

# Declaration

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I, Madhusudan Paul, hereby declare that this thesis entitled “**PRISONS IN COLONIAL NORTH BENGAL: A STUDY OF CONTROL, DISCIPLINE AND PUNISHMENT (1773-1947)**” submitted by me under the supervision of Dr. Dahlia Bhattacharya, Associate Professor, Department of History, University of North Bengal, is a bonafide research work. I also declare that it has not been submitted previously in part or in full to this University or any other University or Institution for the award of any degree or diploma.

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## CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the present thesis titled "PRISONS IN COLONIAL NORTH BENGAL: A STUDY OF CONTROL, DISCIPLINE AND PUNISHMENT (1773-1947)" is the result of the original research carried out by Madhusudan Paul under my supervision and that to the best of my knowledge and belief, neither this theses nor any part of it forms the basis of any research degree either in this University or anywhere else.

September 11, 2023

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PRISONS IN COLONIAL NORTH BENGAL: A STUDY OF CONTROL, DISCIPLINE AND PUNISHMENT (1773 - 1947) A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL FOR THE AWARD OF DOCTORATE OF PHILOSOPHY IN HISTORY BY MADHUSUDAN PAUL UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF DR. DAHLIA BHATTACHARYA ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL RAJA RAMMOHANPUR DARJEELING, INDIA-734013 SEPTEMBER, 2023

1 Introduction For the British the prison was an institution symbolic of order and civility. The prison was for them not just a system to preserve and reform the criminals but to make the colonized country realize the political presence of the authority. Thus, the history of prisons in colonial North Bengal and its control, punishment and discipline clearly emerges as a significant area of study. The present work entitled "Prison in Colonial North Bengal: A Study of Control, Discipline and Punishment 1773-1947" which deals with the evaluation of Prisons in general and the method of modernization of prison system in Colonial North Bengal. The chronological framework is related to the introduction of the modern prison system to the end of colonial rule. Basically, in 1773 was significance in two aspects i.e. in this year British passed a verdict in colonial legal system to deal with the convicts in jail for implementation of punishment and incidentally in the same year the princely state of Cooch Behar came into the contact with the British authority by signing the "Anglo-Koch Treaty." On the other the study restricts itself to 1947, because at the end of the colonial rule there has been a shift in the prison system from the method of punishment to correctional homes. Therefore, the study has taken into an account of the development of prisons as an institution which was implemented and modified through various colonial policies and its transformation as a tool to impose colonial hegemony both in body and mind. The area of study is concerned with the undivided North Bengal i.e. the northern part of present West Bengal and the districts Rangpur and Rajshahi of the present Bangladesh and some parts of Purnea district of Bihar in India. As the region of North Bengal geographically located in the North-Eastern frontier of India, henceforth, after the consolidation of their political authority to India, the British had concentrated their eyes towards North-East India through Northern part of Bengal. Shortly, there after the colonial government realized the

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# Preface

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The present research work entitled “*Prisons in Colonial North Bengal: A Study of Control, Discipline and Punishment (1773–1947)*”, is an attempt to emphasize the processes of multifaceted factors and forces behind the development of prisons as a penal institution in North Bengal and what were the experiences of the People of North Bengal during the period of colonial rule. Recently such studies are given importance in history and hence this dissertation is emphasized a modest attempt to explore the history of the prison of the districts of North Bengal hitherto academically not dealt with.

The present study intends to covers the introduction and development of the new police and judicial system in British India as well as North Bengal and its emphasis on the codification and formation of alien laws in terms of English laws and justice. It also deals with the reformation of the prisons as an agent of disciplinary power which was quite unknown in pre-British India. As results there was a need to imposing discipline with a new technique i.e. work as a therapy and for impose discipline among the prisoners.

The study also emphasis regarding the Preventive Detention and Detention Camps and what was its historical and strategic significance. In fact, Detention Camps were introduced on the eve of complicated political situation in India especially in Bengal due to political movements of the Congress Nationalists as well as the revolutionary activities of the *Anushilan Samiti*, *Jugantar Dal*, Bengal Volunteers and other revolutionary groups. Here the researcher try to emphasis the dark reality of such camp and the colonial atrocities which was strongly applied such types of camps. Although the police records do not give any hints of physical torture, oppression in the form of hard labour from dawn to dusk, unhygienic food, sweeper’s work and also many others. Therefore, scholar has depended

on the writings of prisoners themselves and other contemporary great thinkers and litterateur, though these are fewer in regards to North Bengal.

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**Place: N.B.U.**

**Date: 11/09/2023**

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# Glossary

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<i>Adalat</i>	Court.
<i>Ahilkar</i>	The title of the Chief Native Judge vested with the power of both Criminal and Civil.
<i>Anna</i>	One-sixteenth part of a rupee.
<i>Babu</i>	A disparaging colonial term for educated Bengalees.
<i>Bandikhana</i>	House of confinement, little ‘house of imprisonment’.
<i>Bhadralpk</i>	Bengali gentlemen, belonging to upper caste.
<i>Chabutra-i-Kotwali</i>	Temporary police lock-up.
<i>Chaukidari</i>	System of village watch and ward.
<i>Cutchery</i>	A court of law; a zamindar’s court or office.
<i>Dacoity/Daikaiti</i>	Gang robbery
<i>Dal</i>	Faction.
<i>Daroga</i>	Local police officer.
<i>Darogah</i>	A police superintendent under the late Regulations of the East India Company, who has a limited local jurisdiction, is subordinate to the magistrate of a district, and has under him an establishment of village policemen.
<i>Diwani or Dewanny</i>	The authority or jurisdiction of the Fiscal Department, who was a head of the provincial revenue department. By the Diwani title, the East India Company became the receiver-general or authority of Revenue of Bengal <i>Subah</i> or Province.

<i>Duffadar</i>	Gourd or public servant.
<i>Durbar</i>	Royal Court.
<i>Durree</i>	Woven mat made of coarse cotton/jute.
<i>Faujdar</i>	A term of Pre-Mughal origins. Under the Mughal's it was an office that combined the functions of a military commander along with judicial and land revenue functions.
<i>Hajat</i>	Lock-up or prison.
<i>Havildar</i>	Policeman.
<i>Hawalat</i>	Lock-up or prison.
<i>Jail Khata Kaidi</i>	Convicted Prisoners.
<i>Jemadar</i>	Police or Jail Subordinate.
<i>Kaid Khallassee</i>	A released convict.
<i>Kanji</i>	Boiled rice churned in water.
<i>Kolu</i>	Oil presser, indigenous technique.
<i>Kotwal</i>	Mughal police official in charge of an urban centre.
<i>Maulvis and Pandits</i>	The native assessors who were skilled in Islamic and Hindu law respectively.
<i>Methar</i>	Sweeper.
<i>Mofussil</i>	The subordinate divisions of a district; the country opposed to the town.
<i>Mohurir</i>	Clerk who assisted the Darogah; part of the regulation police of the Company.
<i>Mufti</i>	Muslim learned person, expert in religious laws.
<i>Mussalman</i>	Muslim.
<i>Naib Nazim</i>	The Deputy Officers-in-Charge of Criminal Administration.

<i>Naib</i>	A Deputy.
<i>Nawab</i>	The title was ratified and bestowed by the reigning Mughal Emperor to semi-autonomous Muslim Rulers or governors of Subdivisions or Provinces in the Indian Subcontinent loyal to the Mughal Emperor.
<i>Nizamat</i>	Administration of police and criminal law.
<i>Panchayat</i>	Village council of representatives.
<i>Panchayat</i>	Administrative body at village level.
<i>Pugree</i>	Turban.
<i>Qazi</i>	The Judge of Canon Law.
<i>Raj</i>	Rule.
<i>Raja</i>	Autonomous Ruler.
<i>Ryot</i>	Peasant, subject; tenant of house or lands.
<i>Sadar Diwani Adalat</i>	The High Court with the powers of Civil and Revenue Jurisdiction.
<i>Sadar Nizamat Adalat</i>	The High Court for Criminal Jurisdiction.
<i>Sahib</i>	Indian term for the European.
<i>Samiti</i>	Association.
<i>Sanad</i>	Documents outlining the terms of a grant of land was made to a zamindar.
<i>Sangha</i>	Organization.
<i>Seer</i>	A measure of weight, approximately 900 grams, 40 seers make 1 maund.
<i>Sepoy</i>	Indian soldier in the British army, originating from the Indian word <i>sipahi</i> .

<i>Shastra</i>	Hindu religion texts.
<i>Soorkee</i>	Red oxide.
<i>Subha</i>	Mughal Province.
<i>Tehsildar</i>	Subordinate police officer.
<i>Thana</i>	A police jurisdiction subordinate to district superintendent; area surrounding the police station.
<i>Zamindar</i>	A local landlord.
<i>Zamindari</i>	Landed estate or revenue settlement or mode of assessment in vogue in Bengal Presidency in the nineteenth century.
<i>Zilla</i>	Administrative District.

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# Abbreviations

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<i>A. A. R. C. B. S.</i>	Annual Administrative Report of the Cooch Behar State.
<i>B. J. E. C.</i>	Report of the Bengal Jail Enquiry Committee.
<i>B. C. L. A. O.</i>	Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Ordinance.
<i>B. P. P.</i>	British Parliamentary Papers.
<i>C. I. D.</i>	Crime Investigation Department.
<i>Cr.</i>	Criminal.
<i>E. I. J. I.</i>	Report of the East India Jails Committee.
<i>I. B. P.</i>	Irish University Press Series of British Parliamentary Papers.
<i>I. J. C.</i>	Indian Jail Committee.
<i>Jail Rule</i>	Rules for the Superintendent and Management of Jails and Subsidiary Jails in the Lower Provinces of the Bengal Presidency.
<i>Judl.</i>	Report of the Committee on Prison Discipline, 1838.
<i>Progs.</i>	Proceedings.
<i>Report on Jail</i>	Report on the Jails of the Lower Provinces of the Bengal Presidency.
<i>W. B. S. A.</i>	West Bengal State Archive.