NINETEENTH CENTURY BENGAL

ASPECTS OF SOCIAL HISTORY

PRADIP SINHA, M.A., D PHIL.
Senior U. G. C. Research Fellow,
University of Calcutta

NINETEENTH CENTURY BENGAL

ASPECTS OF SOCIAL HISTORY

A study in some new pressures on society
and in relation between tradition and change

PRADIP SINHA, M.A., D. PHIL.
Senior U. G. C. Research Fellow,
University of Calcutta

FIRMA K. L. MUKHOPADHYAY
CALCUTTA 1965

Price: Rs. 15/-

Printed by P. C. Ray at Sri Gouranga Press Private Ltd., 5, Chintamani Das Lane, Calcutta-9 and Published by K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 6/1A Bancharam Akrur Lane, Calcutta-12.

To my father
Professor Narendra Krishna Sinha

PREFACE

I faced much difficulty in collecting and then integrating materials for this work on social history, the first four chapters of which formed part of a doctoral dissertation. Materials on social and religious movements and on the phenomenon called the Indian awakening are abundant. But, since I did not want to describe only the movements and transformation associated with urban Bengal in the 19th Century, I was forced to collect and then piece together bits of information from widely different sources. The technique is somewhat unorthodox but this type of social history is perhaps naturally so. I have left out many details that might have enlarged the size of the book and have tried to make the book easily readable. This book is written with the conviction that regional history contributes to our understanding of the Indian situation as a whole. Many of the social processes described here may be regarded as basically Indian. As regards the spelling of Indian names, I have generally avoided anglicised forms ; I have preferred 'Rammohan' to 'Rammohun', 'Harish' to 'Hurrish'. But I have retained 'Grish' in preference to 'Girish' to avoid a possible confusion.

I am very much indebted to Dr. A. C. Banerjee, Mr. N. R. Roy, Mr. S. C. Sarkar, Dr. Amalesh Tripathi and Dr. Arun Dasgupta for their encouragement and advice. I must thank Dr. Benoy Choudhury, Dr. Ashin Dasgupta and Mr. Ronald Inden for all kinds of help. Mr. P. C. Ray of Sri Gouranga Press showed much patience and kindness towards me. My wife, Suchitra, rendered some useful assistance. My father helped me at every stage. He aroused my enthusiasm not only for history but also for the study of society.

PRADIP SINHA

Calcutta,
8.10.65.

CONTENTS

NINETEENTH CENTURY BENGAL

Aspects of Social History

INTRODUCTION

Studies in the social history of Bengal in the 19th century have a general tendency to emphasise cultural, educational and religious movements, and social legislation. An excessive emphasis on urban phenomena in such studies results in the almost total exclusion of rural society from the picture. Yet the 19th century society with all its new pressures and changes was essentially a rural society. The growing society of the metropolis and of the provincial towns was, in many respects, a projection of rural Bengal. Rural Bengal, too, was in its turn affected by new pressures, both from within and from without, though an exaggerated emphasis on this aspect may distort the entire social picture.

In the present work certain new pressures on rural environment in the 19th century have been isolated for the convenience of historical treatment. The agrarian society, studied mainly through its reflection in contemporary Bengali thinking, has been shown to be under the influence of an external pressure chiefly through the introduction of new legal concepts in society. The pressure resulted in two significant historical events—the indigo revolt and the agrarian rising in the North Bengal district of Pabna. Yet the force of tradition ultimately turned these legal concepts along channels in which they tended to stagnate and suffer from an overgrowth of weeds. To what extent the new concepts modified the traditional agrarian relationships is very difficult to define with some satisfaction. The field is full of uncertainties and a conclusion is difficult to reach.

The growth of English education, isolated from its implications for social attitudes, offers a simpler problem. The theme has become almost trite, so far as it concerns the metropolitan society. But the rural aspect of the problem has been so far inadequately treated. In this work English education has been treated as a new pressure on rural environment in

the 19th century. This new pressure with its definable effects on the traditional system of education does not create much complication for the student of social history. In the field of education, at least, the new force proved stronger than tradition.

The major part of this work, however, deals with the implications of urbanism and new education for the 19th century society of Bengal. The subject has been treated in three successive chapters. To the social historian these two new pressures of the 19th century offer the best opportunity for an analysis or description of the relationship of tradition and change. The second half of the 19th century* is a period eminently suitable for the development of this theme which also underlies the two other chapters of this book.

The purpose of this work is to establish a historical link between rural and urban Bengal and to define, wherever possible, the role of tradition in moulding and neutralising the forces of change. The problem of relationship between tradition and change assumes particular significance in the context of the growing metropolitan society of Bengal in the 19th century. An analysis of the problem also serves the basic purpose of the book in forging a link between rural and urban history.

The position of the metropolitan society in relation to the traditional rural set-up did not show any tendency towards deep contradiction. At one stage it was thought that the metropolis would have a dissolvent effect on caste—the fundamental social institution of the Hindus. The Young Bengal, representing the first generation of English-educated Bengalis, revolted against much that was traditional in Hindu society. But the revolt subsided. And though heterodoxy was not an insignificant force, it tended to remain isolated even in metropolitan society. If metropolitan society is considered to represent the force of dynamism and rural

* This does not mean a period of only fifty years. In social history some freedom of movement over a wider range than that set by a rigid chronology may be granted.

society that of tradition, no basic dualism was, however, visible along these lines.

A specially effective yardstick for assessing social mobility both in the metropolitan and in the rural region is the institution of caste. The response of this institution to the forces of change is of particular interest in social history.

In metropalitan society a development of real significance in the second half of the 19th century was, as a contemporary writer remarked, the weakening of caste restrictions about food, drink and sea-voyage. In a book published by the Standing Committee on the Sea-voyage Question (1894) the promoters refer to certain changes in social customs. For a long time past, they remarked, the practice of eating things condemned by Hindu rules or custom had been ignored but the gentlemen who had indulged in such practice had not been put out of caste. Their number was growing. They included not only schoolboys and wild young men, not only a few insignificant people who might be regarded as the waifs and strays of society but also, and mainly, elderly, respectable and influential gentlemen, some of whom had been recognized as social leaders. In 1894 a contemporary observer remarked that eating whatever one liked no longer subjected a Hindu to excommunication. He remembered the time when some secrecy was maintained about the matter. "But no secrecy was required now," he remarked.[1]

A wide consensus of opinion about the sea-voyage question was another feature of metropolitan society. The promoters of the sea-voyage movement did not seek to introduce any radical change but to find definite social confirmation for a growing practice. They pointed out that Hindu society had not been able to keep out of its pale all those who had made a voyage to Europe. Some of them secured recognition in society, at any rate, among friends and relatives. After their death, their sons and relatives had

[1] 'A history of Indian civilization during British Rule' (1894), by P. N. Bose, Vol. 2, p. 81.

no difficulty in being accepted as members of society though no "prayaschitta" had been performed by them. That sea-voyage involved loss of caste was not recognized even by the orthodox representatives of the metropolitan society.

These developments, however, did not affect the fundamental caste institution of marriage. Caste distinctions, as a 19th century thinker remarked, ultimately amounted to the non-recognition of inter-caste marriage. It prevented Hindu society from being thrown into the melting pot.[2] Feelings in favour of the Hindu institution of marriage found powerful expression during the agitation against the Age of Consent Bill of 1891. While child marriage had at least some opponents within the traditional society, the ban on inter-caste marriage was hardly ever challenged within it.

In rural Bengal restrictions regarding commensality and sea-voyage appear to have held ground. The attitude of fellow-villagers towards a person returning from England could not find adequate expression because such a person was unlikely to settle in his ancestral village. Surendranath Banerjea's family was, however, excommunicated in his native village after his return from England in 1871.[3] A tremendous controversy raged through the Dacca district when a case of alleged violation of caste rules regarding food was reported to the proper quarter. The controversy raged round the question of excommunicating a group of high-caste young men who had taken food from the hands of Muhamadans while travelling on a steamer.[4] Both these cases occurring in early seventies might have been somewhat extreme. Yet they serve to show that even in the seventies rural Bengal still attached great importance to these matters while in urban Bengal the attitude was generally one of connivance. Excommunication, the most effective sanction of traditional society against recalcitrants, tended to lose much of its rigour in metropolitan society.

---

[2] Bhoodev Mukhopadhyaya in "Samajik Prabandha" (Bengali) first published in 1892.

[3] Surendranath Banerjee: 'A Nation in Making' 1925 edition, pp. 25-26.

[4] 'Statistical Account of Bengal' (1875), Vol. 5, p. 197.

External influence on traditional caste structure in rural Bengal found expression along different lines. A significant feature of the rural history of the period is the attempt on the part of certain castes lower in hierarchy to rise above their traditional position. This was apparently a sign of mobility in rural society. But in a more fundamental sense it was a confirmation of the strength of the caste system.

The movements, first of all, accepted the principle of caste divisions. It also accepted the basic fact that Brahmins held the highest position in the hierarchy. The object of an individual caste or sub-caste was to find for itself a position next to the Brahmins and to relegate the other castes and even certain allied sub-castes to a lower position.[5] There is no evidence, however, that Hindu society recognized any real change in the traditional position of these castes or sub-castes. But the movement had a marked effect on certain social customs. Two of the most important standards of caste respectability, prohibition of widow remarriage and seclusion of women, were sought to be followed. The first criterion was particularly effective since there was a general tendency on the part of the aspiring castes to prohibit or restrict the practice.[6]

The report on the census of the district of Jessore in 1891 (p. 6) refers to a movement among the Chandals, traditionally one of the most degraded castes in Hindu society, to improve their social position. They claimed to be classed as Namasudras and said that they were descendants of a Brahmin

---

[5] 'Report on the census of Bengal,' 1901, p. 303, also 1911, pp. 485-490.

[6] "Our administration of India with special reference to the work and duties of a district officer in Bengal" (1886), by H. A. D. Phillips, p. 128.

"In Bengal," remarks Mr. Phillips, "whether a certain caste is or is not within the pale of the Hindu community, might be decided by the fact of prohibition or permission of widow remarriage. This test would be less satisfactory in Bihar or Orissa." In the opinion of Mr. Phillips the circle of widow remarriage had a tendency to become narrower. As any caste or portion of a caste became wealthy or influential, the seclusion of women, became stricter and the tendency to enforce perpetual widowhood stronger. The upper classes of cultivators were introducing the 'purdah' system more and more, and a low-caste man, on becoming well-to-do, would first of all build a house in such a manner that the privacy of women could be preserved. He woulld have a well dug in the yard so that the women should not have to go out for their diurnal ablutions.

mother and a Sudra father. Their contention was that, being descended on their mother's side from the highest caste, they should be classed among the Sudras. Accordingly many of them left off serving the other classes, and resorted to agriculture. Some disturbances occurred in Barkalia "thana" of the Narail subdivision, and in the Magura subdivision on account of Chandals refusing to serve Baidyas and Kaysthas, but ultimately the agitation subsided and the Chandals resumed their service to other classes as usual.

The Report also refers to the Jugis who claimed the use of the sacred thread on the ground that they were really Jogis or devotees. But the movement died out after a very short resistance. The claim of the Jugis to the use of the sacred thread met with total discomfiture. The failure of the movement was due to the fact that the higher castes refused to recognize them as higher than what they had hitherto been.

Many of these movements were of ephemeral importance. But the movement of the Namasudras was a more serious phenomenon. In 1873 the Namasudras of Faridpur organized a kind of strike which was an attempt on their part to rise in social scale. Their industry, prudence and general demand as agriculturists had placed them in better circumstances and some of them in a state of affluence and an effort was made to remove the stigma of reproach from their caste.[7]

In 1872, a rich Namasudra of a Bakharganj village gave a feast to which all castes were invited. All these, at the instigation of some Kaysthas, refused to accept the invitation, wording their refusal with taunts and reproach reflecting on the Namasudras. The words used were to this effect: "Eat with men who send their women to market and who are employed as 'mehters' in jail for removing filth and everything unclean? What next?"[8]

A meeting accordingly of all heads of villages was called

---

[7] Judicial Proceedings, Letter from District Superintendent of Police to the Magistrate of Fureedpore, the 18th March, 1873.

[8] *Ibid.*

and the letter was hotly discussed, leading eventually to the adoption of the following resolution among the Namasudras of that part of the country: (1) Women, must not in future visit "hats" and bazars"; (2) Service of no kind whatever be taken with other castes; and (3) food prepared by all other castes of Hindus except Brahmins not to be partaken of.

The village heads referred particularly to the grievances they suffered from the Hindus, more especially the Kaysthas, whose treatment of them was considered intolerable. They said that they professed themselves to be higher in caste than the Kaysthas since, on the death of a relative, they remained, like Brahmins, ceremonially unclean for only eleven days, whereas the Kaysthas were so for no less than thirty days. That difference, in the opinion of the village heads, clearly showed that the Namasudras were higher in caste. They also referred to the manufacture of "Choora" which was prepared by them alone and which people of all castes ate without any hesitation. It was absurd for Kaysthas, therefore, to despise them. They, however, admitted that they were justly taunted about their women who were allowed to buy and sell at the "hats" and "bazars". They decided to keep them in seclusion like other castes. They felt aggrieved that the government, on the representation of other Hindus, compelled members of their caste, while in jail, to work as sweepers and remove all unclean matter. This, they declared, was not only a hardship but very unjust as the Government professed to treat all castes on terms of equality. How did it happen that in this case the rule was disregarded? Why were Baidyas, Kaysthas, Sudras and Muhamadans exempted from doing dirty work in the jails?[9]

The refusal of the Namasudras to serve the higher castes could not, however, be an economically feasible proposition except for the small class of comfortably situated people. The community as a whole, however, inclined more definitely towards agriculture and the profession of boatmen.

---

[9] *Ibid.*

In this respect they strengthened the process of gravitation of the entire social body towards agriculture which was a peculiar phenomenon of Bengali society during the period. But, in spite of a marked shift from the degrading professions on the part of some castes, there was no appreciable change in their traditional position in the caste hierarchy which, in the final analysis, depended on the recognition of the higher castes.[10]

A study of mobility in the caste system in the 19th century is not likely to go much further than the limits within which the social forces described here generally operated. Heteordoxy in any fundamental sense remained an isolated force in society. The growing urban community had within it some ultra-heterodox elements rejecting caste tradition. Intellectually, a section of Brahmos proceeded quite a distance in rejecting the old social order. But the expanding community in the metropolis and other urban centres in Bengal was ultimately subject to the force of tradition whose strength may to a large extent be attributed to an overall rural pull on urban life.

The continuity of tradition in society was ensured by a 'communal organization of household.' The projection of an essentially rural home into urban life was thus described by a correspondent to the Sadler Commission in the second decade of the present century:

"The majority of students who flock to the schools and colleges belong to the orthodox middle classes. Most of these families still live in the villages. Since the introduction of the English education, however, there has been a regular influx of the 'Bhadrolok' classes towards the metropolis or to one or other of the 'mafassal' towns. They have been attracted thither by the new openings created by the British administrative machinery, so that people who were in the past content to live and die within the surroundings of their own village, have, in order to share the life of the

[10] U. N. Mukherjee. *A Dying Race* (1909), pp. 34, 37, 38.

metropolis, transformed themselves into an urban society which is composed of lawyers, doctors, engineers, schoolmasters, clerks and officials. Many of these, however, have not yet cut off all ties with their original village homes. The temporary house in town is called 'basha', the word 'bari' (home) being confined to the ancestral home in the village. It is in the latter (unless economic considerations stand in the way) that marriage, Sradhs (ceremonial offerings to the dead) and other family rites are preferably celebrated; it is there that the holidays are spent; it is there that family gods are enshrined and worshipped throughout the year. Economic considerations and the difficulties of communication are, however, effecting a change here also. There is an increasing tendency to cut off all ties with the village and to convert the town residence into a new home. Even in these cases, however, there persists a sentimental tie with the old village."[11]

A typical Hindu home, the correspondent remarked, was a composite structure. At the head there was often the old grand-father or grand-mother. Then there were the sons of the house, who were the earning members of the family. The grand-father continued to be the head of the family, although he might have ceased to earn. Neither marriage nor settling down in life raised the question of a son's leaving his parental home. Even when he had to spend the best part of the year away from the central home, he regarded himself as belonging to it and contributed to the joint income of the family.[12] The grandparents represented the orthodox tradition. Their indulgence to grand-children never went so far as to conflict violently with their most cherished ideas.[13]

The father of the family belonged in most cases to one of the learned professions or to the machinery of administration. He had had his education in English schools and colleges. Perhaps in his youth the intoxication of the new culture threw him off his balance and drew him into

---

[11] 'Report of the Calcutta University Commission' 1917-1919, pp. 124-127.
[12] *Ibid.*
[13] *Ibid.*

the ranks of social and religious revolutionaries. But since those days he had married and settled down in life. He had had children and his real experience of life. This experience and the suitable income he derived from his occupation had sobered him down. His actual experience of life had led him to doubt the dark and livid picture of caste and superstition, which was painted by the reforming imagination of his youth. If he had really come into close contact with western ideas, he led a two-fold life, his intellectual life that was fed by memories of Byron and Shelley, of Mill, Macaulay and Huxley; and his family life fed by domestic affections and protected from external shocks by an indulgent and amused compliance with the forms and rigours of old social order.[14]

In the sphere of traditional family system certain changes naturally followed as when in the interest of service or profession a larger and larger number of middle class people began to gravitate towards urban and semi-urban centres. The traditional tribal character of family life in villages probably tended to be modified in favour of smaller family units. The principle of consanguinity underlying the traditional family system might have been going though a steady process of weakening. In the absence of any serious shock to traditional values, the metropolitan society itself was subject to a strong rural pull. But by the end of the 19th century a substantial segment of metropolitan society, entirely divorced from rural roots, in a physical sense, had undoubtedly grown. And this physical dissociation from rural society could not be without some effect on traditional way of life.

[14] *Ibid.*

CHAPTER I

THE AGRARIAN SOCIETY: REFLECTION IN CONTEMPORARY THINKING

The beginning of serious thinking of a purely indigenous character about the agrarian society of Bengal dates back to the time when a tendency towards social consciousness was just manifesting itself. Rammohan Roy set a trend of thinking by 1830,[1] which broadly continued till the eighties of the century. The agrarian motif became a dominant element in Bengali thinking by the fifties, reached a remarkably emotional level during the indigo days, continued with varying degrees of intensity during a period of about fifteen years leading to the legislative enactment of 1885. From that date to the end of the century the period of 'ferment' in agrarian matters seems to be over, the political element becoming more dominant in Bengali thinking and the agrarian situation also showing a tendency to settle down.

The early stage of agrarian thinking in Bengal, roughly from 1830 to 1859 (when the first Tenancy Act was passed), was primarily concerned with the plight of the peasantry under a system which left peasant rights entirely undefined. To the newly awakened legal sense of the Bengali middle class intellectuals the legal uncertainty of the peasants' position was a matter of serious concern. Rammohan Roy, himself a zamindar, pleaded for legislative interference in the matter.[2] The *Bengal Spectator,*[3] a journal of Young Bengal, drew attention to the misery of the Bengal ryots under the arbitrary conduct of the Zamindars. The *Tattvabodhini Patrika,*[4] a Brahmo Journal, portrayed in vivid colours the

[1] *Exposition of the practical operation of the judicial and revenue systems of India* by Raja Rammohan Roy, London, 1832, p. 70.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Bengal Spectator*, November, 1842.
[4] April, 1850 and August, 1850.

CHAPTER—II

ENGLISH EDUCATION—A STUDY IN RURAL RESPONSE

The spread of English education beyond the limits of the metropolitan city of Bengal was a tardy process till the beginning of the fourth decade of the 19th century. The educational idealism of the new rich, the wealthy 'dewans' and banyans, combined with the economic wants of the social group just below them, created a congenial atmosphere for the consolidation of new education in the metropolitan city. A Bengali journal described the students of the Hindu College in 1830 as 'sons of dewans, brothers of clerks, nephews of accountants (Khajanchis) or grandsons of 'sarkars' dealing with the disposal, auction and sale of goods'.[1] The aspirations of the young student community were, however, much less prosaic than their social origin and were often quite embarrassing for their relatives.[2] The new education received its chief impulse from a sense of inadequacy of a mere working knowledge of the English language which might have been economically quite sufficient.

The absence of this social nucleus accounts for the slow growth of English education beyond metropolitan limits. Interest in English of an elementary and sporadic character was confined to a few banyan-zamindar houses and a few isolated schools set up by individual Europeans and missionaries.[3] But Persian was the language of the court till 1837. "Families of established tradition in the interior found it profitable to teach their children Persian rather than

---

[1] *Samachar-darpan* (Bengali), 27th March, 1830: excerpt in *Sambadpatrey Sekaler Katha*: edited by Brajendranath Banerjee: v.1: 1818-1830.

[2] The 'Young Bengal' phase is noted for its unorthodoxy and literary enthusiasm. See volume 2 (1830-1840) of *Sambadpatrey Sekaler Katha*.

[3] *Samachardarpan* 17th July, 1819, excerpt in *Sambadpatrey Sekaler Katha*; also 'Sekaler janai' (Bengali); p. 71.

CHAPTER III

THE SUBURBAN VILLAGE—A STUDY IN SOCIAL HISTORY.

The growth of the metropolitan city of Bengal with its industrial adjuncts tended to infuse a new element of urbanism into Bengali society in the second half of the 19th century. Urbanism itself was not a new phenomenon. Topographically, the metropolitan city was situated in a densely populated region with urban centres having a long background. The difference between eighteenth century and nineteenth century urbanism perhaps lay in the quality of projection and expansion that the new phenomenon possessed. In the nineteenth century too the metropolitan city was distinguished from other urban centres in Bengal in its capacity for continuous growth and ramification. The region of Bengal which lay within a radius of approximately eighty miles of this urban complex showed certain features which may be regarded as suburban and sub-metropolitan. The region came under direct metropolitan influence.

The metropolitan pull, if it may be so called, could not, however, develop its full logical possibilities. None of the features of Western urbanism associated with rural exodus, the desertion of villages or the growth of an urban proletariat are real in the context of 19th century Bengali society. A preoccupation with the idea of rural decadence around the urban complex can be misleading and can distort the social picture.

The capacity that the metropolitan region possessed as a centre of employment might have a greater impact on sub-urban rural society but for the peculiar nature of the pattern of migration. The diffusion of the metropolitan pull over a wide region tended to weaken its intensity in the sub-

CHAPTER IV

'RURAL TOWNS' IN EASTERN BENGAL—A STUDY IN RURAL-URBAN RECIPROCITY.

The force of urbanism in Bengal outside the limits of metropolitan and sub-metropolitan region mainly worked along two channels—administration and trade. The impact of urbanism on interior Bengal generally tended to create 'rural towns' which were mainly centres of country trade and regional administration. In the census report of 1911 the difficulty in distinguishing between an overgrown village and a small town is pointed out. "The main point of difference," it is remarked in the report, "lies in the occupations of the people, for a town is a centre of trade or at least has shops catering for the wants of the inhabitants and of the surrounding villages or it is a place where the majority of the residents are engaged in non-agricultural pursuits. In the villages, however, the majority are devoted to agriculture ..... As a rule, the village is purely residential and shops are few and far between ...."[1] It is not, however, clear why the census report does not mention the administrative centres —the district or sub-divisional towns—which, socially speaking, had certain qualities lacking in the basically market towns.

From the point of view of social history, the district or sub-divisional towns had certain distinctive qualities. The physical character of a normal specimen of this class of towns in the opening decade of this century is described in the memoirs of his childhood years by an autobiographer. "Kishorganj," he writes, "was only a normal specimen of its class—one among a score of collections of tin-and-mat huts or sheds, comprising courts, offices, schools, shops and residen-

[1] *Report on the census of Bengal*, 1911, p. 43.

CHAPTER V

THE BENGAL VICTORIANS—A COMMUNITY BETWEEN CHANGE AND TRADITION

The relation between tradition and change acquires a special significance in the context of that segment of metropolitan community which came under the direct pressure of English education. For reasons directly attributable to the weakness of such forces as urbanism or industrialism in a basically traditional society education had a social significance unmatched by any other new pressure on society. Thus the 'impact' of the West, if 'impact' it may be called, is mainly a study in the implications of Western education for society. In the metropolitan society of Bengal, and also partly in the semi-urban centres in the interior, the new force found a certain urban framework for its development. Western education was to that extent reinforced by the new pressure of urbanism, whose primary function in society was to attract people to new professions and services and thus to form a middle class society.

Such a society may be said to have taken shape and developed homogeneity by the middle of the 19th century. For about two generations after that the community of English-educated Bengalis was held together by certain dominant ideas and attitudes, social, political and economic. Interest in stability was a most prominent element in these attitudes. Such a society may be said to approximate in certain important matters to the concept of Victorianism, so far as it is understood to signify the prominence of the middle class with its newly acquired sense of solidarity and its innate desire to reconcile new ideas with the basic needs of stability. The Victorian society in Bengal was basically a middle class society with an attachment to tradition born of a compromise with new developments. That compromise was

APPENDIX A*

MR. DEROZIO'S SECOND LETTER TO DR. WILSON: TO H. H. WILSON ESQ.

MY DEAR SIR,

Your letter which I received last evening should have been answered earlier, but for the interference of other matters which required my attention, I beg your acceptance of this apology for the delay, and thank you for the interest which your most excellent communication proves that you continue to take in me. I am sorry, however, that the question you have put to me will impose upon you the disagreeable necessity of reading this long justification of my conduct and opinions. But I must congratulate myself that this opportunity is afforded me of addressing so influential and distinguished an individual as yourself upon matters which if true might seriously affect my character. My friends need not however be under any apprehension for me; for myself the consciousness of right is my safeguard and my consolation.

(1) I have never denied the existence of a god in hearing of any human being. If it be wrong to speak at all upon such a subject I am guilty; for I am neither afraid nor ashamed to confess having stated the doubts of philosophers upon this head, because I have also stated the solution of those doubts. Is it forbidden anywhere to argue upon such a question? If so it must be equally wrong to adduce an argument upon either side, or is it consistent with an enlightened notion of truth to wed ourselves to only one view of so important a subject, resolving to close our eyes and ears against all impressions that oppose themselves to it?

How is any opinion to be strengthened but by completely

APPENDIX B*

List of Members

A

Abdul Luteef, Esq., Deputy Magistrate, 24 Pergunnahas.
Abdul Juhlar, Assistant Urdu Translator, Sudder Court.
Anunduram Dhekial Phookun, Babu, Sub-Assistant Commissioner.

B

Baneemadhub Bose, Babu.
Bama Churun Chowdree, Babu.
Bemola Churn Biswas, Babu, Banian.
Beanland, J. G., Esq., Teacher, Krishnagur College.
Beadon, Cecil, Esq., C.S., Secretary to Government of Bengal.
Bhubanee Prosad Dutt, Babu, Zemindar.
Bhugobutty Churun Dutt, Teacher, Barrackpore School.
Bhoodheb Chunder Mookerjea, Head Master, Howrah School.
Bhugoban Chunder Bose, Babu.
Bhoobun Mohun Mitter, Babu, Commissioner for the Improvement of Calcutta.
Bejoy Chunder Bose, Babu, Assistant of Messrs. Malcolm and Co.
Bissonath Singh, Babu, Teacher, Sanscrit College.
Bindabun Bose, Babu, Writer, Treasury.
Bostum Churun Addy, Babu, Teacher, General Assembly's School.
Boaz., The Revd. T., L.L.D., Pastor of the Union Chapel.
Bonomally Mitter, Babu, Teacher, Hooghly College.
Brojosoonder Mitter, Babu, Dacca.
Budun Chunder Chowdree, Babu, Sub-Assistant Surgeon, Hooghly.

* Report of the Bethune Society from December, 1851 to December, 1852.

APPENDIX C

Roy Bankim Chunder Chatterji, Bahadur, C.I.E., has in the following letter expressed his views regarding the movement.*

To

Maharaj-Kumar
Binoy Krishna Deb Bahadur.

Sir,

The questions which you wish me to answer are such as are best answered by professors of the Dharma Sastras. I do not profess the Dharma Sastras, nor am I prepared to undertake the office of expounding them. But I have no objections to offer a few observations regarding the present agitation about sea-voyages by Hindus.

In the first place, I do not believe that it is either possible or desirable to promote social reforms by invoking the authority of the Sastras. I had to object on the same ground to the late lamented Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar's proposals to suppress polygamy with the aid of the Sastras; and I have seen no ground to change my opinion. This opinion I hold on two grounds. The first is, that Bengali society is governed not by the Sastras but by custom. It is true, that very often custom follows the Sastras; but as often again custom conflicts with the Sastras. When there is such a conflict custom carries the day.

The second reason for my opinion is that if society were everywhere governed by the Sastras, it is doubtful whether the result will be social welfare. You seek to collect the behests of the Sastras, regarding sea-voyages, and to induce society to follow them;—are you prepared to induce society to be guided by the Sastras on all other matters as

* Hindu sea-voyage question (1894)—a tract.

APPENDIX D

The following list is taken from a tract on education written by Krishna Chandra Roy and published in 1882. The tract was reprinted from the *Hindoo Patriot* of 1882. The list is remarkably accurate so far as the occupations of graduates are concerned. I have checked the accuracy of occupations by various means, one of them being the evidence of my ninety-year-old maternal grandfather who could recognize many of the names. Some discrepancies of a minor nature have remained. There are some obvious printing errors in the original tract but they have been corrected as far as possible in the present list.

The jurisdiction of Calcutta University extended at that time over what was called the Lower Provinces of Bengal (Bengal proper, Bihar, Orissa), Assam, North Western Provinces (U.P.), Punjab and Ceylon. In this list 'Bengal' stands for Lower Provinces. But the surnames as also places of occupation indicate that the overwhelming majority were from Bengal proper, which is also a definite historical fact. The list does not include doctors without arts degree, and licentiates in law, who were also a substantial element in the educated society of the time.

Abbreviations in the list:

L. P.—Lower Provinces.
H. C—High Court.
S.C.C.—Small Causes Court.

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Bengali sources:
   A. Bengali newspapers and journals:
      (a) 'Sadharani' (weekly newspaper) 1873-1883
      (b) 'Somprokash' (weekly newspaper), available issues
      (c) 'Amritabazar Patrika', bilingual issues (1872-1875)
      (d) 'Sambadpatrey sekaler katha' (selections from old Bengali newspapers) 1818-1840 ; 2 volumes, edited by Brajendra Nath Bandopadhyaya
      (e) 'Sambadpatrey Banglar Samajchitra' (selections from Bengali newspapers, 1840-1905) ; 3 volumes edited by Benoy Ghosh
      (f) 'Tattvabodhini Patrika', available issues
      (g) 'Sambadprobhakar', available issues
   B. Bengali literary works and memoirs:
      (a) 'Krishnakumar Mitrer Atmacharit' (Autobiography of Krishnakumar Mitra, published in 1946)
      (b) 'Sekaler chitra' (Portrait of the past) by Kalikrishna Ghosh, published in 1918
      (c) 'Atmacharit' by Nabin Chandra Sen ; new edition in three volumes published by Bangiya Sahitya Parisad
      (d) 'Debataganer Martey Agaman' by Durgacharan Roy ; 6th edition, 1957 ; first published in 1889
      (e) 'Dewan Kartick Chandra Rayer Atmajibancharit' (Autobiography of Dewan Kartick Chandra Roy) ; new edition
      (f) 'Pallichitra' (sketches of a village) by Dinendra Kumar Roy ; first published in 1904
      (The writers of the foregoing works record their own experience of 19th century events. Some of these books have only recently been published.)
      (g) 'Alaler Gharer Dulal' by Pyrichand Mitra ; first published in 1855 ; it is a novel dealing with 19th century society
      (h) 'Vikrampur' by Himangsu Chattopadhyaya ; a history of the region of Vikrampur
      (i) 'Samajik Prabandha' by Bhoodev Mukhopadhyaya ; first published in 1892
      (j) 'Sekaler Janai' by Renupada Mukhopadhyaya ; published in 1954 ; it records the history and tradition of the village of Janai in Hooghly
      (k) 'Hooghly Jelar Itihash' by Sudhir Kumar Mitra ; a history of the district of Hooghly, published in 1963
      (l) 'Bidyasagar O Bangalisamaj', Benoy Ghosh
      (m) Sibnath Sastri, *Ramtanu Lahiri O Tatkalin Bangasamaj*
      (n) Bankimchandra Chattopadhyaya, *Bibidha Prabandha.*

2. English non-official sources:
   A. English newspapers and journals:
      (a) *Hindoo Patriot,* 1854-1900

(b) *Amritabazar Patrika,* 1872-1900
(c) *Bengali* (available issues)
(d) Relevant issues of the *Friend of India, Mussalman,* etc.
(e) *Calcutta Review* (relevant articles)
(f) *The Reformer* (available issues)

B. Books and pamphlets etc.
(a) Parbati Charan Roy: *Rent question in Bengal* (1883)
(b) B. C. Pal: *Memories of my life and times* (1932); first volume deals with 19th century society and politics
(c) P. N. Bose: *A history of Hindu civilization during British rule,* 3 volumes (1893-'94) contains observaitons on contemporary society
(d) Carstairs: *Human nature in rural Bengal,* 1894
(e) Carstairs: *The little world of an Indian district officer,* 1912
(f) Buckland: *Bengal under lieutenant-governors,* vol. I (1901)
(g) Colet, S. D.: *Rammohun Roy* (latest edition)
(h) Pyarjchand Mitra: *Derozio* (1877)
(i) *Studies in Bengal Renaissance,* edited by A. C. Gupta
(j) Amit Sen: *Notes on Bengal Renaissance*
(k) N. Bose: *Indian awakening in Bengal*
(l) *Bethune Society Proceedings*
(m) *Selections from the writings of Grish Ghosh* edited by M. N. Ghosh
(n) N. C. Sengupta (ed.): *Harrish Mukherjee's writings*
(o) D. Sanyal: *Justice Dwarakanath Mitter*
(p) Sibnath Sastri: *History of the Brahmo Samaj* (vols. I & II)
(q) Heimsath: *Indian nationalism and Hindu social reform*
(r) Krishnachandra Roy: *High education in Bengal* (1882)
(s) J. C. Ghosh: *Brahminism and Sudra*

3. Official records and publications:
A. (a) Revenue proceedings, 1870-1885, Government of Bengal
(b) Judicial proceedings, 1870-1885, Government of Bengal
(c) Educational Proceedings, 1860-1900, Government of Bengal

B. Government publications, reports, etc.:
(a) Reports on the Census of Bengal, 1872, 1881, 1891, 1901, 1911 and district census reports
(b) Divisional Commissioners' Reports, 1873-1900
(c) Indigo Commission's Report
(d) Bengal district gazetteers, old series, ranging generally from 1908 to 1920
(e) *Statistical Account of Bengal* (1875-1876), 13 volumes
(f) Education Commission: *Report by the Bengal Provincial Committee* (1884)
(g) Report of the Bengal District Administration Committee (1913-1914)
(h) Reports on Native papers

INDEX OF PLACE AND PERSONAL NAMES

(Appendices B and D are excluded from index)

ERRATA

p. 13, line 1, 'Indian' for 'indigenous'.
p. 77, footnote, 'polygamy' for 'hypergamy'.
p. 86, line 8 from below, 'were' for 'was'.
p. 87, line 2, 'Bijoy Krishna' for 'Vijay Krishna'.
p. 97, line 4, 'Banilal' for 'Benilal'.
p. 103, line 11, 'womanhood' for 'womenhood'.
p. 111, line 10 from below, 'womanhood' for 'womenhood'.
p. 114, line 7 from below, 'Grish' for 'Girish'.
p. 126, line 12, 'appear' for 'appears'.
p. 129, line 10 from below, 'is' for 'was'.
p. 134, line 15, 'evil' for 'end'.