

CHAPTER-III

OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE
BENGALIS IN BURMA

The search of job was the primary motive behind the Bengali immigrants who came to Burma through land and sea routes travelling from their own country to another. The better job opportunities became more prominent after the British capture of Burma. There were seekers of fortune in form of cultivators, labourers both skilled and unskilled, traders, businessmen, and professionals like government officials, doctors and teachers. The British encouraged the immigration of the Indians as also the Bengalis to Burma for different jobs particularly as labourers required for various projects of construction like roads, railways and public works. The Bengalis also took to rice cultivations particularly by the Chittagonians. There were also traders and businessmen from Bengal. They had established big commercial concerns including money lending operations. Some started as shopkeepers or traders and many were mechanics. The Bengalis also worked as construction workers, rickshaw pullers, domestic servants and others. Though there was the settlement of the Bengalis in Burma during the pre-colonial and the Bengalis went for search of jobs in Burma in the pre colonial times. Many of the Ponna Brahmins were come from Manipur and western Bengal as astrologers. They had settled in Mandalay and had expanded their profession¹. The details is mentioned in Chapter II. Further in the medieval times there were the coming of the Muslim traders in Arakan and Rangoon. But the search of the jobs and fortune began with the expansion British Empire in Burma. It is true that Burma was the most important commercial place in the south East Asia. Moreover Burma was looked as the Golden Land in South East Asia.

I

A huge number of Bengalis worked as agricultural labourers or cultivators who came from low-caste peasantry from the labour surplus areas of Bengali. The nature of the agricultural labourers and other unskilled labours were not fixed because most of them were seasonal. The agricultural labourers came particularly in the districts of Arakan during the harvest season. They proceeded principally from Chittagong also from

Noakhali and returned home with quiet an amount of money after three to four months. They were attracted to the fertile land of the district. After the harvest season they worked as labourers in the rice mills and in the part of Akyab. Some of them who settled permanently in Burma and did not return after the harvesting season worked as shoe makers, cart drivers, traders, etc². Most of the agricultural labourers as well as other unskilled labourers belonged to the lower castes or were most oppressed groups in India. Some of them were untouchables and many of these early immigrants to Burma were from the low caste agriculturist labourers³. The immigration to Burma not only provided them economic opportunity but also a chance of social mobility that was denied to them in their home districts. In Burma they could earn high wages as well as found the employment much quickly than in Bengal. The most of the Bengali agriculturists were from Chittagong, north of Arakan on the Burma's Western border. At least 40% of the cultivators belonged to Chittagonian Muslims⁴. The Burma Gazetteer gives the details of the cultivation of the district of Henzada. It states that the cultivated lands had increased from 1868-69 which was 16, 897 and in 1873-74 it was 32, 504 acres. The progressive increase in the price of rice together with a better economic governmental regulations and an increase in population the cultivation had increased year after year⁵. The increase in the number of cultivable land indicates that large number of immigrants from Bengal particularly Chittagong, Noakhali and Comilla had come into the work of agriculture in Burma. After the severe cyclone in Chittagong in 1897, large number of emigrants left the district to settle in Burma⁶. They were also attracted to the facility for obtaining land producing remunerative crops, thereby, acquiring security to life and property.

Besides the agricultural labourers, a large section of Bengalis also worked as non-agricultural and wage labourers in the rice mills as well as in the various construction projects introduced by the British Empire. The expansion of British colonial establishment like the building of roads, railways etc. provided opportunities to the labourers from various districts of Bengal to migrate to Burma. There were also huge demand of labours in Burma by the British and the supply was provided by the neighbouring states owing to the great demand for labour in Arakan, the rates of wages

were high and a common day labourer was able to earn six-rupees or 12s a month. The people of Arakan were too indolent to till their own fields, when they can hire others to do the work for them; and the members of Chittagong men go south wards every year for the harvest season and return when it is over. Other, however, stay in Arakan for a number of years and when they return, each man brings with him a large sum of money for a Bengal labourer⁷.

After the Second Burmese War, when the whole of Arakan had been annexed, it seems to have been proposed to establish an imperial line of road in continuation of that connecting Dacca and Chittagong, to run straight into Arakan and then further south. During 1854-56 there was considerable progress of the road works but due to the Mutiny of 1857 and the steam navigation the work of road was not paid attention. The connection of parts of Bengal (undivided) was required for the urge to get a steady supply of labourers. The non-agricultural labourers worked in rice mills, factories as porters, carriers, on the construction of rails, roads and other earthwork. The higher wages received by the Bengali immigrants along with non-monetary reward attracted them to Burma. The earnings of the labourers could be used to buy land, to support their families in India and to purchase consumer goods. The labourers generally sent a large portion of their remuneration to their families in Bengal⁸.

The Indian labourers along with Bengali ones were recruited by labour contractors known as maistry. The maistry recruiting system, which dominated Indian labour movement to and supply in Lower Burma in the 20th century, was not as developed or as pervasive in the last decades of the 19th century. Maistries were usually experienced by Indian workers who were hired by the mill owners or the shipping agents in Burma to recruit labourers in India. These maistry moved from village to village attracting and exhorting labourers to migrate by representing in bright colours, prospects of enrichment and advance. The ignorant coolies believe easily and while some volunteer to go to try their

fortune, many are persuaded⁹. In addition to this many of the labourers emigrated because friends or relatives who had previously been to Burma told them of high wages and assured them that employment could easily be found¹⁰. The labourers generally migrated to Burma for better prospects. The maistry served as a middleman between the employers and the labourers. Amitava Ghosh mentions in his book 'Glass Palace' where Raj Kumar, the principal character in the novel went to the remote villages narrating the better condition in Burma thereby attracting the males to come to Burma for work. The maistry would select a village and gather the men of the village. He would speak in a reverential manner just like reciting Ramayana and would describe the riches which a man could acquire from Burma.¹¹ A single maistry usually recruited directed the transportation of and acted as overseer for a gang of workers. The maistry paid the steamship fare and supplied food to the members of his gang during the trip from India to Burma. On their arrival in Rangoon, he provided food and lodging and placed them in positions which had been arranged with the managers of a rice mill or shipping firm. The maistry's advances to his gang were repaid with interest from the wages which they received in Burma. The interest rates were agreed upon before the maistry signed the worker on and were fixed by contract. The maistry also received a commission from the mill or firm which he served which varied according to the number of labourers he provided. He also derived profit from his ability to buy steamship tickets at bulk rates. The maistry charged the members of his gang the full fare and retained the difference as a charge for his service.¹² Along with the maistry the shipping agents of the shipping companies playing steam ships from Bengal to Burma also acted as a campaigner of migrating to Burma. The shipping agents tried to lure as many as possible passengers in the ships and the maistry who also had link with the shipping agents tried to take workers to Burma particularly by canvassing in the distant villages where poverty and distress was more¹³.

According to the India Emigration Act, 1922 information was to be provided to the workers regarding the conditions, working hours, cost of living, remuneration, etc of the work undertaken by him in the foreign land. But this Act, however, had no influence

in the life of Bengali immigrants to Burma. They became a natural prey to the maistry and the shipping agents. The workers were given false information and promises regarding the wages, conditions and employment in Burma. The maistry served as a middleman between the employers and the labourers. The maistry was to contract labourers, arrange for their transport, food, accommodation and small remittance to their families. These were provided on the basis of loans at high interest recoverable from the wages to be earned by the labourers. The employers in Burma also depended upon the maistry for the supply of labourers and paid wages through him. The maistry made deductions from their wages for meeting the expenses of travel and his commission and to recover the loans taken by the labourers and his families while bringing him to Burma. The maistry also looked after the dismissal of the worker. The maistry was the man in between the employer and employee. In this maistry system when the labourers were they commenced with a debt, an advance of Rs. 4 the wage was about Rs. 20 per month. Labour was under the maistry, who controlled the distribution of wages and made 'false deductions' from ¹⁴. In fact, the labourers carried home much less than what they were paid.

The ships also carried huge number of labourers and workers who were in search of jobs in Burma. The ships which carried them were overcrowded and unhealthy. Mahatma Gandhi was travelling in the ship names s.s.Aronda which was owned by the biggest steamship companies in the world. Mahatma Gandhi in his travel to Burma had described the condition of the ships as there are for the use of these 1,500 passengers (or more) two tiny bathrooms and 12 latrines in sets of 4 for men and two bathrooms and 8 latrines for women. This gives an average of one latrine to 75 passengers and one bathroom to 375 passengers. There is a sort of a running corridor in front of each set of latrines Dirty water and urine from the from the latrines flow into this corridor and owing to faulty drainage, instead of discharging itself through the drain, the foul water continues to roe to and fro on the floor with the rolling of the ship. The lower deck has been described by Gandhi as dark and dingy and stuffy and hot to the point of suffocation There is no direct access to the sea air ... The forepart of the main deck is sometimes

partly used –as was the case last time when we voyaged from Calcutta to Rangoon– as a cattle –hold; the space used by the cattle being separated fro the passengers just by a trellised partition . Similarly, at the stern end of the shade deck there is a cage where sheep, goats, ducks and poultry are kept. It is the foul and stinking beyond description, so much so that it is impossible to stand anywhere near it. There seems to be no hospital arrangement for the third class passengers on board this boat. Nor is there any special accommodation provided for patients from among third-class passengers in case of casual illness or an epidemic outbreak. He adds that during the rainy season the deck passengers suffer most and the indescribable hardships lead to illness and even loss of lives. Under such condition the workers had to travel but after reaching Burma their conditions were no better ¹⁵. Sarala Devi Choudhurani in her article ‘Burma Jatra’, mentions about her travel to Rangoon. She writes about the discrimination of the shipping companies against the Indians and the Europeans who were given privileges in the ships ¹⁶. The unhygienic and poor condition of the ships and the passengers travelling in them has also described by Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay in his novel ‘Srikanta’. He had mentioned about the rush among the passengers from Calcutta going to Rangoon and the congested as well as the unhealthy condition of the passengers in the ships. The Burmese Government particularly the health department had employed doctors and medical officers who examine the passengers willing to travel to Burma and provided passes to those who were free from the germs of plague. This measure was adopted by the Burmese Government in order to prevent the spread of the epidemic or plague in the country from India ¹⁷. There was also a system of quarantine or keeping in isolation to prevent the spread of the epidemic diseases particularly among the deck passengers. They were supposed to live in isolation in a surrounded place of the jungle for seven days after that they were allowed to enter the city of Rangoon. Sarat Chandra himself had gone through this system of the quarantine which harassed the immigrants from India to Burma ¹⁸

Yet the number of immigration between the two countries did not decrease. The number of sea-passengers recorded by the Public Health Department from the parts of Rangoon,

Akyab, Bassein, Moulmein, Tavoy and Mergui shows that and till 1938 the number of incoming passengers were more than the outgoing.

TABLE -3.1
ANNUAL AVERAGE NUMBER OF IMMIGRANTS AND EMIGRANTS
BY SEA (1871-1938)

PERIOD	IMMIGRANTS	EMIGRANTS	NET MIGRANTS
1871-1875	14200	10300	3900
1876-1880	16700	12100	4600
1881-1885	74200	54400	19800
1886-1890	112000	89200	22800
1891-1895	130800	104400	26400
1896-1900	147500	102300	45200
1901-1905	179800	138000	41800
1906-1910	316800	297800	19000
1911-1915	336600	278700	57900
1916-1920	273500	238100	35400
1921-1925	367100	315200	51900
1926-1930	405800	361500	44500
1931-1935	276600	273700	2900
1936-1938	234400	235800	-1400

SOURCE: Cheng Siok Hwa, The Rice Industry of Burma : 1852-1940, Kuala Lumpur, University of Malaya Press, 1968, Table V, p-122

After coming to Burma the condition of the labourers was not better in Burma the living houses provided to them were in no better condition. The Public Health Officer of Rangoon reported in 1926 that, "In one room where we counted 50 coolies, the number allowed by regulation were 9. The conditions was indescribable. Every inch of the floor space is occupied by a sleeping human being and others are to be found on shelves and bunks along the walls. Dark ill-ventilated houses on sites perennially flooded with rain or tidal waters or with stagnant pools of the household sullage waste, with scarcely a ray of direct sunshine in the inner rooms, are inhabited by hundreds of thousands of the poor class..."¹⁹ As a result of such unhygienic living and poor diets the health of the Indian labourers constantly decreased. Most of the beriberi deaths recorded in colonial Burma was associated with poverty induced poor diet. The Hindu coolies were noted to be amongst the worst sufferers. During 1909-1938 there were 19 separate references appear in the annual health reports to the prevalence of beriberi amongst the Indian coolies. In 1931 at Bassein 61 deaths occurred among the Indian coolies. The Hindu coolies in the mining population of Tavoy and Mergui were noted as prone to beriberi outbreaks, which were reported in 1916, 1917 and 1919 and 1920. In 1923 the proportion was much higher. Of 116 deaths in Rangoon, 75% were coolies and in 1929 97 out of the 128 deaths were Hindus. In Bassein the reports note that the deaths were all from the poorest Indian classes. The mortality in the towns continued to show that high proportion of Hindu deaths in Rangoon in the year 1931. There were 55 deaths out of 74 deaths from beriberi in 1931 and in 1932 in Rangoon the proportion of deaths was 81 out of 97 deaths. In 1935, 72 per cent of those affected in Rangoon were Bengali and it was noted that in Pyapon the disease was confined to the Bengalis due to the ill-balanced diet and low standard of living²⁰.

The conditions of working were very poor and the exploitation of the workers under the maistry system continued but the inflow of labourers did not decrease because of the high pay in Burma than in Bengal as well as in India. The colonial Government also encouraged the immigration because the Indian labourers were hardier than the Burmese labourers. They could work for longer hours and were fit as agricultural works,

construction labours, rice mills, and others. Thus the flow of the Indian labours continued till the 1930s and beyond till it was resisted by the Burmese workers. Many were mechanics and mostly from 24 Parganas they were originally technical labours employed in factories and workshops in Rangoon²¹.

The social status of an Indian or Bengali labour can be understood from behaviour of the Burmese towards them as revealed from the figure given below. The figure is an advertisement of Polo Cigarettes published in the Thuriya (The Sun) magazine on 22 January 1937.

FIGURE-3.1



SOURCE: Chei Ikeya, 'The traditional high status of women in Burma: A Historical Reconsideration', Journal of Burma Studies, Volume -10, 2005-2006, Centre for South Asian Studies, p-67

The Bengalis were also free labourers and did not always come under the maistry system. Besides this kind of workers there were Bengali durwans or guards, dhobis or laundry washermen, tailors and barbers.²² Besides skilled and unskilled labourers there were

numerous Bengalis in the business as timber merchants, contractors, ship industry, cloth merchants, tobacco merchants, rice mill owners and also petty businessmen as shopkeepers, medicine dealers, tailors and others.

II

Besides the agricultural and non-agricultural workers Bengalis also took to other professions like establishing rice mills particularly in Akyab district where the Bengali businessmen had in majority engaged in rice mills. The most important of such rice mills was Kelsul and Ghosh Company. In 1832 Shri Ramgopal Ghosh of Kolkata and an European Mr. Kelsul had jointly started the concern. But in 1846 there was misunderstanding between Mr. Kelsul and Shri Ghosh and Shri Ghosh sold his portion to his European partner at the cost of Rs. 2 lakhs. He, thereafter, started a separate concern of rice mill in 1846 at Akyab which was larger than the previous one. In Akyab there was the existence of conspicuous number of rice and paddy merchants and commission agents. The Bengali merchants who existed in considerable numbers and they formed Rice & Paddy Merchants & Commission Agents.²³ The well known rice company of Chittagong named Nityananda Rice Company had opened a branch in Rangoon²⁴.

Timber was an important source of attraction for the Bengali merchants. Moreover, the British Government in 1881 passed the Forest Act for Lower Burma and in 1887 passed a Forest Regulation for upper Burma which was newly annexed. These two Acts amalgamated in the Burma Forest Act of 1902 which clearly defined that forest lands were absolutely the property of the Government and forests which were state property but burdened with private rights²⁵. The company after securing a complete hold over the forests encouraged the merchants to utilize the timber and teak resources of Burma for the railway berths, furniture's, etc. the Bengali merchants mainly stationed themselves at the important parts like Rangoon etc for better transport facilities and easy

communications with India. The Bengali timber merchants had huge profits in the timber business. The British empire in 1920 had 102,000 acres of forests and out of which one half of the area was situated in Burma.²⁶ There were teak, sissu, catechu, catechu, casuarinas, eucalyptus, rubber and deodar. Out of these the most important was teak and many of the Bengali traders worked as timber merchants which seemed to be a lucrative profession. There was also the export of bamboos from Burma. The yield of bamboos in 1901 in British Indian Empire was 185,000,000 out of which one-third was supplied by Burma. Thus Bengalis had taken timber trade as another profession in Burma which required capital which was present and labourers which was cheap and abundantly available due to immigration from Burma. The main work of timber handling was done by trained elephants.²⁷

Bengali timber merchant namely, Shri Shashi Bhushan Niyogi in Rangoon and his eldest son Shri Dhirendranath Niyogi had the most flourishing timber trade in Burma. They were also well known for their charity.²⁸ There was another well known timber merchant among the Bengalis named Sasanka Mukhopadhyay.²⁹

Among the well known Bengali capitalists mention may be made of Gyanendra Lal Chowdhury, the son of the Zamindar of Patiya police station of Chittagong and also Shri Alamohan Das³⁰. In fact, majority of the investors in rice mills were capitalists from Chittagong. Alamohan Das or Surendramohan Das was one of the industrialists in Rangoon. He was honoured by Acharya Prafulla Roy as Karmavir. He started his career with a mere Rs. 25 in hand; Das went to Dhaka and onwards to Rangoon, in Burma, which was then a business hub of South Asian countries. He started a trading company in leaf-tea and soon stabilized in business. He remained in Rangoon eleven years. He came back to Bengal in 1931. He had set up the Howrah Chemical Works in 1920. When he had recovered enough, he repaid his old debts using the earnings from Rangoon and embarked on re-establishing B.W. Scales. In 1934, he set up Pal's Engineering Works which manufactured textile machinery, printing machinery, machine tools and soon.³¹

There was a Bengali millionaire in Burma who resided at Pynmara named Dr. B.K. Haldar. Mahatma Gandhi while his visit to Burma in 1929 had stayed in the house of Dr. Haldar who gave a donation of Rs. 500 to start the Satyagraha movement.³²

Bengalis were also engaged in other professions like metal industries, cotton weaving, spinning, ceramics, and rice mills, dress making, transport business like ships, taxis, motor bus, etc. Burma was famed for the production of high quality of cigars. It in fact started to grow especially after the expansion of the British Empire. Burma cigars were in fact made from the tobacco produced in Chittagong Hill Tracts. Among the various concerns in Burma, Kheezarhee Burma Tobacco Leaf Co. Ltd was in Rangoon but its office was in Calcutta. It manufactured Kohinoor Brand cigarettes and Bengal Club tobacco mixtures. The concern was from Bengal but whether it was a Bengali concern is not known.³³

Due to the huge migration of the Bengalis into Burma the Bengali industrialists particularly after the Swadeshi Movement which gave impetus to the indigenous industries took to start new business. One of such business was the ship industry and the most important was the ships plying from India to Burma as it carried huge number of passengers. The existence of such Bengali businessmen can be traced in July 1905 when the Muslim merchants and Zamindars of Chittagong started the Bengal steam Navigation Company with a capital of Rs. 10 lakhs. It was launched by a number of wealthy merchants of Rangoon. The steamers were built on the most modern lines, fitted with electric lights and it was comfortable for the passengers. It also had separate accommodation for the first and the second classes passengers. The steamers carried both passengers and goods plying between Rangoon and Chittagong, Calcutta and Rangoon, Calcutta and Chittagong. The main office of the company was located at 18, Shark's street, Rangoon though it had branches in Chittagong and Calcutta. Munshi Ishan Ali was the chairman of the Company and Munshi Mohammed Kalamian was the managing director. There were other directors of the Company such as Choudhury Fazlur Rahman,

Choudhury Obeidur Rahman , Choudhury Abdul Bari , Munshi Abdur Rahman and Munshi Inayat Ali. The company successfully ran a passenger service between Chittagong, Akyab and Rangoon. The Bengal Burma navigation Company had put up a stiff competition with the British India Steam Navigation Co Limited which also plied between Calcutta and Akyab via Chittagong and Rangoon. The Company also moved with its agents in the towns of Chittagong and Rangoon to not support the Bengal Steam Navigation Company and charged only Rs.1 instead of Rs.5 of the Bengali ship Company. There were others Bengalis involved in the steam navigation services like Mr. Abdul Bari Chowdhury, owned the Bengal Burma steam Navigation Company. It offered a considerable amount of competition to the British India Steam Navigation Co. It carried passengers and goods from Chittagong and Rangoon.³⁴ The son in law of Abdul Bari Choudhury named Abul Kashen Khan was married in Burma in 1933 to one of the daughters of Mr. Choudhury. He was an advocate of High Court in Burma. He helped his father in law in business in Burma.³⁵ Another well known Bengali industrialist was Tejendralal Ghosh, son of Durgaram Ghosh, one of the most important bankers of Akyab. He had established the national Flotilla Company Limited which carried passengers and goods between Burma and India.³⁶

In the inland water transport some names of few Bengalis can be found. They are R.K. Pal and co. of Rangoon, Malakars of Bassein and Chowdhuris of Akyab. Their steam launches operated within the waters of Tenassarim, Irrawaddy and Arakan Division of Burma.³⁷ Some of the Bengalis worked in the parts and Anil Ganguly while writing about his childhood days mentions that his father Kedarnath Ganguly, originating from Noakhali migrated to Burma and worked in the Rangoon port. Anil Ganguly was born in Rangoon in 1934 and father went to Burma for the search of a better life and prosperity.³⁸ J.N. Ghosal was an eminent Bengali resident of Rangoon who had his own Insurance Company. He took initiative for the foundation of the Theosophical Society of Burma, Brahma Samaj and the Bengal Club³⁹.

Rangoon or Burma was the industrial hub of South East Asia in the nineteenth and the twentieth century as we see that the Bengalis looked towards Burma to try their fortune. There are numerous Bengalis who left Burma as an ordinary person and seized the opportunity of the country and turned to be a successful person. This was the reason for describing 'Burma muluk' of the Bengalis as the Golden land. One such person was Biswajit Dutta who in 1886 had sailed to Burma as a coolie from East Bengal. He was hardworking and ambitious and took the job of a hangman in the Central jail of Rangoon. In fact he was picked up for the job because of his stature by the Englishman in the boat to Rangoon. He soon became a clerk in the jail and seized the opportunity of the newly colonised Burma by resigning from the post and became an independent contractor building roads and laying railway lines. He also brought his brothers and established the 'Biswajit Dutta & Brothers'.⁴⁰ There are also well reputed names of the contractors of Rangoon namely Mr. G.N. Sarkar better known as Girinbabu was one of the close friends of Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay.⁴¹

The middle class Bengalis found Burma a flourishing land to try their future. Jogesh Chandra Banerjee was a contractor of the Rangoon Corporation. He had constructed high roads for the Corporation and thus contributed immensely for the development of the Rangoon town. He was one of the well established Bengalis of Rangoon. He had established the Veena Pani Pathsala. This institution later turned into a high school named Vivekananda Institution⁴². Among the Bengalis who migrated to Burma in search of fortune was Shri. Ramanirajan Choudhury. He came from Chittagong and opened a medicine shop named Unique drug House in Rangoon during the 1944. There were other business men like Shri. Rebati Mohan Choudhury.⁴³ Further references can be made of Shri. Kshitish Chandra De who also owned a medicine shop in Moulmein. He had a partnership with Shri Ramani Ranjan Das in his business. Shri. Das was also the head of an insurance company in Moulmein. After his retirement he took to the business. He was the owner of a lime kiln in Rangoon⁴⁴.

Occupational Structure of the Bengalis in Burma

The occupation of the Bengalis in particular is difficult to seek out in statistics and the actual number of Bengalis involved in different professions is not mentioned in any reports or census. In the census of 1931 the occupation of the Indians as a whole has been mentioned.

TABLE -3.2
OCCUPATION OF INDIANS IN BURMA

OCCUPATIONS	INDIANS, BORN IN BURMA EARNERS AND WORKING DEPENDANTS	INDIANS, BORN OUTSIDE BURMA EARNERS AND WORKING DEPENDANTS
Pasture & Agriculture	66,732 (59,089+7,643)	1,06,323 (97,798+8,525)
Tenant Cultivators	18,341 (16,213+2,128)	22,758 (20,395+2,363)
Agricultural Labouress	28,5000 (25,893+2,607)	49,370 (46,168+3,202)
Forestry	140 (126+14)	1,049 (1,039+10)
Fishing and hunting	634 (577+57)	2,519 (2,461+58)
Metalic Minerals	42 (39+3)	6953 (6870+83)
Non-metallic mineral	360 (357+3)	7397 (7387+10)
Industries (including textiles, hide skin, etc.)	7178 (5,536+1,642)	97,589 (93,479+4,110)
Rice ponders, huskers and flour grinders	1,593 (1,025+568)	32,037 (29,548+2,489)
Transport	5,510 (5,192+318)	96,020 (95,336+684)
Trade	9151 (6,647+2,504)	87,060 (84,010+3,050)
Public force (Army, Navy, Air force and Police)	617 (617+0)	13,378 (13,377+1)
Public Administration	1,012 (993+19)	12,810 (12,742+68)
Professions and Liberal Arts		
Law	176 (175+1)	625 (621+4)
Medicine	408 (347+61)	2722 (26655+67)
Domestic Service	2,339 (1,925+141)	21,987 (21,024+963)
Beggars and Vagrants	617 (201+416)	659(557+102)

Source; Census of India, 1931, Volume - XI, Burma, Part II, Tables -Table - XI, pp- 190-192

The exact number of Bengalis in the different professions is not clear from the above table. But the census of 1931, however, mentions that 3, 76,994 Bengali speaking persons with 2, 42,415 males and 1, 34,579 females were found settled in Burma⁴⁵. From these the exact number of Bengalis in different profession is not easy to locate. But we can come to know the varied professions they had taken after they went to Burma to earn a better fortune than it was available in India.

III

The upper class and middle class Bengalis migrated to Burma in pursuit of jobs particularly after the establishment of the colonial institutions. They were employed in different civil posts as municipality officials, advocates, attorneys, judges, jail officers, doctors, medical officers, surgeons, school teachers, postmasters, railway clerks, etc. This employment of the Bengalis were largely due to the fact that the Bengalis were used to English language as English was introduced in higher education in Bengal in the early years. The educated Bengalis also had the tendency towards white collared jobs and there was also huge number of graduates qualifying from the Calcutta University. Moreover, the colonial masters had also seen the advantage of employing the Bengali clerks which was easily available and with much less remuneration than their European counterpart. While to employ the locals, the British had to take the hardship of providing them training as well as teaching them the new a language i.e., English.

Therefore, a large section of the Bengali immigrants who came to Burma were engaged in the clerical works. Under the British patronage the Bengalis from the upper and middle class families migrated to Burma to fill up the newly developing administrative set up both in civil and legal professions⁴⁶.

The administration wanted the Burma administration according the Indian to model and they started to refashion the set up in Burma. The British after starting the tribunals and police recruited the men also from India. Composition of the police force as recorded in the Burma Gazetteer in 1st January 1876 stated that.

TABLE – 3.3
RACES OF MEN IN POLICE FORCE IN 1876

RACES	NUMBER OF MEN
Europeans	3
Khyoungtha	9
Khamie	50
Khyeng	5
Mro	12
Manipuri	32
Burmese	4
Goorkhas & Tipperah men	81
Madrasis	4
Bengalis	9
Vacancies	6
Total Sanctioned Strength	256

Source: Gazetteer of Burma, Volume-II, p-79

The number of the Bengalis in the police force indicates that the Bengalis formed a significant number in the administrative services of the country.

The names of other Bengali professionals were Shri Kamakhyanath Gupta who had spent six years since 1890 onwards in upper Burma in government service. He was the resident of Hooghly and had published a book named 'Six Years in Burma'. Many Bengalis were in postal department like in Magwe (Upper Burma) the postmaster was B.B. Chatterjee. In the Sadar Municipality of Minbu in Upper Burma, Dr. J. Banerjee was

the vice-chairman and Health Officer. Another civil surgeon of Pokkur was Dr. S.R. Sen. He was the vice-chairman and Health Officer of the local municipality. More names of Bengalis can be found in Thayemoyo, (Upper Burma) Shri M. Banerjee was an advocate; and Shri K.B. Mukherjee (BA, LLB) was a lawyer in the local court of Thatmtyo. Shri K.C. Chakraborty was a postmaster of Mymgyan in Upper Burma. Shri Bipin Behari Chakraborty was the jail superintendent and sub-assistant surgeon of the subdivision of Pagan. There were Bengali lawyers in Pagan namely Shri H. Guha (B. A. LLB). In Yamethin district of Meiktila of Upper Burma there was posted a well known Bengali named Dr. M. L. Basu. He was civil surgeon, jail superintendent, health officer and the vice-president of the local municipality. There were advocates namely S.C. Guha, and B.K. Haldar. Chindwin district of Sagaing had another Bengali as postmaster named S.P. Ghosal. Shewbo district had Rai Saheb N.B. Roy as, the sub divisional officer in the Irrigation Department and the chief jailor of the Shwebo district was Mr. Mukherjee. Shri B.B. Mukherjee was a general contractor of Shwebo and in Sagaing district court Shri S. Mukherjee was an advocate⁴⁷.

Mandalay was an important place of Upper Burma. A large number of Bengalis were engaged in the profession of contractors in government railways and other department in Mandalay. It had Bengalis residing from the earliest times. There is an organisation of the Bengalis named Mandalay Brahmamayee Sevak Sangha associated with the Kalibari in Mandalay. The organisers committee had one the members named Rajballav Chakraborty, whose mentor Shri Madan Gopal Goswami was the court priest during the time of King Mindon, the father of the last king of Burma, Theebaw. Shri Banerjee and P.C. Sengupta were respectively Extra Assistant superintendent and Sub-Assistant superintendent in the survey department at Mandalay. There were advocates named Sarat Sashi Mukherjee and Barister like S. Mukherjee, A.S. Mukherjee L.K. Mitra, P.N. Bose, K. Banerjee and L.M. Mukherjee. At Mandalay there were many businessmen and contractors with firms named J.L. Nandi and sons and Engineering. There are numbers rice mills which did the husking and cleaning of rice⁴⁸. Satish Ranjan Das was the

barrister of Mandalay in Burma. He was married to the eldest daughter of the well reputed barrister of Rangoon named P.C.Sen. ⁴⁹

In Myitkyina Shri J.C. Ghosh was the post master of Michina. In the court of Myitkyina there was Bengali advocate J.C. Banerjee. In the Military Police Battalion of Myitkyina the Nayib Commandant was Shri Nirmal Roy and in the health department was Lieutenant Dr. Kiranchandra Sen. In the district of Bhamo Mr. P. Mukherjee was the post master and J.L. Mitra was the signaller. There were advocates namely U.N. Mitra, B. Dutta and B. Mukherjee, K.L. Sen was also a pleader in Bhamo Dr. Ramlal Sarkar who had settled in China had also spent a few years in Bhamo. ⁵⁰

The name of Shri Shyama Charan Roy is quite known in Burma due to his social activities related to the women's education, education for children and welfare for the poor and needy. He had come to Burma in 1891 and worked as a clerk in the department of military police in Katha of Upper Burma. Later he became an advocate after passing out law examination. Among his philanthropical works includes the organisation of group of volunteers as fire extinguishers called 'Fire band'. The wooden houses in Burma were very much prone to fire and this band helped to extinguish and control fire in the locality. He also taught the needy students and opened a charitable homeopathic centre. He had established a charitable concern named Relief Fraternity. He opened a charitable hospital in various parts of Burma. In the district of Mitkitla, the town of Kyukse was posted another Bengali named Nikunj Behari Roy as the overseer. After the Third Burmese war in 1885-86 many Bengalis had migrated to upper Burma and Majority of them had settled here in various jobs. Some of them are Rai Bahadur Shri Dinanath Sanjal and Rai Bahadur Chunilal Bose ⁵¹.

There is a reference of a Bengali women in professional position in Burma. Shrimati Surabhi Sinha was a lawyer in the town of Bassein in Burma. She practised law in the town. ⁵²

There are evidences and references of Bengali Muslims residing in Burma. Most of them had migrated from Chittagong, Noakhali, Comilla and Dacca. One of them was Din Muhammad who was originally from Mednipore and migrated to Burma particularly for business in 1858. He started as a businessman from Mandalay married a Kachin lady and later became a caretaker of the stable British horses and an interpreter (Dobhashi) of Burmese language⁵³.

After occupying the lower Burma in 1852, Rangoon was taken into the process of development. It almost took two decades to develop the central part of the city and all the construction work was done by the Indian contractors and labourers. Among the Indian construction contractors there were many Bengalis namely Sashipada Das, who after taking the engineering Degree from the Rurkee Engineering College moved to Burma. He started his career as an Engineer and contractor in 1888 and retired in 1904. There was also Mr. Roger Bagchi who in 1887 had come to Rangoon and started the Bagchi and Co. Engineers and Contractors. He had received the contract of constructing the railway lines of Mandalay, Mandalay Municipality works and also hospitals, roads, bridges, culverts and municipality housing complexes. In fact, most of the buildings of Mandalay were constructed by him. His company of engineering had also constructed the viceroy's Ghat Road in Bhamo and the General hospital in Rangoon. The Y.M.B.A. was also constructed by him⁵⁴.

According to the census 1921-1931 there were 3, 76,994 Bengalis in Burma. Bengalis settled in different places of Burma. In Burma particularly in Rangoon there were 29,426; Akyab 39,248; Insein 5,513; Prome 1,705; Bassein 7,556; Mandalay 3,854 Pegu 7,497; Hanthawaddy 6,841; Tharawaddy 2142 and in Tungoo 3,522. Thus according to the census there Bengalis were present in large numbers in Rangoon and Akyab⁵⁵. Among the prominent Bengalis mention may be made of Shri Manmathanath Bhattacharyya, the son of well known Maheshchandra Nyaya Ratna. Shri Bhattacharyya had been Accountant General in Rangoon. Col. Priyanath Mukherjee, I.M.S. who was transferred from Madras to Rangoon after it had become the capital of British Burma. He had married a Burmese lady and settled permanently in Rangoon. After the foundation of

Rangoon Chief Court large number of Bengalis settled here as lawyers, barrister and judges. Some of them can be named as Jatis Ranjan Das, Bar-at-Law who was appointed as judge of small cases court in Rangoon in 1902-Purna Chandra Sen, a well reputed barrister Rangoon. He in the early years of his career was a judge of Maulmein. He was also secretary of the local Bengal Social Club. Laxmi Narayan Sen was another established barrister of Rangoon. Debendranath Palit was an advocate at the chief court of Rangoon. Akshaya Kumar De, was a popular resident of Burma, Ahin Chandra Mukherjee, an engineer at Rangoon, Sashi Bhusan Niyogi was a well known businessman at Rangoon. A.C. Dhar was a famous Attorney at Rangoon, married a Burmese lady and settled permanently at Rangoon. There are also names of many Bengali contractors of Rangoon like Sri Jhanendra Nath De, Sibnath Rakshit, Jay Chandra Dutt, Sashi Kumar Ghose and G.N. Sarkar. They all had a very lucrative business in Rangoon and earned a huge fortune. Girish Chandra Basu had founded a public library called Rangoon Vidyasagar Reading Room in 1895 in memory of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar. There was Priyo nath Sen and Mr.Mahendranath Mukherjee who were the executive engineers in Burma ⁵⁶.

In Arakan also large number of Bengalis had resided as it was quite close to Chittagong. S.C. Sen was the medical officer of Arakan. In Akyab the number of Chittagonians was much more than other races. S.C. Guha, who came to Akyab in the second half of the 19th century, had been engaged as a lawyer here. Mr. N. Banerjee was the postmaster of Akyab. There were many Bengalis who were rice and paddy merchants and owned rice mills or worked as commission agents. Among them mention may be made of Ramgopal Ghosh and Nityananda Roy. In the medical stream Dr. Jagabandhu Basu, M.D. was incharge of the seaman's Hospital at Akyab for some years from 1854.Sri S.C. Das was the overseer of another district of Burma , Arakan. Rai Saheb S.C. Mukhopadhyay was the sub-engineer of the district of Insein. M.M. Basu was the barrister of Arakan and K.C. Basu was the advocate of the district⁵⁷.

Jyotish Ranjan Das the cousin of C.R.Das was barrister of Rangoon. He was married to the second daughter of P.C.Sen, the reputed barrister of Rangoon. He went to Rangoon at the call of his father in law. He had established himself as a well known lawyer. He lawyers in Rangoon were permitted to open offices like the attorneys of Calcutta. He established a firm in partnership with a lawyer in Rangoon. The firm was known as Cawasji and Das firm. He earned great honour and respect from the Burmese, British, and the Bengalis in Burma. He became the judge in the judge of the Rangoon ig Court. He received great reputation and success in Rangoon.⁵⁸

We have further names of Bengalis from the district of Pegu; M.L. Gosain, B.K. Basu, N.K. Mitra, H.B. Dey, K.C. Sen, L.M. Ghosh, J.P. Addy and P.N. Sanyal were all pleaders at Pegu. Mr. R.C. Chatterjee and Mr. A.K. Sen were all lawyers but they practised law in the local Burmese language. In Tharawaddy there are names of two Bengalis like S.C. Guha and U.N. Chakraborty who worked as pleaders. U.N. Chakraborty was the postmaster at Tharawaddy. At Henzada there were some known Bengalis which is to be mentioned as R.P. Sen, bar at law, he was the president of Bar Association. B.N. Das, who was the secretary of Bar Association, K.L. Mukherjee, P.N. Chowdhury and K.C. Banerjee were the members of the Bar Association.⁵⁹

Dr. S.C. Mukherjee was a physician of the medicine firm called San C. Po and Co in Henzada. Shri B.M. Kundu was the overseer of the northern district of Henzada. There were some lawyers in the court of Henzada namely D.N. Roy, Bar-at Law. He was a government prosecutor, President of the Bar Association. S.C. Lahiri who was the secretary of the Bar Association. The other members of the association are N.D. Mukherjee, S.N. Roy Choudhury, B.K. Sen and H.L. Chatterjee. In Henzada there is a Bengali medicine shop named Star Pharmacy, Chemists, Druggists and optician. K.C. Mitra was the proprietor of the shops⁶⁰.

Among the doctors of Rangoon there was Aburba Kumar Roy who passed LMS exam from the Calcutta Medical College in 1906 and went to Rangoon to practice medicine in 1907.⁶¹

In Maubin, the existence of Bengalis could be traced with the civil surgeon Dr. K.K. Chatterjee. He was the superintendent of the district jail. The jailor of the district was also a Bengali called J.K. Sen. In the Maubin court there are two Bengalis named T.C. Basu and H.L. Chatterjee. Moulmein also had Bengalis in the civil posts. S. Mukherjee was the secretary and Assessor of Moulmein municipality. S.C. Dasgupta was the Advocate at Moulmein court. S.N. Dasgupta was the postmaster at Moulmein. There were two advocates at the Myaongmein court named L.M. Banerjee (advocate) and P.L. Ghosh (lawyer). Names of more Bengalis can be dedicated as Dr. L. Bhattacharya who was a civil medical officer at Salween and L.M. Roychoudhury who was the post master at Tavoy⁶². The General Shri Manoj Banerjee was a bank agent of United Commercial bank in Rangoon⁶³. Shri. Brajendralal Choudhury was the post master of the Rangoon post office. Later he was transferred to Taungzee, and Henzada. He also migrated from Chittagong. The post master of Moulmein was Shri. Gouri mohan Chakraborty.⁶⁴

The great Bengali novelist Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay was also engaged in certain jobs while residing in Burma. Sarat Chandra had been in Burma thirteen years. Within these thirteen years he has spent in one and half in Pegu and Langlabein and the rest of the years he has spent in Rangoon. In 1903 when he came to Rangoon he stayed with his uncle Shri. Aghornath Chattopadhyay. His uncle was a well known lawyer of Rangoon. While staying with his uncle started to study law and Burmese language. His uncle could secure a job for Sarat Chandra by establishing contacts with Shri. Krishna Kumar Basu, who was the Audit & Accounts Officer of the railways in Rangoon. After the death of his uncle, Aghornath Chattopadhyay he stayed in the house of Shri. Annada Prasad Bhattacharya. Shri. Bhattacharya was the overseer of Rangoon. Sarat Chandra went to Pegu with Shri. Girindranath Sarkar. In Pegu he stayed in the house of Shri. C.K. Sarkar, who was the Assistant Engineer of P.W.D. of Pegu. In Pegu he met one of the

lawyers of Pegu named Shri. Abinash Chandra Chattopadhyay. Shri. C.K.Sarkar had provided Sarat Chandra with a temporary job in his office of P.W.D. in Pegu. While staying in Pegu he became friendly with another lawyer Shri. Nripendra Kumar Mitra. Sri Mitra had provided a job in the rice mill in Langlabein of his cousin Shri. P.K.Mitra. He also learnt Burmese from Langlabein. Sarat Chandra also secured a job in the Rangoon Examiner Public Works Department with the help of the Accounts Officer, Deputy Examiner Shri. Munindra Kumar Mitra. We also get the reference of Shri Mitra in the India Office List and India Office. In 1911-1912 the examiner Public Works Accounts Office and Accountant General Office was united and therefore, Sarat Chandra worked in 1912 in the Accountant general office. Trailokhyanath Basak was one of the colleagues of Shri. Sarat Chandra. He had married a Burmese woman. Sarat Chandra remained in the Office till his last days in Burma⁶⁵. The details of the stay of Shri Sarat Chandra in Burma gives the idea of the easy availability of jobs and the names of various Bengalis who migrated to the different places of Burma. It also gives the picture of the integration of the Bengali community and extension of a helping hand for a Bengali in the new land.

Bibhuti Bhushan Bandopadhyay went to Maungdaw region of Arakan in east Burma. He travelled in a steamer and mentioned of number of experiences. He took a job of a Marwari firm owned by Kesharam Poddar. He secured a job of a preacher of Go Rakshna Pracharani Sanstha. He was in charge of east Bengal and Arakan. He had to travel in the various places of Arakan. In Maungdaw he met Shri. Surendrantnath Dhar, the well known poet and writer of Chittagong. Shri Dhar often travelled to Arakan by road. He used to walk through the forests of Burma. In his travelogue Bibhuti bhushn gives a lively description of the landscapes of Burma. He had travelled through the teak forests of Arakan Yayomo Range and the nature of Sitang and Mandalay⁶⁶.

IV

Bengalis were also involved in the jobs related to education. Schools were opened by the Bengalis both for the boys and girls in various towns of Burma. Bengali teachers were required to serve in these schools. Bengal Academy was established by the Bengalis as a English medium high school in 1909. Dr. Prasanna Kumar Majumdar and Shri Sashi Bhushan Chakraborty who was a teacher was the primary initiative in starting the school. Mr. J.R. Das who was (Barrister) had contributed immensely in the formation of the school. Mr. J.N. Ghoshal the secretary of Life Insurance Company gave a lot of encouragement to the Bengali students and took lot of initiative. The teachers appointed in this school were Shri Chandi Charan Banerjee, Shri Sushil Kumar Gupta was the head master and Shri Surendranath Sen was the treasurer of the school. Later this post of treasurer was taken by Shri Khirod Behari Roy Choudhury. Later in 1918 under the guidance of Manilal Kundu and few other Bengalis in Rangoon a girls section of the Bengal Academy. Srimati Jyotirmayee Mukherjee, was the Head Mistress of the girls section of the Bengal Academy. The school had a new building of three storeys and many Bengalis had helped in this new endeavour. The names of such volunteers who contributed in financed and efforts are Prasanna Kumar Majumdar, Nux Bux Saheb (Contractor), Bishnu Charan Ghosal, Dr. Manilal Kundu, Surendranath Mandal, Kumundini Kanta Kar, Professor Maulavi Golam Akbar, Sachin Mukherjee, Professor Ramaprasad Choudhury and Mohit Kumar Mukherjee⁶⁷.

After the establishment of the national college at Shwe Kyin monastery in Rangoon on 14 August 1921, a member of Bengali professors taught in the National College. Some of the professors were Prof. Kabyanidhi Bhawmik of English, Professor H.K. Chakraborty of History and Prof. B. Banerjee of Chemistry⁶⁸ and Muhammed Siddiq Khan⁶⁹. The details of the Bengalis in the college are mentioned in the Chapter V. most of the schools in Burma was occupied by the Bengalis namely Shri Direndranath Sen who was a teacher of Dawson's A.V. School in Pazumdaurg. He was appointed in the Government school in

Pegu in 1926. There was another school teacher named Bimal Choudhury who was in Thaten Government School⁷⁰

The occupation of the Bengalis also consisted of employees in the Government Printing Works in Rangoon and Maymyo. The Bengali intellectuals also owned private printing press. We come to know about Nripendra Chandra Banerjee, who was the editor of the Rangoon Mail. Further Bengali owned newspapers were present like Rangoon Daily New, Bashori, etc. The details of the publications and press activities of the Bengali settlers have been described in Chapter V.

The India Office list and India Office gives a list of Bengalis in service in British Burma. Preo nath Sen was the Executive Engineer of the India Public Works. He was trained in Royal Indian Engineering College. He was appointed as Assistant Engineer on 1st October 1898 and posted to Burma or Rangoon in February⁷¹. Another Bengali was in the judicial department of Upper Burma as Law Officer and the Official Assignee and Receiver in Rangoon named Purna Chundra Sen. Ahindra Chandra Mukherjee was the Assistant Engineer as the 1st grade in the public works Department. In the Accounts Branch of the Public Works in 1903 Munindra Kumar Mitra was the Deputy Examiner. In the Telegraph Department the Superintendent of Arakan Division was Gyanendro Prasad Roy⁷².

There were many Bengali civil servants who were engaged in the good positions in Burma but they resigned from their post as a protest against the colonial imperialism. Nagendra Nath Ghosh, the father of the well reputed Bengali poet Bimal Chandra Ghosh was a government employee of Burma. He resigned from the post as a protest to the statement of hang till death of Khudiram Bose, the revolutionary⁷³. Bhudev Mukhopadhyay was the school inspector of Bengal. He had been to Rangoon to meet the Chief Commissioner Sir Ashley Eden and to protest against the discrimination and injustice done to him by the higher authorities.⁷⁴ It must be mentioned here that to give special supervision and encouragement each circle of inspection under a Deputy Inspector or sub-inspector with syllabus prescribed by the University of Calcutta. The

schools were inspected by the Education Department and the pupils were to appear at the public examinations held by the Calcutta University.⁷⁵

We get references of the Bengali government officials from the memoir of Smt Nilima Dutta named 'Ujaan Shrote'. Her father was an employee in the Accounts Office of the Military Department of Rangoon. He was later transferred to Myamyo. He had colleagues named Shri. Ramen Bhoumik and Manmohan Sarkar. Shri Ramen Bhoumik also practised homeopathy. She mentions of Shri Bireswar Ganguly as one of the well known advocate of Myamyo. She mentions of another government employee and neighbour of them in Myamyo named Shri. Amar Mitra. The daughter of Shri Mitra was the reputed Bengali film actress Srimati Manju De. They migrated to India during the Second World War.⁷⁶

The majority of Bengalis who migrated from Bengal to Burma were employed as clerks in government offices, railways, ports, post offices, telegraph services, hospitals, or other services or offices. The posts created by the British were filled up by them because they well knew English language. Some of them permanently settled in Burma. Liberty, the Daily newspaper reported that "There are not less than twenty thousand Bengalis earning a decent living in Rangoon". Some of them were reaped golden harvest in Burma⁷⁷. The approximate salary of the varied occupation can be summed up from the Budget Estimates of the Government of Burma and from the Gazetteer of Burma for the year 1931. The following remuneration has been given below: -

TABLE - 3.4

OCCUPATIONS AND SALARIES OF THE INDIANS IN BURMA

OCCUPATIONS	APPROXIMATE MONTHLY SALARY
1. Unskilled Labourers – agricultural & construction labourers	Rs. 15 to 30
2. Skilled Labourers	Rs. 40 to 60
3. Drivers, Jail wardens, police constables, etc	Rs. 30 to 40
4. Lower division clerks, surveyors, sub-overseers supervisors, etc	Rs. 40 to 80
5. Upper grade clerks, accountants, surgeons, engineers	Rs. 80 to 160
6. Head clerks, High School teachers, government lawyers	Rs. 160 to 275

Source: N.R.Chakraborty, *The Indian Minority in Burma: The Rise and Decline of an immigrant Community*, London, OUP, 1971, p-40.

The salary was higher than the offered salary in Bengal therefore the Bengalis migrated to Burma 'the golden land' for making a shining fortune. But in their process of migration and taking professions they had carved out a significant place in the life of the unknown place. They showed considerable mobility in their occupation. They did not hesitate to adapt to new jobs and took the risk of new trades and business in a new country. Numerous Bengalis started migrating to Burma and took to various professions.

V

The introduction of western system of medicine required doctors who had been trained at government recognised institution. With the establishment of hospitals in the districts and sub-divisional level, there were posts created for the posts of medicinal assistants and surgeons. They were to be filled up and the easiest option available was the Bengali doctors who had studied in Calcutta Medical College. There was absence of local Burmese men in such posts which led to the doctors. There were names like Dr. B.L.

Bhattacharya who was born in Calcutta but his schooling was in Bengal academy in Rangoon, and ISC in Rangoon. After that he joined the Rangoon Medical College and got his M.B.B.S. immediately after graduation he was posted in the Burma front during the Second World War ⁷⁸. Dr. N.M. Bhattacharjee, was the sub- assistant Surgeon in Rangoon in 1867-68. His name has been mentined in the vaccination report of 1867-68 of Burma ⁷⁹ Another well established doctor of Burma was Dr. Nilmadhav Basu. He was in Rangoon and immigrated in the early twentieth century. He had earned a good name and fortune from Burma. He came back to Bengal before the Second World War. ⁸⁰ Dr. Motilal Dutta was a physician in the Rangoon district hospital .Besides doctors the western medicinal practises brought forward other professions like compounder, medicinal shops and nurses. Shri. M. De was a compunder in Moulbein Government hospital. ⁸¹

Along with the Allopathic medicine; western education also introduced Homeopathic system of medicine. In Burma Bengali Homeopathic doctors were also present. It is very interesting to note that Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay practised homeopathy while residing in Burma. Dr. Ghosh had established a homeopathic medicine shop named Sultan Medical Hall in Rangoon. Bengalis also practised the system of Ayurvedic system or Kabiraji in Rangoon ⁸².

The profession of law was very popular among the Bengalis. The British rule had introduced its code of law with laws, regulation and rules which was required to enforce in the colonial country. To implement the new legal system it was necessary to have men who were well-versed with the legal system and languages there men could to put forward the claims of their client in English language before British magistrate and therefore, the British government opened the gates of migration for the Bengali lawyers. In the town of Pyiumara, Shri Shantimoy Roy Choudhury was an advocate. He knew to converse in Burmese language. ⁸³ Among the other Bengali lawyers were Kunjabehari Bandopadhyay and Justice P.C. Sen. Another well known was Atalbehari Bandhopadhyay. Shri Sisir Kumar Lahiri was an advocate of Rangoon High Court. He

contributed immensely to the study of the Burmese Buddhist laws⁸⁴. Keshab Chandra Mukherjee was a barrister in Burma. He came back to India during the Second World War. Rajmohan Das and Sarada Ranjan Das also practised law in Rangoon. They came back to Bengal during the Second World War.⁸⁵

Bengalis residing in Burma had rose in high positions and occupied important posts in Burma and Burmese administration. They not only made themselves known but they also contributed to the country's welfare and development. Such Bengalis included names like Ram Brahmoo Sanyal. He was the first superintendent of the Alipore Zoological Gardens in Calcutta. He was a pioneer in captive breeding and was one of the first zookeepers with training as a biologist. He became widely known in zoological circles on account of his work and publications. He travelled to Rangoon to plan the zoo facilities in 1902. In June 1902 Sanyal was finally made a member of the honorary committee. He returned to India in 1906⁸⁶. Haridas Bhattacharya, the second husband of Kanan Devi, the most famous Bengali film actress was the A.D. C. of the Governor of Bengal. He was posted in Rangoon during the early part of his life as Customs Preventive Officer. Later he became a lecturer of the Scottish Church College.⁸⁷ Dr. Nalini Ranjan Chakravarty was born in Mogoke in Burma and became one of the highest ranking civil servants of Rangoon. He was the part of the team of the General Aung San and Prime Minister U Nu which negotiated with Clement Attlee the terms for the Burmese independence. As adviser to the Cabinet he was in an anteroom waiting to be called by the Chair when some gunmen entered and murdered Aung San. At Pundit Nehru's invitation, Dr. Chakravarti came to India to be the financial adviser to the DVC. While in India, he was involved in the resettlement of the people displaced from Burma after the end of the colonial rule. In his later life he took to research in London for a PhD on the Indian minority in Burma⁸⁸.

Among the Bengalis in high posts in Burma was Dr. R.M. Sen who went to Burma in 1904. He was the first superintendent of the Zoological garden in Rangoon. His son Dr. S.S. Sen was a civil surgeon in Burma. He was posted in Pegu and Mandalay. During the

Second World War he left Burma and settled in India.⁸⁹ Another well known Bengali was Shri Shrisranjan Das , the superintendent of Lands in the office of Rangoon Port Commission. It was a high post. While residing in Rangoon he had spent a lot of money on his own to build a laboratory for the Ramakrishna Mission.⁹⁰

The Bengalis, thus, immigrated to Burma for several reasons and they took to various professions in the country. Since Burma was closer to Bengal geographically and administratively under the same colonial master, the British, the Bengalis never considered it as a separate land. Moreover, the Bengali fortune seekers particularly the business class and capitalists took the opportunity of the newly developing land and the upcoming commercial centre, Rangoon. The agricultural labourers, skilled and unskilled labourers mostly from Chittagong and Noakhali and Comilla had migrated for higher wages and better living. In fact, it has been well described by Abdul Haque Choudhury⁹¹ that Burma had become the *lalanbhumi* or rearing ground of the Bengalis from Chittagong and Comilla. The educated Bengalis from the western part of Bengal also found a challenge and security in Government jobs in Burma.

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34. Ibid, p-151-152; Sumit Sarkar, The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal 1903-1908, New Delhi, Peoples Publishing House, 1973, p- 133
35. The Daily Star, Bangladesh, 10 April 1999. Abul Kashem Khan was a well known industrialist, politician and social worker of Bangladesh.
36. Amit Bhattacharya, op cit, p-163
37. N.R.Chakraborty , op cit, p-86-87
38. Saptahik Bartaman, 9, Sept. 1994, Kolkata, p. 20-22. Anil Ganguly is one of the close associates of Satyajit Ray and his film making.
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40. Krishna Dutta, Walking from the Gallows, Calcutta, 2000. It is autobiographical sketch of the Dutta family in Burma and the author is the youngest daughter of the family.
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43. Interview with Shri Prafulla Kumar Choudhury who is a resident of Deshbandhupara, Siliguri. He owns a medicine shop with the same name of Unique Drug House as in Rangoon. He came back to India in 1965.He is 67 years old.

44. Interview with Shrimati Pushparani De on 15.09.2009. She is the wife of Shri Kshitish De. She came back to India in 1964. She is 68 years old.
45. Census of India, 1931, Volume XI, Part II, p-225-231
46. Haraprasad Chattopadhyay, Internal Migration in India, A Case Study of Bengal, Calcutta, K.P. Bagchi & Co, 1987, p-297-298
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48. Ibid, p-414-415
49. Sudhiranjan Das, Ja Dekhechi Ja Peyechi, , Volume I , Sriticharan, Viswabharati, Kolkata, 1980, p-46 , 119. Shri Sudhiranjan Das was the honorable Vice Chancellor of Viswa Bharati during 1950s.
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51. Ibid, p- 415-420
52. Mahila Sambad, Probashi, Baisakh-Ashwin, Bhaga 33, Khanda 1, 1340 B.S., p-564
53. Gyanendra Mohan Das, op cit, p- 425
54. Ibid, p-426-427
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56. Shrimati Mrinalbala Devi, op cit, p-246-247; Gyanendra Mohan Das, op cit, p- 4
57. Gyanendra Mohan Das, op cit, p-429-430
58. Sudhiranjan Das, op cit, p-47-48
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63. Banaphul ,Pashchatpat, Kolkata, 1982, p. 257.
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