

## PREFACE

There is simple argument above all which the text has amplified to sustain the research that has resulted in this study. Among all the colonial town of present day North Bengal, English Bazar is the oldest one which started her journey towards urbanization in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. But English Bazar has been exceptionally unfortunate not to have its own recorded history of gradual development as an urban centre. Barring a number of studies which have been undertaken by different scholars from different disciplines and couple of article-books, there is no work which had presumably travelled in the historical development of English Bazar town, the district headquarters of Malda from an obscure beginning into a world of urban culture forms an area of interesting study.

The urban centre that developed in Malda during the period specified is categorically different from urbanization in the pre-colonial period. Urbanization at Lakhnauti during the times of Lakshman Sen is archaeologically not fully substantial. The second urbanization that started at Gour with the rule of Giash-ud-din-Aiwaz-Khalji in the 13<sup>th</sup> century was the beginning of the process of urbanization in Malda. Its feature was identical to the feature of Muslim capital centric urban centre in North-India. The first British urban establishment that took place in the district of Malda during the pre-colonial phase originated with the establishment of the commercial factory of the East-India Company at English Bazar in 1680. However, a new type of urbanization took place which can be identified as a colonial urban centre after the formation of the Malda district in 1813. The nucleus of the administrative headquarters of the new district appears to have been located in the pre-colonial English settlement area popularly known as English Bazar. With the gradual expansion of the city necessitated by administration and the migration of people from different areas led to the development of the urban centre with some desirable colonial characteristics. The urbanization dynamics assumed a definite shape after the establishment of English Bazar Municipality in 1869. English Bazar could not remain isolated from the influences of the British Raj because primarily she had to serve the commercial interest of the East India Company. What is observed in general that the pre-colonial urbanization policy in terms of human settlement is hierarchic but not racist. But in the colonial urbanization what is noticed is that the policy of hierarchy was not only determined by the possession of or

proximity to power but also on racist grounds. The second point differentiated colonial urbanization from pre-colonial urbanization on broader terms. This phenomenon also appeared to have conducted the policy of social structurization in the urban centers. Therefore, in view of these facts I have made a humble effort to explore the unrecorded evidences of the modern history of the district headquarters of Malda, its growth and development as an urban centre emerging out as a natural corollary of colonial urbanization.