

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

Scholars consider that the arrival of urban centers is linked to a transformation of the field of social organization. Any society that has urban centers is an urban society. The origin of urban centers is associated with a form of organization that is characterized by impersonal contacts. Urban centers cannot be implicit without their rural hinterland, and the rural peasantry cannot be assumed without discovering its links with the city. Thus, the study of urban history automatically becomes the study of the change of institutional, legal, demographic, and cultural processes.

Hobsbawm associated urban history to "variety store" in which the whole lot was to be incorporated. Many historians have contended that urban history has no domain of its own and is only a stage of more important historical processes. Yet, urban history is fundamentally different from social or economic history - it deals with the cities as a whole - how it is planned, designed, constructed, inhabited, appropriated, celebrated, stolen and scrapped.¹ It is treated as a game of all these variables in a given historical situation. Its landscape, imaginary and real, is the creation of its inhabitants. Thus, the inhabitants of the city are given an agency. The study of urban planning increasingly focuses on kings and subjugators to include ordinary and marginalized people such as prostitutes, untouchables, and transgender people.²

This thesis looks at the spatial, physical, and bodily manifestations of urbanism in provincial administrative towns of early colonial Bengal (Eastern India). The chronological span integrates the transition of the English East India Company from a commercial venture into a territorial power, and finally, the institution of imperial rule in India. The research focuses explicitly on administrative towns as-built records of the complex historical processes that

informed colonial governance, urbanisation and spatial cultures in provincial areas of Bengal. Thus the study illuminates a wide variety of conceptual themes such as the spatial geography of provincial administrative towns (which comprises a review of *Zilla Sadar* towns, *cutcheries*, *mofussil*, the process of growth and evolution of *Zilla* administrative structure.), the negotiated physical spaces and the economic landscaped (in terms of urban centers, marketplaces, communication network, industries, trade and commerce) and finally the sociological aspect of urbanization i.e. urbanism in terms of its impact of the Body social and culture of the *Babus*.

1.2.SITE OF ENQUIRY AND TIME PERIOD OF STUDY

Importantly, this study is located in *Zilla Sadar* towns (provincial towns) of Eastern India – and, more precisely, those of the province of Bengal. The stronghold of Bengal played a crucial role in the consolidation of British power in India in the period between the granting of the *Diwani* in 1765 and the early-nineteenth century. Bengal also subsequently acted as the vital territorial anchor for the expanding British-colonial presence in India between 1800 and 1856, as a number of other areas such as the North-Western Provinces (1801), Delhi (1803), Sindh (1843), Punjab (1849), Berar (1854) and Oudh (1856) were gradually annexed to the British territories.³ When the Governor-General, Warren Hastings, transferred the *Diwani* [civil] offices from Murshidabad (till then the capital of Bengal) to Calcutta in 1773, the latter gradually emerged as the capital of British India⁴. In effect, it was from Bengal that the British ruled India from that point, a situation that carried on through the assumption of governance by the British Crown in 1858.

Bengal also served as the key site for setting up and experimenting with the district administration system itself, the learning from which was subsequently actively harnessed for the administration of other areas of India.

Culturally, too, Bengal represented a region in which there were continuous attempts – both by the British colonists and the local population – to forge a hybrid identity between multiple paradigms.

Although in a strict sense, this thesis is based on the Province of Bengal (known in the pre-colonial Mughal era as *Subah Bangla*), such a territorial delineation has, however, needed to be used in a somewhat flexible manner. This is because Bengal itself did not remain a fixed designation or have set boundaries throughout British rule. In any case, along with other provinces like the Central Province or the North-Western Province, it formed, but a part of the Bengal Presidency and building practices in different locations within the broader region of the Presidency were often had close connections with each other. The expression ‘Bengal Province’ was also, at various points of time, interchangeably used with phrases like the ‘Lower Provinces which came to include the provinces of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa. Hence this thesis is based primarily on the region of Bengal in its strictest sense but occasionally needs to include parts of Bihar and Orissa in the broader sense.

1.3: CONCEPTUAL THEORIES IN UNDERSTANDING URBANISM AND URBANISATION.

Mohenjodaro and Kolkata- two urban centers disjointed in time and space could not be more diverse. Yet equally are called urban centers. The concept of the urban center should be able to encompass an inclusive variability of forms. Compared to rural areas, urban centers have a

greater population, complex population density, and greater societal heterogeneity. Important members of the urban community engage in activities, not unswervingly correlated to food production. These activities consist of social, cultural, industrial, commercial, religious, artistic, educational, military, political or administrative functions. Such diverse activities require different skills. This leads to increasing degrees of specialization. Handicrafts and commerce are separate but interdependent activities. Similarly, administrative staff and political control can be connected. People in complementary occupations tend to stay close to each other, allowing for more efficient transactions. Translated into spatial terms, such a grouping leads to an increased density of the population. Individuals playing economic, religious and political roles need each other to survive. But their links are not defined by kinship but by the mutual utility. Individuals and groups that coordinate various specialized activities tend to focus their power. For example, the state is the largest coordinator of the diverse and sometimes conflicting demands of different interest groups. Civil servants such as kings, ministers, generals, and priests who mix the needs of heterogeneous groups manage to concentrate considerable power in their hands. As a result, each urban center is characterized by the existence of rich and wealthy rich living in the lap of luxury and poor parities performing unpleasant but necessary tasks, such as cremation of the dead, street cleaning, and even, in some case, the night soil. The main functions of an urban center are activities such as administration, ritual service, and commerce. The urban centers are also home to rich, poor, the leaders and the governed, buyers and sellers, artisans, and merchants.⁵

In several pre-modern urban centers, most of the population was involved in agricultural activities. However, the city has been recognized and recognized not for its agricultural products, but the presence of kings, temples or markets. If we examine the urban centers as units of settlement, they fulfill the functions specialized concerning a wider hinterland.⁶ This relationship of interdependence, which is favorable to the urban center, generally comes from

its advantageous geographical location (location on commercial routes, control of natural resources, etc.). Leaders, priests, artisans, and traders depend on farmers to produce their food. Historically, pre-modern urban centers have ruthlessly subjugated their rural environments. Due to the primitive state of technology, farmers produced small amounts of grain that could barely handle the needs of producers. Some of these products have been siphoned into urban centers. The food that is tapped into the urban centers is called “surplus.” The term "surplus" does not mean that the product exceeds the supplies of the growers. These are rather the products brought to the city by the village. It is possible that the villagers needed this food. The urban centers develop various institutional mechanisms to extract food from the villages. This mobilization of “surplus" could take the system of an accolade to an urban deity that one might believe has the land, the source of all products.⁷

This may take the usage of taxes levied by the king or exchange for goods provided by craftsmen or merchants of the city. Commenting on the urban centers of medieval France, the historian Braudel said: "Any city of unequivocal urban status would be surrounded by a ring of villages, each of them connecting it by extension to the lilliputian world of villages ... Each city, big or small, would have a supply area of which it was dependent. A city was like a huge stomach, taking advantage, not of one but several zones and zones of successive influence. Since a great number of people from different occupations remain in the city, the interactions between residents are impersonal, and the residents of such an institution satisfy a substantial portion of their daily needs in the local market".⁸

Many social scientists consider planning as the dependent variable. According to them, the urban centers reflect the economics of a wide range of changes occurring in a specified society.⁹ Other researchers believe that the city acts as a "container," which means that the concentration of rulers and ruled, merchants and buyers, priests, and faithful in a small geographical area leads to a qualitative change in the world urban space. This leads to the

creation of a new landscape. It should be emphasized that the notion of concentration goes beyond the simple aggregation of population and encompasses its deeper social, cultural, and political-economic implications, as they are even more concentrated. In other words, “the city is the hub of power, the site of control.”¹⁰

As Braudel said, the city was above all a land of domination when we define or prioritize it, and the basis is its ability to command and the area it commands. This observation highlights the significance of power in the materialization of urban centers. The advent of the city has meant a renovation in the rapport between humans rather than between man and nature. This transformation of relationships between humans is called the emergence of the state. The human groups that existed before are called kinship societies. The kinship society is generally referred to as "tribal society." Tribal societies are organized on the principle that all members of the community are associated with each other. The natural resources available in the region belong to the collective property. Therefore, tribal society does not create structures where wealth or resources are concentrated in a few families.¹¹ Such contacts and transactions are difficult to maintain in individual memory. The language of a king's command or the exchange of a merchant must be precise. Even minor verbal command errors can make Chinese whispers. Thus, written documents have come to play an essential role in impersonal transactions.

Many examples of early urban planning are, therefore, associated with the invention of writing. A written text could carry the instructions of the powerful to places where they are not present. In an illiterate context, each direction was related to the specific context of its statement. The writing was truly universal, a form of conversation in which speakers and listeners were not sitting face to face. This could transcend the limits of memory and forgetfulness. The instructions of kings, holy men, and merchants could travel to distant lands. Writing has made possible the preservation, freezing, and dissemination of knowledge.

In the historical context, urbanization has also referred to the process by which the rural world has engendered a new type of settlement called the city. The study of urban history is an attempt to study both processes. Urban and rural do not refer to separate and distinct processes. Once the town was invented, the word "rural" was simply a form of specialization. Urban centers cannot be implicit without their rural hinterland, and the rural peasantry cannot be assumed without discovering its links with the city. Thus, the study of urban history automatically becomes the study of the change of institutional, legal, demographic, and cultural processes. Urban history is a survey of the economic, political, social and spatial systems that created this form of settlement.

Modern urban studies began at the close of the 19th century as a crossroads for the arts, humanities, and social sciences. There was an endeavor to understand the experimental nature and built environment of the city. Each city had an autonomous personality and was also part of a more significant urbanization system.

The commencements of systematic studies of urban studies were linked to the period that saw the incredible progress of urban centers resulting from industrialization. Much of this interest was related to concerns over urban problems caused by overcrowding, poverty, and insalubrity, as well as an attempt to create a more planned society. These writings were sometimes tinged with nostalgia for the lost idyllic world of the past.¹²

The city was considered as the leading cause of physical and moral degradation. Since the start of the twentieth century, historians like Henri Pirenne drew long-term models of variation as part of the urban revolution in Europe. Pirenne dedicated his study on the institutional processes that linked Europe and Asia. According to him, European urban centers that emerged after the tenth century were due to the result of the opening of the trade routes with Asia. He inferred the Crusades as a secret war for the opportunity of trade

itineraries. For him, the degeneration of feudalism in Europe was directly interrelated to the new forms of organization that appeared in medieval urban centers. Pirenne had well-defined the European city as a portion of the large picture that was redefining the stories of religion and feudalism. However, Max Weber saw in the transactional and depersonalized nature of modern economies and social relations the explanation of the "lonely crowd life." Weber explored a more profound history of urbanism by pointing out that the European Renaissance city was a unique form of organization, unprecedented in history and unparalleled in China, India or the Arab world.¹³

He pointed out that in the pre-modern world, the urban centers of the world represented a system of institutions dominated by political power. In addition to an urban community, urban centers included fortifications, a market, a court, and powerful professional groups with some autonomy. What distinguishes the city from the Renaissance is that it is controlled by merchant associations rather than by kings or priests. These urban centers, having wrested power from the political elite, laid the foundations for capitalism. There have been debates regarding the nature of pre-modern urban centers, and mainstream academic opinion seems to suggest that the political elite dominated pre-modern urban centers and that the economy of the city was subordinated to politics.¹⁴

This impression is reinforced by the fact that the most significant urban centers of the premodern world, such as Rome, Constantinople, Baghdad, Delhi or Beijing, were at the commencement of the political capitals. On the other hand, New York, arguably the most important city of the last hundred years, is not political capital. This is why researchers characterize pre-modern urban centers as "parasitic" and modern urban centers as drivers of growth.

In the United States, the Chicago School has experimented with new ways of understanding urbanism. They made Chicago city their field of observation and put particular emphasis on scientific measurement, quantification, and comparison. It was believed that urban life was anchored in its more full geographical and material environment. Scholars like Louis Wirth have studied urban planning in socio-psychological and historico-structural terms. It has been shown how land use has changed with different patterns of industrialism and variations in the social structure. The tradition of "cultural ecology" that emerged in the 1950s attempted to understand urbanism as a consequence of the dynamic interaction of human beings, the environment, technology, and social structure.

There is a long tradition of studying urbanism as a prospect of modernity. The modern city envisioned by planners has a top-down approach with planned rows of buildings, restricted traffic routes, and short distances. Modernity is assumed as the cultural counterpart of industrial capitalism with its notions of individualism and the homogenization of everyday practice. In Europe, the erection of monumental scale city halls with remarkable clock towers is assumed as the imposition of a new discipline of time. The mayor also symbolized a transfer of power from traditional institutions like the church to a democratically elected municipal council. Another current of research focused on the built-up space of urban centers.

The study of urban history has also undergone a "cultural turn." The "cultural turn" means a change in the study of the experiential aspect of urban planning. Researchers have tried to move away from the grand theories and explanations in favor of local knowledge and the descriptions of localized change. These studies have questioned notions of structural elucidation in terms of global categories such as economics or politics. Micro-stories of localities, issues related to gender, sexuality, subjectivity, race, and caste have become the major concerns of many historians.¹⁵

Rather than viewing the city as a fixed space within which the tragedy of urban life unfolded, scholars have studied the process of constructing identities based on class, race, sex, and religion. Sexuality, Material, and symbolic spaces were continually dissolved and recreated in the lived life of peoples. They emphasized that people live in urban centers in social spaces created from conventional practices and a series of personal and impersonal networks.

Previously, gender issues were lacking in urban studies. Since the 1970s, the history of masculinity has been realized in the construction and management of urban spaces. Specialists pointed out that ideas about public spaces and domestic spaces are influenced by a man-centered ideology. Individual houses are designed with a clear division of spaces between men and women. Modern planning seems to have replicated this model on a large scale. Gender studies have created new approaches to understanding the architecture and planning of urban spaces. The city turned out to be a predominantly male space. For example, one can discern the blindness of masculine ideologies in the near-virtual absence of public toilets for women in most urban centers until the first half of the twentieth century. According to feminist readings, urban space could be visualized as a male space of solitary crowds and the fleeting encounters. Urban historians have also addressed issues of governmentality that refer to the creation of a device that disciplines and controls the inhabitants of a city.

THEORY OF SPACE AND URBAN

Marxist philosopher Henri Lefebvre in his classic book 'The Production of Space' disparaged the approaches that presented space as a simple framework or backdrop for action like the movement of persons or construction of buildings. He also opposed the treatment of space merely as a metaphor, without any reference to its material aspect. He suggested, on the contrary, that each historical society "produces" space in three interconnected ways that

produce perceived, conceived, and lived spaces, and it corresponds to 'spatial practices, exemplifications of space, and spaces of demonstration.' Lefebvre suggests that perceived space refers to the elements of space as they are perceived by the body, manipulated and displaced, 'the practical source of the perception of the outside world'¹⁶. This is diligently linked with the idea of spatial practice.

Conceived space, is the impression of space that is derived from specialized knowledge of spatial thinking. These could come from geography, physics, urbanism, or theology and also include ways to draw boundaries, map cities, distance, and surface units, or imagine the world. Lefebvre often used the term representations of space to refer to this process. The lived space, however, differs both from the perceived space and the conceived space to the extent that it can amplify or undermine each of the other two aspects.¹⁷

In other words, according to Lefebvre, social relations operating across space also generate social relations, combining both material and non-material. Seeing space in this way opens up the possibility of examining how class, gender, or caste relations are formed by space. As the geographer, Edward Soja has pointed out, a social theory based on the general assumption that time is a dynamic entity, while space is mostly static and immutable.¹⁸ One can identify a variety of Marxist, Weberian, feminist, and poststructuralist approaches that use this considerate understanding of space to develop an understanding of the urban centers.

Among those who understood urban centers as an amalgamation of social and spatial dynamic forces, at the beginning of the 20th century even before Lefebvre, were the adherents of Chicago School. Their approach was called human ecology because it borrowed much of its terminology from Darwinian ideas about evolution. Ernest Burgess, one of the

prominent members, recommended that urban centers developed as sequences of concentric circles based on competition among its users. In such a model, the center of the city consisted of business districts that paid higher rent payments than any other potential user. Around this center are different layers of society, such as the working classes who wanted to live close to their workplace, high-class apartments - for those wishing to flee the crowded downtown area and suburbanites. Once these initial distributions are stabilized according to market forces, each region acquires a distinct cultural character. Such an approach highlighted the links between the economy, culture, and spatial configuration of the city. Despite criticism, the main ideas of the ecological approach persist the concept of the town as sequences of concentric circles replicating the dissemination of the population, itself a result of the value of properties and mobility.¹⁹

Sociologist Georg Simmel of the early 20th century focused on how group size qualitatively shapes the nature of its interaction.²⁰ In his essay "Metropolis and Mental Life," he argued that the very density of human-city interactions tends to develop the character of urban centers. Urban historians having faith in Weberian categories have advocated that, although the city can be considered as an independent social entity in the early modern era, it is tough to do the same for the contemporary period.²¹ Peter Saunders argues that space is "not a category around which a social dynamic peculiar to the modern city could be identified, instead of city is a space where general societal processes can be observed more intensively."²²

Space has been a critical category in the way recent methodologies to urban history (as well as urban studies in general) have developed. However, it is essential to think carefully about how this category is used in each context - whether space is perceived as a small container of

events, or as a pure metaphor, or as a site for complex production and reproduction, or as generating an independent dynamic.

1.4 LITERATURE REVIEW: POST-COLONIAL DISCOURSES AND EXISTING LITERATURE ON COLONIAL URBAN FORM IN INDIA:

This section discusses the conceptual premise of the thesis concerning postcolonial literature in general and then regarding the specific work done in the domain of colonial architecture and urban form in India. Subsequently, he analyzes some different theoretical frameworks or models that have addressed space production and its relationship with social and power structures. Based on this analysis, the subsequent section attempts to derive a heuristic conceptual framework as a tool to understand the spatial culture of colonial provincial governance in the Bengal district cities.

The condition of colonialism provides clues to much of our current identity in various spheres of cultural existence. Colonialism involved the interface of diverse cultures to produce new paradigms of cultural practices and cultural artifacts (architecture, of course, is one of them). It also generated specific formations of power structures and knowledge systems in societies that, in turn, were incorporated and produced simultaneously through their spatial and material environment.²³ These are just some of the reasons why the colonial phenomenon, in general, deserves an in-depth investigation into the architectural academic commitment.

The domain of governance, together with the spaces directly or indirectly related to it, is a particularly suitable field to investigate these issues, given that, in the colonial context, governance was one of the principal instruments through which culture who enjoys formal authority tried to establish control mechanisms of the other. The British colonial government apparatus actively took advantage of attempts to manage, remodel, and in fact, "reform"

Indian society. However, while the general power equations may have tilted in favor of the colonizers, the process was not only in black and white; instead, it involved many negotiations and "give and take." Government spaces and other related spaces in the domestic and public domain provided the physical terrain in which these operations and structures of government power and social functioning were codified and sometimes institutionalized. On the other hand, the buildings and spaces produced were also often used by different groups of people as tools to subvert seemingly obvious power equations. Therefore, this thesis tries to decode some of these interrelations to interpret them.

The need for this study also arises from a general concern about the dominant tendency of the architectural community to see architecture as a primarily physical entity based on form.²⁴

Similarly, dialectically, the study also proposes to use the physical device to shed light on the processes that inform this dynamic of space. Therefore, the thesis aims to read the physicality of space through the practice of space and, in that sense, is closely aligned with a fertile school of thought that is at the intersection of spatial, social, and cultural studies.²⁵

Colonial governance in India was not singular, although, often, the image of management has been printed in the public imagination through unique and iconic buildings, building complexes, large imperial spaces, and through the plethora of academic and popular debates about them.²⁶ Some of the examples of such iconic architecture or urban space include, for instance, the Governor's House in Calcutta, the Viceroy's Palace, and the elaborately landscaped spaces in New Delhi – which find frequent mention in demonstrating the nature and expression of colonial authority. Although such discourse has played a very crucial role in understanding the potency of architecture or urban space as representational devices and as consolidated instruments of power, it often tends to divert attention away from the more nuanced, networked, web-like functioning and the manifestation of power. In reality, colonial

governance took shape and operated not only through these iconic spaces -- i.e., the symbolic top of the administrative pyramid -- but also through a complex network of functions and spaces which constituted the overall colonial governmental apparatus.

A strong impetus for the conceptualisation of this thesis comes from post-colonial writings that are founded on Michel Foucault's notion of power. Not only does Foucault's analysis articulate the innate nexus between space, power, and knowledge,²⁷ it also defines the nature of power itself radically. The proposed study is closely linked to Foucault's argument that power is not as centralised as it appears to be – 'it is never monopolised by one center', it does not 'function in the form of a chain,' and it 'is deployed and exercised through a net-like organisation.'²⁸ Foucault's ideas about power being a net rather than emanating from a center and power as operating at the most micro-level of social relations provide the ground for this study to shift attention to the interactions and networks that existed between and within European and native groups in Sadar towns. Following on from this, the thesis looks at the relationship between the design of spaces and the negotiations between the principal agencies that went into the making and functioning of those spaces. Fundamental to the research is thus a conception of the colonial power structure and its spaces as a network of interconnected agencies and domains – not as singular power-centers or buildings. This has also been the driving force behind the emphasis on non-monumental architecture and a more extensive network of spaces corresponding to middle-lower administrative hierarchies.

The overriding tendency in the architectural and urban historiography of colonial India until the late-1990s was to cast it primarily as a grand imperial narrative – i.e., of how heroic British efforts constructed the colonised cities, towns, buildings, monuments.²⁹ There have been, however, a few significant architectural writers in recent times challenging this viewpoint, who emphasise, for example, that

... ‘any serious attention to the historical evidence of late seventeenth and eighteenth-century Bengal cannot fail to illustrate the precarious situation of the British East India Company during this time. Far from being able to predict future British control, the uncertainty of British enterprise was evident to British authorities, the same authorities whose deeds would be constructed into a story of uninterrupted success ... Not only were the complex choices and decisions made by the British and Indians simplified into a British winning strategy, but the enormous contribution and resistance of the native population during the entire duration of colonial rule is also effectively subdued as part of the city’s [Calcutta, in this case] history.’³⁰

In her work on urban domestic spaces in Delhi between 1847 and 1910, the architectural critic Jyoti Hosagrahar also expresses similar concerns:

..... The grand design of imperial New Delhi by Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker has dominated architectural histories of modern Delhi, denying indigenous inhabitants an active role in the production of modernist built form.³¹

Within such a shift in the ideological and analytical basis of colonial spatial historiography, it becomes clear that the image of colonial power and governance in India as being necessarily consolidated, authoritative, singularly dominant, consistent, and refined ³² itself needs interrogation. Instead, there was a process of accretion and modifications that characterized the evolution of a revenue administration system into that of imperial governance, and which involved numerous negotiations and experiments.

Colonial governmental machinery in provincial Bengal also did not exist in isolation – in other words, British governance did not only operate through explicit mechanisms and spaces. As this thesis reveals, governmental functioning was intricately linked to and deeply dependent on a range of other spaces within the Zilla Sadar, far beyond the formal boundaries of the colonial provincial office. There was, over time, the development – under native or

European patronage – of various syncretic institutions (e.g., colleges, schools, clubs, and town-halls). These were, on the one hand, the fall-out from the introduction of a British education in India, and on the other, of increasing attempts by local actors to establish sovereign domains that could become a pivotal source of Bengali and Indian nationalist identity formation.³³ This secondary apparatus was an often contested domain, and usually co-produced by native and European agency.

Interestingly, it was these syncretic institutions that provided the most fertile experimental ground for many hybrid spatial formations and architectural styles, eventually feeding into the channel for the development of the ‘Indo-Saracenic’ structural stream in the late-nineteenth century. For authoritative works on the ‘Indo-Saracenic’ as a significant development in colonial India, see Metcalf, *An Imperial Vision*, and G.H.R Tillotson, *The Tradition of Indian Architecture*. In a broader sense, governance was also conducted through parts of residential domains since, very often, the provincial British officers, as well as native tax collectors, functioned from their home offices, without which it is impossible to imagine the spatial structure of colonial administration.

Of crucial importance here, and something that warrants fore-grounding is the Indian response to British attempts at establishing colonial control, and the participation of the local actors in the creation of a composite provincial civic culture and space. This often happened in the form of fully-fledged buildings and hybrid architectural styles that came up under the patronage of the local elite or other local groups.³⁴ Mrinalini Sinha’s work on social clubs and ‘clubbability’ in British India provides a revealing account of the evolution of the ‘club’ as a typical colonial social institution, and of how it gradually involved the participation of locals (though mostly elites) both in its production as well in its membership and social life.³⁵ There also developed other institutions such as town halls where the patronage and access were for more mixed, or even exclusively Bengali.

In a broader sense, this thesis intends to unravel the nature of East-West interaction in the context of regional architecture and urban form in Bengal. One of the most significant bodies of work – taking a cue from Foucault’s notion of power and knowledge systems, or Jacques Derrida’s skepticism about modes of representation³⁶ – is Edward Said’s seminal work on ‘orientalism’ and the discourse built up around it. Said suggested that the ‘orient’ was a European construct, a tool for dominance, and he showed how a body of (colonial) knowledge could involve the exercise of power.³⁷ Much post-colonial theory, in turn, has taken its cue from Said. Said deconstructed a large body of western literature to make his case that the West depicted the East as the irrational, weak, feminised ‘other,’ contrasted with the rational, healthy, masculine West – a contrast, he suggested, derived from the need to create ‘difference’ between the two. However, Said’s position focuses on the creation of difference but does not recognise the fact that European power in the East was never absolute and remained heavily dependent on local collaborators or local forms of knowledge (which were frequently subversive of imperial aims). Said’s theory thus emphasises the hegemonic dimensions and structures of colonial dominance but subdues the overlaps and dependence of the two cultures – something that has also attracted criticism from various academic quarters, not least, the ‘Revisionist’ camp. Indeed, Fraser has also pointed out that Said modified his position in later texts such as *Culture and Imperialism* towards a less binary construction.³⁸

EXISTING LITERATURE ON COLONIAL URBAN FORM IN INDIA:

Specific studies on colonial urban planning in the Indian context have taken five general directions in the last forty years. The first is a generation of works produced in the seventies and eighties by historians and travel writers such as Sten Nilsson, Robert Irving Grant, Jan Morris, or Philip Davies.³⁹ These gave detailed descriptions of British or European colonial architecture in India but were mainly devoted to iconic and monumental architecture and its formal characteristics. The second saw mostly from the late 1980s until the mid-1990s,

typified by the work of academics such as AGK Menon, K.T. Ravindran, and Jon Lang. It was a body of post-colonial criticism about colonial architecture and urban patterns in India, which accurately traced its role in the foundations of current building design and city planning practices.⁴⁰ These, therefore, focused on continuities and links between colonial and postcolonial spatial patterns. The third strand consists of a body mainly of historical and stylistic studies of art from the late 1980s, focusing on the works of Thomas Metcalf, Giles Tillotson or Andreas Volwahren, who were actively involved in the relationship between representation and the production of architecture, including handicrafts and patronage, and mediations with the local cultures that these involved.⁴¹ Metcalf, in particular, has committed to representing the imperial state of the late 19th century in India and its framework hegemonic. The fourth, primarily represented by the work of Anthony King in the late 1970s, marked an essential critical change in the framework for analyzing colonial architecture and urban development.

In a pioneering study, King demonstrated the intersection between social theory and the writing of the history of colonial architecture.⁴² The King 's work was followed by the fifth body of historical work on urban development colonial, which included the work of Narayani Gupta on urban history of Delhi during the transition from Mughal to colonial rule, work Pradip Sinha on history of colonial Calcutta, the work of Veena Oldenberg in the manufacture of colonial Lucknow and the work of Norma Evenson in the development of the main colonial metropolitan centers in Madras, Mumbai, Calcutta and Delhi.⁴³ The principal objective of this body of work was the identification of the colonial city in terms of colonial sociology and its stratified spatial characteristics, such as black and white cities, tracing the precise historical processes behind the production of such landscapes.

The last decade (since 2000) has witnessed an apparent change in such a radical and 'Manichaeic' interpretation of colonial landscapes (as the King postulates, for example) to

those in favor of more complex, hybrid and heterogeneous. This has also been accompanied by a growing interest in institutional and governmental history, social history, gender history, and the complex role of multiple agencies, both European and Indian, in the production of a modern colonial landscape.

Some of the critical work in this context include the followings: Stephen Legg's work on urban governmentalities in Delhi in the first half of the 20th century; the work Swati Chattopadhyay on architectural and urban history of Calcutta; William Glover's work on colonial Lahore; The work of Peter Scriver in the Department of Public Works in the second half of the 19th century; Work Arindam Dutta on the institutional history of aesthetic change in the architecture of India at the end of the nineteenth century; The work of Vikram Prakash on the precise translations between "copy and create" in the production of the vocabulary Indo- Saracen end of the nineteenth century ; The work Prashant Kidambi on urban history of colonial Bombay; and the work of Jyoti Hosagrahar on the urban landscape, modernity and indigenous agency Delhi in early 20th century.⁴⁴

Although the immeasurably significant works of Metcalf and Tillotson make critical connections between the ideology of the colonial state, the interests of the local patrons of the Indians, the craftsmanship and the stylistic apparatus of architecture, the relationship between these aspects and spatial practice (including your room and use) is still a gap that needs to be filled. This study is based on the conviction of the architectural community, whose premise is to observe the practice of space to address this gap. The central argument of Metcalf is also that of an increasingly robust imperial state and its hegemonic practices at the end of the 19th century. Norma Evenson, in his book, *The Indian Metropolis*, effectively tracks the development of major colonial cities in a similar manner but focuses primarily on the city's morphology and residential models. Once again, his work is focused exclusively in larger

metropolitan areas, and, like the other writers mentioned above, does not provide detailed studies based on types of individual buildings. Some scholars have also carried out excellent work in the capital cities or the main urban centers of India. Narayani Gupta's book, *Delhi Between the Two Empires*, which traces the urban transitional history of Delhi from the end of the Mughal to colonial rule, is a significant example.

The work of Andreas Volwahren analyzes the four cities of Madras, Calcutta, Bombay, and Delhi in terms of its dominant stylistic content. Research Veena Talwar Oldenberg and Rosie Llewellyn Jones on the creation of colonial Lucknow meticulously records the colonial urban structures overlap in what was a settlement precolonial.⁴⁵ However, even here, the commitment is to Lucknow as a great center political. At the most developmental level, the reference to the monumentality of governance centered on individual buildings has been reasonably standard,⁴⁶ but in the more "ordinary" architecture of colonial governance, it is virtually non-existent. An exciting work that finds resonance with this thesis in its concern for the connection between governance and space is that of cultural geographer Stephen Legg on the creation and operation of colonial New Delhi in the first quarter of the twentieth century. Legg provides a deep analysis of the sociopolitical, legal, disturbance, and police geography of the city. However, all these texts still represent the bias towards capital cities that accompanies colonial space studies, and in which local and provincial narratives rarely find a place.

Swati Chattopadhyay has emphasized the aspect of colonial space culture as something co-produced by both the colonizer and the colonized, and the fact that the boundaries or domains of space and room production were often confusing, in his book *Representing Calcutta: Modernity, Nationalism and the colonial mystery*, as well as in its previous articles.⁴⁷ Chattopadhyay's work constitutes the closest conceptual basis and inspiration for my proposed research since it is based on this issue of the co-production of an administrative

culture and civic that arises from a range of social practices that were closely linked, but not limited to mere governance. Such a premise again resonates with Foucault's assertion that "power is situated within a cacophony of social practices and situations."⁴⁸ Such a notion also breaks the idea of the polarities of the two cultures in question and emphasizes, in change, in Identity overlay. In terms of analytical tools, the approach Chattopdhyay cover between physical scales (the urban morphology and typology of construction), look literary texts along with physical reading spaces, and address the voices of a variety of social groups instead of adhering to the obvious ones. Categories as colonizer-colonized all provide significant inspiration for the methodological orientation of this study.

1.5: CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

The research aims to make a new contribution to knowledge in the following ways:

1. Conceptually, it engages with
 - Spatial, Physical, and also Socio-cultural aspects of urbanisation rather than a purely formal discourse.

2. Empirically,
 - It focuses on provincial towns rather than large urban centers. Looks into the spatial geography in terms of *Zilla Sadar*, *cutcherries*, *mofussil*,
 - The negotiations of physical-economic space traversed with expanding markets, communication routes, and trade.
 - The impact of urbanism reflected in new contours of bodily understanding through deep inquiry on *Babu Culture*.

3. Methodologically, it posits itself at the intersection of spatial, physical, historical, and sociocultural studies.

1.6: CHAPTER STRUCTURE

The introduction part of the thesis forms the foundation for the remaining chapters and discusses about the theoretical and ideological issues along with statement of the problem, the site of enquiry and time period of study. This chapter looks into the conceptual theories in understanding urbanisation and urbanism. The existing literature review of post-colonial discourses and existing literature on colonial urban forms in India and finally the contribution of this research thesis to the existing knowledge. The chapter 2 entitled ‘The Spatial Geography Of Provincial Administrative Towns In Early Colonial Bengal’ discusses about the zilla sadars, cutcheries and mofussils. Chapter 3 The Growth And Evolution Of Administrative Space In Provincial Bengal (Circa 1757-1857) discusses about the formation of new administrative spaces in the early colonial Bengal. Initially the historiography of the conquest is argued followed by the changing administrative spaces. The chapter 4 entitled ‘Negotiated Physical Spaces And The Economic Landscapes In Early Colonial Bengal’ parleys about the urban centers and market places that were existing during the time period of the study. Another important aspect studied is the condition of the communication system both land and water and the manufactories and industries. Towards the end this chapter discusses the emergent economic space in trade and commerce in early colonial Bengal. The chapter 5 entitled ‘Urbanism, Social Body And The *Babu* Culture In Early Colonial Bengal’ discusses about the impact of urbanism on the bodily and social representation on a new emergent group of elites called Babus. The chapter begins with the existing conceptual propositions on

the Babu and ‘social body’. Other issues discoursed are *saukin babu* and the changing moral atmosphere of Bengal and the urban and the provincial deliberation.

¹ Hayden, Dolores, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995, p. 15

² Ibid.

³ P.J. Marshall, Bengal: *The British Bridgehead, Eastern India 1740–1828*, Series: *The New Cambridge History of India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); See also C.A. Bayly, *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire*, Series: *The New Cambridge History of India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

⁴ Calcutta was formally made the capital of British India in 1801. But the centre of gravity of colonial administration had actually started shifting when the civil courts had moved to it in 1773

⁵ Wirth, Louis, ‘Urbanism as a way of life’ Reprinted in J.J. Macionis and N. Benokraitis (ed.), *Seeing Ourselves*, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1989, pp.360-366

⁶ Trigger, B., ‘Determinants of Urban Growth in Pre-industrial Societies’ in Ucko, P.J., Tringham R. and Dimbleby, G.W. (eds.) *Man, Settlement and Urbanism*, Duckworth Publishers, London, 1972, p. 120

⁷ See Orans, Martin, ‘Surplus’, *Human Organization*, Vol. 25, 1966, pp. 24-32.

⁸ Braudel, Fernand, *The Identity of France*, Fontana Press, London: 1989, pp.182-185

⁹ Fischer, Claude S., Towards a subcultural theory of urbanism, Reprinted in J.J. Macionis and N. Benokraitis (ed.) *Seeing Ourselves*, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey. 1989, pp. 367-373

¹⁰ Southall, Aidan, *The City in Time and Space*, Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 8-10

¹¹ Braudel, Fernand, op.cit., p- 181

¹² Shane, Ewen, *What is Urban History?*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016, p. 13

¹³ Pirenne, Henri, *Medieval Cities: Their Origins and the Revival of Trade*, Princeton University Press, 1969

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ See Steward, J., 'Cultural Ecology' in *The International Encyclopedia of The Social Sciences*, Vol. 3., 1968.

¹⁶ Lefebvre, Henri, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), pp. 66-71

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 40

¹⁸ See Soja, Edward W., *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*, (Verso, London, 1989).

¹⁹ Burgess, Ernest W. *Urban Sociology*, (University of Chicago Press, 1967)

²⁰ Saunders, Peter, *Social Theory and the Urban Question*, 2nd ed., (Routledge, 1993), pp.88-97

²¹ Abrams, Philip and E. A. Wrigley, *Towns in Societies: Essays in Economic History and Historical Sociology*, Past and Present Publications ;(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978).

²² Saunders, Peter. Op.cit., pp. 88-97

²³ Bernard S Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996); Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1994); Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin Books, 1978/2003).

²⁴ The preoccupation with formal attributes of building as largely a physical (and often visual) artefact has not only been the core of modernist traditions, but interestingly has continued to be the major thrust even of post-modern architecture. Perhaps as a reaction to this, in more recent times there has been a wave of critical writings that have tried

²⁵ Some of the seminal works in this context are, for instance, those of Henri Lefebvre, Edward Soja, David Harvey and Doreen Massey. Lefebvre discussed how space is produced through the overlap of abstract scientific, social and physical or material spaces. Soja emphasised the importance of space in understanding political and cultural phenomena. David Harvey has discussed the intersection of the conceptual framework of Marxist socio-economic theory with spatial and geographical theory.

Massey drew immensely significant connections between urban space and socio-economic parameters like poverty, welfare and wealth. See, for example: Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (London: Blackwell, 1991); Edward Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London: Verso Press, 1989); Soja, *Third space* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1996); Doreen B. Massey, *For Space*, (London: Sage 2005); David Harvey, *Social Justice and the City* (London: Blackwell, 1998).

²⁶ See, for example, the architectural and urban-design analysis of colonial buildings given by Lawrence Vale, Philip Davies or Robert Grant Irving. Lawrence J. Vale, *Architecture, Power, and National Identity* (Yale: Yale University Press, 1992); Philip Davies, *Splendours of the Raj: British Architecture in India* (London: J. Murray, 1985). Robert Grant Irving, *Indian Summer: Lutyens, Baker and Imperial Delhi* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982).

²⁷ For a detailed account of Foucault's deliberations on geographies and power from a wide range of perspectives framed around his discussions with the French geography journal *Herodote* in the mid-1970s, see Jeremy W Crampton and Stuart Elden, *Space, Power and Knowledge: Foucault and Geography* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2007). See also Colin Gordon (ed.), *Michel Foucault - Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-77* (New York: Pantheon, 1980).

²⁸ Michel Foucault, *Power*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: New Press, 2001), 98.

²⁹ See for example: Kathleen Blechynden, *Calcutta: Past and Present* (Calcutta: Thacker, Spink & Co, 1905); P. C. Bagchi, *Calcutta: Past and Present* (Calcutta: Calcutta University Press, 1939); Nemi Bose, *Calcutta: People and Empire* (Calcutta: India Book Exchange, 1975); Philip Mason, *The Men Who Ruled India* (New Delhi: Rupa & Co, 1992); Lawrence James, *The Making and Unmaking of British India* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999).

³⁰ Swati Chattopadhyay, *Representing Calcutta: Modernity, Nationalism and the Colonial Uncanny* (London: Routledge, 2005), 9.

³¹ Jyoti Hosagrahar, 'Mansions to margins: Modernity and the domestic landscapes of historic Delhi 1847-1910', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 60, No.1 (2001), 2. It is important to note here that Hosagrahar's and Chattopadhyay's work were also the result, within the field of spatial

history, of a larger body of work by the Subaltern Studies Group, led by historians like Ranajit Guha. The Subaltern Studies Group emphatically stated the need to recover ‘other’, less heard, voices in the writing of colonial history and to shift attention from mainstream political history-writing to the domain of social history, local and micro-histories including those of peasant and lower-caste groups, labour, and women. See Ranajit Guha, ed., *A Subaltern Studies Reader 1986-1995* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

³² See the works of the following authors on colonial governance in India: D.N. Banerjee, *Early Administration System of the East India Company in Bengal* (London: Longman 1943); B. B. Misra, *The Central Administration of the East India Company, 1773-1834* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1959); Ibid, *The Administrative History of India (1834-1947)* (Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1970).

³³For discussions on the ideological foundations of the imperial state in India and development of various colonial institutions in terms of their architectural development, see: Thomas Metcalf, *An Imperial Vision: Indian Architecture and Britain’s Raj* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989); Giles H.R. Tillotson, *The Tradition of Indian Architecture: Continuity, Controversy and Change since 1850* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); Chattopdhyay, *Representing Calcutta*. For discussions on colonial institutions and the public sphere see e.g. Mrinalini Sinha, ‘Britishness, Clubbability and the Colonial Public Sphere: the Genealogy of an Imperial Institution in Colonial India’, *At Home in The Empire, The Journal of British Studies* 40, No.4 (2001), 489-521; Dipesh Chakrabarty, ‘Adda, Calcutta: Dwelling in Modernity’, *Public Culture* 11, No.1 (1999), 109-145.

³⁴ Some examples of this, for example, are the Raj College, Raj Collegiate School and Udaychand Public Library in Burdwan under the patronage of the Maharaja of Burdwan; Manindrachandra Bidyapith in Berhampur set up by the zamindar of Kasimbazaar; Krishnanath College in Berhampur adopted by the same zamindar family; The Town Library and Town Hall set up with contributions from Maharaja Srishchandra of Krishnanagar and other elites of the town; the Town Hall built by the zamindar Bansagopal Nanda in Burdwan; and the India Club built under the patronage of the Maharaja of Koochbihar in Koochbihar

³⁵ Sinha, 'Britishness, clubbability and the colonial public sphere: the genealogy of an imperial institution in colonial India', *Journal of British Studies* 40, no. 4, *At home in the Empire* (2001), 489-521.

³⁶ Jacques Derrida's hugely consequential work provided a vital basis for post-structuralist and post-modern philosophy. Derrida questioned accepting forms of representation at their face value and called for the deconstruction of meanings to reveal the complexity of their production as well as to critique established and accepted social, political and other power structures. Though Derrida used textual analysis as his tool of investigation and demonstration, deconstruction has provided the fundamental ideological basis for much of post-colonial criticism.

³⁷ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Vintage, 1979); Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (Chatto and Windus: London, 1994).

³⁸ Murray Fraser with Joe Kerr, *Architecture and the Special Relationship: The American Influence on Post-War British Architecture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 15.

³⁹ Sten Nilsson, *European Architecture in India 1750-1850* (London: Faber, 1968); Robert Grant Irving, *Indian Summer: Lutyens, Baker and Imperial Delhi* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982); Jan Morris, *Stones of Empire: Buildings of the Raj* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983); Philip Davies, *Splendours of the Raj, British Architecture in India* (London: J. Murray, 1985).

⁴⁰ See for example: Menon, 'Rethinking Architecture'; Ravindran, 'Colonial Routes'; Ravindran, 'Why planning failed', *Seminar* 390 (1995), 45-50; Lang, Desai and Desai, *Architecture and Independence*

⁴¹ Metcalf, *An Imperial Vision*; Tillotson, *The Tradition of Indian Architecture*; Tillotson, ed., *Paradigms of Indian Architecture - Space and Time in Representation and Design* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1998); Andreas Volwahren, *Imperial Delhi: The British Capital of the Indian Empire*, (Germany: Prestel Verlag, 2002).

⁴² Anthony D. King, *Colonial Urban Development - Culture, Social Power and Environment*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976).

⁴³ Pradip Sinha, *Calcutta in Urban History* (Calcutta: Firma KLM, 1978); Narayani Gupta, *Delhi Between the Two Empires 1803 -1931: Society, Government and Urban Growth*, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1981); Norma Evenson, *The Indian Metropolis: A View Towards the West*, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989); Veena Talwar Oldenberg, 'The Making of Colonial Lucknow 1856-1877' in *The Lucknow Omnibus*, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005); Pradip Sinha, *Calcutta in Urban History* (Calcutta: Firma KLM, 1978).

⁴⁴ Stephen Legg, *Spaces of Colonialism: Delhi's Urban Governmentalities*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007); Chattopadhyay, *Representing Calcutta*; Peter Scriver, *Rationalisation, Standardisation and Control in Design: a Cognitive Historical Study of Architectural Design and Planning in the Public Works Department of British India, 1855-1901*. (Delft: Publicatiesbureau Bouwkunde, Delft University of Technology, 1994); William Glover, *Making Lahore Modern: Constructing and Imagining a Colonial City* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008); Arindam Dutta, *The Bureaucracy of Beauty* (New York and London: Routledge, 2005); Dutta, 'Strangers within the gate: Public Works and Industrial Art Reform' in Peter Scriver and Vikramaditya Prakash, ed., *Colonial Modernities*, 93-114; Vikramaditya Prakash, 'Between Copying and Creation: The Jeypore Portfolio of Architectural Details' in Peter Scriver and Vikramaditya Prakash, eds., *Colonial Modernities*, 115-126; Prashant Kidambi, *The Making of an Indian Metropolis: Colonial Governance and Public Culture in Bombay, 1890-1920* (Ashgate: Aldershot, 2007).

⁴⁵ Oldenberg, *The Making of Colonial Lucknow*; Rosie Llewellyn Jones, 'A Fatal Friendship - The Nawabs, the British and the City of Lucknow' in *The Lucknow Omnibus* (Oxford and New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005).

⁴⁶ Davies, *Splendours of the Raj*; Irving, *Indian Summer*; Vale, *Architecture, Power, and National Identity*.

⁴⁷ Chattopadhyay, *Reresenting Calcutta, A Critical History of Architecture in a Post-colonial World: A View from Indian History, 1997*, URL <http://www.saed.kent.edu/Architronic/v6n1/v6n1.05a.html> accessed Jan 18, 2018.

⁴⁸ Foucault, *Power*, 98