

Chapter-VII

Conclusion

The urbanization of English Bazar town from 1813 to 1947 is summarized in this chapter. English Bazar is the oldest town of colonial origin of present day north Bengal and perhaps one of the earliest colonial town of undivided Bengal, which was originated centering the factory built by the East India Company at Mukdampur, to carry on trade, mainly on silk and cotton textiles.¹ The foundation and development of English Bazar town during colonial period was initiated and influenced by several factors such as locational i.e., geographical, European trade, especially establishment of factory, foundation of British rule along with district and municipal administration, development of transport and other communication, education, health services, judicial and police administration and economic transaction. These factors contributed a lot for the growth of population and development of infrastructure facilities of English Bazar which acted as the agent of social transformation. However, the process of urbanization was some time checked and slowed down due to several factors and again get momentum and by the time of independence English Bazar had attained maturity as an urban centre by any definition of the term. When the land was purchased by the Company from the local Zamindar Raja Roychoudhury to build commercial factory at Mukdampur, the place was sparsely populated, but by the census of 1941 English Bazar registered a population of 23,334 people.² This remarkable increase in population was made possible by migration of peoples from different parts of the district and across the district. So the driving force behind the urbanization of English Bazar town was initially economic and later on it was assumed the added character of administrative town.

The introductory chapter deals with the evolving idea of the term town in detail over the year from one census to the other and from one country to the other. This chapter also dealt with the review of theories of urbanization in world-wide and a details look on the process of urbanization during pre-colonial India. It is observed that urbanization is not a one-dimensional phenomenon. It involves multi-dimensional process, such as demographic, social structural, economic growth and cultural changes. Historically, the process of urbanization has come to symbolize as social and economic development reflected by the emergence of particular type of

human settlements, societal institutions, social and cultural forms.³ So, urban development is therefore, a complex process defying any simple and isolationist explanation. Any explanation of this emerging pattern becomes lopsided if one or the other aspect of its growth is over emphasized at the cost of other equally relevant factors.^{3a}

Colonial urbanization in India and its historical perspective is the subject matter of the second chapter. The discussions on this chapter examine that when and how the colonial phase of urbanization was started in India. It has been observed that in the initially stage, the policies of the British proved rather harmful to the process of urbanization. Many traditional towns of commercial importance began to decline. The negative attitude of Britishers towards the traditional industry, especially cotton industry hit hard to the process of urbanization. The victory of Plassey, (1757) gradually transformed East India Company from a commercial agency to political authority of India which had a negative effect on Indian traditional towns those were hitherto acted as the centre of politics, administration and economic activities of independent kingdom. Introduction of railways diversified the old trade routes and as a result many important trading points which were previously served as market town began to decline. The economic policy of the British also invited a series of calamity in Indian sub-continent which again to some extent contributed to the decline of pre-colonial town. But it was observed that from the second half of the 19th century a new trend of urbanization began as result of the opening of Suez Cannel, introduction of steam navigation and construction of railways, canals and harbours, which gave rise in the volume of economic activities.⁴ Political consolidation of British power in India and with the establishment of an elaborate special structure of administration gave rise a number of administrative town which in course of time emerged as the most important town and cities of colonial India. Many new towns began to setup centering the commercial factories, ports and railway stations.

Third chapter focuses upon the history of urbanization in the district of Malda till its formation. It reveals that Malda has long history of urbanization and contains several towns and cities of historical importance such as Lakhnauti, Gour, Pandua, Old Malda, English Bazar etc. But the emergence of towns within the territory of Malda in different historical periods was not an accidental. A variety of factors acted as the driving force behind the growth of the towns in Malda district in different

times. It is observed that in ancient and medieval periods, urbanization of the region was closely related to the rise and fall of royal powers, dynasties and empire and thus in this period, the process of urbanization was mostly a political process. The towns like Lakhnauti, Gour, Pandua was originated, flourished and decline due to the rise and fall of royal powers. Later on, in the absence of royal authority, especially after the coming of East India Company and subsequently with the establishment of British power in Bengal, the growth of the towns was associated to the economic-administrative process. The towns like Old Malda and English Bazar is come into this category. Sometimes many additional factors also contributed to the process of urbanization of the district. After the establishment of commercial factory and the formation of the district the growth of English Bazar was undisturbed and emerged as the most important town of the district bearing the character of colonial town.

The fourth chapter deals with the circumstances leading to the formation of Malda district and details study of urban administration of the English Bazar town from 1813 to 1869. Though, due to meagerness of source material relating to town administration, it is quite impossible to furnish a complete picture of gradual development of general administration of the town before the establishment of the English Bazar Municipality in 1869. Yet it is observed that the primary administrative measures were undertaken in the various wings of administration, such as roads, bridges, ferries, dispensaries, sanitation, water-supply, and education provided infrastructure facilities to English Bazar town. A Magistrate, with his contingent and staff were there to maintain peace and order in and around the town. The first annual report of the sanitary commission for Bengal for the year 1868 helps us to get a clear picture of the town administration especially in terms of public health⁵ before the establishment of English Bazar Municipality.

The first part of the fifth chapter examined the socio-economic factors leading to the establishment of English Bazar Municipality along with the details study of urban administration in various branches of municipal administration such as roads, education, health services, economic activities of the town and police administration. It reveals that in 1869, with the establishment of English Bazar Municipality the people of the town received improved civic amenities rendered by the municipality and thus, the importance of the town especially as residential place had increased day by day. The quantity and quality of services provided by the

municipality to the people of the town such as maintenance of proper drainage system, supply of healthy water, introduction of vaccine program within the municipal limits, construction of roads, construction of public latrines, introduction of street lights, disposal of night-soil, maintenance of primary education, clearing of garbages from markets and many others odds but important jobs improve gradually and municipality discharged these duties efficiently. So the general and sanitary condition of the town had been satisfactory and by the eve of Independence the town English Bazar had every possible amenities of a modern town. A casual glance at the service provided by the municipality by the 40's of the 20th century would convince anybody that the town had a colonial character in every sense of the term.

It is often said that 'No Roads - No Urbanization'. This section in chapter five, deals with the development of communication and its contribution to the urbanization of English Bazar town. At the initial stage, there were no on road communications to reach English Bazar. The rivers have been the most important means of communication.⁶ There were practically very few or no roads exist within the district.⁷ But with the passage of time, particularly following the year of 1870, an important reform has been made and new regulations passed by the Government that henceforth, the entire collection of the district from tolls and ferries will be spent on roads and other communication⁸ As a result there was substantial progress made in this direction. By January 1878, another important development was taken place which breakdown the isolation of Malda from the rest of Bengal, when the Northern Bengal State Railway, later East Bengal State Railway, open for trafficking up to Jalpaiguri from Sealdah⁹ and with this a direct communication was established for traffic from Sealdah to Jalpaiguri.¹⁰ A list of roads provided by the Bengal Statistical Gazetteer, Malda District, compiled in the year 1913,¹¹ and 1923¹² left little room for doubt that the progress made in this direction during last twenty years was satisfactory. As far English Bazar town is concerned it is evident from all the available sources that intra-town communication is considerably good. It was owing to the care of different commercial residents and British administrative officers the roads, both passing through it, and its vicinity, was excellent. A Street in English Bazar, laid out by Mr. Henchman, is wide, straight and regular.¹³ Thus the introduction of the railway and improvement of communication led to the greater mobility of people and increased the economic activities of the town which in turn

hastened the process of urbanization. Along with on roads communication postal communication also developed considerably.

An in-depth study of the condition of education and the role of other social institutions are being dealt with in the second part of the fifth chapter. It has been observed that before coming of the British, there were numerous pathsalas or elementary village schools education in the length and breadth of the district, 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 was somehow supported and guided by the Government.¹⁴ The first Government school coming up in the district of Malda in 1858, namely the Malda Zilla School which grew up to be a high school from a middle English School¹⁵ to be followed by the establishment of a few more school in the town. The Barlow Girls' School and Malda Model Madrasah came into existence in 1871¹⁶ and 1915¹⁷ respectively. The Malda College, the only college of the district before independence was started functioning as early as 1944. By the 40's of the 20th century town English Bazar could boast of being an important centre for education which attracted students from all over the district and 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, who maintained their additional establishment in the town especially for the education of their children.¹⁸ Thus the spread of education created an intellectual environment which prompted the publication of some local newspaper, magazine and a good number of literary works. Gradually English Bazar town apart from administrative headquarter become the centre of academic activities.

The concern for the health of British troops and British officials led to the introduction of public health measures which was gradually extended to every municipal town of British India especially where the Britishers were resided. So, this section dealt with the public health measures provided by the English Bazar Municipality also their own arrangement for cleaning the town to protect the town dwellers especially Europeans from various diseases. As a measure of public health the people were asked to dump the filth in particular pit, from where the municipal people cleared it. The people were not allowed to deposit waste on the banks of Mahanada. Some other hygienic measures were also taken to protect the health of the inhabitants such as clearing of garbage's from markets, registration of births and

deaths, and many others small but important tasks. The cleaning of latrine was gradually regularized. Under their limitation the municipality had made arrangement for water-supply for the inhabitants. The municipality maintains more or less satisfactory drainage system. A well maintained hospital cum dispensary was there to serve people of the town as well as outside the town which was run by the municipal, Governmental and individual funds. The main focus in that era was continued to prevent and cure only Europeans and a section of Indian population.

This section in Chapter five dealt with the economic changes that took place in English Bazar and their contribution to the urbanization of the town during the period of our study. Literally, the English Bazar town was founded by the East India Company by establishing a commercial factory there. Therefore, initially the economy of the town grew up centering the factory and their silk trade. Naturally, the people who were engaged in silk production such as weavers, reelers, etc and those who were engaged in silk trade such as banias, gomostah, dallals paykars,¹⁹ small and big merchants etc came and settle here and benefited by the economy generated by silk trade. Thus gradually English Bazar became the important seats of commercial transactions. Though the largest part of incomes generated by the transactions in English Bazar remained flowing out of the town by the traders most of whom were hailing from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh and other parts of the country. Only a part of the profits earned by a class of middlemen's was spent in English Bazar which in turn created job opportunities for the unskilled labourers²⁰ and thus contributed to the process of urbanization. But in 1833, the monopoly in trade of the East India Company was abolished.²¹ As a result, the Company's factory at English Bazar was abolished in common with all the other Commercial Residency in 1836.²² Consequently, the trade of the town which was flourished centering the commercial factory received its first setback which in turn affected the process of economic growth of the town and thereby disturbs the process of urbanization. But in the mean time the town was gradually accrued the new character of administrative town after the formation of Malda district in 1813. The selection of English Bazar as district headquarter, led to boast to a well organized local market with shops of every description created good commercial opportunities. English Bazar thus once the town of trading villages became an important commercial-cum-administrative capital of the district.

The last segment of the fifth chapter gives a detailed description of the evaluation of police administration of the country in general and the arrangement of police management for town of English Bazar in particular. As far the police administration of the English Bazar town is concerned, the 'Municipal Police force' at the end of 1872 consisted of 2 officers and 32 men, maintained at a total cost of Rs. 235.5.4 per month. The Census Report returned containing a population of 12,859, giving an average of one policeman to every 476 of populations. The annual cost of the municipal police, as compared with the population protected, amounted in 1872 to 2 annas 5 pies per head of the populations.²³

The chapter 'settlement analysis and social relationship' deals with the population concentration, settlement pattern and social changes of English Bazar town during the given period of the study. During the first census of India in 1872, the town registered 12,859²⁴ populations which means according to the definition of the town adopted by the first census, English Bazar placed as class IV category with qualifying the criteria of population, density, functions and administrative status.²⁵ But by the eve of Independence the population concentration of the town increased tremendously. The census of 1941 recorded 23,334²⁶ populations e. t. 81.46% increased within a span of near about 60 years. The phenomenal growth made possible by migrations, along with natural growth. Apart from the villages of the district, people from other district as well as from the district of present day Bangladesh came and settle in the town permanently. It is observed that even by the beginning of the 20th century the settlement of the town was sparsely populated. There were instances of mango plantations, jungle, and refuge areas within the municipal limits. Sometimes, wild dogs and jackals made the towns people life in danger and miserable. In the year 1919, one municipal employee named Nitai Bagdi was granted a leave of twenty-one days for the treatment caused by ferocious jackals. Another instance of rewarding of Rs. 5 to one Nabinchandra Mondal for his bravery in slaying away few wild jackal.²⁷ But by the turn of 40's of twentieth century due to the several factors the population growth reached its highest stage and due to the increase of population, it is found that, in 1941 census English Bazar town moved to a higher grade from class IV to Class III and till Independence the town retained her position as class III town.²⁸

Like the other factory towns of colonial India which was the creation of Britishers, English Bazar functioned as a collecting center of Company's trade. As it grew and developed, its morphology and spatial patterns initially were dictated by the presence of western populations which was first exclusively trade-oriented. But over the centuries when the British shifted their role from traders to rulers of the Indian-subcontinent, they added a new dimension to the cities and created a collectorate office to administer the newly established district, a municipal apparatus to monitor urban growth, a superintendent of police with his office at the district headquarter to maintenance of law and order, and to ensure that certain areas, especially those where they resided, would receive adequate urban facilities.²⁹ It is also observed that the towns they founded were different from indigenous towns of pre-colonial India. It was marked by its segregation.³⁰ Every town contains a large native population; these were spatially segregated from the Europeans settlement. Indigenous and colonial life-styles determined the nature of settlement patterns and, in turn, moulded the form of the built environment.³¹ The society was divided as the European society comprising of European origin and the native society constituted by different cast group people. The native society was almost organized and hierarchical. The richer section of the urban society maintained class and status distinctions and resided in streets or paras bore the name of each professional class. The European society was clearly at the top of the society and enjoyed the most privileged position by virtue of being the rulers and administrators of the place and maintained distance from native population of the town except few well-to-do families of the town. Though, it is not an easy to find out those characteristics in a present condition of the town but if we go through the settlement pattern and social relationship of the town of an early date we can trace those characteristics.

Notes & References

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Glossary

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| Kachari | Administrative office |
| Gomosthas | Local agent |
| Nawab | Administrative head of the province |
| Aurung | A place where export goods are manufactured collected for wholesale disposal. |
| Kachery | Office |
| Sepoys | Soldiers |
| Thana | Police station |
| Pargana | Sub-division |
| Jungle | Forest |
| Jheel | Ponds |
| Kutchra | Unmetalled |
| Sudder | Administrative headquarter |
| Pucca | Metalled |
| Chowkidars | Town police |
| Jamadar | Collector of refuse |
| Dufadar | Petty officer of local police |
| Daroga | Superintendent of State Karkhana |
| Dadan | Advance |
| Anna | 16 th part of rupee. |
| Harkaras | Foot runners to carry the mails |
| Zamindary | Petty landlords |
| Dak | Post office |
| Pathsala | Elementary village schools for Hindus |
| Muktab | Elementary village schools for Muslims |
| Chatuspathis or choubarris | Village school |
| Adhyapakas | Professor |
| Maidan | Play ground |
| Madrasah | Muslim learning centre |

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|-----------------------------------|---|
| Banias | Banias or Banyan comes from Sanskrit word 'Vanik' means merchant or trader, generally from Vaisya Caste. |
| Bazar | Daily market |
| Farman | The Mughal Imperial order i.e., decree or edict. |
| Coccon | The silken case spun by larvae. |
| Dalal | Broker |
| Paykar | Whole seller |
| Dadani | The mechanism of advances or loan |
| Mahajanans | Local money lenders |
| khamru | Silk reeled according to the European method is known as filature silk and that according to the native method is known as khamru |
| Potdars | Money-changers |
| Kotwal | In large town the administration of police was entrusted to an officer called the 'Kotwal' |
| Kusbah | The small town |
| Daroga | In charge of a police station |
| Zilla | District |
| Tahasildar | Below to the Superintendent. |
| Khana sumari | House numberings |
| Ukilpara | Areas of lowers |
| Hakimpara | Clerks neighbourhoods |
| Keranipara | Clerks neighbourhoods |
| Babupara | Neighbourhoods of the babus |
| Baidya | Trading class. |
| Kaibarta, Aguri, Barui | Manufacturer castes. |
| Kamar, Kansari, Sonar, Sutradhar, | Artisans' castes. |
| Kumar, Laheri, Teli | Artisans' castes. |
| Tanti, Jogi, Ganesh, Kapali | Weaver castes. |
| Beldar, Chuneru, Naik | Labouring castes. |

dhopa, hajjam, dhanuk,

A considerable number of persons who engaged chiefly in personal services.

Agarwala, Marwari, Khatri,

Trading communities.

Subarnabanik, Gandhbanik, Banias

Trading communities.

Bayamagar

Gymnasium.