

CHAPTER 5: URBANISM, SOCIAL BODY AND THE *BABU* CULTURE IN EARLY COLONIAL BENGAL

INTRODUCTION:

Edward Said maintains: “Knowledge of the Orient because generated out of strength, in a sense, creates the Orient, the Oriental and his world.”¹ The establishment of the British Empire had a profound impact on the emergence of new Bengal. The new ambiance in Bengal was a reflection of archetype European society, and the emanation of *Babu* Culture was an example of this new prototype urbanism. The *Babu* culture had a significant impact on the domestic life of the new urban bourgeois of the provincial towns of Bengal. Tapan Raychaudhuri writes that the *Babus* were the “first Asian social group of any size whose mental world was transformed through its interactions with the West.”² Tapan Raychaudhuri points out that the British brought about a “close contact between two entirely different cultures of which one was perceived to be dominant,” and this supremacy proved the catalyst that prompted a segment of young Bengali men to mimic their colonizers which, in turn, contributed to the rise of the *Babus*.³ But the ‘colonial mimicry [of the *Babus* was, in essence,] the desire for a reformed, recognizable other as a subject of a difference that is almost the same but not quite.’⁴

The literature on the *Babus* also uses both primary texts and historical accounts. The primary texts are all written in Bengali, the *Babus*’ native language. The *Babu* was a social type, and he was a real figure in nineteenth-century Bengali society. Chhatu *Babu*, Latu *Babu*, Ramtanu Datta, Nabakrishna Deb, and Nimlani Haldar, just to name a few, were famous *Babus* of their days of whom Chitra Deb writes in her essay “The ‘Great Houses’ of Old Calcutta.”⁵

This social phenomenon gave rise to a literary tradition and *Babus* such as those in Nobo *Babu* Bilash or The Drolleries of the New *Babu* (1825) and Nobo Bibi Bilash (bibi meaning prostitute) or The Drolleries of the New Bibi (1831), Motilal in Alaler Ghorer Dula or The Spoilt Child of Rich Parents (1858), and Nobo in Ekei Ki Bole Sobhota? or Is this Civilization? Social satirists of the day such as Bhabanicharan Bandopadhyay, Tekchand Thakur, and Michael Madhusudan Dutt used social facts in their writings to give a well-developed and detailed picture of the prevailing atmosphere of the time; hence, as Sudhosotto Basu and Jotindra Dasgupta, editors of Dutt's Ekei Ki Bole Sobhota? point out, "historians agree that such literature can be taken as very authentic social documents."⁶

This chapter uses contemporary textual sources along with the narratives regarding *Babus* published in Samachar Darpan and Samachar Chandrika while trying to project in what manner urbanism gave rise to the third culture exemplified in the new *Babu* culture and how this had a huge impact on domesticity which inadvertently paved the way for new 'Body social' enigma in Bengal.

5.1: BABU AND THE SOCIAL BODY IN CONCEPTUAL PROPOSITION

The Hobson-Jobson dictionary the definition of the term *Babu* as 'properly a term of respect attached to a name, like Master or Mr., and formerly in some parts of Hindustan applied to certain persons of distinction. Its application as a term of respect is now almost or altogether confined to lower Bengal. In Bengal and elsewhere, among Anglo-Indians, it is often used with a slight savor of disparagement, as characterizing a superficially cultivated, but too often

effeminate, Bengali. And from the extensive employment of the class, to which the term was applied as a title, in the capacity of clerks in English offices, the word has come often to signify a ‘native clerk who writes in English.’⁷

The advent of the East India Company allowed Bengalis many opportunities to amass large fortunes within a lifetime that would have been impossible if positions such as those of the banians and dewans had not been occasioned by British needs. In her essay, “The ‘Great Houses’ of Old Calcutta,” Chitra Deb rightly says of Bengalis, who filled such positions: “Unusually too, their wealth came not from hereditary trade or landed wealth but from new sources allied with nascent British colonialism.”⁸ The new Bengali *Babus* were becoming wealthy and their wealth came not from hereditary trade or landed wealth but from few sources allied with nascent British colonialism”.⁹ Bengal was a simple case where both imperialism and colonialism were supported and “perhaps impelled by impressive ideological formulations,” and it reminded that “certain territories and people require and beseech domination, as well as forms of knowledge affiliated with domination.”¹⁰

When the British first came to conduct business in Calcutta, the Setts and Basaks were existing businessmen of the time, but no one in Calcutta knew English. The use of sign language was prevalent when communicating with the British regarding business matters slowly, with the aid of sign language, some English words were learned. Later, because of the establishment of the Supreme Court the necessity to learn English in order to conduct legal matters increased.¹¹

Vrudhula points out that: “The study of English literature, in particular, helped to form a sense of connection between rulers and ruled, and yet it also served to perpetuate the *Babu* stereotype. It accomplished this by presenting a vision of idealized Englishmen and Westerners as the

universal standard which all enlightened persons should strive to attain, and by attempting to point out the failings of Bengali character through rationalistic discourse".¹²

Horace Wilson, a victorian scholar, claimed: "Orientalists wish Indians to study so that they may elevate their own culture, religion, and morality," and the *Babu*s agreed with the Orientalists' view.¹³ The *Babu*s realized they could only receive acceptance if the British perceived them as being socially and culturally evolved. Aware that the British considered "European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures," the *Babu*s comprehended that they could use their money as a means to display their refinement and social status proving that the negative opinions the British entertained were unfounded.¹⁴

Percival Spear says that over the Mogul empire, and thus over the whole of Indian public life, was cast a mantle of Persian culture. The language of the Court and of public business, of diplomacy and polite society, was Persian. Taste in the arts, in literature and in public deportment and etiquette, was influenced by Persian models, both Muslims and Hindus of the upper classes studied Persian as a language and a literature.¹⁵

Sir William Jones had acknowledged "...how degenerate and abased so ever The Hindus may now appear...at some early age, they were splendid in arts and arms, happy in government, wise in legislation, and eminent in various knowledge."¹⁶

The British believed in the "necessity of such rule which is justified by those moralistic and normative ideologies of amelioration recognized as the Civilizing Mission or the White Man's Burden"¹⁷ Dipesh Chakrabarty observes that English education often brought in its trail a sense of crisis in Bengali families—a certain degree of waywardness in young men that led to their

neglecting their duties towards their families and the elders was a most commonly voiced complaint against the Young Bengal [*Babus*] of the early nineteenth century.¹⁸

Shibchunder Bose correctly writes of the Young Bengal *Babus*:

Some of the Bengal[i] Bab[us] read and write English with remarkable fluency, and the epistolary correspondence of most of them is commonly carried out in that language. When two or more educated bab[us] meet together...they perhaps talk of some leading articles in the Anglo-Indian or English journals or periodicals and eagerly communicate to each other the flotsam and jetsam of advanced European thoughts, the ripest outcome in the Nineteenth Century...as if the vernacular dialect were not at all fitted for the communication of their ideas.¹⁹

Initially the word did not have derogatory meanings, but during the latter half of the eighteenth century and then in the nineteenth century, it began to be used as a pejorative term. Subir Raychaudhuri writes, “the sahibs applied [the word *Babu*] to Indians in a derogatory fashion...the word reflects all the contempt of the ruler for the ruled”²⁰ In Colonial Masculinity: The ‘Manly Englishman’ and the ‘Effeminate Bengali’ in Late Nineteenth-Century Studies, Mrinalini Sinha notes that ‘The *Babu*, an old Bengali word of Persian origin, did not always have negative connotations for the British. In fact, well up to the second half of the century, ...the term was used as a title of respect for men who had no other titles, very like its English equivalents ‘Mr.’ or ‘Esquire.’ The origins of a more negative meaning of the word, as Christine Baxter points out, can be traced to the works of early nineteenth-century Bengali social satirists. These early Bengali social commentators used the term ‘*Babu*’ to satirize the culture of the nouveau riche in Bengali society; the term was associated with Bengali parvenus who had adopted...Anglicised manners for upward economic and social mobility. When the British first

adopted this negative usage of the *Babu*, its connotation of social-climbing or money-grubbing continued as an important theme in British satires of the Bengali *Babu*.²¹ In *The Parlour and the Streets: Elite and Popular Culture in Nineteenth-Century Calcutta*, Sumanta Banerjee offers a definition that is closer to the purposes of this study since it can be applied to both types. He notes: In the nineteenth century, the *Babu*, as he appeared in the farces and the sketches, was the pampered son of a British agent who has inherited his father's wealth dissipates it on drinking, whoring and other amusements with a host of sycophants.²²

Shib Chunder Bose writes in *The Hindoos As they Are* that 'the British had a direct hand in the formation of *Babus*. It is undoubtedly true that "almost every respectable family of Bengal[i] Bab[u]s...[was] more or less indebted to [the East India Company] for its status and distinction, position and influence, affluence and prosperity."²³

The 'body' of the human emerged as a subject of historical analysis in the latter 1970s. The genesis for the rise of this subject-specific can be related to the interdisciplinarity of the 'new social history' of the 1960s and 1970s. The scholarship developed in parallel to the growth of the histories of women and sexuality. Since then, it has developed in tandem with the new cultural history and gender history both of which owes very much to the disciplines 'general engagement with the linguistic turn'. Body history does 'exemplify general reorientations' in historical study.²⁴

The textual analysis of the body was not at all absent from the historical writings before the 1970s. Throughout the 19th and much of the 20th century, historians regarded the human body as a source of weakness to be overcome instead privileging the mind as a source of rationality consciousness and identity. This dualism of mind and body was the most important feature of

classical Christian and Enlightenment traditions that dominated the western intellectual thought. Thus in the writings of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels,²⁵ the human body was weak and passive. Marc Bloch's examination of royal healing²⁶ in England and France could be termed a prototype of body history, and Lucien Febvre's calls for 'quantitative histories' of family life, sexuality and death also encouraged historians to 'historicize aspects of the body.'

The most influential sociologist for the history of the body is Norbert Elias. Elias published works between the 1930s and the 1980s, but the key work for use for this chapter is "The Civilizing Process," first published in German in 1939, had a major impact in the late 1970s, at which time it became available in English translation.

Elias examined changes in forms of 'acceptable social conduct' and 'treatment' of the body, particularly in relation to bodily functions, from the medieval to the modern period. He distinguished between two historical bodies. "Echoing classic modernization theory, the medieval body was childlike, uncivilized, irrational, and uninhibited in expressing emotions and bodily functions. In order for a more mature stage of individualization to develop, repression and education were needed. During the early modern period, the medieval body gave way to the modern, bourgeois body, which was restrained, mannered and decorous."²⁷ The medieval body's uncontrolled impulses were replaced by the modern body's emotional self-control.

Mikhail Bakhtin's²⁸ study of the culture of folk humor in the context of the French writer François Rabelais has become enormously influential in body history. Bakhtin identified two distinct bodies, the 'grotesque,' which he discussed at length, and the 'classical.' These bodies were associated, respectively, with low and high cultures. The classical body of elite culture was easily described and recognized, but the grotesque body was difficult to categorize and appraise.

It was defined primarily in opposition to the classical body. Where the classical body was individual, the grotesque was collective. While the classical body emphasized the head, traditionally associated with honor, the grotesque body accentuated the belly and genitals and embraced organic bodily functions defecation, lactation, menstruation and conception. The complete and immaculate classical body's interactions with the world were clearly defined. In contrast, the grotesque body, the boundaries between inside and outside, between self and the other, the body and the world were blurred.²⁹

Michel Foucault was one of the key post-structuralist philosophers of the twentieth century.³⁰ Within the poststructuralist tradition, bodies are viewed not as constant biological entities, but - like books, films, and language itself - as texts'. Bodies can be 'read by interpreting bodily signs and symbols. This semiotic conceptualization has led to a focus on social construction - how the meanings given to the supposedly natural or biological body are not fixed but constructed socially and culturally. Hence the body is understood differently in different historical periods. Foucault's approach is a social constructionist one. For Foucault, bodies were constructed to legitimate dominant forms of power. The power relationships between rulers and their subjects are enacted on the bodies of the dominated. As modern forms of power relationships developed, so there was a change from an older to a new, modern body.³¹ The major shift towards this new form of power and body occurred in the early modern period - through Foucault's attention to chronology, lacked rigour. The old fluid body of humours and astrological correspondences gave way to a new body, denied by observation, intervention and scientific rigour.³²

THE 'NEW BODY' IN EARLY COLONIAL BENGAL

The *Samachar Darpan* of 24th February 1821³³ and 9th June 1821 contains an interesting anecdote bearing the title “*Babu-r-Upakhyan*” *The story of Babu*, gives a vivid account of *Babu* Culture in the second half of the 18th century. The author of the anecdote, as pointed out by some critics, was Bhabanicharan Bandopadhyay, but whoever he was, he was the first to realise the impact of urbanism leading to the formation of a new social class popularly called as a *Babu*.

As Srikumar Bandyopadhyay³⁴ observes 'the advent of the Bengali Press (1818) provided an opportunity for and an incentive to the expression of tendencies that had been accumulated for some time in the Bengali mind and.... it was the first attempt to bring together fragmentary aspects of the life of a particular class by creating a character Tilak Chandra, in the *Babu* Episode published in the *Samachar Darpan*.³⁵

The first of the two episodes can be summarised as follows:

Raj Chakraborty, a Brahmin Kulin in the city of Amarabati, was a rich man. He held important positions in government service and in the farms of Zamindars. His reputation for wisdom, intelligence, legal ability and executive capacity was so publicized that Sultan Ahamed Khalipa, a wealthy Indian merchant, named him *Deoyan* from one of his opium farms. It was a very lucrative post. Sultan Ahamed Khalipa exported his opium, which costs little to produce, to China, where he made great profits. To get rich quick, Raj Chakraborty Deoyan began to adulterate opium. In doing so, he acquired fabulous wealth.

Having no children, Raicakrabarti Deoyan performed several religious rites to obtain a child. Finally, he had a son as handsome as the moon.³⁶ To celebrate this event, Chakrabarti Deoyan held a series of auspicious ceremonies, such as the dance of lizards and the singing of frogs. Over time his son reached the age of six months.

It was now time for the boy's *annaprasan*, the ceremony' at which he was to receive his name. There was a group of pundits who adulated Rajcakrabarti Deoyan. When asked to suggest a name for the boy, one of them pretended to See in him 'the nine qualities of a Kulin.'³⁷ He accordingly recommended a name, Kulincandra Tilak i.e., an ornament of the kulins. The second pundit observed that the boy would be a most felicitous maha*Babu*. The third pundit went a little further. He maintained that he had by astrological calculations ascertained the characteristics of a *Babu* and assured Raj Chakraborty Deoyan that his son possessed all those characteristics.

In consequence, Raj Chakraborty Deoyan's son was named Tilak Chandra *Babu*. Since there was no one referred to him as Tilak Chandra, he came to be known as *Babu*. *Babu* was brought up in great luxury. The Deoyan adorned his son with as many golden ornaments as his little body could endure. He even wanted to suspend a gold brick from his neck as a sign of his opulence.³⁸

Rajcakrabarti Deoyaaii afforded his son every description of indulgence but no education. To know the gayatri is sufficient for a Brahmin boy. He may, of course, acquire, knowledge, if it is so ordained.³⁹ Provided he looks after the fortune he will inherit from me, he will never want for anything. What becomes of him is up to destiny. After I am dead, I shall not be able to come back to fend for him.

Consequently, the *Babu* frittered away his boyhood flying kites and playing *bulbuli*. Though there was an education shop in the house he gave no thought to reading or writing. Nevertheless, *Babu* was held in high esteem by the paid flatterers of his father. They feigned to discern rare academic distinctions in the boy. According to them, there was nobody wiser than he was. He is well-verses in all the *Sastras* such as English, Persian, Arabic, Nagari, Phiringi and Armenian. He studied English for a month and after that, he could understand letters in English at a glance

and reply to them without hesitation. Despite having had no elementary education, *Babu* was induced by these flatterers to believe that 'I am forgetful of self. Everybody calls me wise and learned and I also feel that I am indeed a scholar.⁴⁰

By the time Raj Chakraborty's death, *Babu* had become a perfect hedonist, which philosophy was summed up in the following words: 'the world is transitory, and its physical gratification is the only reality.'⁴¹ Babbu inherited the property but not the industry of his father. Raj Chakraborty had known how to earn money and *Babu* knew only how to spend it. His father had accumulated his fortune little by little, and *Babu* dissipated it left to right and center. Nevertheless, the *Babu* realised that he owned his social position to the fortune his father that was acquired in his various positions. He, therefore, began to make inquiries about the possibilities of securing employment. This had let some of his flatters to speculate that he was perhaps the way to obtain some high office. These speculations brought the *Babu* a new group of flatterers who attended him from morning till night in the expectation of getting employment. But *Babu* had nothing to commend him but money. His very vanity presented an insuperable obstacle to his securing employment. In his heart of hearts, he knew that this was, and there was no likelihood of being able to secure employment for others but to admit as much would disillusion his flatterers and cause them to desert him. Unless he kept up this pretense no one would come and he would have to look out for people to fill out his court. Thus in order to maintain his court, *Babu* held out false hopes to his admirers. All those seeking preferment from him used to attend his drawing-room at dawn and dusk. They received *Babu* on occasion with great respect and courtesy and when he was seated amongst them on his throne-like chair, he listened with enormous satisfaction their fulsome praise. Some would remark: '*Babu* has been

made Nawab of Golanagar' and others would add: 'Babu has concluded an important' transaction, he has leased the entire Sundarbans.'

One day as he entered his assembly, *Babu* commanded his valet to prepare his shirt and *pag* (a large headgear) in readiness for the Darbar (office) the following morning. This gave rise to widespread speculation amongst his admirers. They dreamt of *Babu* holding an important appointment, saying to them: 'Then my assumption has come true.' Some promised to sacrifice at Kalighat, others to offer *sirni* at the shrine of Satya Pir. *Babu* did not divulge his plans. He kept his assembly in suspense until the following day. Since *Babu* was going to the Darbar, not a single member of the household had a moment to lose. The following morning *Babu* bathed, eaten breakfast sparingly, and spent ages donning his finest clothes before finally boarding his splendid carriage. He had no time for lunch. Escorted by four red turbaned footmen, *Babu* arrived at the shop of his friend, Haji Hadi Saheb, a rich Muslim date merchant. 'They conversed in another language, though far from being a gifted conversationalist. *Babu* went on talking with an affected accent, as befitted his station.' For a while, they discussed such topics as the current value of money, the origins of war, the appointment of the new Kaji and so forth. Then *Babu* commanded one of his footmen to go and see whether Molla Phiroj was at home and whether or not Mr. Antoni Badrigu was lunching at home today. He commanded a second man to see if Mr. Iago was free, in which case he would go. So saying, *Babu* boarded his carriage and returned home via the auction market. Meanwhile the entire household silently awaited his return. He had left for the office without taking lunch, and no one knew whether he had had anything to eat. *Babu* seemed to have worked very hard and now had a headache. It spoilt his appetite. After a mere grain or two of rice, he retired to bed. His admirers arrived on time. Everyone awaited the glad tidings in silence. Into the drawing-room strode *Babu*, dispelling the silence with the

pronouncement that he had worked hard that day. ‘I was late leaving the Darbar. I had a headache and went straight to bed. General conversation then commenced. *Babu* did not talk of business. And so he went on holding court every day. Meanwhile, his unfortunate petitioners had exhausted their money and were now borrowing to maintain themselves. They moved in with relatives but continued eulogising *Babu* as before. *Babu* was unable to offer them any preferment but concealed his inability from them. On the contrary, whenever anyone failed to attend his court, *Babu* greeted him with: ‘And where have you been all this time, my dear Sir? A vacancy came up, but since you were absent, another candidate filled it. And thus, it was in this way *Babu* passed his time.

The subject matter of this episode reflects aspects of social behaviour in early 19th century urban town is confirmed by Sibnath Sastri.

‘There appeared at this time a group of people, popularly known as *Babus*. They generally belonged to the well-to-do-, urban middle class. They knew Persian and had a smattering of English, and on the strength of this knowledge, they despised their native religion. Without any higher end in view, they lived for themselves alone, pleasure being the be-all and end-all of their existence. With faces bearing marks of debauchery, heads covered with a profusion of waving curls, tinged teeth like so many pieces of jet, pieces of thin black-bordered muslin round their waists, cambric *banians* so made as to show their figures to the best advantage, neatly folded scarves thrown over their shoulders and shoes ornamented with broad buckles, they strolled along the streets humming or whistling a favourite tune. Their chief enjoyment during the day was sleeping, flying kites, watching bulbul fights and music, and the night brought other less on reputable amusements’.⁴²

To add to Sastri's statement, Tilak Chandra was without question silly, foppish, vain and pretentious, but he was not debauched and vicious. Nevertheless it is true that he and his father belong to that section of society to which Sastri alludes. The father Rajcakrabarti is a rich man who becomes fabulously wealthy by joining the opium trade. His son Tilak Chandra spends his boyhood flying kites and playing *bulbuli*. Though he never studies, he is yet said to know a number of languages. His philosophy of life is hedonistic. He lives like a *nabab*, holding a regular assembly of sycophants. When he goes out, he wears a huge turban like a nabab, and covers his body with *jama-jora*. He then boards a beautiful carriage and is escorted by guards clad in red turbans. He has a wide range of acquaintances. His friends include Haji Hadi Saheb, a Muslim, Antoni Badrigu, an Armenian, Mr. Iago, an Englishman probably all of the merchants. He is not good at conversation, but he is aware of his social rank and so speaks a different language, probably Hindustani, with Haji Saheb, with an affected accent. He is held in high esteem by the sycophants of his court. They include Hindus as well as Muslims. Some of them worship the deity of Kali and the others Satya Pir.

Since the dawn of the 18th century, when the Nawab of Bengal had virtually become independent of the control of the central government of Delhi, affluent families in the townships on the Hooghly district started an indiscriminate intimation of the extravagant way of life that prevailed in the court of the Nabab.⁴³ It was soon followed by the emergence of a number of Bengali families who became wealthy either by trading with the European merchants or by cooperating with the East India Company.⁴⁴ This class mainly consisted of the native agents of the Company popularly known as *banian or gomasta*. Thus Kanta Babu, the founder of the Kasimbazar estate, was a banian to Mr. Sykes, a servant of the East India Company⁴⁵ and Maharaja Nabakrishna, the founder of the Shobhabazar estate, was munshi to Warren Hastings.

Two further examples of rich men who owed their fortunes to cooperation with the Company are Rammohan Ray and Dwarakanath Thakur. A contemporary of theirs Raja Radhakanta Deb was the grandson of Maharaja Nabakrishna of Shobhabazar.

Nabakrsna had started life as Persian *munshi* to Warren Hastings. Later he entered the service of Lakshmikahta alias Naku Dhar, banian to Lord Clive, and subsequently, himself became *munsi* to Lord Clive. In 1780 Nabakrsna was appointed by Warren Hastings as manager of Burdwan zamindari.⁴⁶ Raja Baidyanath Ray, another of Rammohan's contemporaries, was the third son of Maharaja Sukhamay Ray, who was himself the grandson of Lakshmikahta alias Naku Dhar the founder of the *Posta Raj* family of Calcutta.

Naku, Dhar, as he was popularly known, came from a very humble origin. It is said that he was once muttering, his prayers, on the Ganges embankment when he spotted an "Englishman floating down the river. Naku Dhar rescued the man, who turned out to be the sole survivor of a boating accident. Naku Dhar revived the man and allowed him to stay as his house-guest during his convalescence. Through association with this chance acquaintance, Naku Dhar picked up a smattering of English and was later engaged as an interpreter in the service of the Company. There is a tradition that Naku Dhar's loyalty to the Company was instrumental in helping lay the foundation of power in India.⁴⁷

In short, almost all the rich families of Calcutta in the early 19th century, such as the Debs, the Roys, the Thakurs and the Ghosals, owed their positions in society to cooperate with the Company.⁴⁸ For obvious commercial reasons, these people learned English and for the same reason again, they were prompted to adopt certain English practices as well.

The *Babu*'s linguistic pretensions are an interesting reflection on the language situation in contemporary Calcutta. Tilak Chandra is said to have conversed with an affected accent and in another tongue when visiting his friend Haji Hadi Saheb. It may have been noticed that in outlining the rise of the rich Calcutta families, the word munshi was frequently used. They were the Persian-speaking secretaries.

The changes which the word *Babu* was undergoing can be understood in a way that earlier the word had been a title of respect corresponding in large measure to the English word 'gentleman.' In some circles, it was still used as the equivalent of the abbreviated form of address 'Mr.' The Samachar Darpan of the 1st May, 1824 by while reporting on a function held in the residence of the Lord Bishop of Calcutta, stated that "among the Bengali guests present on this occasion were *Babu* Radhakanta Deb, *Babu* Kashinath Mallik, *Babu* Gurucharan Mallik, *Babu* Harimohan Thakur, *Babu* Umanandan Thakur, *Babu* Shyamlal Thakur and *Babu* Biswambhar Pani etc.

The nababi ways of life were not the only temptations to which young men were exposed. It was clear that many of them were adopting the dress, eating habits, and ways of life, generally of the British residents, the sahebs. The word *Babu* had also come to mean 'westernised.' As early therefore as 1821, *Babu* had ceased to be an epithet of respect applied to a Hindu of good position but had been transferred as a pejorative term to that class of men who had accepted nababi or sahebi ways of life as their own.

SAMACHAR DARPAN OF 9TH JUNE, 1821.

The second *Babur* Upakhyan, which, as has been stated above, appeared in the Samachar Darpan on the 9th June 1821, was according to the editor's note the work of the same man as the former. The following is an abridged translation of it.⁴⁹

As a result of the pandit's flattery, *Babu* imagined that he knew all there was to know of Bengali traditions and culture. Then he determined to live like the sahebs (Europeans), modeling his behaviour on theirs in every particular. For instance, the sahebs generally go for a ride in the mornings and evenings, either in a carriage or horseback. *Babu* gave instructions to his servant to wake him so that he can go for a ride on horseback early in the morning. Unfortunately, he spent most of the night in a brothel, and arriving home early hours went off to bed. Soon the- servant came and woke him. He was still feeling sleepy when he got up and by the time he was mounted and ready to go, it was well past sunrise. He felt ashamed to ride along the same road the sahebs go at that time of the day. So he went a different way. Horses have a knack of recognising inexperienced riders. This one soon recognised, the *Babu* and flung him off. He was sent sprawling onto the cinder track; the cinders lacerated his face and hands. He returned home, half-carried, along by the groom. The horse has bolted.

When a European gives his word to anyone, he keeps that is he does not lie. This is European ethics. *Babu*'s ethics were manifested in his intercourse with the many people who came to see him. If some beggar came to see him and told him the troubles of his father and mother, *Babu* straightway refused to give anything. When hearing these gentlemen interceded on the beggar on behalf, *Babu* replied, 'do you want me to turn into a Bengali? If, after having once refused him, one were to give him something, my word would become a lie. As long as I live, I shall prevent that. A man's word is final.'

When a European quarrels with anyone, he virtually makes war. He attacks him with his fist, pistols, and so forth. By way of imitating that, *Babu* punched his dependent relatives and also threatened to shoot them whenever his anger was aroused. *Babu* considered this a mark of virility.

Europeans go to church on Sundays and attend to business on the other days. In view of this, *Babu* abandoned all daily and evening ceremonies and went into the garden on Sundays when he sometimes listened to *kheur* (vulgar ditties) from *sakher vatra* (amateur yatra).

Europeans express courtesy by going to the homes of people in need and trying in various ways to remove their difficulties. *Babu* also went to see the distressed families in their homes, but his main interest was to discover the women of the families concerned and establish illicit relations with them. Europeans act as arbitrators. *Babu* became an arbitrator. He consulted an English book of law. But his judgement was far from impartial. When Europeans speak Hindi, they pronounce 't' and 'd' as 'td' and 'd.' So when anyone asked *Babu* his name, he replied, 'Dataram Gosh.'

The above episode is a separate and independent sketch about a different *Babu*. The *Babu*'s name, in this case, is 'Dataram Ghosh, not Tilak Chandra. He is of a different caste too, and he is a Kayastha, whereas Tilak Chandra was a Brahmin. Tilak Chandra is a nababi *Babu*. He imitates the Muslim nababs. He holds courts in his assembly of sycophants, and he wears a *pag*. Dataram Ghosh on the other hand has adopted the habits of the sahebs. He goes for a ride in the morning. He pretends to fight duels. He abandons the traditional Hindu ceremonies such as *ahnik*, *sandhya* and *puja* for the simple reason that sahebs do not observe them, but every Sunday, he goes to his garden house in imitation of the sahebs who go to church on Sunday. He reads law books in the hope of becoming an advocate like them. That the writer does not approve of such behaviour is evident from the fact that every attempt of the *Babu* to adopt western ways is made to end in disaster and humiliation. One feels that he is more severe on Dataram Ghosh than he was on Tilak Chandra. He has aligned himself with that growing number of orthodox.

Many of the rich families of Calcutta, as we have said before, owed their affluence to the East India Company and the commercial houses in the city, and sought to establish their economic positions by developing intimate social relations with the sahebs. Many of them, even among the conservatives, used to invite European residents, to parties in their houses, some of which are described in the newspapers. References to some such parties are mentioned in the press. ‘1823, May - The other evening we went to a party given by Rammohun Roy, a rich Bengalee *Babu*, the grounds which were extensive, were well-illuminated, and excellent fireworks display. In various rooms at the house, nauch girls were dancing and singing. The style of singing was curious; one of the women was Nickee, the *Catalani* of the East’.

On the 11th December 1823, Dwarakanath Thakur threw a housewarming party which was attended by distinguished members of the European community of Calcutta.⁵⁰ Their wives were also present. The guests were entertained, to a sumptuous dinner, and afterwards, songs, dances, and western music-were performed to their satisfaction. That the conservative members of Hindu society did not hesitate to ingratiate themselves with their European benefactors is evident from reports published in contemporary journals of functions held in their homes.

The Samachar Darpan of 4th October 1823, reports that a farewell dinner was given in honour of Mr. Ferguson, a Counsel of the Supreme Court of Calcutta, at the residence of *Babu Kashinath Mallik*.⁵¹ It was attended by a number of English lawyers of the Supreme Court. The function comprised two parts: the first being dinner, followed by speeches in appreciation, of the services of Mr. Ferguson, and the second in the ballroom is a dance in honour of the guests, all of whom were European. They were charmed by the dancing of the beautiful Muslim girls. On the 17th November 1823, *Babu Ruplal Mallik* held a resplendent reception on the occasion of the Rasa festival (festival of Lord Krishna’s circular dance).⁵² Invitations were extended to the European

community of Calcutta. Professional dancing girls (*taypha nartaki*) performed dances in the ornate ballroom and dinner was served in a room downstairs. The European guests were reported to have enjoyed the rich food and wine. They were then entertained to music played by members of the Badshahi Paltan (Royal Army?) Orchestra. The report ends by saying that never before had such a dance was held in the home of a baby. The occasion. for holding such functions was not always religious. The Samachar Darpan reports that on the 18th March 1824, *Babu Gurucaran Mallik* gave a dinner in his residence at Barabazar, Calcutta, to entertain his European friends. Once more, the guests were served with rich food and wine and afterwards, there were dances by courtesans.

5.2 SAUKIN BABU AND THE CHANGING MORAL ATMOSPHERE OF BENGAL

The episode on *Babu* appeared in the Samachar Darpan on 23rd June 1821.⁵³ It bore the title *saukin Babu* was published over the pseudonym ‘*Ajnatakulasil*’- One whose family and character are not known. It goes as follows:

The *Snanyatra* Yatra (the Bathing Festival of Lord Jagannath) attracts each year from town and city in host of the *Babu* who are the participants or as spectators attend and bring along with them such things as afford them entertainment some preferring singers and musicians some prostitutes, some jesters and some dancing girl and all according to the means having pleasure craft. Hearing all these annual events this year, one of these new-fangled fops impetuously hired a *hapbajra* (a minor pleasure craft) and set out to attend the bathing festival, accompanied by the

wife. When they were about to board the boat, the boatman eyed the lady and desiring two sports with her as they did with all the *Babus* woman said- ‘The way to the boat is muddy *Babu*. Who among the two of us to put the lady aboard, and the Baby assented. Later going on deck and surviving the nautical scene, The *Babu* observed that about the other craft, almost all the other nymphs where either singing drinking or indulging in amorous sinks. Grieved by his lady's lack of such amorous graces, the *Babu* said ‘do something, Just sing a *kheur* (vulgar ditty) and I will accompany you on the tabla and you can dance as you sing. Chaste wife that she was, the lady complied with his every whim the whole night through, completely dispelling his displeasure.

In the morning, the boat arrived at its destination, which was the Mahes Stairs, and this foppish mine of virtue betook himself to watch the bathing. Meanwhile, his wife descended from the boat on that auspicious full moon day into the Ganges to bathe. Here the tide itself, like god incarnate, rushed to protect her chastity. The profusion of craft created confusion. Unable to tell which was her own, the talented lady's purifying feet trod the deck of some other mine of virtue, Whether she had an assignation or not, there is no knowing, but never again was she seen by that foppish mine of virtue. The poor fellow enquired after her from door to do throughout the town, but without success. And so the author concludes, ‘I beg of you, foppish gentlemen, do not do likewise.’ Such whims end only in disgust.⁵⁴

The central event of this piece is, therefore, highly improbable, which explains why it is important to understand urbanism. In effect, the foppish *Babu* had invited his wife on a naughty nautical weekend, where a mistress would have been more appropriate and allowed her to be suggestively manhandled by the boatmen who mistook her for a whore and addressed her as such, and then induced her to sing, and dance, like ‘prostitute, in a brothel,’ In consequence, he lost her forever; which in this piece is deemed a fitting punishment for such a naive idiot. An

interesting feature of this work is that the saukin *Babu* is obviously an upstart, who has only recently acquired sufficient fortune to enter high society with whose manners he is not acquainted. One deduces from this episode that was already in existence a *Babu* class for this upstart to enter, and that it was to some extent at any rate profligate. Its enjoyment of religious festivals such as the *snana* yatra of Mahes was almost entirely irreligious; the occasion is merely a pretext for carrying their Calcutta capers into the countryside via the waterways of riverine Bengal. Surprisingly, this profligacy does not occasion. Any comment from the author, who accepts it as normal upper-class behaviour, the only abnormal and reprehensible event is to introduce a lawfully wedded wife into such a licentious setting.

This work indicates that the author does not disapprove of *Babu*'s attending the snan yatra accompanied by prostitutes. Actually, in the early 19th century, Bengal recourse to prostitutes was commonplace. No stigma was attached to it. Indeed it might even enhance a man's social status.

Shibnath Shastri writes: 'since it was in those days out of practice to go abroad with wife and family and fornication also was not considered as a vicious act by society, almost every government servant, lawyer and mukhtar used to keep a mistress. Consequently, brothels sprang up around their places of residence. It is reported about conditions prevailing in the district of Jessore that it was customary to introduce in fraction members of societies such as leaders and mukhtars to a newcomer by saying that "he has erected a brick-built house for his mistress." It was a matter of great prestige on one's part to present one's mistress with a brick built house. Not on in Jessore was the moral atmosphere deplorable, but it was also all over the country'.⁵⁵

The moral atmosphere of Bengal was no better. Kysnacandra of Nadiya noted as a great ‘patron of art and culture, deserves no less a reputation as a libertine⁵⁶. Despite his adherence to orthodox Hinduism., his love of erotic verse impelled his court poet Bharat Chandra to compose a poem on the *Vidya Sundar* theme. So widespread was immorality in the late 18th century Bengal that the great bulk of Europeans, both in and out of the service, (of the Company) lived, unmarried with native females, and their leisure time was spent in the most debasing associations. This state of affairs existed, according to J.C.Marshman, ’for a quarter of a century after the ‘Battle of Plassey’ and used his phrase, ’England had subdued Bengal, and Bengal had subdued the morals of its conqueror.⁵⁷

The next Contribution to the press on the *Babu* theme was a letter published in Samachar Chandrika. The name of the correspondent and the date of publication are unknown. The summary given below is based on a reprint that appeared in the Samachar Darpan on the 22nd January 1825, under the heading - “*BALAKER ANGRAZI POSHAK*” (Children in Western Dress).⁵⁸

The letter reads like a narration of an actual incident. It is included because it has a direct bearing on the *Babu* theme, and because, being a sincere expression of doubt on the part of a conservative Hindu about the wisdom of clothing Bengali children in foreign dress, it provides a touchstone of truth against the responses of the societal modernism perspective evolving due to new urbanism. It is as follows:

The author used each day to go to the Ganges to bathe. Every morning he would see new road skirting the Ganges embankment a number of boys riding either on pony-back or in-carriages, accompanied by beautiful turbaned footmen. This led him to suppose that the boys were

European children. One day, however, to his surprise, he saw them heading towards Bangali tola, an exclusively Bengali residential area. Puzzled, he asked the footmen to which European families children belonged. This question set the footmen laughing in derision. ‘What a foolish and ignorant Brahmin. They are the children of *Babus*.’

The author remained skeptical. Admittedly, the children's complexions were on the dark side, but on the other hand, their clothing was almost completely European. Presuming them to be of mixed parentage, he asked the children their names. The author doubts were completely removed when one of them replied that his name was. Sri Adhaaman *Babu* and that his father was a Bengali Hindu.

Having narrated this incident, the author then goes on to argue against the practice of clothing children in the western dress on the grounds that if Children were accustomed to foreign clothes from infancy, they might come to feel uncomfortable in traditional Bengali dress and decline to wear it. Admittedly, close relatives might not see harm in such a boy when; a grown man, entering their homes, dressed as an imitation saheb, but strangers, on the other hand, might well be alarmed at such an eventuality since it might be mistaken by others for a visit from a genuine saheb, which would naturally bring the house into disrepute.

This letter contains the first explicit reference to an aversion to western dress. The accounts of *Babu* behaviour have so far referred if anything only to *Babus* being clothed in Muslim dress, principally the voluminous shirt and the large *pag*. Even the *Babu* in the second *Babu* episode who modelled his behaviour in other respects on that of the sahebs did not, so far as we know, abandon ‘traditional Bengali dress,’ a form of clothing that by then it may well have included the Muslim shirt and turban. That the author's fears were not groundless is shorn in the aversion

to traditional dress expressed by young Hindu College student some five-years later ‘I am not a *jagajhapoyala* or a member of a kirtan party that I should wear such clothes, he indignantly declared when offered such clothes by his father.⁵⁹ Instead, he demanded socks, shoes, trousers, and so forth, which were beyond his father’s means. When his father said he could not afford such clothes, the boy refused to go anywhere: in other words, it was below his dignity to be seen in a bengali dress.

The fifth extract from the newspapers of the period under review was published in the Samachar Chandrika on the 5th December, 1830. It differs from all the other extracts. The following is a summary:

The city of Ksodha lying north of Kashipur had a mixed population of the well-off, middle class and poor families. Their lived many Kulin belonging to the Brahmin and Kayastha castes. Some of them were rich and some of them were poor. There were three rich men living in the three parts of the village. The leader was kaliraj by name who was continually engaged in heroic activities. His deeds were always admired by his flatterers. When a few of the villagers disapproved of his ways of living, all the sycophants of Kaliraj decided that they should be ostracised by being refused all invitations. Thereupon the poor Brahmins lamented ‘For what Sin they have been ostracised? If subjects are loyal to the King, they enjoy many amenities and command, respect in society. We did not agree with the ideas of the Kaliraj, and so we have been outcast. Since we have not acquired a liking for brandy, we have been plunged into misery. None of us have a Muslim wife and we never eat the meat that is sold in the market and this is imputed to us as a sin, and we are suffering for it.’

Kaliraj is a rich man. He is always surrounded by flattered by a number of sycophants. He drinks brandy, eats the meat that is sold in the market and also has a Muslim wife. Most of the villagers approve of his deeds because he is rich. But a few Kulin members of the Brahmin and Kayastha castes do not; consequently they are boycotted.

This passage is far more bitter and direct than those which preceded it. It is written by a man who feels that the cause of orthodox Hinduism is lost. The age of wickedness 'kali yuga' has indeed come for those who adhere to the most solemn requirement of their creed, i.e.'not to eat beat, not to drink alcohol and to marry within their own caste are now be boycotted and treated as outcasts. The king of wickedness, Kaliraj, is in control, and his supporters were in the majority. What were the virtues of the Hindu that have now become crimes?

The Samachar Chandrika published a significant letter, reprinted in the Samachar Darpan of the 22nd August 1829:

'In the city of Calcutta, instead of being denounced for practicing such things as eating meat from the butcher, consorting with Muslim prostitutes, and drinking alcohol and so forth, people are actually being respected.'⁶⁰

The tide of modernism was not confined to the city of Calcutta, and it had even reached the small., village, of Kasoda to its north.

The Samachar Gandrika published another *Babu* episode on the 10th of March, 1831.⁶¹ It appeared in the correspondence column of the paper and was claimed by the writer, whose name we do not know, to be based on an actual incident. That| the ridiculous situation in which the *Babu* finds himself, is intended to inculcate a moral lesson. It reads as follows-

‘None can escape the consequences of their evil deeds; God gives the man his due today or tomorrow. Hold this saying in firm belief, for you, will now hear positive proof of it.....’

The actual episode is as follows:

A strange gentleman who had come to Calcutta for the business purpose was living in rented accommodation somewhere in Shyambazar. He fell in love with a married woman. As she was willing, he enjoyed himself and accomplished his evil designs for some time without the knowledge of the woman’s husband. When, however, the latter learned of his wife’s misconduct, he resolved to mete out proper punishment to her lover. He concealed his knowledge of the affair from his spouse and bided his opportunity. A few days later, when, for some reason, his mistress failed to meet him at the appointed place at the appointed hour, the paramour fell into a great passion. The pale and sad face he rushed to the house of his beloved and rattled the fence near the dorms in which she slept. The woman was asleep and didn’t hear but the noise he was making reached the ears of her husband, who cunningly put on female clothing and came to the front door. The sight of her dispelled the paramour’s gloom.’ He became ecstatic and frenzied with lust and deceived by the darkness of the night, and he attempted to embrace the woman. Then husband attacked this ‘mine of virtues’ violently. He seized him and threw him to the ground. Then he thrashed him, beating him with the palms of his hands and punching him with his fists, and kicking him with his feet and hammering him with slippers. This fourfold beating put an end to the ‘anticipated pleasure of that Adonis.’ The husband then began to pour abuse upon the Woman. Meanwhile, the *Babu* lover who had been struggling like an elephant, now made off like a crippled gnat, bruised and naked.

The writer of this letter signs himself *Yatharthanusandhayinah*, a Sanskrit compound meaning ‘seeker of the truth.’ What is the truth that the recounted of this farcical incident is seeking? It is surely not that the visiting *Babu* should seek to enjoy himself in the evening. There were brothels in plenty in the city and it was not regarded as a sin to frequent them. The sin for which he was punished laid in his obtaining his enjoyment in the company of a married woman. There were limits to permit vice and he was transgressing those limits.

During the period of our study, a series of satirical writing appeared in the newspapers. Written anonymously, these satires portrayed, as well as criticised, the behaviour of the new *Babus*, who emerged in the city of Calcutta in the early 19th century. The writings of Bhabanicaran Bandyopadhyay is important in understanding the whole concept.

Bhabanicaran is best remembered today ‘as a contemporary and Antagonist of Rammohan Ray’⁶² and for want of proper assessment, his place in, and contribution to, Bengali Literature has been overlooked.

In 1823 Bhabanicaran seems to have brought out two works, both of them written in Bengali prose. They are *Kalikata Kamalalay* and *Hitopades*. While the first one is an original work, the second one is a Bengali translation of the Sanskrit original of *Visnu Sarma* and as such, falls outside the purview of this thesis. Both works were, however, published in his own name. 1825 saw the publication of two further works, *NabaBabubilas* and *Dutibilas*. *Dutibilas*, written in verse, was published under his own name, whereas *NabaBabubilas* written in prose and verse bore the pseudonym of Pramathanath Sarma. In 1832 Bhabanicaran brought out his last work, also written in prose and verse entitled *Nababibibilas* under the pseudonym of Gobindacandra Mukhopadhyay.

In this section, it is proposed to examine the first original prose work of Bhabanicaran, namely Kalikata Kamalalay, which S.K. De describes as Bhabanicaran's most important work'.⁶³ Published in 1823, it is principally a study of the urban life of Calcutta in the second decade of the 19th century. It was written in the form of dialogues between a city-dweller and provincial, and it 'professes to be a manual of etiquette for country people-who come for the first time to Calcutta and find them bewildered by its strange manners, customs and speech.'⁶⁴ This dialogue device provided Bhabanicaran with a framework within which he could set forth differing views on Hinduism and on the practices which were permissible to Hindus. The dialogue purports to be between a 'rural' Hindu and an 'urban' Hindu. It appears from the nature of what follows that the debate was actually between an ultra-orthodox Hindu, who was unwilling to admit any concession to Social change and a Hindu who, though orthodox, was prepared to allow some adjustment of Hindu practices to the political, social and economic changes "which marked the history of Calcutta at this time. At the beginning of the book, 'Bhabanicaran explained the significance of the title: Calcutta resembles an ocean. This is why the title Kalikata Kamalalay has been chosen. The word Kamalalay means 'ocean,' the residence of Kamala Laksmi, the Hindu goddess of Fortune.⁶⁵ In keeping with the title, Kalikata Kamalalay was designed to be completed in four 'waves,' i.e., four volumes.⁶⁶ The only part which is available and known to have been written in the present volume and 'it is doubtful whether the book was, ever completed in 'four waves' as the author completed and set forth in his preface.'⁶⁷

The title Kalikata Kamalalay implying as it does a survey of the whole of Calcutta society is, to some extent, misleading. Bhabanicaran was clearly concerned only with Hindus

society. Muslims and other religious communities in Calcutta were excluded from consideration.⁶⁸

In setting out to describe Calcutta Bengali Hindu society, Bhahahicaran seems to be both posing and answering one question: how far could social changes be admitted without forcing Hindus to violate accepted beliefs and practices? That Bhabanicaran should have felt it necessary to pose such a question as early as 1823 (the date of publication of *Kalikata Kamalalay*) is historically important: it implies certain disquiet in his own mind about differences which were already developing within Bengali Hindu society. One infers that to his mind, at least Bengali Hindu Society was tending to drift into two camps, the rural and the urban and that within the city of Calcutta, disunity had begun to appear in the form of various Opposing factions. It was, therefore, we would suggest, in order to demonstrate the desirability and possibility of maintaining unity in Bengali Hindu society, both in town and country, and to foster mutual understanding between the ultra-orthodox and moderate orthodox that Bhabanicaran composed his *Kalikata Kamalalay*. It will be noted that whilst drawing attention to certain economic and professional divisions within urban Bengali Hindu society, Bhabanicaran nevertheless stressed the fundamental uniformity of their daily routines, based on traditional Hindu practices, and showed how the various classes were related one to another and came together for social functions organized under the auspices of their respective faction leaders.

By seizing upon the device of a dialogue, Bhabanicaran displayed subtlety, for it permitted him to attach the unorthodox, whilst at the same time maintaining a central position, orthodox yet enlightened. S.K. De speaks of Bhabanicaran keeping in this work ‘a fairly open

and balanced mind.⁶⁹ In Kalikata Kamalalay, there are two Voices, that of a Conservative provincial, and the other of an urban Calcutta-ite. In refuting some of the allegations of the provincial while yet feeling sympathy towards them, the urban Hindu, with whom one naturally identifies Bhabanicaran was able to indicate that there was no fundamental disagreement between the more flexible modern point of view and the traditional point of view represented by the ‘rural’ Hindu. By achieving a reconciliation, however tenuous, Bhabanicaran arrived at a position in which he could argue that within Bengali society, there were two schools of thought, that of the orthodox and that of the radical reformers. By indicating that the difference of emphasis in the orthodox school of thought could be satisfactorily accounted for Bhabanicaran was free to emphasize his disagreement with the teaching of the radicals, which of course, included Rammohan Ray.

At this point in the debate, the provincial raised the language issue. He argued that the urban Hindus, who in his view no longer performed Hindu ceremonies or observed Hindu practices, no longer studied either Sanskrit or Bengali. The urban Hindu claimed that these were miss-conceptions and attempted to correct them. He maintained that the Bengali language was studied in Calcutta, that Bengali books were being bought, and that the Sanskrit language was respected now as it had always been.

The next point to be considered by the disputants was the economic situation in Calcutta. Bhabanicaran divided the Bengali Hindu society of Calcutta into two broad economic sections namely the leisured class (*asadharan bhagyaban lok*) and the working class (*bisayj bhadralok*).

The people who lived off inherited fortunes belonged to the first category. They led an indolent life.

'They usually stayed at home to perform necessary religious rites before having lunch and take a siesta in the afternoon. Waking 4 or 6 p.m., some of them look after business while listening to the readings of the Puran.'⁷⁰

Bhabanicaran's explanation of the origin of these people is simple. They had come into a fortune, the author observes, through the blessings of God (*bhagabaner kriplate*) But he seems to know that their money had come either from the annual interest of their invested patrimony or from the revenue of their zamindari property.⁷¹ The 'working class,' according to Bhabanicaran, was subdivided into three distinct sections, vis. Upper, middle, and lower class. They consisted nevertheless, to use his own expression, of people who were 'poor yet gentlemen' (*daridraathaca bhadralok*). People belonging to the upper section

'rise, in the morning, wash their faces, gossip with people of various denominations then go for a bath anointing their bodies with such oil as bring them comfort. Then they perform their daily prayers and other religious rites (*puja hom, dan, bali, baisva*). After lunch, they rest for a while and then getting dressed in excellent clothes they go to their places of work either in a palanquin or in a beautiful carriage. Their office hours, which are determined by themselves according to the nature of work, being over they come home, change, wash, touch the Ganges water to purify themselves, perform evening prayers, and have some refreshments after which they hold a session of gossip. These sessions are usually well-attended. Some of those present are there for a particular

purpose; others are merely paying a social call. Sometimes the *Babu* himself goes out to visit someone etc.'

The only difference between these people and those of the leisured classes seems to be that these did a little work. People belonging to the middle section of the working class 'do almost the same except for the fact that they spend and gossip less, and work harder.'⁷² Many people in the lower section also follow the same way of life, except that they spend and eat much less and work much harder, for each day they have a long way to walk. Every evening they are obliged to report to their master, the deoyan, and flatter him if they wish to keep body and soul together.

Thus the provincial divided contemporary Bengali Hindu society into two sections, conservative and reformist, but he regarded the Calcutta Bengalis as belonging to the latter. The urban did not accept the provincial's allegation and argued that the orthodox section of Calcutta society to which he regarded himself as belonging performed its religious duties (*karma-kanda*) with due propriety. He stated that the charges made by the provincial were warranted in the case of the radical section of Calcutta society. And he agreed that the manners of these people were not 'the manners of a gentleman'.⁷³

5.3 THE URBAN AND THE PROVINCIAL DELIBERATION

By 1823 Calcutta was an affluent city with a huge population, and it was in Calcutta that the Europeans and the natives came into close contact with each other through their participation in trade and commerce.⁷⁴ There was also some social intercourse between both parties. It was during this period of our study such organisations as the Hindu College, the Calcutta School

Book Society, and the Calcutta School Society were established. All of them were, however, the products of Europeo-native understanding. Bhabanicaran, while recognizing the good work done by these organizations⁷⁵ observed that a section of the wealthy Hindus and their children educated in the Hindu College were drifting away to the European way of life as a consequence of their contact with the new values imported by English education. That he felt alarmed at the thought of further degeneration of Hinduism in Bengal is confirmed by the fact that Kalikata Kamalalay is designed so as to project the old values in all their supposed purity and perfection, while at the same time exposing to criticism the behaviour of the new generation who were more and more coming under western influence.

But it would be unjust to maintain that Bhabanicaran condemned indiscriminately all changes that followed English rule and English education. The following dialogues bear testimony that the provincial alleged that the city-dwellers did not know how to read and write Bengali and even when they spoke Bengali,

“they speak it by mixing such foreign words with their mother tongue as *kam* (a little), *kabul* (agreement), *kambes* (more or less) etc. it appears that they have not studied Sanskrit and have never conversed with the pundits, or they would not have used such words as the above.’

Replying to the first allegation, the urban stated that

‘Children belonging to many distinguished families learn Sanskritised Bengali first, and subsequently they English as well as Persian both being money producing knowledge. There is a need to acquire such knowledge. It is also supported by the Sastras. How can a

country be administered without a knowledge of the language of those who happen to be ruling it? I can see no harm in it.'

As regards the mixed language, the urban put a counter-question to the provincial,

'What would you suggest doing with such words as cannot be translated into Bengali or which do not have any equivalent either in Sanskrit or in the cognate languages?'

Then he commented that

'There is no harm in using such a mixed language.

It may be wrong to employ those words during prayers and other religious rites, but while you are executing official duties or having a light discussion, the use of them cannot be regarded as harmful. If one speaks purely in Sanskritised Bengali without recourse to foreign words, it may be difficult for many to follow it.'

The urban also gave a fairly long list of Perso-Arabic and English loan words that had no corresponding synonyms in Bengali or Sanskrit. These were the English words he cited:

'nansut (non suit), *saman* (summon), *kamanla* (common law), *kompani* (company), *kort* (court) *tacement* (attachment), *dabal* (double), *dikri* (decree), *dismis* (dismiss), *diu* (due) *primiyam* (premium), *sarip* (sheriff), *kalektar* (collector), *kaptan* (captain), *jaj* (judge), *sapina* (subpoena), *oyarin* (warrant), *ejent* (agent), *trejari* (treasury), *bil* (bill), *sarjan* (surgeon), *diskaunt* (discount) etc.⁷⁶

The debate is interesting in that it indicates that a conflict between Sanskritised Bengali and a form of Bengali, which permitted the use of Perso-Arabic and English loan words, had already

begun. The ultra-conservative Hindu clearly regarded it as offensive to Hinduism to permit the use in Bengali any word which did not trace its origin to Sanskrit. This is the beginning of the movement towards the establishment of *sadhu bhasa* (purified Bengali) Bengali, in which all foreign loan words were replaced by Sanskrit derived words.

The moderate Hindu took the point of view that in Bengali as it was spoken, then there were a number of words of foreign Origin and that as a number of these Words had no Sanskrit Equivalents, it would be impossible to dispense with them. He also argued that if a completely purified Bengali (*sadhubhasa*) were adopted, the (majority of Bengalis would not understand it.

From this, it may be assumed as had been noted by earlier Writers, including Bharatcandra Ray, that the language used by Bengalis was a language of mixed vocabulary. The moderate was not prepared to admit that it was a breach of Hindu doctrine or practice for a Bengali speaker to use such loan words as had been established in popular usage.

It may be stated in this connection that in 1801, Carey noticed that ‘multitudes of words originally Persian or Arabic are constantly employed in common conversation, which perhaps ought to be considered as enriching rather than corrupting the language.’⁷⁷ In 1847 the Rev.W. Yates observed that there was a mixed Bengali which Borrowed too largely from the Hindi and Hindustani and, partly also from English.⁷⁸ Yates also recognized that ‘this is used by almost all Muhammadans who speak Bengali, by most persons in the employ of Europeans; and by those who are engaged in commerce and in judicial matters.’⁷⁹ Yet he almost echoed the urban’s language when he commented that it would be pedantry to proscribe all foreign words from the Bengali language because, in many cases they are the only terms which exist or which are likely

to be understood'.⁸⁰ Q.A. Mannan, in a recent literary history, maintains that it was after Carey's time that 'criticism of the mixed vocabulary began to be expressed'.⁸¹ In fact, there was already positive resentment against mixed Bengali during Carey's time and this is reflected in Kalikata Kamalay.

Though Bhabanicaran, in the speech of the urban, strongly supported English education, it is revealed in the following statement that Calcutta orthodox circles still patronized Sanskrit learning and the scholars who purveyed it. The urban argued as follows:

'Brahmin pandits pay regular visits to the rich and affluent households of Calcutta, who, in their turn, also patronize them in various ways. When a student or scholar (of Sanskrit) comes to Calcutta, he contrives to get himself introduced to some rich gentleman. Through constant courtship he acquires the gentleman's favour, but only after he has succeeded in demonstrating the depth of his erudition, does he acquire recognition, when the generous and good-principled *Babu* finally sets him up in a *tol* or *catuspathi*. Furthermore, the *Babu* always does his level best to ensure that the scholar attains wide fame and greater fortune. Many *tols* have been established in this manner in the past and are still being established in the present.'

Thus it is evident that, in spite of his good words for the Hindu College and David Hare's School, Bhabanicaran was concerned with the promotion of Sanskrit learning. He seems to have taken pride in the fact that *tols* and *catuspathis*⁸² were still being established under the auspices of affluent families in Calcutta.

But all families in Calcutta were not of this kind. The Unorthodox Hindus in the city showed keen appreciation of the new learning, and their attitude to Sanskrit was not as favourable as that of the orthodox faction. Rammohan's attitude to Sanskrit's learning, which was clearly expressed in his letter to Lord Amherst,⁸³ was strongly condemnatory.

The provincial however, had more to say on the subject of education and learning. He alleged that these *Babus*

'Collect all the best books in a variety of languages, Persian, English, and Arabic. They have them arranged so neatly, some in one glass cabinet and some in two, that not even the most expert book-seller could better the arrangement. And the books are guarded with such care that not even a century hence will anyone suspect that they have been handled. But then why should one suspect such a thing, when with the exception of the warden who arranged them in the first place, no one else has even touched them, not even the *Babu* himself. And so far as we are aware, no one ever will. We presume that these *Babus* are of the opinion that the more books one has in one's house, the more secure is one's hold on Sarasvati (the goddess of learning); just as the more cash one keeps in the house, the more Laksmi (the goddess of wealth) lingers there. The moment one spends, Laksmi grows Restless. Presumably also the moment one disturbs the books, Sarasvati is peeved.'

The urban replied,

'A rich man usually collects things which are necessary for his household. He takes good care to maintain them. But he is not required to use all of them at any one time. He uses only those which he needs. People are not required to use all the books in their collection.'

Is it contended that if they spend their time without reading those books on which they have spent money, such time is necessarily wasted? It is not so. And those who cannot pass their time without reading the books do, in fact, read them.'

This is a specious argument but excellent satire, subtle and humorous. It is based on the fact known to be true that among the educated Hindus of early 19th century Calcutta, a number had already begun to collect the 'best books in a variety of languages, Persian, English, and Arabic.' The provincial's point was that they did not read these books but saw in them a prestige symbol. The urban in his reply confirmed in a subtle way rather than refuted the provincial's argument. He made two points:

- i) that there were people who read the books they bought; and
- ii) those who bought them and did not read them but nevertheless acquired some merit because they had spent money on their acquisition.

The statement on this subject can be taken to imply that the books collected in these libraries were not Bengali, but Persian, English, and Arabic. The inference is that the people who prided themselves on their libraries had equated learning with education in a foreign language. It is hard to resist the feeling that the author had Rammohan Ray in mind. Rammohan Ray certainly knew Persian, English and Arabic and the author may by this satire be implying that he did not know them or Bengali very well.

That a section of the Calcutta-ites reacted adversely to Bengali books was expressed in a further allegation by the provincial. It was as follows.

'Bengali books are no Use to me.' Some say they are intended for the education of children, what use are they to us? Others say, "These printers plague us to death.'

The urban challenged the truth of this statement and claimed that it was largely the Calcutta-ites who bought the Bengali books that were issued from the Calcutta printing presses. Even more than twenty years after the establishment of the first printing press In Bengal, people in some other regions of the country did not know ‘what a printing press was.’ It was, therefore, the patronage of the urban people that helped the press to survive. One infers from the above controversy that a section of the Calcutta Bengalis was averse to Bengali books, yet that there was another section (the orthodox?) Who patronized them? There were, of course, some people who, in spite of their considerable wealth, were still illiterate and abhorred all books, not Bengali books alone.

Another aspect of Calcutta society emerges from the discussion, namely, that the Calcutta orthodox were divided into a number of opposing factions. Every individual had to identify himself with a particular faction. Though seemingly paradoxical, these groups were, according to the urban instrumental in maintaining law and order in society. The attention of these factions was directed in the early years of the 19th century towards social and religious, but not political questions. Each faction supported a particular point of view, which was that laid down by the leader whose influence over members of his faction was immense.

The orthodox Hindus performed *Karma-Kanda* and an individual hardly enjoyed any freedom in this society. He could not invite anybody, nor could he respond to anybody’s invitation to his free will. It was the leader of his faction who determined the course of his social activities. The leader could expel him from his faction if he was found guilty of any ‘misconduct.’ And once expelled, none would even take a drop of water at his house, nor would

anybody visit him. Even his friends and relatives would boycott him lest they should expose themselves to similar persecution. The question is, what is the definition of ‘misconduct’? The answer is, obviously, anything that defied orthodox Hindu practices. ‘People eat and behave properly for fear of such expulsion, and thus the cause of religion is maintained.’⁸⁴

6.5. NABABABUILAS, NABABIBILAS AND THE BOROUGH

NabaBabubilas was published under the name Pramathanath Sarma. The first edition of *Nababilbilas* came out under the name of Gobindacandra Mukhopadhyay. The third edition of *Nababibilas*, published in 1840, did not bear any name.⁸⁵ The authorship of two subsequent editions, published in 1852 and 1853 respectively, was attributed to one Bholanath Bandyopadhyay.⁸⁶ The Ranjan publishing House brought out an edition of *Nababibilas* in 1937, which was based on the text of the 1852 edition.⁸⁷ The tradition of anonymity was continued even in the later decades of the 19th century. Pyaricand Mitra wrote his *Alaler Gharer Dulal* (1858) under the assumed name of Tekcand Thakur and Kali Prasanna Sinha wrote his *Hutom Pyacar Naksa* (1861) giving his name as *Hutom*. That all the *bilas* works, mentioned above, were composed by Bhabanicaran seems to be confirmed by the following statement of Rangalal Bandyopadhyay. He wrote in 1861: ‘Bhabanicaran is neither a bad writer nor a good writer; the true picture of the Young Bengal, as well as the old Bengal, has been depicted in his works *Babubilas*, *Biblbilas*, and *Dutibilas*.’⁸⁸

According to the Rev. J. Long, *NabaBabubilas* was first published in 1823.⁸⁹ *The Friend of India* for October 1825, published a long discussion on the work entitled “The Amusements of

the Modern Baboo. A work in Bengalee, printed in Calcutta, 1825.”⁹⁰ It is therefore probable that it was not until 1825 that the first edition of *NabaBabubilas* came out. Long recorded in 1855 that ‘new editions of the work are constantly issuing from the presses.⁹¹ Munshi Abdul Karim states that the second edition of *NabaBabubilas* was published in 1838.⁹² Another edition came out in 1853.

The first part of *NabaBabubilas* gives us a glimpse into the condition of education in Calcutta in the first part of the 19th century. The son of a Bengali Hindu got hit the first lesson under a Hindu *Guru-mahasay* at the age of when his main subjects of the study were Bengali, arithmetic and Sanskrit. After this stage, he was placed under a Muslim *munhsis*, with whom he studied Persian. Having studied Bengali, Sanskrit, and Persian, he went to English schools. Thereafter he was considered fit to take up employment in government and merchant offices. The chosen places of work included organisations like the Supreme Court of Calcutta, the Court of Appeal etc. But some of the young men, it seems, went into business. Their association with the English residents of Calcutta was, in some cases close and cordial. People like David Hare had been able to enjoy the respect and admiration of the Bengali community of Calcutta.⁹³

But his failure could be attributed to two things, namely, improper education due to his father’s indifference and his association with Khalipa. In the first place, Ramganga Nag has been portrayed as a rich but uneducated man. He was believed to know something of the languages current in Calcutta, but his lack of judgment was revealed when he appointed an ill-educated *gurumahasay*, a boatman *munsi*, and a saheb of low origin to teach his children Bengali, Persian and English respectively. Probably he himself had only a smattering of these languages which he might have acquired in order to become a successful businessman.

In the second place, *Khalipa* (an Arabic word meaning representative) represented the extravagant class that flourished by trading. With the East India Company in the latter part of the 18th century. His advice to Jagaddullabh clearly indicated that he preferred a return to the kind of life that prevailed in the courts of the Muslim nababs. He advised *Babu* to adopt all the vices of the nababs. Thus the young man was a result of his training led to ape two cultures, British and Muslim.

It is interesting to note here that Ramganga wanted to elevate himself to the aristocracy by giving his children education; however, incomplete it might have been. Khalipa, on the other hand, also prompted Jaguddurllabh to become a perfect aristocrat, not by pursuing academic habit⁹⁴ but by enjoying himself wine wealth, wine and women. In fact, Ramganga recognized the emergence of a new English educated aristocracy in Calcutta, while Khalipa ruminated the memories of the past. And *Babu*, caught in the dilemma, imitated partly the English life, partly the nababi way of life. But it was the influence of Khalipa that accounted most for the fall of *Babu*.

The Friend of India, while reviewing *NabaBabubilas* in 1825, commented that ‘it is a satirical view, of the education and habits of the rich, and more especially of those families who have very recently acquired wealth and risen into notice.’⁹⁵ In 1858 Rajendralal Mitra noted that it reflected the evil consequences that might follow from what may be called profligacy and drunkenness, ‘if the education of a boy is hampered owing to his father’s indifference.’⁹⁶

While the Friend of India observed that the work satirised the habits and education of a certain class, Mitra concluded that it was had education that led *Babu* to ruin. He apparently

believed that a proper education could have saved him from the troubles that he fell into. This, of course, is true, but the author makes clear that moral degradation could be brought about by unaccustomed affluence, as was the case with the father, as well as by faulty, ill-planned, and undisciplined education, as was the case with the son. When the two came together in one family the plight of the victim indeed grave.

It may be remembered here that in *Babur Upakhyan*, Rajcakrabarti Deoyan, father of Tilakcandra *Babu*, thought that ‘to know *Gayatri* is enough for a Brahmin’s son. He may, of course, acquire knowledge if it is so ordained’.⁹⁷ And Tilakcandra himself observed that ‘it is a physical pleasure that matters.’⁹⁸ Nevertheless, he pretended that he knew many languages and modelled his behavior partly on that of a saheb, and partly on that of a nabab, he wanted to command influence in society.

In the present episode, Ramganga Nag was eager to exhibit in society that the children were well-acquainted with English, Persian and Bengali. At this point, Ramganga resembled Tilakcandra, who had for similar reason pretended that he knew those languages. In fact, Ramganga and Tilakcandra held almost identical views with regard to education while Rajcakrabarti. Deoyan represented the viewpoint of the first generation of the native merchants who had suddenly become rich.

Although Tilakcandra imitating the nababs, held a court of sycophants, it was, however, he who conducted his affairs. Instead of relying on the flatterers, he caused them to depend on him. Jagaddurllabh, contrary, fell under the evil influence of Khalipa and made a fool of himself.

He seemed to be one step ahead of Tilakcandra so far as extravagance and profligacy were concerned.

The first edition of *Nababibibilas* (the Harlot's Progress) came out under the name of Gobindacandra Mukhopadhyay in 1754 Saka (1832).⁹⁹ That the work was composed not later than 1830 A.D. is confirmed by a statement in the Samachar Darpan of the 28th August 1830, that 'Bibibiias will shortly be printed from the Upendralal Press,

So far as the pattern of the story is concerned, *Nababibibilas* is very similar to *NabaBabubilas*. The episode may very well be described as the continuation of the same as that of *NabaBabubilas*. In *NabaBabubilas* the author concentrates all his attention on Jagaddurllabh *Babu*, the hero of the episode. That his wife was leading an immoral life has been hinted at twice. First, when she asked *Babu* to declare in the presence of all that he had been sleeping for the last two months in her apartment.¹⁰⁰ Second, when *Babu* discovered that he had become the father of five daughters in spite of the fact that he had never lived with his wife.

In the present episode, the author has laid entire stress on *nababibi*, the wife of a young new *Babu*. The *Babu* was made to pay for his wife's desertion and ostracized by society, but it appears that the final catastrophe this time was awaiting *nababibi*. In the gradual process of destruction, she firstly lost her honour, then her youth, and later the illusion that unrestrained freedom brings Happiness and prosperity.

It is evident that in all the above Works, the author has directed his attack against those people of the Calcutta Hindu society who were rich and indifferent to the traditional practices of Hinduism. The *Babus* not only frequented brothels, they even cohabited with non-Hindu prostitutes. Khalipa advised *jagaddurllabh Babu* to consort especially with Muslim prostitutes. And consequently, *Babu* defied the sastric instructions and even dined with the Muslim prostitutes. When someone objected to it, the high priest of the *Babu*'s family retorted that it was quite in conformity with the tantric practices and, therefore, not opposed to Sastra.¹⁰¹ This most probably contains a very subtle attack against Rammohan Ray, who about this time was reported to have justified his alleged association With a Muslim woman by citing support from the tantras. In *Nababibibilas*, the husband of *nababibi* was rebuked by his relatives for consorting with prostitutes of various religions and nationalities. While living with the *dakoyala*, *nababibi* also reportedly took Muslim dishes and drank English brandy. Her circumstances deteriorated and she even went to the extent of soliciting Muslim customers. The growing love for Muslim food and dress was attacked first by Bhabanicaran in *Kalikata Kamalalay*; but it was not long before the attack was transferred from the habits of Muslims to the community itself. In *Nababibibilas*, Bhabanicaran described Bengali Muslims as *patinere*.¹⁰² The language also enters into consideration at this point. There was a mixed language, i.e., a language in which words of Sanskrit origin and terms of Perso-Arabic origin were both used. This language was current among the lower class people in Calcutta and was also used by Bengali Muslims. This mixed language probably contained more Perso-Arabic elements than did the accepted colloquial speech of Calcutta, and in referring to it, the author is suggesting that Bengali Muslims speak a form of Bengali, which is different from that used by Bengali Hindus. From this point, it is not a long step to a further suggestion that in respect of their food and way of life, and in respect also

of their language Muslims were alien to Bengal and that the Hindus alone were true Bengalis. It is important to notice this discrimination at the language level between Bengali Muslims and Bengali Hindus at such an early date in view of the fact that the cleavage between the two communities became wider within the next few decades. Bankimcandra Cattopadhyay develops this point of view by using the term ‘Hindu’ and the term ‘*Inian*’ as synonyms.¹⁰³

¹ Said, Edward. *Orientalism*, p. 40

² Raychaudhuri, Tapan. *Europe Reconsidered: Perceptions of the West in Nineteenth-Century Bengal*. Delhi: Oxford U P, 1988. p IX.

³ Raychaudhuri, Tapan. *Europe Reconsidered: Perceptions of the West in Nineteenth-Century Bengal*. Delhi: Oxford U P, 1988. p IX.

⁴ Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 2004, p. 86

⁵ Deb, Chitra. "The 'Great Houses' of Old Calcutta." Chaudhuri 56-63

⁶ Dutt, Michael Madhusudan. *Ekei Ki Bole Sobhota?* Eds. Sudhosotto Basu and Jotindra Dasgupta, Calcutta: Biswas Book Stall, 2002, p. 42

⁷ Yule, Henry, Sir. Hobson-Jobson: *A glossary of colloquial Anglo-Indian words and phrases, and of kindred terms, etymological, historical, geographical and discursive*, New ed. edited by William Crooke, B.A. London: J. Murray, 1903, p.44

⁸ Deb, Chitra. 1990. "The 'Great Houses' of Old Calcutta". Calcutta: The Living City. Sukanta Chaudhuri. ed. Volume II. Oxford University Press, Calcutta, 6

⁹ Ibid. , p. 56

¹⁰ Said, Edward. 1994. "Culture and Imperialism", Vintage Books, New York, 36

¹¹ Thakur, Tekchand. Alaler Ghorer Dulal. Eds. Brojendranath Bandopadhyay and Sajanikanta Das. Calcutta: Arun Kumar Chattopadhyay Kortrik , Ganodoi Press, 2004, p. 17

¹² Vrudhula, Rajiv M. "The Bengali *babu*: Ideology, Stereotype and the Quest for Authenticity in Colonial South Asian Literature." Diss. The U of Chicago, 1999, p. 89

¹³ David, Deirdre. *Rule Britannia: Women, Empire and Victorian Writing*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1995. P 126

¹⁴ Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1978. p. 7

¹⁵ Spear, Percival. *The Nabobs: A Study of the Social Life of the English in Eighteenth-Century India*. Gloucester, Mass: Peter Smith, 1963, p. XIV

¹⁶ Kopf, David. *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance: The Dynamics of Indian Modernization* 1773-1835. Berkley: U of California Press, 1969, p. 39

¹⁷ H. Bhabha, *Op.cit.* p. 83

¹⁸ Chakrabarty, Dipesh. "The Difference—Deferral of a Colonial Modernity: Public Debates on Domesticity in British Bengal." *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*. Eds. Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler.

Berkeley: U of California P, 1997, 373

¹⁹ S.C. Bose, *Op.cit.* p. 205).

²⁰ Raychaudhuri, Subir. "The Lost World of the Babus." Sukanta Chaudhuri (ed.): *Calcutta: the Living City*. Calcutta, OUP, 1995, p. 69

²¹ Sinha, Mrinalini. *Colonial Masculinity: The 'Manly Englishman' and the 'Effeminate Bengali' in Late Nineteenth Century Studies*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1995, p.17

²² Banerjee, Sumanta. *The Parlour and the Streets: Elite and Popular Culture in Nineteenth Century Calcutta*. Calcutta: Seagull Books, 1998, p. 180

²³ Bose, Shib Chunder. *The Hindoos As They Are*. Calcutta: W. Newman & Co. 1881, p.196.

²⁴ Walker Carthine. 2005. "Writing Early Modern History", Hodder Arnold, London, 2006

²⁵ The state of factory workers ' bodies' was cogitated as exhausted, diseased, mutilated, represented the physical manifestations of capitalist exploitation. See, for example, Friedrich Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844*, trans. Florence Kelley Wischnewsky (1845; London 1892). Max Horkheimer (1895-1973) and Theodor W. Adorno (1903-69) of the Marxist Frankfurt School saw the body as part of an 'underground' history related to the 'instincts and passions which are displaced and distorted by civilization': Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming (1944; London, 1973 p. 231. Carthine, Op.cite, endnotes, 222.

²⁶ Marc Bloch, *The Royal Touch: Sacred Monarchy and Scrofula in England and France*, trans. J.E. Anderson (1924; London, 1973).

²⁷ Carthine, *Op.cit*, endnotes, 222.

²⁸ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky (1965, Bloomington, 1984), Ch. 5.

²⁹ Carthine, *Op.cit*, 209-210

³⁰ Foucault, M. *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*. London: Tavistock, 1979.

Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981. *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

³¹ Ibid., pp. 112-114

³² Carthine, *Op.cit*, 212-216

³³ Bandhopadhyay, Bajindranath, *Sambadpatre Sekaler katha.*, Vol. I, pp..108-112.

³⁴ Bandyopadhyay, Srikumar, *Banga Sahitye Upanyaser Dhara*. 5th ed., 1965, p.22

³⁵ Ibid. , p. 22

³⁶ Text; *Pare ek Chandratulya uttamputra janmila*

³⁷ Text: *Kuliner nabaguner laksan ache*

³⁸ Text : *Deoyanji putrer sarire yata dhare tata svarnalankare tahake bhusita karilen deoyanjir iccha ye svarner istak putrer gale dolayaman karata apan aishvaryya prakas Karen*

³⁹ Text : *Brahmaner chelya gayatri sikhilei hay kapale thake bidya hobe*

⁴⁰ Text: *Ami apta biomrta sakaleo amake bijna o pandit kahe ar amar apna apnio bodh hay ye ami pandit bhati*

⁴¹ Text: *E anitye samsare kabal saririk sukhbhogi satya.*

⁴² Lethbridge, Sir Roper, *Ramtanu Lahiri - Brahman and Reformer*, London, 1907, p. 171 This is a translation of the Bengali original *Ramtanu Lahiri o Tatkalln Bangasama* by Sastri

⁴³ Sen, Sukumar, *Bangla Sahityer Itihas*, vol.II., 3rd ed., 1955, p.157.

⁴⁴ Ibid. , p. 157

⁴⁵ Datta, k.k. *Survey of India's social Life and Economic condition in the 18th Century, 9 1707-1813, Calcutta.* , 1961, p. 124

⁴⁶ Buckland, C.E., *Dictionary of Indian Biography*, London, 1906, p. 310

⁴⁷ *Sambadpatre Sekaler katha*, Vol. 1. , p. 416

⁴⁸ Bagal, Yogeschandra, *Unabimsa Satabdir Bamla*, (Enlarged edition), 1963, p. 1

⁴⁹ *Sambadpatre Sekaler katha*, Vol. V. , p. 78

⁵⁰ The samachar darpan, 20th December, 1823, *Sambadpatre Sekaler katha*, Vol. 1. , p. 138-139

⁵¹ *Sambadpatre Sekaler katha*, Vol. 1. , p. 236

⁵² Ibid. , p. 137. Lady Heber has given an interesting account of this function which, according to her was arranged by a rich native, Rouplall Mullich, on the opening of his new house. She also noticed ‘a crowd collected round a songstress of great reputation, named Viiki, the *Catalani* of the East, who was singing in a low but sweet voice some Hindooostanee songs..’ The songstress here referred to is apparently none other, than Niki whom we have already spoken of. Lady Heber however did not seem to enjoy the party. She felt that the whole exhibition was fatiguing and stupid, - nearly every charm: but that of novelty wanting. Heber Reginald, *Narrative of a Journey through the Upper Provinces of India, from Calcutta to Bombay*, 1824-1825, vol.I, 4th ed. , London, 1829, pp. 47-48.

⁵³ *Sambadpatre Sekaler katha*, Vol. 1. , pp. 115-116

⁵⁴ Ibid. , p 116

⁵⁵ Sastri, Sibanath, *Ramtanu Lahirl o Tatkalin Bangasamaj*, Calcutta, p.41

⁵⁶ *Sambadpatre Sekaler katha*, Vol. 1. , pp. 464

⁵⁷ Marshman, J.C. *op.cit.* , Vol. 1. , p. 41

⁵⁸ *Sambadpatre Sekaler katha*, Vol. 1. , pp. 129

⁵⁹ The *Samachar Chandrika*, 1st November, 1830.

⁶⁰ *Sambadpatre Sekaler katha*, Vol. 1. , pp. 135

⁶¹ *Ibid.* , pp. 86

⁶² De, S.K. *Bengali Literature in the Nineteenth Century*, Calcutta, 1962, p.555

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 557.

⁶⁵ Bandyopadhyay, Bhabanicaran, *Kalikata Kamalalay*, Ranjan Publishing House, 1936, p.3

Text: _Kalikatar sagarer sahit sadrsya ache tatprayukta‘

kalikata kamalalay nam sthir haila. kamala laksmi tahar

alay ei artha-dvara kamalalay sabde yeman samudrer upasthiti haiteche teman kalikatar upasthitio haite pare..

⁶⁶ Text: Ei granthe cari taranga haibek. ibid., p.2.

⁶⁷ De, S.K., *op.cit.*, p. 558.

⁶⁸ Calcutta had a mixed population of 179,917 according to the returns of the population given for the four divisions in 1822. (Hamilton, Walter, *The East India Gazetteer*, 2nd ed., Vol.I., London, 1828, p.320). A later account places the population at 229,714. (Stocqueler,J.H., *The Handbook of India*, London, 1844, P.260) While speaking about the Calcutta people Bhabanicaran concentrates only on Bengali Hindus, but Calcutta in those days,as has been stated above, was a place inhabited by mixed population.In 1822 when *Kalikata Kamalalay* was yet to come out, the Muslim population of Calcutta was according to Hamilton,48,162 while the Hindu population was placed at 118,203. (Hamilton,*op.cit.*,p.320). It hardly needs any interpretation to establish that Bhabanicaran implies the Bengali Hindus alone when he refers to the urban society of Calcutta.

⁶⁹ De, S.K., *op.cit.*, p.561.

⁷⁰ Text: Tahara pray apan alaye thakiya purbokta rityanusare

Sandhyabandanadipurbak madhyahna Kale bhojan kariya pray anekei nidra yan cari ba chay danda bela satve apan bisay dristi Karen kehaba puranadi sraban kariya thaken.Kalikata Kamalalay, p.10.

⁷¹ In other words they belonged to the landed aristocracy which emerged in Bengal consequent upon the introduction of the Permanent Settlement in 1793 by Lord Cornwallis. Bengali traders, who had already earned big fortunes by trading with the East India Company, turned their attention to zamindari Interests with a view to acquiring aristocratic status. It is interesting to note that almost all the rich native families

of Calcutta - Rammohan Ray and Dvarakanath Thakur not excepted - finally abandoned trade and bought zamindaries. Though their financial interests lay in the villages, these rich zamindars however, had their permanent place of residence in Calcutta. It is probably about them that Hamilton wrote in 1828 that some of the native traders have made or inherited large fortunes and the public apartments of a few are furnished after the European fashions, with elegant chandeliers, pier glasses coaches, chests of drawers, writing desks, and two or three hundred chairs. Hamilton, Walter, *op.cit.*, p. 324.

⁷² Text: *Tahadiger pray ai riti kabal dau baithaki ataper alpata ar parisramer bahulya. Kalikata kamalalay*, p.9.

⁷³ Text: Bhadraloker mata byabahar nahe. *Kalikata Kamalaly*. P.12.

⁷⁴ The effect of such intercourse was not always commendable. In 1828 hamilton wrote that ‘whenever, in the behavior of the natives, insolence, ill-nature, coarseness, brutality, drunkenness (qualities hostile to their national character) are observed, the change may be invariably traced to their intercourse with low Europeans.’ Hamilton, Walter, *op.cit.*,p.324.

⁷⁵ Bandyopadhyay, Bhabanicaran, *Kalikata Kamalalay*, pp.45-46.

⁷⁶ Bandyopadhyay, Bhabanicaran, *Kalikata kamalalay*, p.24.

⁷⁷ Carey, William, *A Grammar of the Bengalee Language*, Serampore, 1801, preface, p. iii.

⁷⁸ Yates, The Rev.W., *Introduction to the Bengali Language*, Calcutta, 1847, p. 121.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 121.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 121.

⁸¹ Mannan, Q.M.A., *The Emergence and Development of Dobhasi Literature in Bengal*, up to 1855 A.D., University of Dacca, 1966, p.196.

⁸² Tol: a school or college, especially of Sanskrit learning. Catuspathi: a college where the four Vedas are taught.

⁸³ *English Works of Ram Mohun Roy*, Panini edition, 1906, pp. 471-474.

⁸⁴ Text: *Ihate sankanvita haiya lok ahar byabahar Karen tahate dharma raksa pay. Kalikata Kamalalay*, p.31.

⁸⁵ Karim, Munsi Abdul, (Comp.) *Bangala Pracin Puthir Bibaran*, vol.I. No.1, p.266; quoted in *Sahitya Sadhak Caritmala.*, Vol.4. p. 28.

⁸⁶ *Sahitya Sadhak Caritmala*, vol. 4. pp. 28-29.

⁸⁷ *Sambadpatre Sekaler katha*, vol.II, P.735.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Long, The. Rev.J., *A Descriptive Catalogue of Bengali Works* etc. (this catalogue has been reproduced in full in D.C. Sen's work *Bangabhasa o Sahitya*, 5th edn., Calcutta, 1921), p.687,

⁹⁰ *The Friend of India*, (Quarterly Series), October, 1825, p. 289-308.

⁹¹ Long, The Rev.J., op.cit., p. 687

⁹² *Sahitya Sadhak Caritmala*, vol. 4,. P.23.

⁹³ Mitra, Pyaricad, *Debhid Heyar*, Calcutta, 1964.

⁹⁴ Text: Kena micha ketah bahi o puthi laiya mejaj kharap Kariba. N.B.,p. 27.

⁹⁵ *The Friend of India* (Quatrerly Series), October, 1825, p. 289.

⁹⁶ *Blbidhartha Sangraha*, Saka 1780 (1858 A.D.), Caitra, p.280.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 81.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 82.

⁹⁹ *Sambadpatre Sekaler katha*, vol. V. p. 207

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. , pp. 216-217.

¹⁰¹ *Nabababubilas.*, p. 38.

¹⁰². Glossed by Carey as ‘a Moosooman (in contempt)’ in *A Dictionary of the Bengalee Language*, vol. I., (abridged) Serampore, 1827, p. 340.

¹⁰³ Clark, T.W., The Role of Bankimcandra in the Development of Nationalism, published in *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon*, (edited by C.H. Philips), London, 1961, p.439.