

Chapter: Five

THE INTELLIGENTSIA OF MURSHIDABAD

The intellectual ferment in Murshidabad was much striking during the second half of the nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth century. The preceding period however saw the intellectual activities chiefly in two ways, the service of the many luminaries in the court of the Bengal Nawab Murshidabad who were coming to this region with service for few years and left legacies; and the activities of the Vaishnava saints, poets and padavali writers. The period subsequent to the period of our discussion is too current to discuss in an objective manner. The period under review however saw the arrival of important personalities serving in the court of the Murshidabad Nawabs, who were by no means powerful under the supremacy of the colonial power at that time, but probably by no means less hesitant to get the service of the qualified in its unbroken line. The establishment of Berhampore College in 1853 heralded a new era in this unbroken chain of intellectual activities. A number of persons who were much instrumental in making possible the Bengal renaissance came to Krishnanath College as teachers or principals of this College and this College also in turn produced many great men. About some of them we have already discussed in the previous chapter. These persons were suitably helped and accompanied by the intelligentsia who were born and brought up in Murshidabad. This accelerated the growth of activities for both. And the social milieu thus created has already been discussed in the chapter on renaissance social milieu of this thesis. A conglomeration of chiefly three groups of intelligentsia – those who were associated with the Nawab's court, those who came from outside the district and were associated with Krishnanath College and those who were born and brought up in Murshidabad situated the district in a broader prominent context, in the contemporary intellectual world.

True it is that those who had originally been hailed from Murshidabad some of them later took to their activities in Calcutta, or rather intellectual environment of Calcutta created scope for their intellectual growth; but it is true at the same time that their intellectual minds were created in Murshidabad and they did not dissociate themselves from the galaxy of the intellectuals active in Murshidabad.

Evidently the intellectual fervour in the district was chiefly helped by the much-needed finance from the Murshidabad Nawab, or from government sources, through Krishnanath College or by the local zamindars that had entrepreneurial fervour and zeal in favour of intellectual activities, in many cases on their own too. But the members of intelligentsia had come from different cross-sections of the society. Though it was not always exceptional that some of them depended on their own resources. The Vaishnava lyrical fervour continued throughout the period of our study, although not with the same zeal. Scholarly writing, gathering, scientific activities etc. also developed but from the last quarter of the nineteenth century and through out the first half of the twentieth century; added features with these were the outburst in artistic activities and revolutionary activities against the colonial masters, whereas the nationalist leaders of the district had mostly moderate tone in the preceding period.

The distinctive feature of some of the zamindars of Murshidabad was to patronize the scholars, and the tradition began much earlier. The humanistic spirit that was too much ingrained in them led them to promote such projects as were needed for public good. They took up different utilitarian activities on their own or they patronized the members of intelligentsia to take up such works. Rani Bhawani of Natore had to take the responsibilities of her deceased husband's estates as early as 1748. She was a patron of Sanskrit learning and Murshidabad profited from her generosity. She used to donate

Rs.1000 per month for Sanskrit education, to the Chatuspathis, gave scholarships to the pundits of the 'Tols'. The students of the *tols* were given 500gm of rice everyday. She appointed some physicians who went to the houses to give a healing touch to the suffering people, without fees, She allocated some money for the maintenance of the widows. She also gave loans to the weavers. Here she made no distinction between different castes, creeds or groups. Apart from this the construction of Charabangla temple at Baranagar under her patronage marked the quintessence of Bengali art and architecture. She established Durgabari and Durgakunda in Kasi. She constructed a road linking Howrah and Kasi, at present that is a part of the Bombay Road. A portion of her zamindary was taken over by Hastings and given to Kantababoo. Her example influenced other zamindars. Raja Harinath of Kasimbazar also patronized Sanskrit learning.

The patronage of art, architecture and scholarly activities by some of the zamindars had been a regular phenomenon through out nineteenth and twentieth century. The contribution of the family of Kasimbazar is remarkable in this tradition. In the first half of the twentieth century Raja Harinath Roy of this family, an heir of Kanta Babu who was the Diwan of Warren Hastings, responded to the changes that were taking place in the society with the introduction of the British rule. Social conditions in Calcutta were changing very fast. The establishment of Hindu College in 1817 created a commotion in the placid social life and many young men flocked to learn English. Harinath had patronized the establishment of the College with a donation of Rs. 20000. The fact was reported in the 'Jnanannwesan' and later repeated in the 'Samachar Darpan'. Harinah was a patron of the folk culture that found expression in 'Kabigan'. The 'Kabigan' this time was arranged in Kasimbazar on the occasion of the Saraswati Puja. 'Kabigan' was a form of instantly made verses requiring the two parties to outwit each other by asking questions and answering them, all time in rhymed poetry. This wonderful intellectual contest was

almost defunct for lack of patronage. Harinath not only gave unheard of fees to the 'kabiials' but paid their cost of transport and covered them with valuable gifts. Harinath was a good friend of Dwarkanath Tagore, and he had been helping Dwarkanath in his commercial enterprises. He was well versed in Persian and Sanskrit and therefore eager to extend the facilities to the people. As early as 1822 he arranged to bring from Benares Krishnanath Nyayapanchanan to Kasimbazar, who established several 'Chatuspathis'. Harinath then took measures to establish an English school in Murshidabad. He approached Mr. Stuart to take charge of the school. Harinath arranged to build a school house on his land in Saidabad. But unfortunately he did not live to see the success of his project. The Saidabad English School which was the first school of its kind in Murshidabad opened its doors on the 1st November, 1837. In the absence of his father, the fifteen years old Krishnanath had the privilege of inaugurating the school which started to function immediately. Patronizing education, as started by Harinath, became the most important occupation of the family. Harinath belonged to a small elite group of zamindars who did not spend their time in frivolities. The trend that was set by him became the an important source of motivation of his descendants.

A notable personality of this family was Raja Krishnanath. He believed that enthusiastic acceptance of Western learning and sciences was the only way of liberation for his countrymen. William Stephen Lambrick, and Pandit Shivaprasad, a scholar of Hindu College, were his tutors. The local Maulavi taught Krishnanath Persian. These teachers were responsible for infusing into his mind the spirit of liberalism. Raja Digambar Mitra, who was a student of Hare School and later on of Hindu College and strongly influenced by Derozio, was a companion of Krishnanath. Digambar taught for some time in the Nizamat School in Murshidabad but he soon left his job to

become the head clerk to the Collector of Rajshahi. Then he served as a clerk in the Native Infantry Lines in Berhampore Cantonment. He was a friend and companion of Krishnanath. In 1840 he was appointed as the Diwan of Krishnanath, Shivaprasad was also a Derozian. Krishnanath hit the headlines of the newspapers by opening the doors of the first English school in Saidabad on 1st November, 1837. It may be said that, he was the first among the enlightened who thought of establishing a university in Berhampore, the district head quarter of Murshidabad much before the university of Calcutta was established. In 1841, at the age of 19, when he received the zamindari, he entertained the grand idea of founding a college with the sale proceeds of his entire property, fixed and movable, in case he died without a successor. With the money thus obtained, company papers would be purchased and held in the name of the Accountant General at Calcutta. He wanted the Governor General and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, would be the patron of the college and the appointing authority of the professors. On October 30, 1844 the day before his death, he further developed his idea of an academy for higher education by changing the name of college into university. It is noteworthy that Raja Krishnanath recommended common Bengali as a subject to be taught along with English, Latin, and Sanskrit etc. Near the university he wanted to establish a hospital and wanted that an experienced physician and proper natives appointed to the hospital to manage and carry on the business thereof. He added, " And the due examination education and proper management of the children attached thereto is left to the care of Govt. who will allot to such poor children as are unable to provide for their own maintenance while carrying on their studies what they consider suitable to their respective circumstances..."¹ However, his will was declared invalid by the Supreme Court, but as a partial fulfillment of his dream Berhampore college was established in 1853, in 1902 it was renamed Krishnanath College. In the later half of the nineteenth century when the education commission resolved to close down some government

run educational institutions unless they are taken over by any non-government agency Maharani Swarnamoyee and Maharaja Manindra Chandra Nandy helped Krishnanath College to run by their generous donations.

The progressive attitude of Raja Krishnanath was reflected in his publishing of the Bengali newspaper 'Murshidabad Sambadpatri'. It was the first Bengali newspaper, published from the moffusil Bengal that appeared on 10th May 1840, Gurudayal Chaudhuri was its editor. Krishnanath imported the machineries needed for the printing of the paper from London and Calcutta. About this paper The 'Calcutta Monthly Journal' remarked "its opinions are liberal and clothed in pure Bengally" But the publication of the paper was to be stopped. Collector Mr. Taylor and Magistrate Mr. Harry Elliot filed a suit against the management of the paper for publishing news criticizing the activities of the Govt. employees. The Govt. ordered to stop the publication of the paper citing different sections of vernacular Press Act. Krishnanath started to publish another newspaper in English viz. 'Murshidabad News'. These activities of Raja Krishnanath were the clear manifestation of his urge for freedom of press. He did whatever he could do within his limitations to avert the suppressive methods of the British government. He became a member of the Landholders' Society, founded by Dwarka Nath Tagore which was the precursor of the Indian National Congress. He founded five prizes of Rs. 1000 each to be awarded to the first five students of the Calcutta Medical College. When David Hare died in June, 1841, Krishnanath was the convenor of the memorial meeting; he also took an active part and contributed the largest subscription- Rs. 3000 towards the erection of a statue in his honour.² Krishnanath's love for education, his patronizing of culture, which was manifested in the very high payments he made to Kabials, musicians, Tyfawalis and various other people, his interest in horticulture, physics, astronomy and mining made him distinct from others. Although the details are not known but he laid out a ship

building yard by the Ganges in the old garden of Gurgin Khan in Saidabad and ordered a steam engine through Hamilton and Co. Although Krishnanath was also known for his profligacy but it can be said that he envisaged the largeness of the world of knowledge.

Equally important was Krishnanath's wife Maharani Swarnamayi's zeal for the spread of education. She had knowledge of four languages Bengali, English, Persian and Sanskrit. Kishorichand Mitra praised the charity of Maharani and told that it was 'rising above distinctions of creed and colour and benefiting all nationals alike'. She was married to Krishnanath at the age of eleven, and being widowed at the age of sixteen on the untimely death of her husband. However she showed organizing capability and increased the income of the Estate and took up the cause of spread of education among her countrymen. In the first year of her administration she gave shelter to four Brahmo boys, who were dislodged from their homes for giving up their ancestral religion. She also created the Cossimbazar Raj Library in 1887 and she had the habit of reading the books of current publication. She kept herself abreast of time by reading newspapers like- 'Samachar Chandrika', 'Samachar Darpan', 'Rasaraj', 'Pratikal', 'Somprakash', 'Education Gazette', 'Sambad Bhaskar', 'Sambad Prabhakar', 'Bamabodhini Patrika' etc. She was maintaining a good library in her house. The entire Bengali works of Raja Rammohan Roy has also been found in her collection. She was conscious about her surroundings. In 1860, Lord Macaulay's amendments in Penal Code brought the Europeans under the jurisdiction of the local courts. Almost immediately Swarnamoyi issued a general order to all her law agents that if any indigo planter molested any of her subjects, particularly women, the law agent was to file a suit against the oppressor immediately and then send the full report of the case to her. She started building schools for boys and girls separately. The best feature of these schools was that they offered education for free. The

Christian missionaries received her unstinted supported for establishing institutions for rehabilitating the women, particularly widows and destitute girls. The missionary educational schools received regular grants from the Maharani. She gave about 30 bighas of land to Krishnagar College under a deed of conveyance in 1851. And in 1853 she outdistanced all other donors by herself contributing Rs. 4000 for the establishment of Berhampore College. In 1871 it was for the financial crunch that at the instance of W.S. Atkinson, the then Director of Public Instruction, the Governor of Bengal decided to reduce the Berhampore College to the classes necessary for the first Arts Examination, instead of reducing the number of colleges. Rani Swarnamayi alongwith Rai Dhanpat Singh Bahadur and other inhabitants of Murshidabad district sent a memorial to the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal to reconsider their decision. They argued that it was difficult for the students to reach Calcutta or Hoogly by land or water and that Rajshahi, Malda and other adjoining districts, which had no college of their own, depended on Berhampore College alone for their education. They suggested the substitution of two native lecturers paid on a comparatively cheaper scale, 'for two of the present highly paid European Professors'. The memorial, however, was rejected. By this time, Rani Swarnamayi gave Rs. 3000/- for the creation of a fund to meet the expenditure of the college hostel. Berhampore College again fell victim of the retrograde policy of the government during 1872-87. C.W. Tawney the officiating Director of Public Instruction in 1885, expressed his opinion in favour of "the total abolition of the Berhampore College, as it is very expensive and utterly useless as the Krishnagar & Rajshahi colleges are in existence". At this juncture Maharani Swarnamayi in a letter dated the 3rd November, 1886 offered to contribute Rs. 1000/- per month for five years towards the maintenance of the college. In 1887, by a resolution the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal transferred the management of Berhampore College and School to the Board of Trustees as proposed by Maharani Swarnamayi. One of the first

important acts of the board was the appointment of Brajendra Nath Seal as the Principal of the college. With him came Satish Chandra Mukherjee as the headmaster and professor of English, who later on founded the Dawn Society and became a stalwart of Swadeshi movement. Satish Chandra Mukherjee worked as the headmaster of the Collegiate School from 1892-94. The board of Trustee took another step; it reduced the college fee from Rs. 5/- to Rs. 3/- and the number of students swelled. Again out of the endowment of Rs. 20,000/- created by Maharani Swarnamayi for the promotion of Technical Education in the district of Murshidabad Rs. 5000/- was earmarked for maintaining a class for technical education at the Berhampore Collegiate School and at some of the elementary schools maintained by the Municipality. Khagra London Missionary School, Berhampore Girls' School, Saidabad Middle Vernacular School, Medinipore High School, Calcutta Bethune School, Rajshahi Madrasa, Cuttack College, Aligarh Colloege, Calcutta Hindu Hostel, Calcutta Medical Institution, Sanskrit etc. institutions received generous donations from Rani Swarnamayi. She also donated Rs. 2000/-, for the establishment of the Indian Institute at Oxford. She donated land for Botanical Garden and Bengal Engineering College at Shibpur. For the establishment of the Indian Science Association she gave Dr. Mahendralal Sircar Rs. 8000.³ Maharani's interest in contemporary cultural development was all-round. Rasaraj Amritlal Bose, a poular playwright of the time, often went to Cossimbazar to stage plays in the palace for the Maharani. This patronizing of the theatre helped the company to sustain through difficult times.⁴ Maharani Swarnomayi, contributed the sum of one lakh and fifty thousand rupees for the hostel for female medical students at Calcutta.⁵ She was fully behind the movement in requesting Lady Dufferin to establish a hospital for ladies only. Unfortunately Swarnamayi did not live to see the opening of the Lady Dufferin Victoria Hospital for women in 1898. A ward bears her name and remembers the service rendered by her in its establishment. Another priority of Swarnamayi was water. She dug

innumerable tanks in the various parts of her zamindari, repaired old tanks and the banks of the river. It was during the famine of 1878 that Swarnamayi fed 5000 persons per day throughout the larger period of the famine.

Probably the most fascinating side of Swarnamayi's life was her contact with Iswarchandra Vidyasagar. She established friendship with Vidyasagar quite early in her life when she got her husband's Will translated by Vidyasagar. She wanted to patronize his efforts for the widow remarriage movement but was desisted by Vidyasagar. She however fully supported him when Vidyasagar wanted to promulgate a legislation against polygamy. She helped Vidyasagar financially to repay loans. She gave as loan to Vidyasagar Rs. 10000 for the establishment of Sanskrit Press. It can not be ascertained whether he was able to repay because the Maharani considered the loans to be donations to help out the great man in various projects of his social reform. She helped Vidyasagar with large sums of money when he established the Hindu Family Annuity Trust in 1872 to help out the young widows who were destitute. Vidyasagar often wrote to Maharani suggesting donations to well-known Pundits and Sanskrit scholars whose situation had become pathetic with old age. In one such occasion Vidyasagar wrote about the marriage of Sharmistha, the daughter of poet Michael Madhusudan Dutt, cautioning her of not sending money, which might be refused by proud Michael. Swarnamoyi sent Michael the wedding gown for his daughter and every bid of thing that was required for the marriage. It was during Swarnamayi's lifetime that Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay had been serving at Berhampore as the Deputy Magistrate. And it was at his instance that Swarnamayi donated a fair amount to Surendranath Banerji and Dwarkanath Ganguli for the Indian Association Hall and also the entire expenses of Lalmohan Ghosh, Barrister-at-Law for going to England and staying there to discuss about the political

situation of the country. It is a remarkable feature of the nineteenth century Bengal that Swarnamayi and Vidyasagar though they had never met each other carried on their partnership in philanthropy with the Diwan Rajiblochan acting as the middle man.

The contribution of Maharaja Manindra Chandra Nandy of Kasimbazar Raj family, a successor of Rani Swarnamayi being her nephew, was significant enough to draw the attention of the contemporary intelligentsia. Manindra Chandra by dint of her generosity and activities proved that he did not escape the Enlightenment. Manindra Chandra was the member of Bengal Legislative Council, Land Holders Association, Indian Legislative Council and Indian Industrial Association. His patriotic fervour was exposed when he helped financially The Indian Industrial and Agricultural Exhibition of the Indian National Congress and Swadeshi and handicraft industries Swadeshi era. On August 7, 1905 the Swadeshi movement was born in the historic meeting held at the Calcutta Town Hall under the Presidentship of Maharaja Manindra Chandra Nandi of Kasimbazar. It was resolved in this meeting that the boycott and Swadeshi movement would continue till the annulment of the Bengal partition. He was also a member of Bengal National Chamber of Commerce, Calcutta Historical Society, Calcutta Evening Club, established by the famous poet and playwright Dwijendralal Roy. Under his patronage the first meeting of 'Bangiya Sahitya Sammilan' was held at Cossimbazar Rajbati, Rabindranath Tagore presided over the meeting, in the first week of November, 1907. He donated land and money for the construction of a building for Bangiya Sahitya Parishad. His constructive patriotism was manifested through his endeavour in the spread of education. Manindra Chandra established three levels of schools in his Zamindari in Bengal, the primary, the Middle English and the High English. He patronized all the educational institutions established by Maharani Swarnamayi and

fully supported them. He also supported tols of pundits in villages, which imperted the traditional education. He patronized educational institutions like Bose Institute, Benaras Hindu University, Berhampore Commercial College, Calcutta University, Srish Chandra Institution, Manindra Chandra Vidyapith, Medical Colleges at Calcutta etc. and Swadesi industries like Bengal Potteries Works. He also established school of mines in Ethora, Burdwan, the Music College and India's first school of Drama in Kasimbazar. He took full responsibility of Krishnanath College at a time when the government stopped aiding it financially and developed the College to become one of the best Colleges in Bengal. The many great men who came to Murshidabad at that time as teachers or Principals of the College had been supported by Manindra Chandra. Many of the contemporary scholars and writers like Chandra Sekhar Mukherjee, Yajneswar Bandopadhyay, Hem Chandra Bandopadhyay, Dinesh Chandra Sen, Nikhil Nath Roy and the like had been patronized by Manindra Chandra.⁶ He entrusted Acharya Yajeshwar Bandopadhyay for writing a comprehense History of the World, and for that he spent much money for collecting materials. Manindra Chandra also had interest in reviving the classicism. For that he started collecting ancient scriptures and texts and printing all those mostly after proper editing and annotation done by the scholars. Manindra Chandra showed interest in correcting the almanac, erecting Buddhist Vihar in Calcutta and repairing of some temples. Though he was more interested in patronizing students for higher education who would be able to do good to the community.⁷ Not only education but all other facets of culture had been patronized by him. Manindra Chandra himself faced financial difficulties for doing all these charitable and philanthropic works. At the time of his death the Kasimbazar Raj Estate was reeling under the debt of almost three crores of Rupees.

All the cultural promotion that Manindra did in his lifetime had found deep roots in his son Srischandra, who was one of the most cultured persons at the same time, was blessed with in-born artistic gifts. He was elected as the member of the Berhampore Municipality and Bengal Legislative Council. He acted as the Minister of Irrigation, Communication and Works in Fazlul Haque's ministry. He had good relations with the personalities like Subhas Chandra Bose, Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy etc. Subhas Chandra Bose came to him several times on the matters of the Council and was felicitated by him with an address of welcome when he visited the Berhampore Municipality. ⁸ As a scholar he wrote a monograph 'Bengal Rivers and Our Economic Welfare'. For that he undertook journeys by water to study the Bengal rivers. He wrote in this such prophetic words, " Rivers after all are no respecters of political boundaries or barriers, and sheer forces of nature may compel both the Pakistan and the Indian units of geographical Bengal to join their hands together in evolving a common river policy."⁹ Srischandra was chosen to preside over the Town Hall meeting to protest against the Communal Award. He became Sheriff of Calcutta and president of Bangiya Sahitya Parishad. He however continued with the philanthropic activities. During his lifetime Govinda Sundari Ayurvedic College was opened at Calcutta, he himself opened the Journalist's Club at the Samabaya Mansions on 17th September, 1933. He also agreed to patronize the Veda Vidyalaya founded by his father in Puri.

The Kandi Raj family was another prominent family that was associated with the intellectual activities and helped the scholars and donated generously for the upliftment of the common people. The town Kandi owed much to the wealthy Kandi Rajas, who were originally Uttarrarhi Kayasthas. They took up their residence at Paikpara in the neighbourhood of Calutta and therefore were called the Paikpara Rajas. The first of the family to settle at Kandi was Hara Krishna Singh, who was a money lender and silk merchant. He is said

to have been driven to take up his residence at Rampur Boalia by the Maratha raids, his son Gauranga Singh is known to have lived at Kandi. The real founder of the fortunes of the family was Ganga Govinda Singh the nephew of Gauranga Singh, who became the 'banyan' of Warren Hastings, and in that capacity amassed an immense fortune. Ganga Gobinda Singh was born at Kandi and devoted himself to the erection of shrines and images of Krishna. His grandson, Krishna Chandra Singh, better known by his popular name of Lala Babu, who was born in 1775, became an ascetic and took up his residence at Brindaban, where he was distinguished for his liberality and piety. Lala Babu's son was Sri Barayan, who left no sons. His senior widow adopted Pratap Chandra Singh, who helped to found the British Indian Association, of which he was Vice-President. He was made a Raja Bahadur and C.S.I., and founded the Kandi High School in 1859. Nandakumar Nyayachanchu a former teacher of Sanskrit College, in 1861 was appointed as the Head Pandit of Kandi School on the recommendation of Vidyasagar. Kandi owed its dispensary, which was a well-equipped institution, to the munificence of Giris Chandra, son of Pratap Chandra, who died in 1877, who bequeathed Rs. 1,25,000 for its construction and maintenance; it was opened in 1888.¹⁰ Bimal Chandra Singh of Kandi Raj family was a scholar – politician. His important works included 'Banglar Chasi', 'New Construction of India', 'Debt Legislation in Bengal'. He described the plight of the cultivators of Bengal in his book 'Banglar Chasi'. He edited the book 'Bankim Prativa' in which many eminent writers of Bengal like Rabindranath, Acharya Prafulla Chandra, Sir Jadunath Sarkar and the like contributed articles. Being himself a member of the zamindar family he was instrumental in passing of 'The West Bengal Estates Acquisition Act, 1953', while serving as a minister in the state legislature.

Maharaja Rao Jogindra Narayan, who lived in the first half of the twentieth century, was the adopted son of the Mahesh Narayan

the zamindar of Lalgola. He was born in 1845 (1846 in another opinion). Actually he was the son of a Brahmin viz. Ram Samjhaon of Paligram of Gazipur district. Jogindra Narayan was a student of Berhampore English School (Collegiate School), he learnt Sanskrit and English from Rev. Lalbehari De. Jogindra Narayan was a direct witness of the harassment of Bankim Chandra in the hand of a sahib and he gave deposition in the court in favour of Bankim Chandra. Afterwards friendship developed between the two and Bankim Chandra stayed for some time in Lalgola 'Rajbati' (palace) and also wrote a portion of 'Anandamath'. It was for his endeavour that the collections of Vidyasagar have been preserved at the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad library. He did many philanthropic works e.g. establishment of schools, making provision for drinking water for the poor etc. His donation for the construction of a public hall viz. Grant Hall at Berhampore is noteworthy. On 4th September 1910, Jogindra Narayan donated company papers amounting Rs. 80000/- along with its interest amounting Rs.1500/- for the maternity home at Berhampore. He donated Rs. 156944.00 for making of provisions for drinking water in different places of Murshidabad; particularly Lalgola, Berhampore and Malda; for education, library and publication of books about Rs. 4 lacs, for making of hospitals and treatment of poor about Rs. 6 lacs, for different other philanthropic works like flood relief, construction of roads, renovation of old temples etc. about Rs. 381657.00. All total he donated about Rs. 40 lacs throughout his life.¹¹

The light of Enlightenment also touched the Dudhoria Raj Family of Azimganj. The Dudhorias claim to belong to the ancient Chauhan clan of the Kshatriya caste. The banking and money-lending business and zamindari was behind the prospect of this family. Budh Sing and Bissen Chand of this family constructed many temples at Giridih, Jangipur and Dharmasalas at Pawa Puri near Bihar, on Mount Abu, on the Pareshnath Hill in Hazaribagh, at Azimganj, in Bombay and at Rani in Marwar in the second half of the nineteenth

century. They maintained for a long time a school for Bengali girls at Azimganj and Jain Pathshalas for the boys of their co-religionists at Azimganj, Benaras, Palitana and Dhoraji. The total number of their many donations and contributions for public and charitable purposes reached a very high figure. It was during the first half of the twentieth century that the most illustrious son of the family Raja Bijoy Sing Dudhoria took up many philanthropic works. He donated generously for the construction of the Jiaganj Edward Coronation Institution. Jangipur Hospital, Victoria Girls' School Raghunathganj Amateur Dramatic Club had received financial help from him. He made handsome donation to the fund of the library of the Krishnagar Club. He donated Rs. 4000 to the fund of the Krishnagar College, which was greatly appreciated by the public. He was so popular for his philanthropic works that in March 1915, he was re-elected Chairman of the Azimganj Municipality for the fourth time in succession. The Hindoo Patriot of Calcutta in its issue of 31st May, 1915, remarked that 'The Raja Saheb is one of the most public-spirited leaders in the Murshidabad District'. He prepared two schemes for filtered water-supply one for Azimganj and the other for Jiaganj, in the face of the Bhagirathi being stagnant during the hot season, and the water in the rainy season being muddy on account of the flood and undrinkable. Between 1900-1915 he donated nearly two lakhs of rupees. Keen on relieving the sufferings of the diseased and distressed, he contributed the princely sum of rupees one lakh to Lady Minto's Fete in aid of the Nursing Association. When there was a scarcity of food grains in 1906-07 and the poor were feeling the pinch in consequence of coarse rice selling at 6 and 7 seers per rupee, he imported a vast quantity of rice and caused it to be sold to the poor at 10 seers per rupee for as many months as the scarcity lasted. He maintained a large number of his poor and helpless co-religionists who had been granted monthly allowances. But his charitable disposition made no distinction of castes or creeds and he rendered help wherever it was really needed. It can be said that it was the goodwill towards all living creatures,

kindness and human fraternity the three principal tenets of his religion had prompted him to take up various humanistic works.

The family of Raja Ashutosh Nath Roy of Kasimbazar was also known for its generous donations and many works of public utility. In 1875 Annoda Prasad Roy of this family was decorated by the government with the title of 'Rai Bahadur' for his various acts of liberality during the famine of 1874-75. His son Ashutosh Nath Roy for various acts of public utility and liberality, and having shown his public spirit by the princely gift of a lakh of rupees in aid of the construction of Lady Dufferin's Hospital at Calcutta, the government was pleased to decorate him with the title of 'Raja'. His mother Annakali Devi was also well known for munificence and liberality and was highly spoken of by the public. She established many schools for boys and girls.

Sris Chandra Sarbadhikari of zamindar family of Choa, Murshidabad was a lover of knowledge. He was born in 1885. His speeches which he delivered in public had been published under the instance of some other important personalities like Raja Pyari Mohan Mukhopadhyay. He became the owner editor of the famous English periodical 'Hindu Patriot'. Munshi Newaj Hosain and Munshi Jillar Rahman, who was also known as Raja Mian of Talibpur zamindar family did many works of public welfare like establishing schools, maqutabs, charitable dispensaries, hospital for female, mosques etc. Talibpur English High School was established under the patronage of Raja Mian. In the Khondkar family of Fatehsing Pargana of Murshidabad was born Khondkar Fuzli Rubee in 1848. He rose to the position of the Diwan of the Murshidabad Nawab. He went to England with the Nawab Nazim Mansur Ali Khan to act as the Superintendent of his affairs. Later on the Nawab made him the Amin of Estates (Mahalat), the affairs relating to which were then in a chaotic condition. Under him the 'Mahalat' showed a marked improvement

and its income rapidly increased. He associated himself in many works of public welfare. Fuzli Rubee was a nationalist is evident from the fact that he invested money in some industries which were established during the Swadeshi era. He helped other contemporary historians of Murshidabad in getting the historical information. He himself wrote a book entitled 'Origin of the Musalman of Bengal'.

One important source of sustenance for the intelligentsia in Murshidabad was the Nawab's court. From different positions they served the Nawab. The tradition began with the predecessors of Raja Rammohan Roy in the eighteenth century. Brajabinode Roy, grandfather of Rammohun, served under Nawab Alivardi Khan and rendered useful service to the Mughal emperor Shah Alam II, when the latter came to the eastern provinces as heir-apparent in 1759 and continued to reside there even after his accession to the throne. In a letter addressed to Rammohan by the Mughal king Akbar II of Delhi in 1828, the latter referred to the good services rendered by Rammohan's grandfather to emperor Shah Alam II during Shah Alam's residence in the Eastern Provinces.¹² Rammohan Roy's father was a small zemindar, who had served under the Nawabs of Murshidabad.¹³ Though Rammohan himself went to Murshidabad as the private munshi of Mr. Thomas Woodforde who was appointed Registrar of the Appellate Court of Murshidabad from the 11th Aug, 1803. Rammohan published 'Tuhufat-ul-Muwahidin' propounding his theory of monotheism while staying in Murshidabad. There were some other members of intelligentsia who also took service under the Nawab in his court in Murshidabad. We will mention their names in our field-wise study in this chapter.

A number of celebrated Vaishnava poets were born and developed their literary activity in Murshidabad. The 'sripat' of Krishnadas Kabiraj Goswami, author of Chaitanya Charitamrita, was just within the borders of Murshidabad. Radha Krishna Das (12th -

13th c.) was born in Dopukhuriabazar, Murshidabad. He was the disciple of famous kirtan singer Sachinandan Das and himself became a famous player (badak). He played khol in the kirtan group of Rasik Das, Abadhut Bandopadhyay, Ganes Das etc. He himself was a kirtan singer. Nayananda Das was born in Bharatpur, Murshidabad. This famous Vaishnava poet was the nephew and disciple of Gadadhar Pandit. He wrote 'Prayobhakti Rasantar'. Only 96 *padas* written by him are available out of many more. Gobinddas (1534/37- 1613) was born in Teliabudhuri, Murshidabad. He was the grandson of Mahakabi Damodar Kabiraj of Srikhanda. Initially he was a *shakta* but later became a vaishnava under Srinibas Acharya. About Radha-Krishna and Gaurangalila he wrote many *padas*. He wrote 'Sageet-Madhab' and 'Karnamrita' in Sanskrit. He adopted the writing style of Vidyapati. Srijib Goswami was so satisfied with his work 'Gitamrita' that he gave Gobinddas the title 'Kabindra'. Another remarkable personality Sayyid Murtaja was born in Baliaghata, Murshidabad. His father's name was Hasan Qaderi. He wrote about 28 songs about Radha- Krishna. Nikhil Nath Roy wrote the biography of this fakir. Gokulananda Sen, who lived in the eighteenth century, was born in Kandi, Murshidabad. He was known as 'Vaishnavdas'. He compiled 'Gurukul Panjika' and 'Padakalpataru', i.e. the compilation of the Vaishnava *padas*. He wrote 27 *padas* in Padakalpataru. He was a good singer. Krishna Dayal Chandra (1201- 1288) was born in Panchthupi, Murshidabad. He mastered over Grammar and Gita. He was taught kirtan by Krishnahari Hazra of Panchthupi. He was expert in Manoharshahi style and was known as 'Chandaji.' Another famous kirtan singer Akhil Das (1260- 6.3.1333) was born in Kandar-kulo of Murshidabad. In this field his teachers were Bahuballav Das and Rasik Das. His kirtan 'sampradaya' was famous. Fatik Chaudhury (1277- 1344 B.S) was born in Hasanpur, Murshidabad. His original name was Krishnabandhu. He was a famous kirtan-singer. He was a disciple of the classical singer Jiban Krishna Chattopadhyay. Maharaja Manindra Chandra and Srischandra Nandy of Kasimbazar

supported the Vaishnava faith and patronized its men. Thus throughout the period of our study one intellectual tradition continued through the activities of the Vaishnava poets.

It was in the second half of the nineteenth century that a number of scholars gathered in Murshidabad, some of them had been serving at Berhampore College some other had been the sons of the soil. Interestingly most of them had relations with Ramdas Sen (1845-1887) who was born at Berhampore in the distinguished Sen Family and was one of the most prominent members of intelligentsia of the time. He had the misfortune to lose his father when he was still an infant, and his early education was therefore somewhat neglected. But as he grew in years he began gradually to acquire a taste for learning, which induced those habit of industry and study that enabled him, while still a young man, to take rank among the literary celebrities of his time. He entered upon those antiquarian and philosophical researches which attracted the notice of European scholars. In 1884 Calcutta Review wrote, "As an earnest and indefatigable student of Indian antiquities, he has no equal in this country, with the single exception of Dr. Rajendra Lala Mitra. But he is, in one respect, a greater benefactor to his country than even Dr. Mitra. Dr. Mitra's antiquarian writings are a sealed book to those who know not English; Dr. Ram Das Sen's antiquarian writings are open to those who know only Bengali, as well as those who know English."¹⁴ He was an earnest lover of education and a great supporter of the Berhampore College. The first Hindu from the district, who went to England was Ramdas Sen. His Bengali poems and his contributions to the principal Bengali journals of the country are a rich mine of thought and information. Most of his articles like 'Aitihāsik Rahasya' were written on history and its ancillary sciences. He wrote about fifteen books of poems, travel and history. 'Tattava Sangeet Lahari', 'Kusummala', 'Bilaptaranga', 'Kabita Lahari', 'Chaturdaspadi Kabitamala', 'Bharat Rahasya', 'Bangalir Europe Darshan' were some of the important

books authored by Ramdas Sen. He was regularly writing in the contemporary periodicals like 'Sambad Prabhakar', 'Banga Darshan', 'Nabya Bharat', 'Charu Barta', 'Naba Jiban' etc. ¹⁵ The mind of a patriot who was imbued with the spirit of the renaissance is clear from the passages of his 'Bangalir Europe Darshan'. He remarked that he had two objectives for visiting Europe in 1885, firstly, traveling and secondly, to learn commerce. He believed that for the proper development of the country commerce was essential. He wanted to learn commerce because of his own development and the development of the countrymen. In his different sonnets (Chaturdaspadi kabitamala) Ramdas praised the literary genius of Michael, the revival of Hinduism under Shankaracharya, the role played by Rev. Long against the oppression met by the indigo planters, the role played Rani Lakshmibai during the great mutiny of 1857 and also the genius of Max Mueller. But in some other sonnets he criticized the cruelty as exhibited by Siraj-ud-daullah and the method that the Derozians took for social reform. In another sonnet, which was probably composed during his stay in London Ramdas, he mourned the death of Raja Rammohan Roy at the time when during the second half of the nineteenth century India really needed his service and leadership.

He had good contacts with the German scholar Max Muller and he dedicated his book 'Aitihāsik Rahasya' to Prof. Max Muller. The learned Professor, in his address to the Oriental Congress of London, spoke very highly of this book. In the course of the same address, he further remarked, 'In the *Antiquary*, a paper very ably conducted by M.Barges, we meet with contributions from Ramdas Sen and several other learned Indians, which are read with the greatest interest and advantage by European scholars.' Dr. Ramdas Sen was a distinguished member of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, the Agricultural and Horticultural Society of India, the Sanskrit Text Society of London, the Oriental Academy of Florence, the British Indian

Association of Bengal, The Societa Asiatica Italiana of Italy and the Royal Society of Great Britain, Zoological Garden, Calcutta and received the title of 'Doctor' from the Oriental Academy of Florence. He also adorned the posts of honorary magistrate of Berhampore, Municipal Commissioner, a member of Board of Trustee of the Berhampore College and secretary of Murshidabad Sabha.

The library of Ramdas was legendary. Persons like Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, Akshay Chandra Sarkar, Gurudas Bandopadhyay, Pandit Ramgati Nyayaratna used his personal library. In 1951 Shri Anuttam Sen, Ramdas' successor made over a collection of about 3500 volumes which belonged to the late Dr. Ramdas Sen of Berhampore in the district of Murshidabad, to the National Library, Calcutta.¹⁶ Many nineteenth century basic books on Literature, History, Philosophy, Religion, Philology, etc. are available in the collection. Many rare books in Sanskrit had enriched the collection considerably. Such rare items, as Renell's Bengal Atlas (1770), are also available. Nineteenth century Bengali works on Literature, Essay, Religion, etc. are also available in his collection. Many of these books are not available elsewhere. There were also about 75 Bengali and Sanskrit manuscripts, that included the manuscript of Uvvata's 'Mantra Bhasya' was five hundred years old and the manuscript of 'Supti Karnamrita' of Shridhar Das, the court poet of Lakshman Sen, written about seven hundred years ago. Other European scholars like Dr. Weber and Count Angelo De Gubernatis admired him. In the prosecution of his researches, he visited Europe in the year 1885. His erudition is proved by the fact that he had consulted Pali, Sanskrit, English works and investigated the chaityas, vihars, temples and Asoka's pillars of Sarnath, Bokrya kund, Allahabad and Delhi, for preparing a lecture, which he delivered at the Berhampore Literary Society on 19th September, 1870, on 'The Modern Buddhistic Researches'.¹⁷ With the endeavour of Murshidabad Sabha, which was

presided by Baikuntha Nath Sen that after his death, his statue was installed in the compound of Berhampore College. The statue was made by Signor Rondoni of Italy and for that the famous artist Sashibhusan Hes who was then in Rome, was much instrumental. The secretary and treasurer of the 'Ram Das Sen Memorial Committee' was Mukundalal Barman. It was after his death that Manindra Chandra Nandy became the secretary and treasurer of the Committee. In the dictionary published from Italy entitled 'Dizionario Biografico Degli Scrittori Contemporanei, 1879' Ramdas' biography had been published with photographs along with two other eminent scholars Rajendralal Mitra and Sourindra Mohan Tagore.

Bankim Chandra Chattopahyay was transferred as Deputy Magistrate to Berhampore on 15.12.1869 and he remained there till 3.5.1874. In April 1872 Bankim Chandra edited 'Banga Darshan' was first published from 1, Pipulpaty of Bhawanipur by Braja Madhab Basu of Saptahik Sambad Press. At that time many scholar-writers were working at Berhampore viz. Bhudev Mukhopadhyay, Ramdas Sen, Lalbehari De, Ramgati Nyayaratna, Raj Krishna Mukhopadhyay, Dinabandhu Mitra, Loharam Siroratna, Ganga Charan Sarkar, Akshay Chandra Sarkar, Baikuntha Nath Sen, Taraprasad Chattopadhyay, Dinanath Gangopadhyay, Gurudas Bandopadhyay etc. Bankim Chandra joined this group. In 1873 while staying at Berhampore Bankim Chandra published his novels 'Bisabriksha' and 'Indira'. It was during his stay in Berhampore that once Bankim Chandra while returning home from office was assaulted by one Lt. Colonel Duffin of the Berhampore Cantonment, and received several violent pushes at his hands. Actually Bankim Chandra was passing in a palkee across a cricket ground where Mr. Duffin and some Europeans were playing. This was deemed a great 'beadubee' on the part of the Babu and Mr. Duffin felt himself fully justified in chastising him with blows. Hereafter Bankim brought a criminal case

against his aggressor and it had caused great sensation in Berhampore. Col. Duffin expressed deep contrition and a desired to apologise. The apology was made in due form in open Court where about a thousand spectators, native and European, were assembled. ¹⁸ Rao Jogindra Narayan of Lalgola who was a student at Berhampore gave witness in favour of Bankim Chandra. Bankim Chandra was a close friend of Ramdas Sen and he took the help of Ramdas' library in writing his many memorable passages.

In the literary circle at Berhampore one important person was Akshay Chandra Sarkar (1846-1917) who, was born in Hooghly. He practiced law at first in Berhampore and then in Chinsurah. His father Ganga Charan Sarkar was the Sadar Munsef at Berhampore. Akshay Chandra's friendship with Bankim Chandra was a result of both working and residing at Berhampore at the same time. At the young age he used to write in 'Banga Darshan'. He was the founder editor of 'Nava Jivan'. He favoured the indigenous industries and the education system, which supported autonomy. He was an activist in the Congress session of 1886 and was in favour of the demands for the rights of the ryots. Another literareur and a close friend of Bankim Chandra, Chandrasekhar Mukherjee (1849-1922) passed Entrance from Berhampore Collegiate School in 1866 and B A in 1872 from Presidency College. In 1872 he was appointed a teacher of Berhampore Collegiate School. He taught in Berhampore Collegiate School and in Puntia English school. He had practiced Law in Berhampore Court and subsequently High Court. At that time he was in debt and Manindra Chandra Nandy gave him financial help to repay loan and made him editor of one periodical 'Upasana'. Maharaja Manindra Chandra Nandy had been paying him monthly Rs. 50.00 for editing the magazine 'Upasana'. His important works included 'Saraswatkunj', 'Udbhranta Prem', 'Stri Charitra' etc. He wrote in the famous periodicals of the time like 'Masik Samalochak', 'Sahitya', 'Malancha', 'Jnanankur', 'Bharatbarsha' etc. He also worked as

literary critique (sahitya samalochak) of Banga Darshan when Rabindranath was its editor. Rajkrishna Mukherjee, another member of this assembly passed B.L in 1868, registered himself in High Court and went to Berhampore for practicing Law. In 1869 he was appointed as a professor of Law in Cuttack Law College. On 15.1.1871 he was appointed a professor of Law at Berhampore. He wrote books like 'Pratham Siksha Bangla Byakaran', 'Pratham Siksha Banglar Itihas', 'Kabitamala', 'Meghdoot' (in verse). Rev. Lalbehari De (1824-1894) who was associated with the education department of the government since 1867, worked as a professor of English of the Hooghly College, the editor of Bengal Magazine, a member of Bethune Society and wrote articles like 'Primary Education of Bengal', 'Vernacular Education in Bengal', 'English Education in Bengal', 'Teaching of English Literature in the Colleges of Bengal', 'Compulsory Education in Bengal' etc. had been staying at Berhampore at this time. De wrote Bengal Peasant life while staying at Berhampore as the head master of Berhampore College School. Sir Gurudas Bandopadhyay (1844-1918) who taught in Presidency College, General Assemblies Institution also taught Law and Mathematics at Berhampore College. He was also permitted to pursue practicing Law at the local court. Gurudas went to Berhampore in 1866 and became a successful lawyer and teacher. His deliberations on law attracted the attention of Mr. Buckley; the British Agent at Murshidabad, Rev. Long; whose name was associated with 'Nil Darpan' and Divisional Commissioner Mr. Campbell.¹⁹ The Nawab of Murshidabad, Maharani Swarnamoyee and many other zamindars appointed him as their lawyer. In 1872 however he went to Calcutta for practicing Law at High Court. Probably we went to Calcutta on the advice of his mother and Rashbehari Ghosh; another renowned lawyer of Berhampore. He subsequently became a Judge of the High Court and the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Calcutta. He became a member of National Council of Education in 1906. He wrote books like- 'Hindu Law of Marriage and Stridhan', 'A Few Thoughts on Education', 'The Education Problem in India' etc. When

Gurudas Bandopadhyay was teaching Law and Mathematics at Berhampore College, Pandit Ramgati Nyayaratna was teaching Sanskrit. In order to know the core of the Hindu Law Gurudas wanted to learn Sanskrit. And he learnt it from Professor Nyayaratna.²⁰ Pandit Nyayaratna was appointed as Sanskrit teacher of Berhampore College on February 13, 1865. His salary was Rs. 150.00. On February 2, 1879 he was transferred to Hooghly Normal School as Head Master.²¹ He wrote 'Bangalar Itihas', 'Bangalabhasa O Bangla Sahitya Bisayak Prastab', 'Nitipath', 'Bharatbarsher Samasto Itihas', etc. 'Banglar Itihas', upto the time of Ali Vardi Khan was written by Ramgati Nyayaratna, the second part was written by Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, that is, upto the time of Lord Bentinck, the history of subsequent period i.e. the third part was written by Bhudev Mukhopadhyay. It is worth mentioning here that Haraprasad Shastri was a student of Kandi School. He came to Kandi with his elder brother Nanda Kumar Nyayachanchu, who was the head pandit of Anglo Sanskrit School of Kandi. He learnt the alphabets in that school. At that time his name was Sarat Nath Bhattacharya. Celebrated teacher Rev.E.M.Wheeler was appointed as the principal of Berhampore College in 1906, that is, a year after the opening up of the railway from Ranaghat to Bhagabangola. Monmohini, a learned woman, mother of wheeler was the daughter of Rev. Krishna Mohan Bandopadhyay. His teaching method was quite attractive. Seasonal flowers featured his classroom when he taught Flower Poems of Wordsworth. During the age of Swadeshi, police intervention in the college hostel was a regular affair. Rev. Wheeler himself was present many a time during the routine police search to protect the students from being harassed by the police.

In the field of literature thus Murshidabad saw the flourishing of many writers. Most of their writings survived beyond their age and are still popular. There were however some less known but popular writers. Radhamohon Thakur who lived in the first half of the

eighteenth century, was born in Malihati, Murshidabad. He was the disciple of Shyamananda Puri. He was famous for his scholarship in the court of the Nawab of Murshidabad. Maharaj Nandakumar was his disciple. He compiled the book 'Padamrita Samudra'. He himself wrote 182 *padas* in Brajabuli and Sanskrit. His important work is Padakalpataru. Gangaram Deb Chaudhury belonging to eighteenth century although was born in Mymansingh but in 1167 B.S he went to Murshidabad, and while staying in Murshidabad he wrote 'Maharashtra Puran'. Its subject matter was about the Maratha invasion in Bengal. He also wrote 'Suk Sambad' and 'Labkush Charitra'. Jagannath Tarka Panchanan, who lived in the eighteenth century and wrote 'Bibad Bhangarnab', the translation of which was of great help in the civil justice and administration of the Company government received patronage from Nanda Kumar, the diwan of the Murshidabad nawab and Raja Nabakrishna of Shovabazar. Probably he was the first Bengali Brahmin to enjoy financial help of the English government. Maharaja Jainarayan Ghosal of Calcutta took service under the Murshidabad nawab, later under East India Company. In his house in Kasi in 1814 he established an English school, probably the first in India.²² English, Persian, Hindusthani and Bengali were also taught in that school. Raja Dakshinaranjan Mukhopadhyay (1814-1878) of Calcutta was a Derozian and had been publishing 'Jnanveshan'. He was the first Indian collector appointed by the government. Later he took service under the Murshidabad nawab. He gave landed estate to Bethune to establish institution for female education. Ishan Chandra Bandopadhyay of Hooghly, who was proficient in Persian, English, Latin, Greek, Mathematics, Chemistry and Astronomy taught in General Assemblies Institution, Berhampore Krishnanath College, Krishnanagar College, Hooghly College etc. He worked in Berhampore when the place saw its heyday in the field of creative literature. Mahamahopadhyay Sri Ram Siromani (1230- 1310 B.S.) was born in Berhampore, Murshidabad. He was the disciple of Pandit Madhab Chandra Tarkasiddhanta of Nabadwip who was a

master of 'Nyaya'. He was appointed as the principal of Jubilee tol, which had been established by the Kasimbazar Raj family. In 1887 he was given the title 'Mahamahopadhyay'. Girish Chandra Basu of Dacca, the assistant editor of 'Hindu Patriot' and the publisher of the news weekly 'Hindu Intelligentser' and was vehement against the indigo planters was appointed, after 1860 as the private secretary of the Murshidabad Nawab. He was a champion of women education. Prasanna Kumar Sarbadhikari (1825- 1886) who was born in Radhanagar, Hooghly taught for some time in Dacca College and then took service under Murshidabad nawab. Later he became the principal of Sanskrit College and Berhampore College. He also taught in Presidency College. He prepared the Bengali version of arithmetic and algebra. Sambhu Chandra Mukhopadhyay the Editor of 'Hindu Patriot' had been working as the Diwan of Nawab Nazim of Murshidabad. When Indian League was established in 1875 he was its President. W C Banerjee and Hume recognized his political knowledge. He was the only Hindu leader, who in 1877 when Russia and Turkey were engaged in war, organized an open meeting where Abdul Latif presided. Another luminary of Murshidabad Raibahadur Purnendu Narayan Singha (1861- 1923) was born in Kandi. He started practicing law in Patna High Court in 1918. He took active part in the Home Rule movement. In 1886 he represented among others the state of Bihar in the second session of the National Congress. However later he gave up his association with the Congress. For the first time he organized the Agriculture and Industrial Exhibition in Patna. He was one of the founder directors of the Bank of Bihar. In 1895 he established Anglo-Sanskrit High School in Patna. He was a Senate member of the Patna University. He mastered over Vedanta, philosophy and theosophy. He wrote many books in English and Bengali. He was awarded 'Qaiser-e-hind' gold medal. Janakinath Bhattacharya who lived in the second half of the nineteenth century achieved the top rank along with Ramendra Sundar Tribedi in the Entrance Examination in 1881, and passed from Hindu School and Kandi High School respectively. He

was a professor of Ripon College. He became the principal of Ripon Arts College after the death of Ramendra Sundar in 1919. Ripon College was known as 'Ram-Janaki' College after their names. Mahamahopadhyay Chandidas of Maimansingh taught for 21 years in Berhampore Jubilee Tol, which had been established by the Rani of Cossimbazar, Annakali. He was the president of Bangiya Brahman Sabha. He edited 'Kusumanjalikarika'. He received the title Mahamahopadhyay in 1930. A close associate of Keshav Chandra Sen and one of the leaders of 'Nababidhan' Binayendranath Sen was the headmaster of Berhampore Collegiate School. Later he became professor of Presidency College. He represented Brahmo Samaj in the international conference of liberal religionists in Geneva and America. He was a member of Calcutta University Institute. He established a school for the Brahmo boys and girls in 1906. In 1909 he presided over the conference of the Indian Unitarians at Lahore. He wrote books like 'Arati', 'Gita Addhyan', 'The Pilgrim' etc. Mahamahopadhyay Krishnachandra Tarkalankar of Dacca was the court pandit of Kasimbazar Maharaja and a teacher of chatuspathi establish by the Maharaja in his early life. He learnt Grammar from Abhaycharan Vidyaratna, 'Nabya Smriti' from Jagatkishore Sarbavoumo, Smriti and Nyaya from 'Dacca Saraswat Samaj'. Famous pandit Mahamahopadhyay Tarinicharan Siromani gave him the title on Nabyasmriti and he received the title Nyayalankar from Dacca Saraswat Samaj. Later he taught in Bishudhanand Saraswati School at Calcutta. He joined Calcutta University for teaching 'Smriti' and 'Nyaya' at the instance of Sir Ashutosh. In 1924 he was given the title Mahamahopadhyay by the Government of India. Many women of excellence also featured the tradition. Indumati Ghosh of Panchthupi, Murshidabad and the wife of Madhusudan, the zamindar of Panchthupi, who lived in the second half of nineteenth century showed her academic excellence while in primary school only. She is famous for her 'Banga Narir Brata Katha', which is divided into four parts- 'Mangal Chandi', 'Laxmi', 'Sasthi' and 'Sadharan Katha'.

A special mention may be made of Sarat Chandra Pandit (1881-1968), who is more famous with his epithet 'Dadathakur'. His parental house was in Dharampur, Birbhum. Later the family shifted to Daharpur of Murshidabad and then to Jangipur. He was born in his maternal uncle's house Simladdi, Birbhum. He established a press with manually run printing machine and started publishing a news weekly 'Jangipur Sambad'. He himself was compositor and proof reader of his paper. He also published Bidushak, which he had been selling on himself in Calcutta. For the whole life he used rough cloth and walked barefoot. A movie was made on his life and the famous actor Chabi Biswas played the role of 'Dadathakur' and received President Award. He wrote 'Dadathakurer Botal Puran', which was in favour of temperance movement. He attacked the class exploitation through his satirical and other writings. Nalinikanta Sarkar who helped him in publishing another weekly paper 'Bidushak' wrote his biography. 'Bidushak' wrote in favour of communal harmony and against the false pride of the Brahmins being high caste.²³ Another celebrated female writer Nirupama Devi (1883- 1951) was born in Berhampore, Murshidabad. Her father was Nafar Chandra Bhatta. Association of Sarat Chandra and Anurupa Devi influenced her to write verse and stories. 'Didi' was probably her best novel, which was published in Prabasai magazine in 1319-20 B.S. Calcutta University awarded her Bhubanmohini gold medal and Jagattarini gold medal respectively in 1938 and 1943. She was converted to vaishnavism in the last years of her life. She wrote books like 'Annapurnar Mandir', 'Aleya', 'Bidhillipi', 'Yugantarar katha' etc.

Dakshinaranjan Mitra Majumdar of Dacca came to Murshidabad and stayed for five years during the first decade of the twentieth century. With all probability his interaction with the members of intelligentsia there prompted him to write articles in the literary journals like 'Sahitya Parishat Patrika', 'Pradip' etc. He also

started publishing a magazine viz. 'Sudha'. After that he left for Mymensingh to take care of his father's zamindari. Another literateur Sudhir Chandra Sarkar (1892- 1969) was born in Berhampore. Raibahadur Mahimchandra was his father. He traveled many places in his childhood as his father was working in the judicial department and was transferred to many places. He wrote for many journals like 'Bharati', 'Suprabhat', 'Jamuna', 'Janhabi', 'Bharatbarsha' etc. He had connection with the contemporary other famous writers. Later he joined law book publishing agency 'Rai M C Sarkar Bahadur and Sons', which had been established by his father. Nachghar, Mauchak etc. magazines were published from this publication. He compiled and published 'Hindusthan Year Book'. He presided over the Children's literature section of Prabasi Banga Sahitya Sammelan. Jagadananda Bajpayee (1888-19.12.1974) a prominent writer, was born in Jiagunj, Murshidabad. He was a journalist, poet and literateur. For a long time he worked as assistant editor of 'Ananda Bazar Patrika'. For some time he worked in the same post in the 'Dainik Janasebak' patrika. He was imprisoned several times for his close association with the Anusilan group. His compilation of essays 'Binsha Satabdir Biswa', 'Pratidhani' (kavya) are important. Celebrated writer Sourindra Nath Bhattacharya (1889-1959) was born at Kasimbazar. His father was Ramapati Tarkabhusan who was the court poet of Manindra Chandra Nandy. He was a student of Saidabad Hardinge School (later known as, Manindra Chandra Vidyapith). He wrote many patriotic songs. At the same time he was a skilled artist. He wrote 'Murshidabad Bandanagan' in 1944. He wrote in many popular magazines. His important works were 'Chanda', 'Mandakini', 'Nirmalya', 'Banglar Bansi' etc. Nalinikanta Sarkar (1889-1984) a writer, journalist, singer and literary critic, though was born in Kaliachak, Malda, spent long time in his maternal uncle's house in Jagtai, Murshidabad. From 1920-25 he edited the literary magazine published by revolutionary Barindra Kumar Ghosh. He was associated with the magazines like 'Bichitra', 'Bharati', 'Sanibarar Chithi' etc. His first work 'Kanchantalar

Cup' was published in 1916, it was written in the colloquial language of Murshidabad. He had connections with Rabindranath, Nazrul Islam and Jaladhar Sen. He wrote regularly in 'Jangipur Sambat'. He wrote the biography of Dadathakur, which was later made into a movie. In the last years of his life he became a disciple of Sri Aurobindo. Nurunnecha Khatun Vidyavinod (1894-1975) was born in Shahpur village, Murshidabad. Her father Khondakar Habibur Sobahan was a government official. She was the first Muslim female novelist. Initially she learned alphabets in her house. In 1912 she was married to lawyer Kaji Golam Ahmad. She traveled different places in India with her husband and learnt English. Her first published novel was 'saptadrasta' (1923). She wrote many historical novels like 'Janaki Bye', 'Bharate Moslem Bitatto' (1924) etc. Story e.g. 'Bhagyachakra', 'Bidhilipi', 'Niyoti' etc were written by her. 'Nurunnecha Granthabali' was published in 1929. She was given the title 'Vidyavinodini' by the Nikhil Banga Sahitya Samiti, and she was selected a fellow by the Bangla Academy of Dacca.

Gautam Sen (1304-1386 B.S.) who was born in Jiaganj, Murshidabad, was a writer and journalist belonging to 'Kallol' literary group. He passed B A from Jiaganj College. He was given the title Siroratna in Ayurveda, in 1938. He had been working in Viswanath Ayurveda College. His published books are 'Setubandhan', 'Priya o Manasi', 'Yuger Alo', 'Yug Banhi', 'Nilkuthir Math', 'Khelar putul' etc. At different points of time he had been editing 'Sainik', 'Bharatbarsha', 'Galpolahari', 'Dunduvi', 'Prabasi' etc. magazines. Another luminary Manis Ghatak (1902- 1979) was born in Berhampore. He was a celebrated poet and writer of the 'Kallol' group. He wrote novels like 'Kankhol' and memoir 'Mandhatar Babar Amol'. He translated the poems of Pablo Neruda. He edited and published little magazine 'Bartika' from Berhampore till his death. Famous film director Ritwik Ghatak was his brother and celebrated writer Mahasveta Devi was his daughter. Md. Abdul Hi (1919- 1969) was born in Maricha,

Murshidabad. He was the first among the Muslim students to pass from Dacca University with first class marks with Bengali as honours subject, in 1941. In 1952 passed M.A from the Dacca University. He had been teaching in Krishnagar Government College before partition. After 1947 he joined the Bengali department of the Dacca University. Alongwith Dr. Sahidullah he published the book 'Traditional Culture in East Pakistan'. From the Bengali department of Dacca University he edited and published 'Sahitya Patrika'. Anwar Pasha (1928-1971) who was born in Berhampore, Murshidabad, was a poet, writer and educationist. He passed the High Madrasa examination from Bhabta Ajijia High Madrasa in 1946, and then I A from Berhampore Krishnanath College, B A from Rajshahi College, M A from Calcutta University in 1953. Till 1957 he taught in educational institution in West Bengal and then in 1958 he joined Pabna Edward College as a professor in Bengali. He joined Dacca University in 1966. Sheikh Gumani Dewan (1895- 9.5.1976) was born in Jangipur, Murshidabad. In traditional dewan family he was born and the house was known as 'pandit bari'. He mastered over kabigan, in which he described the contemporary war, famine, oppression, war for independence, thereby tried to create awareness among the people. During the famine of 1943 he joined the relief work. He had good relation with Rabindranath Tagore and he was the president of the local union.

Among the writer-scholars who lived in the nineteenth century but started literary activity in the first half of the nineteenth century was Hirendra Nath Mukhopadhyay (1906-1981) who was born in Kandi, Murshidabad. His father was the treasurer of Brahmacharyashram, Santiniketan. He passed matriculation from Kandi Raj High School in 1922, IA and BA from Berhampore Krishnanath College in 1926, MA in Philosophy from the University of Calcutta in 1949. He was given the title 'Kabya Vinod' by Bangiya Saraswat Mahamandal. He annotated 'Ujjwal Siromani' of Srirup Goswami and received D.Lit from the University of Calcutta. He was a

member of Astrological Society and secretary of Indian College of Astronomy. He had been working under Income Tax Department of the central government. He was associated with Bangiya Sahitya Parishat, Santiniketan Asramik Sangha etc. His works included 'Astachal', 'Mumursu Prithivi', 'Lilabhumi', 'Matir Paras' etc. He also wrote many short stories, novels, plays etc. in various literary magazines. Gourishankar Bhattacharya (1920-1994) was born at Saidabad, Berhampore. His father Mrityunjoy Siromoni was a proof-reader at Baptist Mission Press, at the same time a writer. In 1937 he passed Matric from Sanskrit Collegiate School at Calcutta. He could not continue with his B A at Ripon College. He established publication agency 'Mitralaya' at the young age of thirty. From 1939-40 he started career as a writer. He had been publishing 'Ispater Sahar' from Burnpur in the '50s. He wrote books like 'Albert Hall', 'Agnisambhav', 'Mahakavyer Putul', 'Apar Panchali', 'War and Peace', 'The American', etc. He was associated with 'Anandabazar Patrika' from 1972- 1990. He had also been writing in 'Aajkal', a news daily. He was the founder member of Photographic Association and general secretary of Sahityasevak Samiti. Neamal Basir (1932-1985) was born in Talibpur, Murshidabad. After 1947 the family was shifted to Dacca. He passed IA in 1954 from Jagannath College, M A in Bengali from Karachi University in 1963. He was associated with Yuva League, which had been established in 1951. In 1952 he was imprisoned for joining the language movement. He was associated with the newspapers like 'Natun Din', 'Dainik Ittefak' and also with Radio Pakistan in Karachi. His published works included 'Londone Ekkrat', 'Dhupchaya' etc. He received Bangla Academy award for his translation works in 1980. One of the most erudite scholars who strongly upheld the communal harmony was Rejaul Karim (1902-1993) who was born in Margram, Birbhum. He was a nationalist, freedom fighter, great educationist and journalist. His elder brother Moinuddin Hossain was a writer and journalist. The family was not conservative. He passed matriculation from Calcutta Madrassa in 1920. While studying I A in St. Xavier's

College in 1921 he joined the non-cooperation movement and left college. First he joined as a honorary teacher in the national school at Salar, Murshidabad, when the school was closed down he started one evening school in Margram. After some time he went to Berhampore and started studying under the guidance of maternal uncle Abdus Samad, who was a nationalist leader and a lawyer. Manindra Chandra Nandy was so impressed to listen his speech that he accepted taking responsibility of all expenses for his study. He passed I A in 1928 from Berhampore Krishnanath College and B A with English honours in 1930. He established Al Hilal club where scholarly articles were read. He passed M A in English from Calcutta University in 1934 and obtained a degree in law in 1936. Then he started practicing law at Banksal Court, Alipore Court and then in Berhampore Court. In 1948 he joined Berhampore Girls' College as a professor and retired from there in 1982. He fought actively against communalism from 1930-47. When communalism gripped over Indian politics from 1935-37, he supported Abdus Samad and Moinuddin to establish 'Anti Separate Electorate League'. He was instrumental in establishing Congress Sahitya Sangha in 1944. Its first branch office was opened at Berhampore in 1945. He was associated with 'Nabayug Patrika' till 1946. He was also associated with other magazines like 'Naya Bangla', 'Kohinoor', 'Nabanoor' etc. He wrote against the 14-point charter of Muhammad Ali Jinnah in 'Prabasi' magazine. He started publishing magazines like 'Durbin' and 'Ganaraj' (1947). He edited 'Murshidabad Patrika' during 1951-52. For a long time since 1960 he was a member of Legislative Council. Till 1970 he was associated with Congress politics. He was associated with many cultural activities in Berhampore. He wrote books like 'Bankim Chandra o Musalman Samaj' (1944), 'Naya Bharater Bhatti', 'Jatiyatar Pathe', 'Sampradayik Samasya o Gandhiji', 'Sanskriti Samannoy – Kichu Bhabna', 'For India and Islam', 'Muslim and the Congress' etc. In the book 'For India and Islam' he had written against separate electorate, separate educational institutions for the Muslims, to quote him, " The history of the world

has conclusively shown that the policy of segregation instead of uplifting a nation or a community has degenerated it, intellectually, economically, politically and socially. How can such a policy thrive in a country like India where different communities living side by side from generation to generation are linked together by one common bond of brotherhood and friendship with having their interest wholly identical?²⁴ For his being a strong supporter of communal harmony and cultural assimilation he was given honorary D.Lit by the University of Calcutta in 1984. He received Vidyasagar award for his contribution to literature.

Murshidabad social milieu gave birth to a number of historians in the modern period who wrote objectively and pioneered in their writings many facades of history. Probably Nikhilnath Roy was the first in the line of historians whose prominence is due mainly to their writing of history. Nikhilnath Roy (1865-1932) was born in Puran, 24 Paraganas. He was a student of Khagra Missionary School, Berhampore Collegiate School and Berhampore College. He passed B A in 1892 and BL in 1897 from Berhampore College and started practicing law in Berhampore Judges' court and High Court at Calcutta. From 1907-22 he worked as the naib of Manindra Chandra Nandy. Regularly he was writing articles in Murshidabad Hitaishi. He wrote books like 'Murshidabader Itihas'(1902), 'Murshidabad Kahini' (1897), 'Sonar Bangla', 'Jagat Seth', 'Pratapaditya' etc. In his celebrated work 'Murshidabader Kahini' he wrote about Jagat Seth, Bangadhikari, Maharaj Nanda Kumar, Kanta Baboo, Ganga Gobinda Singh, Peasant rebellion against the oppression of Debi Singh. In this book he also described the places of interest in Murshidabad like Katra Mosque, Kiriteswari, Motijhil, Roshnibagh, Khosbagh, Hirajhil, Baranagar etc. While writing he took the help of the works of Orme, Hunter, Malcolm, Holwell, Burke, Beveridge, Ghulam Hosain and also Selections from State papers, Proceedings of the Council of Calcutta etc. He was a member of 'Suniti Sancharini Sabha' of Berhampore,

which had been established by Sasadhar Tarkachudamani, and member of the executive body of Bangiya Sahitya Parishat. He took help of the library of Ramdas Sen. He had been writing in 'Murshidabad Hitaishi' in its initial phase. He edited periodicals like 'Aitihāsik Chitra', 'Palli Bani', 'Saswati' etc. He wrote many books like 'Asruhar', 'Rajputkusum', 'Sonar Bangla', 'Murshidabad Kahini', 'Murshidabad Itihas', 'Biography of Ramdas Sen', 'Murshidabad Kayastha Samity' etc. His presence made the intellectual gathering of the last quarter of the nineteenth century in Murshidabad more versatile. Another celebrity in this field Puran Chand Nahar (1875-1936) was born in Ajimgunj, Murshidabad. Setab Chand was his father. He passed B A and B L from Presidency College and M A in 1898. He was the first M A among the Jainas in Bengal. He collected many sculptures, coins, books and manuscripts and established a museum. He was the life member of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute. He represented the Svetamvara Jainas in the Board of Directors of Benaras Hindu University. He wrote many books; among them 'Jaina Inscriptions' in three volumes, 'Epetome of Jainism' are important. Ramkamal Singha (1880- 1950) was born in Kandi, Murshidabad. He passed F A and took service in Calcutta Museum as clerk. In 1905 he resigned his post to protest against the partition of Bengal and joined Bangiya Sahitya Parishad. For next 45 years he was in charge of this organization.

Celebrated historian Radha Kumud Mookerji originally belonged to Murshidabad. He was born in 1884. His father, Gopal Chandra Mookerji was a renowned High Court Vakil and also associated with the Bar at Berhampore. Gopal Chandra was appointed as Tagore Law Professor, a great honour in those days to an Indian. After completing his early education Berhampore Collegiate School, Radha Kumud Mookerji came to Calcutta for higher education at the Presidency College. In 1901 he obtained double honours in the B.A. examination and established a record by taking his M.A. degree in History and the

Cobden Medal in Economics in the same year. A year later, he obtained a second M.A. degree in English. Besides these honours, he won the famous Premchand Roychand Scholarship of the value of Rs. 7000 together with Mowat Gold Medal. In 1915 he obtained his Ph.D degree from the Calcutta University. Radha Kumud Mookerji, Benoy Kumar Sarkar, an erudite scholar and many others actively participated in the movement for boycott of the Calcutta University. All the four student leaders of the Boycott movement – Rabindranarayan Ghosh, Nripendranath Banerjee, Radha Kumud Mookerji and Benoy Kumar Sarkar, were active members of the Dawn Society of Satis Chandra Mukherjee.²⁵ Radha Kumud began his career as a professor of English at the Ripon College and taught later, in 1903, at the Bishop's College, Calcutta. In 1906 he was appointed Hem Chandra Basu Mallick Professor at the National Council of Education, Bengal and the Bengal National College with Sri Aurobindo Ghose as its Principal. In 1916 he was appointed as the first Maharaja Sir Manindra Chandra Nandy Professor of Ancient Indian History and Culture at the Banaras Hindu University, where he stayed for hardly a year when he joined the University of Mysore as the first Professor of History. He adorned that chair for five years until he became Professor and Head of the Department of History at the Lucknow University in 1921. This was the last university he served till his retirement, being subsequently appointed Emeritus Professor of History in the same university. In 1942, on the occasion of the meeting of the Indian History Congress at Hyderabad, some of his friends and students formed a committee for 'a presentation volume and a lectureship foundation' in his honour. Dr. Mookerji passed away at Calcutta on September 9, 1963 at the age of 83. In recognition of his services and scholarship, the Lucknow University conferred on Dr. Mookerji *honoris causa* the degree of Doctor of Literature at its Silver Jubilee convocation held in 1949.²⁶

Dr. Radha Kumud Mookerji had a unique combination of scholarship with political and social activities. He organized the Bengal Anti-Communal Award Commiottee of which he and Sri T C Goswami were elected Secretaries. Poet Rabindranath Tagore was its President; Sir B C Mahtab, Maharajadhiraj Bahadur of Burdwan, was elected its working President; Sarat Chandra Chatterjee, the famous novelist and Hirendranath Dutta, the eminent philosopher, were elected its Vice-Presidents. Dr. Mookerji was elected a member of the Bengal Legislative Council as early as in 1937, as a nominee of the Indian National congress and was a member of that body for six years (1937-43). He was also the leader of the opposition in the Council for some time. He worked as a member of the Bengal Land Revenue commission (known as Floud commission) under the chairmanship of Sir Francis Floud for a year and a half (1939-40). He was a member of the Indian delegation to the FAO Preparatory Commission at Washington (1946-47). In 1952 he was nominated a member of the Rajya Sabha by the President of India and served there for one full term (1952-58). He encouraged and took part in the organization of teachers as well. He presided over the Meerut session of the U P Secondary Education conference and Khulna session of the All India Teachers' Conference. He was the Vice-President of the All India Hindu Mahasabha for a number of years, President of the All India Hindu Youth conference at its Lahore session, President of the Vikramaditya Celebrations at Amritsar, organized by the Hindu Mahasabha and President of the Akhand Bharat Concerence and of its Standing Committee. Dr. Mookerji was honoured by many academic organizations. He was Sectional Chairman at the All India Oriental Conference at its Mysore Session, President of the Early India Section of the Indian History Congress at the Lahore Session in 1940 and General President of the Indian History congress in 1952 in its Gwalior Session. He was awarded the title of 'Itihas Siromani' and Sayaji Rao Gaekwad prize of Rs. 7000 by the govt. of Baroda. He was invited by several academic bodies to deliver lectures. On invitation he

delivered lectures at the Annamalai, Bombay and Mysore Universities, Manindra lectures at the Banaras Hindu University and a series of lectures at the Punjab University.

Radha Kumud took up the study of ancient Indian history and he wrote detailed and critical monographs on almost all the periods and aspects of Ancient India. His major works may be divided into some broad categories- firstly, Biographies- like Chandra Gupta Maurya, Asoka etc. secondly, General Histories- like Hindu Civilization, The Gupta Empire, thirdly, Studies of Institutions- like Local Self-Government in Ancient India etc., fourthly, Books dealing with the problem of Indian unity- like Fundamental Unity of India, A new approach to Communal Problem; and Miscellaneous Works- like Notes of Early Indian Art and India's Land System. He was shocked by the division of the country in 1947. In the introduction to the 1954 edition of his book 'Fundamental Unity of India' he has tried to re-explain his thesis thus -' A territorial separtion of communities is no solution of the communal problem'. He recommended the Stalin constitution of the USSR as the best solution of the minority problem. He re-emphasized that though the division of India into two separate states was an accomplished fact, it should not affect all aspects of life- in both the States, specially in economic, cultural and religious spheres. 'The distribution of religious places of all the communities, distribution of material resources, etc., all show that the division was unjustified.' He, however, expressed a hope ' that the two new states will respect, preserve and promote these deeper unities, in the life of their people without emphasizing their differences which are comparatively superficial and confined only to politics, for politics does not exhaust the totality of life's interests.'²⁷ He was convinced about the fundamental unity of India and continued to emphasize the point from his earliest work to the end. Radha Kamal Mookerji (1890-1968) brother of Radha Kumud was born in Berhampore, Murshidabad. He was awarded Premchand Raichand scholarship. He

taught at Krishnanath College, Berhampore and the University of Calcutta and also at Lucknow University. As an economist he visited various Universities in India, Europe and America. He wrote books like 'Bartaman Bangla Sahitya', 'Manomoy Bharat', Democracies of the East, Theory and Art of Mysticism, The Culture and Art of India etc. He was the editor of literary magazine 'Upasana'.

Another celebrated historian whose mind was made in Murshidabad was Rakhaldas Bandopadhyay. He was born at Berhampore in 1886, Rakhaldas Bandopadhyay was the only son of his parents, Matilal and Kalimati. Originally hailing from Sagardee in the district of Dacca, now in Bangladesh, the ancestors of Matilal settled on the other side of Lalbagh (lately known as Dahapara) under the patronage of Murshid Quli Khan. During the battle of Plassey the family sided with the Nawab and consequently with the latter's discomfiture had to leave their Lalbagh residence. Rakhaldas passed the Entrance Examination with a scholarship from the Krishnanath Collegiate School, Berhampore, in 1900 and got admission to the Presidency College from where he graduated in 1905 and he obtained M.A in History in 1909 from the Calcutta University. Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Saratchandra Bose, two of our eminent nationalist leaders, were his class-mates. Famous historian Bhandarkar encouraged him by praising his collection of photographs of antiquities, Theodore Bloch acquainted him with Western methodology in historical, particularly archaeological, researches. Ramendrasundar Tribedi also enhanced his love of art and archaeology and it was under his direction that Rakhaldas along with some his friends collected antiquities for the Bangiya Sahitya Parishat. In 1911 he served the University of Calcutta as an Honorary Professor of History. In 1917 he became the Superintendent of the Western Circle of the same department and held the same office till 1923. In 1924 he took over the charge of the office of the Superintendent of the Eastern Circle, Archaeological Survey of India, in Calcutta. In 1928 he resigned from

the government service when he was invited to join the Benares Hindu University as the Manindra Chandra Nandy Professor and head of the department of ancient Indian history and culture. He held the post till his premature death in 1930.

Rakhaldas was primarily an archaeologist and his fame rests chiefly on his epoch-making discovery of Mohenjodaro in the Larkana district, Sind in 1922-23, which has pushed back the antiquity of Indian civilization to 5000 years and has linked up India with old civilizations of the world. In course of excavating the ruins of a Buddhist establishment at Mohenjodaro, Rakhaldas recovered certain inscribed seals with pictographic characters markedly resembling those found earlier at Harappa in the Punjab. He was 'quick to appreciate the value of his discovery' and at his suggestion Sir John Marshall undertook excavations at the site. The full significance of the discovery of Rakhaldas was shortly realized when a comparison of the finds from Mohenjodaro and Harappa led Marshall to assign them to a pre-historic civilization far earlier than any known at that time. The discoveries at Mohenjodaro by Rakhaldas were followed by the excavations at Paharpur in the district of Rajshahi in North Bengal in 1925-26. By his excavations there, the archaeologist revealed for the first time 'the general outline of the plan and scheme of decoration of the temple' of the famous Buddhist monastic complex of Somapura of early mediaeval Bengal.²⁸ Apart from his achievements in the field of archaeology, Rakhaldas showed his expertise in other branches of history: epigraphy, palaeography, numismatics, iconography and art-study. He made his debut as an epigraphist in 1909 by editing the Madhainagar grant of Lakshmanasena in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*. His earliest essay in numismatics was published in the 'Numismatic Supplement' of the 'Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal' in 1908 under the title 'Notes on Indo-Scythian coinage.' Apart from the papers on numismatics, Rakhaldas ventured to publish a comprehensive work on a specialized subject like numismatics in

those days, and that too, in his mother tongue Bengali- 'Prachin Mudra' (1915). Apart from analyzing historical and archaeological data, Rakhaldas was well succeeded in synthesizing the facts at his disposal. His 'Age of the Imperial Guptas', was published posthumously in 1931 and the two-volume 'History of Orissa' (1930-31) bear testimony to this remark. Like some present-day historians he felt the necessity of writing history 'from the bottom up' and produced regional histories like 'Bangalar Itihas' and 'History of Orissa' for a better understanding of the general pattern of Indian history. It appears that Rakhaldas, chiefly aimed at discovering the 'dry truth' from the mass of facts and in this respect he seems to have approached the ideal set by Ranke: 'as it actually happened'.²⁹ Rakhaldas was a nationalist and wrote some of his books when patriotic feelings were running high in this country. The echoes of the contemporary political situation may thus be heard in some of his works. Rakhaldas' patriotism was still more articulate in his novels, particularly 'Karuna', which has Skandagupta as its hero. Although some find an undertone of Hindu nationalism as the characteristic of the writings of Rakhaldas, but there is no doubt that Rakhaldas mainly depended on the primary sources for reconstructing ancient Indian history. Another prominent person whose primary interest was in history was Nalininath Dasgupta (1902-1966) who was born in Berhampore and received education in Berhampore, Calcutta and Dacca University. He did research in the department of Pali of Calcutta University. He was an archaeologist and professor of Ancient Indian History and Culture in Calcutta University. He was awarded 'Griffith Award' and 'Sir Asutosh Mukhopadhyay Gold Medal' for doing excel in research. He was associated with Dr. N N Laha edited 'Indian Historical Quarterly'. His major works included 'Prachin itishas', 'Banglai Bauddhadharma', 'Prachin Bharater Itihas', 'The successors of Kumargupta', 'On the Reign of Vijaysena' etc.

The first economic historian of modern India Ramesh Chandra Dutt (1848-1909), whose eminence was due primarily to his work 'Economic History of India (1757-1857)', pointing out the drain of wealth from India to Britain, was for some time in his childhood a student of a local school of Berhampore, most probably Berhampore Collegiate School. His father was a Deputy Collector and had served for some time in Berhampore. Ramesh Chandra was also a member of Indian Civil Service. As a Collector he was transferred to Murshidabad in the last quarter of nineteenth century and with all probability he met Bankim Chandra for the first time in Berhampore. Ramesh Chandra was a supporter of widow remarriage movement. Among his other important writings there are- 'The Peasantry of Bengal' (1874), 'England and India a Record of Progress during a Hundred Years' , 'The Literature of Bengal', 'India in the Victorian Age', 'Open Letters to Lord Curzon on Famines and Land Assessments in India' etc. Historian Kali Kinkar Dutta who rose to the position of the Professor of History, Patna University was an ex-student of Krishnanath College. Among his most important works mention may be made of 'Bihar and the Indian Movement of 1857-59', 'History of the Freedom Movement in Bihar', 'Text Book of Modern Indian History' etc.

A good number of persons, who originally belonged to Murshidabad, had contributed to the development of science, medicine, agriculture, horticulture and floriculture. One of the most celebrated zoologists of the modern era Rambrahmo Sanyal (1850-1908) was born in Mahula, Murshidabad. His father's name was Baldyanath. He passed Entrance Examination from Berhampore Collegiate School and took admission in Calcutta Medical College. He studied there for 3 years then took up for research animal life. He had good contact with the famous Botanist Sir George Benet. He made important contribution to the making of Calcutta Zoo. He was appointed as the superintendent of the Calcutta Zoo in April 1880.³⁰ He contributed to the growth of zoological studies, in 1892 he

published his brilliant work 'A Handbook on the Management of Wild Animals in Captivity in Lower Bengal' and in 1896 'Hours with Nature'. The Handbook was widely acclaimed. A contemporary issue of the famous journal 'Nature' reviewed this and remarked, "Considering the number of zoological gardens in Europe, and their long establishment, it is singular that it should have been left to the superintendent of a zoological garden at Calcutta, and to a native of India withal, to produce the first practical handbook on the management of animals in captivity. The author, who, we believe, is a member of the "Brahmo Somaj", and one of the very few natives of British India that have exhibited any taste for natural history, has been for some years superintendent of the Zoological Garden at Calcutta.....It is certainly a work of considerable interest. In the first place it has the merit of giving us a complete classified list of all the mammals and birds that have been kept alive in the Calcutta Garden.....On the whole we must allow that this volume is a remarkable production, considering the circumstances under which it has been prepared, and that its author deserves great credit for the pains bestowed on its composition, and for much valuable information contained in it.³¹ In 1898 he represented India in the International Congress of Zoology, held in Cambridge.

Ramendrasundar Tribedi (1864-1919) was probably the most illuminated son of the tract who had developed the field of science. He was born in Jemokandi, Murshidabad. His father's name was Gobindasundar. He was a student of Kandi English School and stood first in the Entrance Examination. In 1887 he passed M A with gold medal. In 1888 he was awarded Premchand Raichand scholarship in Physics and Chemistry. In 1892 he started teaching Physics and Chemistry in Ripon College and later on became its Principal- a post he held till his death in 1919.

He wrote to Sadlar Commission on enquiry about the reforms of Calcutta University that, "Western education has given us much; we have been great gainers; but there has been a cost, a cost as regards culture; a cost regards respect for self and reverence for other, a cost as regards the nobility and dignity of life."³² He showed his literary merit for the first time by writing article 'Mahasakti' in 'Navjivan' magazine. He also wrote in other magazines like 'Sadhana', 'Bharati' etc. He wrote 'Bangalakshmir Bratakatha' protesting against the proposal of partition of Bengal. The famous song 'Banglar Mati, Banglar Jal' of Rabindranath Tagore has been inserted in this book. He also proposed for no cooking day, that is 'arandhan', protesting against the proposal for the partition. His most important works included 'Prakriti', 'Jiggasa', 'Nana Katha', 'Pundarikkulkirtipanjika', 'Karma Katha', 'Aids to Natural Philosophy' etc. and the biographies of Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, Maharshi Devendranath, Acharya Max Muller, Umesh Chandra Batabyal etc. He translated the Aitareya Brahmana. All his essays were written in Bengali and they dwelt on a variety of areas like science, philosophy, ancient Indian culture, Hindu religious rituals and social customs, biography, literature, grammar and philology, contemporary social problems etc. He took active part in the development of Bangiya Sahitya Parishat. He was associated with Bangiya Sahitya Parishad for a long time and he also became its secretary. It was acting upon his request that Maharaja Manindra Chandra Nandy of Cossimbazar donated 7 cottas of land at Upper Circular Road for Bangiya Sahitya Parishad. He took active part in the collection of money for the construction of the Parishad building. At his instance Raja Jogindra Narain of Lalgola, Murshidabad agreed to bear the whole expense for the construction of the first story of the Parishat building. He presided over the Science Session of the Seventh Conference of the Bangiya Sahitya Parishat, which took place in Town Hall, Calcutta.

Ramendrasundar felt that science can not, after all, tell the final truth, that is competence to meet one's quest about the things around is dwarfed by the limited nature of the means it employs. The dissatisfied scientist in Ramendrasundar was thus looking for a way out of this failure of science and when 'Jijnasa', a collection of essays, was published in 1904 it was made clear that Tribedi, after all, had reached a plane where he could find answer to the questions left unsettled in science and this plane was philosophy. Science, to him, was basically a human activity, which can be understood only in the context of a central problem of man that emerges against the backdrop of the outer world or the world of nature. In other words, Tribedi approaches science philosophically. Striking hard at the very root of materialist monism in this way, Tribedi now established his own position. Although he had logically repudiated the real existence of the material world, he however, did not dismiss it altogether. He admitted that there was with us a world of matter, but at the same time, also a world of mind. At the very near of the inner world there lies the mind. 'Any attempt to reconcile these two worlds may begin by enquiring into what lies behind this material world. One such attempt may be to take, after Kant, the noumenon or the thing-in-itself or, similarly, to take, after Sankhya philosophy, the 'Avyaktya Prakiti' or the unknowable entity as the ultimate determinant of the material world and to accept, further, that the knowledge about the material world is possible only in the context of this noumenon or 'Avyaktya Prakiti'. But since this is just a movement from one kind of dualism to another Ramendrasundar found it unacceptable. Much as he was in search of a philosophical monism, he tries to establish an identity between the world of mind and the world of matter and this he did by ultimately turning to the teachings of Indian Vedanta.³³ Although Ramendrasundar's epistemological enquiry drove him to a purely metaphysical position the scientist in him, however, never allowed him to get lost in the so-called mist of spiritual other-worldliness. Tribedi took the opportunity of reminding his countrymen that early Indian

civilization, after all did not thrive on the so-called otherworldly values. During the Vedic times people in India had a tremendous attachment to the material needs of life. Ramendrasundar regretted that even sixty years of English education had not brought about any fundamental change in the traditional attitude of our people. Under the impact of English education the countrymen had known a lot and learnt plenty, but had not learnt just how to know and how to learn since there had not grown among them any scientific attitude that could make one a discerning investigator. According to him, from the thirteenth century when Muslim rule was installed in India till his own times when the British Raj in India had been sufficiently strengthened, there had been no change in this basic attitude of the people of India. Indians, with their other-worldliness and their ascetic stoicism, have always looked upon every political change as nothing but an ordain of fate like famine, earthquake, storm and other natural calamities. In the face of natural calamity and accident Indians have learnt simply bear with them without looking for any remedy. Similarly, they have accepted all political change as something to tolerate. Besides this attitudinal difficulty the degenerate social arrangement in India was as well an important cause and this degeneration. He criticized the so-called Brahmanical hegemony over Indian society. He thinks that the Brahmins, for their own convenience, created a rigid caste system, and as a result, people were left utterly divided and fighting with each other, the net consequence of which was that a national unity- that could have been a potent force against any foreign aggression- was totally absent. A close proximity between the sovereign and the subjects which Ramendrasundar finds so much missing in Indian history is, according to him, the most important foundation of nationalism. Despite the presence of other favourable conditions a nation cannot grow, if the political sovereign in a society is alienated from its subjects.

It is in the context of this failure of Indian nationalism that Trebedi looks at his own times and watches confusion and frustration all around. Contact with western culture and introduction of western education, at one time, raised great hopes among the people of the country. But all hopes, Ramenderasundar observes, have been belied. The disillusioned educated class of India, were finding themselves trapped in an artificial atmosphere. For this, however, there was no point in blaming the western education. Indian people are alone responsible for this. Devoid of a nationalist feeling, they have been prone to discard totally India's national tradition. Thus the entire educational system in India has been anything but national. What, then, was badly needed in India of his own times was, according to him, the growth of a healthy patriotism and a strong nationalist sentiment. For this, what was primarily important was an intimate knowledge about the character of our society. To have this knowledge one had to carry on a searching enquiry on the entire body of society. He himself wrote the famous essay on 'Achar' or social custom. Ramendrasundar was writing at a time when under the influence of western education and culture there began a tendency to discard altogether the existing customs and rituals of the society. Since he believed that a nationalist spirit is to be grown in the country on the basis of a careful scrutiny of the various aspects of our social life he was naturally driven to estimate the merit of those social customs and rituals against the perspective of the needs of our society. He argues in 'jajna' or oblation that the Hindu religious practice of oblation should not be taken as a mere performance of some religious rites. It was by doing 'jajna' that man will undergo sacrifice in order to express his gratitude to the great creator. However his philosophical pursuit ultimately led him to take resort to a priori position in as far as, from providing a final explanation of reality, he got stuck to the idea of 'Brahma'- the idea that entirely rests on a nonverifiable assumption.³⁴ He tried his best to establish that the age-old Indian customs and rituals, after all, originated from some social needs and makes it quite

clear that he was very much against rashly removing them in the name of social reform. This shows that while, Tribedi was highly modern and scientific, and at the same time, he could not withdraw his support from the old, if only they are basically Indian.

Thus to know India, to search for her identity happens to be the central mission of Ramendrasundar and, judged in this light, he seems to be carrying on in his time the renaissance movement initiated in nineteenth century Bengal. Since Rammohan – the first milestone in Bengali Renaissance – the Renaissance movement in Bengal had always, been, in essence, a search for the identity of India. This search, however, was carried on in two different directions. While searching for the Indian identity some stalwarts invariably looked to the past glories of India and tried to collect from the old treasure what they took to be the gems of traditional Indian life which, they thought, they could well use for glorifying the image of India. Bhudeb Mukhopadhyay and Swami Vivekananda, among others, may be said to have represented this tradition. At the other extreme were persons like Rammohun and Vidyasagar who sought to discover a new India by cutting many of her old ties, who felt that unless the society was thoroughly reformed the nation could not stand on her own feet and assert her identity. Ramendrasundar Tribedi seems to have taken a middle position between these two extremes. His philosophical thought ultimately succumbs to Vedantic idealism because he believes that Indian way of life can best be known in the light of her own philosophy. Yet he is not totally hostile to western materialism.³⁵ His point is that the fruits of western civilization have, of course, to be utilized in India, but then, the Indian condition and the Indian perspective must never be forgotten. This, however, does not take him so far as to recommend a thorough modernization of Indian society.

This kind of explanation, no doubt, helps us in understanding the mind of Ramendrasundar, but, does not, however, explain why

Tribedi, after all, chooses to take such a middle position and thus inevitably suffers from self-contradiction. Perhaps the only way to have an explanation in this matter, according to Amal Kumar Mukhopadhyay, is to study Ramendrasundar against the background of his contemporary social conditions. The last decade of nineteenth century and the first two decades of twentieth century provided the time-span of Tribedi's writings. This represents an important transitional phase of Indian society. The feudal India was then fully glowing although the budding industrial bourgeoisie, very much after 1905, were desperately looking for a ground to grow on. At such a historical juncture the character of society was naturally a mixed one. It was, no doubt, essentially feudal, but at the same time, it was also having the first taste to capitalist development. Such a mixed pattern of society was bound to have its impact on the highly sensitive educated middle class of that time and Ramendrasundar Tribedi provides a very good example of this queer effect. It was impossible for the educated middle class to abjure their attachment to the feudal India, but, at the same time, it was difficult for them to ignore the signs of impending social change. Thus Ramendrasundar's life and works covered a whole range of activities from teaching to politics to literary activities. No doubt this renaissance personality influenced the life and works of many a greatmen during the period of our study.

The development of ayurveda is an important phenomenon during the whole of nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth century. Kabiraj Gangadhar Sen Roy's (1798- 1885) contribution in this is worth mentioning. He was born in Magura, Jessore and was taught ayurveda by Kabiraj Ramkanta Sen of Rajshahi. He practiced medicine in Murshidabad. Many members of the wealthy zamindars families and nawab family had been treated by him. He authored about 80 books on Kavya, ayurveda, byakarana, smriti, astrology etc. He wrote a note on Charakasamhita viz. 'Jalpakaipataru'. Before him in eleventh and sixteenth century Chakrapani Dutta and Shibdas Sen

wrote notes on the same subject. Gangadhar however corrected the mistakes of their notes. He wrote kavyas like 'Lokalokpurusiya' and 'Durgabadhkavya'. He also wrote commentaries on Manu Samhita. For publishing books he established a press at Berhampore, viz. Pramadbhanjan. He was not in favour of polygamy and supported widow remarriage. But he was not in support of citing scriptures against polygamy, because the scriptures were on the contrary. Rather he wanted the spread of education and creation of consciousness to stop this social evil. About 374 ancient scripts, which were in his possession had been given to Sanskrit College, Calcutta after his death.³⁶ Another exponent of ayurveda Mahamahopadhyay Dwarkanath Sen (1845-1909) though was born in Khandarpara, Faridpur. But he learnt philosophy and ayurveda from the famous Kabiraj Gangadhar of Murshidabad. At the age of 30 he started practicing medicine at Pathuriaghata. He was the first Mahamahopadhyay of the Ayurvedic practitioners.³⁷ In the field of allopathy treatment the name of Dr. Bamandas Mukhopadhyay (1879-1955) is worth mentioning. He was born in Simulia, Murshidabad. He was a famous gynecologist. He passed Entrance Exam in 1899 and F A in 1901 from Berhampore College and took admission in Calcutta Medical College. He was the batchmate of Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy. He was the foremost gynecologist after the death of Kedarnath Das in 1936. In 1937 he was selected as a member of the Royal College of Obstretitians and Gynecologist. He was associated with Chittaranjan Seva Sadan since its inception in 1926. He also had interest in Hindu philosophy. Another remarkable personality Yogiraj Barada Charan Majumdar (sraban 1293- 1.8.1347) was born in Kanchantala, Murshidabad. He passed Entrance Examination from Kanchantala School, and F A and B A from Krishnanath College. He started his career as a teacher in the Nimtita H E School. He served as headmaster in the S N Academy of Lalgola for 25 years. But he was more famous as a yogi (devotee). His associate was Lalbaba of Benaras. He influenced the celebrated poet Nazrul Islam. He

exchanged letters with Mahatma Gandhi. Sri Aurobindo described him as 'the greatest yogi of modern Bengal'. In Calcutta he had some associates. Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose learnt 'Yoga' (meditation) from him. About Yoga he wrote 'Path Harar Path', 'Revealed Twelve' etc.

The fields of agriculture and floriculture also had not been left untouched. Probodh Chandra Dey, FRHS (1862- 1934) was a famous agriculturist who served under the Nawab of Murshidabad and prepared plan his mango grove. He also planned the orchards of the Darbhanga Maharaja and the famous garden in Mysore. He wrote books like 'Krishikshetra', 'Mrittikatattava', 'Bhumi Karshan' etc. Major Sachchidananda Ghosh (1916- 1987) was born in Baghdanga, Murshidabad and passed matriculation from Kandi Raj High School, I S C from Krishnanath College. He joined Indian Army in 1945 and later on became a Major. After independence he worked for some time in TISCO, Jamsedpur. He started practicing medicine at Kandi at 1952. From that time on he started writing articles on medicine, astronomy, flowers etc. in 'Kandi Bandhab', 'Panchajanya', 'Murshidabad Barta', 'Amra Manus'. He was also writing for 'Compus'. He established the Kandi branch of Indian Medical Association. He was associated with Friend's Rosery of Lucknow. The first flower show was organized in Murshidabad at his house.³⁸ He first started cultivating Bonsai and Hidroponix in that region. He made new type of Bogenvalia viz. Anindita, which received international recognition. He also made new variety of flower *Chandramallika* viz. Alkananda and Ananda.

In the field of art and fine art Murshidabad did not lag far behind Calcutta, the metropolitan city. The various ways of upholding the cultural development was clear in the mind of the illustrious Maharaja Manindra Chandra Nandy of Kasimbazar. He established the Kasimbazar College of Music as early as 1898 in Kasimbazar.

Radhika Prasad Goswami, the renowned musician had then retired from the organization of the Tagores in Calcutta and was living in his village. Manindra Chandra asked him to be the Principal of the College and also prepare a curriculum, which would not only create classical musicians and drummers but also prove that such North Indian classical 'kheyals' and 'thumris' could also be sung in the Bengali language. Two of the disciples of Goswami became famous. One was his nephew Jnan Prasad Goswami, but the person to acclaim all India fame and to start a school of his own in the gharana style was the famous Girija Shankar Chakrabarti. The Maharaja fully sponsored him, taking him to the various music conferences all over India, not only proving the great talent of the master but also demonstrating that highly conservative Hindusthani classical music could also be sung in Bengali. Girija Shankar Chakrabarti (1885-1948) was born in Berhampore, Murshidabad. Girija Shankar was artist as well as a singer. He was taught for 8 years in Government Art School. He was taught singing by Radhika Prasad Goswami of Berhampore Sangeet Vidyalaya, and by Md. Ali Khan, a descendant of Tansen in Delhi. He was the disciple of Ustaad Bare Munna Khan of Lucknow. In the house of 101, Harrison Road of Kshetri he learned Thumri from Ganpat Rao and Muijuddin Khan. He learned classical style from Badal Khan. He mastered over khayal style in Bengali. Jnan Prakash Ghosh, Sudhirlal Chakrabarti, Naina Devi, Tarapada Chakraborty and Sukhendu Goswami were some of his famous disciples. Girija Shankar was a great teacher and singer, he did pioneering work to popularize Kheyal and Thumri in Bengal. He also trained Eva Dutta, Gita Mitra and Arati Dutt, possibly the first group of Bengali girls to win all India fame as kheyal or thumri singers. Another artist Prasanna Kumar Banik was born in Dacca. He was famous for playing tabla. He learnt it from Ata Hossain, who was a court member of Murshidabad nawab. He was more famous in Calcutta. He wrote 'Tabla Tarangini' and 'Mridanga Prabesika'. Celebrated artist Kshitindra Nath Majumdar (1891-1975) was born in Jagtai

Murshidabad. He was one of the favoured students of Abanindranath. He was a teacher of Indian School of Oriental Art. In 1942 he joined Allahabad University as an art teacher. Vaishnava ideal was the source of his art. His famous paintings were 'Danalila', 'Radhika', 'The Moon', 'Kach O Debjani' etc. Eminent artist Hirachand Dugar (1898-1951) was born in Jiaganj, Murshidabad. He was born in a Jain family, which had been shifted from Bikaner. In 1915 he took admission in the Government Art School at Calcutta and then went to Santiniketan. He was one of the first four students of Kala Bhavan, which was established in 1919. The other three students were Ardhendu Prasad bandopadhyay, Krishnakinkar Ghosh and Dharendra Krishna Debbarma. They were taught by Nandalal Basu and Asit Kumar Haldar. While a student his paintings were highly praised at the annual art exhibition of Indian Society of Oriental Art. It is said that he was the just successor of the Abanindranath style. He was taught the art of Mughal painting, miniature sculpture of ivory etc. from Iswarprasad Barma. In 1922 he went back to Jiaganj. In 1946 he once again started painting, this time mainly landscape. In 1949 he traveled widely in Rajasthan and drew sketch of the Jain temples of Satrunjay and Palitana. He died at Satrunjay in 1951 while drawing. Indra Dugar (1918-1989) was born in Murshidabad. He was taught drawing by his father Hirachand and not in any institution. Later he became a disciple of Nandalal Basu at Santiniketan. He was famous for his drawings of different types of flowers, rivers and puranic gods. He drew murals in the Jain temple at Calcutta. In Ramgarh (1939), Jaipur (1949), and Amritsar (1956) Sessions of the National Congress he decorated the stage and pandal. In 1946 one of his drawings was selected for the Exhibition organized by UNESCO, which was held in Paris.³⁹ In 1964 at least eighty exhibitions were organized in West Germany with his paintings. Many more were organized in London, Russia, Italy, America, Japan etc. But he did not go abroad any time. In 1944 he compiled one article 'Nandalal' along with the art critic Dijendra Moitra, when Nandalal was alive. Charu

Roy (1890-1971) was born in Berhampore. In 1911 he passed matric from Berhampore and B.Sc. in 1918 from Presidency College. He was interested in painting. He learnt it from Brojo Paul, a sculptor of Berhampore. He was associated with Indian Society for Oriental Art. He was also associated with the magazine 'Bharati'. In 1922 he joined 'Anandabazar Patrika' in its editorial section, he also worked as cartoonist. 'C.R' was marked on cartoons drawn by him. He for the first time made calligraphy with the Bengali alphabets. He was also associated with the world of theatre. He was the art director of the drama 'Sita' which had been directed by Sisir Bhaduri. Later he directed the movie (1929) 'Love of a Mughal Prince', and acted in some other movies. He edited the first cinema magazine in Bengali, viz. 'Bioscope'. Another filmmaker Manju De (1926-1989) was born in Berhampore, Murshidabad. She was an actress and director. She passed BA in 1945 from Asutosh College. Her debut film was '42' directed by Hemen Gupta, released in 1949. She acted in Ratnadwip, Nil Akaser Niche, Kabuliwala, Jighansa etc. She directed the film 'Sargo Hote Bidai', which had been released in 1964. She also directed 'Sajarur Kanta'. She represented India in London Commonwealth Motoring Conference. She learnt cinematography in London.

In the field of theatre the members of intelligentsia showed their genius. Raja Bahadur Pratap Chandra Sinha, CSI (1827-1866) was born in Kandi. He was adopted by the royal Sinha family of Calcutta. He and his younger brother Iswar Chandra established 'Belgachia Natyasala'. It was inaugurated through the staging of the play Ratnabali, written by Ram Narayan Tarkaratna, on 31.7.1858. This 'natyasala' was closed down in 1861. He was the vice-president of the British Indian Association and a friend of Vidyasagar. During the initial years of the Calcutta Medical College and Hospital, that is, in 1848 he donated Rs. 50000 to this institute. Bidhayak Bhattacharya (1907-1986) was born in Jiagunj, Murshidabad. He was famous literateur and dramatist. He was associated with 'Amritabazar' and

'Yugantar' patrika. He was a professor of Rabindrabharati University. He directed various plays that included 'Matir Ghar', 'Bis Bachar Age', 'Rakter Dak', 'Nati Binodini' etc. Some of these were staged in Rangmahal and Rangamancha. He wrote novels like 'Dhuli', 'Asampta', 'Ratri Jader Din' etc. In the sphere of culture the students of Krishnanath College School had made their modest contributions in the twentieth century as well. The late Amal Banerji, who had a meteoric rise on the Calcutta Stage and Utpal Dutta, the famous Cinema star were the members of the alumni of this school.

The fields of singing and fine arts did not remain untouched. Sachinandan Das, who lived in the second half of the nineteenth century, was born in Manikyahar, Murshidabad. His father was Banamali who was famous for playing 'Khol'. Sachinandan learnt playing 'Khol' from his father and kirtan from Krishnasundar Thakur of Manikyahar. Later he formed a 'sampradaya'. Many gave him the position next only to another famous kirtan singer Rasik Das. Santosh Sengupta (1909-1984) a distinguished Rabindrasangeet and Nazrulgiti artist though was born at Bikrampur, Dacca, learnt thumri from Manju Sahib of Berhampore. Later he learnt singing from Nazrul Islam, Himangsu Dutta and Kamal Dasgupta. Worth mentioning his dance-drama 'Chitrangada', 'Chandalika', 'Sapmochon', 'Shyama', 'Balmiki Prativa' which had been published. Radharani Devi (1913-1997) was born in Jiagunj, Murshidabad. Her father's name was Mahendra Narayan Chandra. Hari Sadhan Das taught her singing in the early life. She was proficient in singing and acting. She was known as the 'Empress of Kirtan' (Kirtan samrajny). She acted in the movies like 'Manmoyee Girl's School', 'Ramanuja', 'Maya Kanan', 'Chandidas' etc. She helped the freedom fighters in collecting subscriptions by singing songs while participating in processions.⁴⁰ Renowned folk singer Abdul Alim (1931-1974) was born in Talibpur, Murshidabad. He completed his education only up to class VI. He could not take formal instruction for folk singing being too poor. But he was singing

on many festivals. Sayyid Badruddoja, a resident of Murshidabad, helped him to take instruction from Sayyid Golam Ali. He also came to be associated with Nazrul Islam and another folk singer Abbasuddin. Kanailal Seal, an instrument player took him as his disciple. After the Partition of 1947 he shifted to Dacca. There he flourished as a Radio artist. He was playback singer of about 50 films including 'Mukh O Mukhos', 'Padma Nadir Majhi', 'Lalan Fakir', 'Dayal Mushid' etc. However he supported the government decision of broadcasting of Rabindrasangeet from Radio and Television. He was awarded posthumous 'Ekuser Padak' by the Bangladesh government.

The consciousness in art and literature was accompanied by a strong sense of nationalism, and nationalist struggle gained momentum in the district of Murshidabad during the period of our study. We find both the moderate and the extremist tendencies among the freedom fighters, who had originally belonged to Murshidabad. Krishnanath College, we can say, was the nerve center of the freedom struggle. A number of nationalists were either teaching in the college or had been the students of the college. Even after independence a good number of orators flourished as politicians and strengthened the democratic set up of the country. Raibahadur Baikunthanath Sen (1843-1921) was born in Alampur, Burdwan, but he passed Entrance Exam from Berhampore Collegiate School in 1859, B A in 1863 from Presidency College and B L in 1864. He started practicing law first in Calcutta High Court and then in Berhampore Court. He served as honorary magistrate for 28 years, chairman of Berhampore municipality for ten years and also served as an advisor to the Kasimbazar maharaja. He became a member of the Congress Education Committee in 1900 and president of reception committee of the Congress session in Calcutta in 1917. He was a member of the National Council of Education and Bengal Provincial Committee. He was the first editor of the news weekly 'Murshidabad Hitaishi' (1893). Pattavisitaramaya in his History of the Congress described Ambika

Charan Majumdar, Surendra Nath Banerjee, Bhupendra Nath Basu and Baikuntha Nath Sen as the 'old guard' of the congress, though; Baikuntha Nath Sen was in the forefront in all kinds of progressive works of his age. As a part of the Swadeshi movement 'Berhampore Leather Manufacturing Company Limited' was established, with the patronage of the Maharaja Mahindra Chandra Nandy. Maharaja himself was the Chief of the Board of Directors of the Company. Among others Khan Bahadur Khondakar Fazle Rubbi and the like were the members of the Board.

Another lawyer –political leader of eminence was Kali Krishna Banerjee who was born in October 1864 at Saidabad in the district of Murshidabad. His early education commenced at the Krishnanath Collegiate School, Berhampore. Within a very short time he had to move to Calcutta along with his father where his father had been transferred as Superintendent of the Alipore Collectorate. Amrita Bazar Patrika of 15th March, 1938 reports that in 'Calcutta he entered the David Hare School and got the great Asutosh as the rival.' He passed the Entrance Examination from that school in 1879 with scholarships and getting higher marks than his rival and in the First Arts Examination he stood second in the University from the Presidency College and 'left his worthy rival third in the list. He graduated from the same College in the year 1884 and won a gold medal by topping his friend in some of the subjects. He started practicing law in Berhampore and became the President of the Berhampore Bar in 1922, on the death of Baikuntha Nath Sen and he remained in that respected position till his death in September 1936. He took keen interest in all the benevolent and public activities of Murshidabad. From 1918 onwards he was for some time a Commissioner of the Berhampore Municipality and in 1918 also was elected the Vice-President of the Murshidabad Association. As a staunch educationist he took much interest in the educational affairs of the town. The monumental work of his life was the establishment of

a High English School at Gorabazar. He was very fond of his association with the Sanskrit scholars. In 1915 he was unanimously elected Chairman of the Bengal Brahman Sammilani. In matters of politics he was a follower of Surenda Nath Banerjee and belonged to the old school of Indian politicians. He was a sincere patriot. Patriotism and the spirit to fight against communal harmony were combined in another personality Moulavi Abdus Samad. He was born in a higher middle class family in 1861, in the district of Murshidabad. He was an eminent lawyer who was elected as the President of the Berhampore Bar. At the same time he was the leader of the Murshidabad District Congress, and was elected as the President of the Reception Committee, which was formed for the conference of the Bengal Provincial Congress, which was organized in December 1931. He was a member of the Bengal Legislative Council. He fought against the government policy of creation of separate electorate for the Hindus and Muslims and in the process argued against Suhrawardi. He considered it as serving the interest of the imperialist rulers and not the Hindus. He died in 1945. Another prominent nationalist Brojo Bhushan Gupta (1869- 1940) was born in Panchananpur, Murshidabad. In 1905 he participated in the anti-partition movement. He established 'Jatiya Adarsha Vidyalaya' in Berhampore. In 1921 he became the president of the District Congress Committee. Desbandhu Chittaranjan Das visited his house. In 1927 he presided over the 'Jela Chatra Sammilani' which took place in Krishnanath College School.

Gandhian leader Shyamapada Bhattacharya (1892-1973) was born at Berhampore, Murshidabad. Although he was a Gandhian, but in his house the political leaders of different ideologies often met. He was imprisoned in 1930. At that time the British government cancelled his lawyer's license for one year, other advocates of Bengal protested against this. He was again arrested during 1942 movement. More than once he was elected to the legislature. Another luminary

Nalinakshya Sanyal (1898-1987) was born in Nadia but was educated in Berhampore, then in Presidency College and London School of Economics. He did his Ph.D under the supervision of Harold Laski. He taught economics and commerce for 35 years in Calcutta University. He did not take any dowry at the time of his marriage and did not discriminate the invitees on the ground of caste. Poet Nazrul Islam also attended the ceremony. For hoisting Congress flag in a government building in London he was imprisoned. Like other nationalists he also did not accept the formation of Simon Commission. He was prominent leader of Bengal Provincial Congress Committee. He presided over the Congress session in Calcutta in 1933. In 1967 along with Ajoy Mukherjee he established 'Bangla Congress' but later joined the PDF ministry of Prafulla Kumar Ghosh.

Annada Prasad Mandal (1882-1977) was born in Katsihi, Burdwan. He passed B A from Berhampore College and passed Law from Ripon College in 1922. He was imprisoned for six years for joining Civil Disobedience Movement. He became a member of legislature of undivided Bengal in 1946. He was elected a member of West Bengal State Assembly in 1952. He had been a member of Burdwan District Congress for five years and joined Bhoodan movement. He established Kalna Dairy and many educational institutions. Another prominent political activist Bijoy Singh Nahar (1906-1997) was born in Azimgunj, Murshidabad. Politically he was Gandhian. At the age of 22 he became a member of Bengal Provincial Congress Committee. He was a councilor of Calcutta Corporation in 1933-34 and worked with mayor Subhas Chandra. For about 25 years from 1952 he was MLA elected from Bowbazar and Chowranghee. He was deputy chief minister of Bengal when Ajoy Mukherjee was chief minister. In 1977 he joined Janata Party and in that year he was elected MP from Calcutta north-west constituency. He was also associated with different Sports and Cultural associations.

Most prominent of the revolutionary, extremist Nalinikanta Bagchi (1896-1918) was born in Kanchantala of Murshidabad. While a student of Berhampore Krishnanath College he joined the revolutionary works. He tried to make the Indian soldiers up in revolt in Danapur. He also worked in Gwahati and Dacca. He was injured in a police firing and died in the prison of Dacca. Another revolutionary Kedareswar Sengupta was influenced by Pulin Das and joined Anusilan Samiti of Dacca. For his revolutionary works in north India under Rash Behari Basu he was arrested from Berhampore. He was arrested again for maintaining link between the revolutionary terrorists of Bengal and Bombay. Later on he was arrested for joining Quit India Movement. Prabhash Chandra De (1885- 1954) was born in Calcutta but he taught English in Berhampore Krishnanath College, Krishnanagar College and Victoria College of Cooch Behar. Later from 1931- 48 he taught in Ripon College and Manindra College. He was associated with the revolutionary secret society 'atmonnati'. But he lost job for the police action. The female nationalists also came forward. Labanyaprabha Dutta (1888- 1971) was born in Berhampore, Murshidabad. She was married to Jatindrath Dutta of Khulna, at the age of nine. She was inspired to join the political activities by her elder brother Surendranath Roy. During the swadeshi movement in 1906 she had been using swadeshi goods and was helping the boys joining swadeshi movement. Her husband died when she was 23 years of age. She then spent some time in Puri and Nabadwip. In 1930 she and her daughter Shovarani established an organization called 'Anandamath' for serving the motherland. In 1932 at the time of Civil Disobedience Movement she was imprisoned for 18 months. She observed fast for 14 days to fight for the right of the widows to cook food for them in the female ward of the Presidency jail and was successful in fulfilling her demands. She was the secretary of the South Calcutta Congress, secretary of the female sub-committee of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee (1939) and its President from 1940-45. Jahanara Imam (1929- 1994) was born at Sundarpur, Murshidabad. Her father

was Saiyad Abdul Haque, who was a deputy collector. She led the anti-communal movement in Bangladesh. She passed I A from Rangpur Carmichael College, and B A from Brabourne College, Calcutta. Famous architect Sarikul Imam was her husband. She went to East Pakistan after partition and started teaching. She lost her husband and son at the time of war of liberation. She was given the title 'Sahid Janani' by the people there. She formed public opinion and organized movement against the communal leaders like Golam Azad. Her prominent works included 'Ekattarer Dinguli', 'Cancer-er sangay' sahabas', 'Buker Bhetor Agun', 'Jibon Mrityu' etc. Another freedom fighter Saroj Kumar Roychoudhury (1903-1972) was born in Malihati Murshidabad. When he was studying B A at Berhampore College he was influenced by Subhas Chandra Bose and Kiran Shankar Ray to take up swadeshi activities. Later he took admission in the 'Jatiya Vidyapith' at Calcutta. He belonged to Kallol literary group and wrote for the first time in 'Baikali'. He edited one monthly journal 'Bartaman'. He started writing autobiography in 'Anukta' magazine sometimes before his death. He wrote many articles and novels like 'Natun Fasal', 'Kalo Ghoda', 'Hansabalaka', 'Satabdir Abhisap' etc. Prominent freedom fighter Durgapada Sinha (1910-1996) was born in Jiaganj, Murshidabad. He was the member of the West Bengal state assembly from 1952- 62, from 1964-67 he was Member of Legislative Council. From 1964-67 he was the president of the Murshidabad District Congress. He was a member of AICC for 17 years. Before his death he donated all his properties to Students' Health Home including his residential house in Jiaganj. Prafulla Kumar Gupta (1914-1986) was born in Gorabazar area of Berhampore. Inspired by Pannalal Dasgupta he joined the freedom struggle after giving resignation from the post of Manager of Imperial Glass Factory. He remained imprisoned from 1932- 37. He wrote many articles in English and Bengali magazines and newspapers. He wrote books like- 'Rajniti o Bharat', 'Satabarsher Alope Sri Aurobindo', 'Swadhinata

Andolone Murshidabad', 'Chasir Mukti Kon Pathe?', 'Bharatiya Mahabidroho', 'Sahitya o Sahittik' etc.

Prominent political leader Tridib Choudhury (1911-1997) passed Matriculation from Berhampore Krishnanath Collegiate School (presently known as, Krishnath College School) and later passed I A from Krishnanath College. He lived in secret place after Chittagong Armoury Raid in April 1930, on the direction of his group. He organized revolutionary Anusilan Samity at Berhampore but he was imprisoned. While in jail he passed B A in 1933 and M A in 1936 from the University of Calcutta. In 1937 he was elected the Office Secretary of the Congress Parliamentary party. He worked as close associate of Subhas Chandra Bose from 1937-40. In March 1940 he resigned from Congress Socialist Party and formed Revolutionary Socialist Party along with Jogesh Chatterjee, Pratul Ganguly, Rabi Sen, Trailokyanath Chakrabarty and the like. In July 1955 he joined the freedom struggle of Goa and he was imprisoned there till January 1957. He was elected MP for consecutive seven times from Berhampore. He was the vice-president of the United Trade Union Congress. He edited 'The Call' i.e. the mouthpiece of the party and assistant editor of 'Kranti'. He wrote many books like 'Right-Left-Right- The Communist Dillemma', 'Marxbad Leninbader Sapakshe' etc. Another political leader Nani Bhattaharya (1917-1993) was born in Kasimbazar, Murshidabad. He passed matriculation from the school in Jiaganj. He was associated with Anusilan Samity in his early life. He was also instrumental in the foundation of Revolutionary Socialist Party in 1940. He was imprisoned for five years for taking active part in fighting against imperialism. He also established trade unions for the Railway Workmens' and the tea garden Labourers. He became the editor of the mouthpiece of party, viz. 'Ganabarta'. He was the health minister of the Left Front government from 1977- 1982 and Minister for Irrigation from 1982- 1987. He became the state secretary of his party in 1988. He was elected MP in 1989 and 1992. Eminent

leader Bimal Chandra Sinha (1917-1961) was born in Paikpara, Calcutta. He mastered Persian, Sanskrit and philosophy. He stood first in B A and M A examinations. He was a member of 'Bangiya Babosthapak Sabha' (1946). He served as minister from 1956- 61. He wrote many books like 'Bankim Prativa', 'Samaj o Sahitya', 'Banglar Chasi' etc. Under the influence of Suresh Majumdar he gave leadership in the formation of Rabindra Bharati and was a secretary of this association. Another eminent person and political leader of the modern era Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal (1901-1990) was a lawyer. He passed BA with English honours from Krishnanath College and M A from Calcutta University. He had been practicing mainly at Berhampore and other courts of Bengal. He was close associate of Subhas Chandra Bose and Sarat Chandra Bose. He was arrested in 1930 at Berhampore for joining Civil Disobedience Movement. He was elected as a Congress member in 1937 election and also elected as the Chief Whip of the Congress under the direction of Bose. In 1942 he was again arrested for joining Quit India Movement. He represented the undivided Presidency Division in the Central Legislature during 1946 interim election. In 1947 he resigned from his post in the Congress Party and the Central Legislature. From 1957-64 he was the leader of the opposition in the Legislative Council of Bengal. From 1970-76 he remained a member of Rajya Sabha as a Left Front member. He was elected MP from Jangipur as a Left candidate. He wrote books like 'Hajar Duarir hajar niswas', 'Mayer Maya' etc.

In the field of games and sports there were many whose claims are no less than any prominent players of the metropolitan city. Krishnanath College School enjoyed unquestioned supremacy in the field of Sports. With the appointment of the late Joseph Arulananthum as the Headmaster of the school in 1919, a new chapter in the history of her sporting activities began. He had the good fortune of securing the services as Games masters of such eminent sportsmen as Moni Das, the famous player of Mohan Bagan,

Jaminikanta Bhattacharjee and Jitendranath Chakrabarty. Celebrated footballer Karuna Shankar Bhattacharya (1910- 1978), later Captain of the Mohan Bagan Club, Calcutta was also its alumnus. He was a member of the first Indian football team that toured South Africa in 1934, and Captain of the first I F A team that toured Australia in 1938.

Thus the beginning of formulation and even articulation of a secular, nationalist identity could be traced back to the nineteenth century. The period was the formative stage of the political, economic and cultural rights. The intelligentsia in the moffusil areas, particularly Murshidabad was involved in a process of negotiations and the confrontations with the colonial authorities. Their works were humanistic, secular and national, in which we find the contemporary western modern ideas as well as the traditional identity. In their love for countrymen they were the men of original ideas. Their works created awareness, which would in turn added a new dimension in the freedom struggle and guided the developments in the post – independence era.

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