of the district got admitted.⁵⁷

VI

The Malda College, the only college of the district which was established before independence started functioning as early as 1944 in East Pakistan or present

day Bangladesh. There was an interesting story behind the establishment of the College at English Bazar. It was said that before coming to English Bazar the College was in East Pakistan or present day Bangladesh. Contemporary Professor of Arabic and Philosophy Sanaulla Saheb and Sri Mani Dey Sarkar has decided to shift the College at English Bazar. One night, with the help of some students of the college both the Professors along with all the necessary documents and books of the library came and set up the College at Atul Marke in 1946. It was in the year 1947 the college shifted to the present campus.⁵⁸ There was a controversy on the issue of its establishment. According to 'Gourdoot', Sri Asutosh Choudhury and Jadunandan Choudhury, two important leaders of Hindu Mahasabha and Moulavi Johur Ahmed Choudhury, a leader of Muslim League, gave generous donation for the establishment of the college. In return, Moulavi Johur Ahmed Choudhury, demanded reservation for local Muslim student which was strongly opposed by Asutosh Choudhury. With the intervention of the then Chairman of English Bazar Municipality Jiauddin Ahamed the issue was short out and the Chairman requested to both the communities to look at the college affairs with secular outlook.⁵⁹

VII

One of the important historical institutions of the town is Malda Museum. It was established in the year 1937, with the collection of Sri Khitish Chandra Barma, the then Tribal Welfare Officer of the district.⁶⁰ Primarily, the museum was known as Malda B. R. Sen Museum. The soul of the museum and curator was Pramathanath Misra.⁶¹ After him the charge of curator was handed over to advocate Sibendu Sekhar Roy. Letter on Professor Jatindra Nath Gongopadhayay of Malda College was elected as secretary cum curator of the Museum. When Malda Museum was established then excluding Calcutta there were only 5 museums in whole of undivided Bengal.⁶² In this direction the establishment of Malda Museum added the town an additional ornament.

Indeed, by the 3rd decade of 20th century town English Bazar could boast of being an important centre for education which attracted students from all over the district and in some cases from neighboring districts. Needless to say that the beneficiaries of this opportunity belonged to either rural mass or many well to do families, mostly owners of mango orchards, money lenders and jotedars who attracted by the educational facilities maintained their additional establishment in the

town especially for the education of their children.⁶³ In other words, it may be said that apart from administrative headquarters, the town became the centre of academic activities. The spread of education kindled the intellectual hunger among the people of the town, which prompted the publication of some local newspaper, magazine and a large number of literary works as shown by the following table.

VIII

A good number of bi-monthly, monthly and weekly local newspapers were published from English Bazar which fulfilled the intellectual hunger of the townsman. A monthly literary magazine named "Goubarta" was started in 1896 by Radhes Chandra Seth from Krishnakali press at English Bazar,⁶⁴ which ran on a cooperative basis.⁶⁵ It was the second press in the district. First one was started by William Carry at Madanabati. Mention should be made that the Krishnakali press was founded at the initiative of Radheschandra, with the help of some advocate of English Bazar and zamindar Krishnalal Choudhury.⁶⁶ "Goubarta" seemed to have discontinued after some year due to the lack of response from the people but its contribution to the history of literary activities of Malda was immense. Despite his first failure, Radhes Chandra Seth's initiative did not wane and started another weekly newspaper called 'Gourdut' in 1896. Through the numerous articles Radhes Chandra Seth raised various local issues of public interest such as landlord-peasant disputes; maladministration of municipalities, etc.⁶⁷ Since 1917, 'Gourdoot' was edited by Lalbihari Majumdar. Two local Bengali publications were 'Maldah Samachar' a weekly newspaper by Kaliprasanna Chakrabarty (1897-98) which continued till 1921 and a bi-monthly magazine 'Gambhira' by Krishnacharan Sarkar of Kaligram in 1914. Except for Kaliprasanna Chakrabarty, another editor of 'Maldah Samachar' was Rangalal Ghosh. In 1914, another paper called 'Maldah Akhbar' was started by Moulavi Abdul Gani Khan. 'Maldah Hitaisi' was started from 1925 under the editorship of Ramaprasana Saha. Weekly 'Dumur', 'Adina', and 'Minar' were published in 1941. Editor of these papers were Nandagopal Choudhury, Akbar Munshi and Abdur Rahaman respectively. Society, history, nationalism, literature, religious writings were its main subject of writings. The notable persons who contributed a lot to the literary works of the district were Radheschandra Seth, author of 'Maldah Ratnabali' and 'Geography of Maldah' in Bengali and Benoy Kumar Sarkar, who left a treasure of writings in various

languages in different fields. The remarkable amongst them were 'Bange Nabajuger Natun Sikha', 'Prachin Griser Jatiya Sikha', 'Bhasa Sikha' etc. Among others were Atul Chandra Gupta, Monindra Mohon Basu, Radha Kumud Mukhapadhoyay, Haridas Palit and many more.⁶⁸ The list will be longer. Other remarkable persons of the town those who have contributed a lot to the spread of education and culture were Pandit Haridas Palit and Bidhu Sekher Sastri an excellent scholar of Sanskrit and Pali literature.⁶⁹

Table-6

Little Magazine in English Bazar Town				
S. L. No.	Period	Name of the Publication	Name of the Editor	Year of the Publication
1	2	3	4	5
2	Monthly	'Gourbarta'	Radhes Chandra Seth	1896
3	Weekly	'Gourdoot'	Radhes Chandra Seth	1896-97
4	Weekly	'Maldah Samachar'	Kaliprasanna Chakrabarty	1897-98
5	-	'Maldah Akhbar'	Moulavi Abdul Gani Khan	1914
6	Bi-monthly	'Gambhira'	Krishnacharan Sarkar	1914
7	-	Maldah Hitaisi'	Ramaprasana Saha	1925
8	Weekly	'Dumur', ,	Nandagopal Choudhury,	1941
9	Weekly	'Adina'	Akbar Munshi	1941
10	Weekly	'Minar'	Abdur Rahaman	1941

Source: Amit Gupta, "Maldaher Sahitayer Udvab O Bikas," in *Madhuparni Bises Malda Jela Sankha*, 1985, 178-182.

IX

With the spread of education and publication of journal, magazine, local newspaper, and the increase in literary activities led to the spreading of nationalism among the people of the town, which in turn prompted the establishment of a number of libraries and bayamagar within the town. Swarasati Library of Golapatti, Sarada Library of Kutubpur, Binapani library of Mukdampur, Mukdampur bayamagar,

Gandhi Dharmasala bayamagar is remarkable. The role of the above mentioned libraries and bayamagars in the history of freedom movement in Malda is immense. These libraries and bayamagars were the centers of Revolutionary activity. B. R. Sen library was established at English Bazar in 1937. Later on this library was converted to district library in 1958. Malda Muslim Institute was established in 1937.⁷⁰ All these social institutions augmented the cultural development of the town in which the inhabitants of English Bazar town had played an active role. They actively participated in the development of vernacular system of education, publication, journalism and spread of nationalism.

By the turn of 20th century, a wind of change taking place in the attitude and social situation of the educated people of the town. They were beginning to gather the returns of investment they had so far made in education. Many of them were going for legal, medical, clerical and teaching professions. The growth of professional class in the town created interesting situation. The newly formed class of educated gentry, mostly products of the schools and colleges were eager to keep contact with the outside world⁷¹ which led them to take active role by participating in municipal, political, educational and social services and became the natural leaders of their neighborhood community and of the town. In course of time, through their participation in social and political activities many of them had been establishing communication with the national political organizations and with the leaders of national movement. The obvious effect of modern education was the spreading of national consciousness among the educated people of the town. Many notable man of the English Bazar town participated and sacrificed their life for the cause of mother land. The pioneer nationalist was Radesh Chandra Seth, who attended the third session of Indian National Congress held in Madras. He also formed an organization named Malda Association. Social service was its chief objectives and raised a fund for relieving the famine-stricken people of Faridpur and Barisal district. During the Swadeshi movement in 1906 nationalists like Prankrishna Bhaduri of Malda detested British education and sent their children to enroll in the national school of Calcutta. In 1905 the district magistrate of Malda issued a circular which prohibited the students from taking part in political movement but it failed to reach its desired end. Moulvi Nur Box, the eminent nationalist of the town strongly opposed the partition of Bengal and presided over a number of anti-Partition meetings.⁷² During this

period, a wave of revolutionary movement also started blowing in the town. It was mentioned earlier that an attempt was made in January, 1916 on the life of Nabin Chandra Bose, headmaster of Malda Zilla, for his conspiracy against the revolutionaries.⁷³ In the days of non-co-operation movement a number of meetings and protest movement had been organized at English Bazar. Particularly the students of A. C. Institution participated in this movement with great zeal.

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