CHAPTER 1
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

No critical attempt has so far been made to reconstruct the history of the socio-religious reform movements in Bengal during the nineteenth century. The present study covers four important socio-religious reform movements in Bengal during the nineteenth century e.g. (i) Farā'īdī movement, (ii) Tariqah-i-Muhammadiya movement, (iii) Titu Mir and his religious reforms movement in Bengal and (iv) Ahle Hadith movement. In collecting data for this study, we consulted original sources with critical scrutiny.

A few works on socio-religious reform movements in Bengal, especially during the later half of the nineteenth century.

1. (a) James Wise : Notes on the Raees, Castes and Trades of Eastern Bengal, London A.D. 1884 (Printed a few copies for the private use of the government). In this work Wise made an outline of different religious and professional groups of Muslim including those who attempted to introduce religious reform.

(b) W.W. Hunter : Our Indian Musalmans, (London A.D. 1871). The author made an attempt to study the political implications of the religious reform movements.

(c) Syed Ameer 'Ali : "A. Cry for the Indian Mohammedans", Nineteenth Century, New York, vol. xii, A.D. 1882, p. 183f. In this study Amīr 'Ali tried to ascertain the position of the rapidly disappearing Muslim Upper Class.
century have been produced. Four modern studies\textsuperscript{1} have
devoted considerable space to the nineteenth century Muslim
socio-religious reform movements in Bengal though their
main concern lies with different subjects. Besides, a
few articles have also been published on the socio
religious reform movements in Bengal during the nineteenth
century. In these studies, the socio religious reform
movements in Bengal during the nineteenth century did not
receive as much attention as it deserves in its
socio-religious as well as in its socio economic aspects.

2. a) Dr. A.R. Mallick: British Policy and the Muslims in
Bengal, 1757-1856, a study of the development of the
Muslims in Bengal with special references to their

b) Dr. Muhammad 'Abdul Bari : A Comparative Study of the
Early Wahabi Doctrines and Contemporary Reform
Movements in Indian Islam (Ph. D. Thesis submitted
in Queen's College, Oxford University, 1953).

c) Dr. Muin-ud-din Ahmad Khan : History of the Farā'īḍī
Movement in Bengal (Ph. D. thesis, published by the

d) Dr. Qeyamuddin Ahmad : The Wahibi Movement in India,
published by Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, Calcutta -
1966.
Source materials fall into following groups:

1) Sources on the contemporary socio-religious conditions of the Muslims in Bengal.

2) Sources on the Faraidi Movement.
   (a) Faraidi sources, (b) Contemporary sources (c) Government records.

3) Sources on the Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah, Titu Mir's Movement and Ahle-Hadith Movement.

1. Sources on the Contemporary Socio-economic conditions of the Muslims in Bengal:—

   (i) Hafiz 'Abd al Shakur: Ḥiṣn Wajib al-Idhān Milād wa Qiyām par (Urdu), Calcutta, A.H. 1295; Criticism of Qiyām or the practice of standing in the milad.

   (ii) Maulānā Wilayat 'Ali: 'Amal bil-Ḥadith (Persian), circa, A.D., 1837 (copy in the Asiatic Society of Pakistan): Exposition of the Maulana's policy of encouraging the following of the prophetic tradition in preference to the prescriptions of the schools of law or madhab.

   (iii) Maulānā Faiḍ Ahmad: Fatwa on the validity of Fatihah in Persian.

(v) Maulānā Saif Allah Khan; Fatwa on the validity of milād Sharif in Urdu.


2. Farā'īdī sources:

a. (i) Inscription:

Tomb inscription of Haji Shari'at Allah, the founder of the Farā'īdī movement. According to Muinuddin Ahmad Khan¹ author of History of the Farā'īdī movement in Bengal says that, "the existence of this inscription was not known to the scholars before 1957, and it was recovered by him from the descendents of Haji Shari'at Allah. It was then critically examined, edited and published in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan"².

¹ Dr. Muinuddin Ahmad Khan: History of the Farə'īdī Movement, p. 19.
Again Dr. M.A. Khan says, "the said inscription consists of ten lines of commentary on the life and character of Haji Shariat Allah in Arabic language, which enable us for the first time to fix decisively the chronology of his life and to make a number of important corrections of the views advanced by earlier writers including in the Encyclopaedia of Islam. It was originally fixed in the surrounding wall of the Haji's grave began to be mashed away by the rivers Arialkhan (Padma), not long after his death, the inscription was collected by Dudu Miyan (the Haji's son) and preserved at his residence. In 1957, (at the request of M.A. Khan), the inscription was presented to the Asiatic Society of Pakistan (Dhaka) as a gift by Maulānā Abu Khalid Rashid al Din Ahmad alias Badsha Miyan, the grandson of Dudu Miyan and the present head of the Farā'īdis, which he inherited from his father Khan Bahadud Sa'id al Din Ahmad, on Badsha Miyan's election to the headship in A.D. 1906".

ii) A hand written document on a stamp paper signed by Dudu Miyan on the 22nd Paus, B.S. 1255/4th January, 1849, giving, power of legal attorney to Munshi Faid al-Din Mukhtar, has been recovered by M.A. Khan, from the descendants of Dudu Miyan. Being a legal document,

1. Dr. Muinuddin Ahmad Khan, op. cit., pp. 19-20.
(iii) A fatwa (i.e., legal decision) on the unlawfulness of holding congregational prayers of Friday and 'Id in the villages of Bengal. This is an important document, composed in mixed Arabic and Urdu languages (most of the Urdu portion being the translation of Arabic passages) and printed on a big sheet of paper measuring $16\frac{1}{2} \times 26\frac{1}{2}$ inches and consisting 91 lines in small script. It was sponsored by Maulānā Abu Yahya Muhammad Noor al-Din son of the famous Farā'īdī theologian Khalīfah 'Abd al-Jabbar of Faridpur district, and was approved and signed by twenty Farā'īdī theologians of Eastern Bengal. It gives in a nutshell the views and arguments of the Farā'īdīs on the subject.

(iv) Durr-i-Muhammad Puthi, pp. 9-138, Bengali text dealing with Farā'īdī doctrines and the life and character of the Fara'īdī leader. From the textual evidence, the completion and publication of the work can be dated in between 1903 and 1906.

2. This copy of the fatwa was recovered by M.A. Khan from a village in the Chandpur subdivision of Tippera district in 1958; (see M.A. Khan, op. cit., p. 20).
Although the puthi is written in Bengali language, the preponderance of Arabic and Persian words in the composition indicates that the writer was a skilful theologian. Every new argument is begun with a tag or passage from the Qur'an, prophetic tradition, fatwa or any other book of religion, which is reproduced in the original Arabic, Persian or Urdu, and the Bengali portion which follows represents an exposition of the quotation. Hence, we find about 51 quotations of this, which put together even independently of the Bengali, give us a fair idea of the Farā'iḍī doctrines.

(v) Nazim al-Din Puthi, pp. 1-120, in Bengali language dealing with Farā'iḍī doctrines. Though the work is a reproduction of Durr-i-Muhammad's Puthi, the first 31 and odd pages of Nazim al-Din's work gives us an idea of the Farā'iḍī attitude towards the important problems of ijtihad (i.e., the principle of fresh investigation into the points of law and rules of morality) and taqlid (i.e., imitation of the authoritative prescriptions of the Schools of law):

(vi) Wazir 'Ali : Muslim Ratnahar, being a sketch of life and career of the Farā'iḍī leader from the earliest time down to B.S. 1335. It was published about 30 years back and is somewhat carelessly written. It is in the form of a puthi and consists of 55 pages.
(vii) Munshi 'Abd al-Halim : Haji Shari'at Allah, 22 folios, a manuscript biography of Haji Shari'at Allah in Bengali. The manuscript is claimed to have been written on the basis of the family tradition of his ancestors. It is said that his grandfather, Maulānā Ihsan Allah was, a contemporary of Haji Shari'at Allah and both of them were collegues at the religious seminars of Makka. In his later life, Maulānā Ihsan Allah was made a Khalīfah by the Haji and after the former's death the position of Khalīfah was inherited by his son and thereafter by his grandson, Munshi 'Abd al-Halim, the author of the manuscript. The author died in the year 1928, at the age of 70. The manuscript is highly informative about Haji Shari'at Allah's life.

(viii) Maulānā 'Adil al-dīn : Halat-i-Kar (Guzari, 27 folios, a manuscript biography of Haji Shari'at Allah and his successors down to 1958, in Persian. The author was a Fara'īdī theologian and a disciple of Khan Bahadur Said al-Dīn, the father of the then present head of the Farā'īdīs. He was a resident of Madaripur, and died in 1958 at the age of 97. The present manuscript was written by him at the request of Khan Bahadur Sa'īd al Din.
(ix) A handwritten sanad granted by Abu Khalid Rashid al-Din Ahmad, the then the Head of the Farā'īḍīs, confirming the hereditary right of Khilafat of Munshi 'Irфан al-Din of the village Bajari Khula in the interior of Tippera district, in A.D. 1936. This is an evidence of the living influence of the Farā'īḍī movement in an attenuated form down to the present day.

b) Contemporary Sources :-

(i) Bengal Criminal Judicial Consultations (Lower Provinces) 3 April, 1832, No. 6 : Roobukoree of the Magistrate of Dhaka Jalalpore, 29 April, 1831 (preserved in the India Office Library, London). It is a Ru-ba Kari or an official report of the District Magistrate of Dhaka Jalalpur (which consisted of the modern districts of Dhaka and Faridpur) on a criminal suit instituted against Haji Shariat Allah and his followers for allegedly assaulting a village of their opponents in the district of Dhaka in April, 1831. The document was edited and published by M.A. Khan in the journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan¹.


(v) H. Biveridge : The District of Bakarganj, its history and statistics, London A.D. 1876, pp.339-41 : Description of an outrage of the Farā'īdīs on the indigo factory of Mr. Dunlop in A.D. 1846, written on the basis of the letters of a Magistrate dated the 20th February, 1847 and the 20th July 1847.


(c) Government Records:


(ii) Selection from the Records of Bengal, No. XXXIII, Papers related to Indigo Cultivation in Bengal, Calcutta, A.D. 1860, 1211 pages.

(iii) Pamphlet on India, the Great Wahhabi Case, being a full report of the Proceedings in the matters of Ameer Khan and Hashmatdad Khan (at the High Court of Calcutta), Calcutta, A.D. 1870.

(iv) Lewis A. Mendes : Report on the Proceedings in the matters of Ameer Khan and Hashmatdad Khan, Part II being the appeal case of No. III listed above in the Calcutta High Court, Calcutta, A.D. 1871.

(v) Hafiz 'Abdullah Ghazipuri : Ibra'-i-Ahl-i-Hadith wal-Qur'an mimmafi jami'al shawahid min al-Tuhmat Wa'l Buhtan (Urdu), Benaras, A.H., 1304 : Being reproduction of the proceedings of a legal suit between the Hanafis and the Ahl-i-Hadith.

(vi) Translation of the proceedings held in two cases tried in 1847 before the Secessions Judge of Dhaka in which Dudu Miyan and 63 of his Followers belonging to the sect of Hajees were charged with wounding, plunder, Arson A.C., being the proceedings of the trial of Fara'idi leader Dudu Miyan and 63 of his followers in the case of their alleged attack on Mr. Dunlop's indigo factory at Panch Char involving the kidnapping of the
Hindu manager of the factory. Military Orphan Press, Calcutta, 1848, 314 + 40 pages. It is referred to hereafter as Trial of Dudu Miyan.

(vii) A report of the Collector of Faridpur showing the items of taxes and illegal cesses, dated A.D. 1872.


(ix) A part of the Collector of Faridpur with regard to the rate of land revenues in the district, dated A.D. 1892.

(x) Muin-ud-Din Ahmad Khan: Selections from Bengal Government Records on Wahhabi Trials, 1863-1890 being selections from the records of the Government of Bengal and Madras relation to the activities of the follower of Sayyed Ahmad Shahid in Bengal, Bihar, Delhi and Madras, Asiatic Society of Pakistan, 1961, 429 pages.

3. Sources on Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah, Titu Mir and Ahle-Hadith movements.

The original source material lies scattered in a number of manuscripts old and scarce books and
journals in Persian, Urdu and English. We made a survey of these existing sources of information here.

(i) Sayyed Muhammad Ali: Makhzan-i-Ahmadi, was published from the Mufid-i-Aam press, Agra, by Nawab Muhammad Ali Khan in 1881-82. The earliest work on the life of Sayyed Ahmad Shahid. The author was the nephew, disciple and close associate of Sayyed Ahmad Shahid. It contains a general account of his life up till his return from Arabia, and has been utilised by all the subsequent biographers. It is dedicated to and was prepared at the instance of Nawab Waziruddulla (1834-64) to Tonk, who along with his father, Nawab Amir Khan, was an important supporter of the Muhammadi Movement. In fact Tonk was an important centre of the Muhammadi, and the old state library of Tonk contained a valuable collection of materials on the subject.

(ii) Jafar 'Ali Naqvi: Tarikh-i-Ahmadi, this is an important biographical account of Syed Ahmad Shahid. Jafar 'Ali Naqvi was a good scribe and was appointed by Sayyed Ahmad as his chief Munshi, in charge of official papers. As such he was in a privileged position to write about the Muhammadi movement. He was in the N.W. Frontier with Sayyed Ahmad but returned to India after
his death, and compiled the work in 1272 (1855). He also participated in many of the events described by him. Mehr\(^1\) refers to a manuscript copy of the work in the Punjab University Library, Lahore, which contains an account of the Rising of Titu Mir in Bengal a topic which is not mentioned in any other Persian work.

(iii) Waqai'i-Ahmadi or the Tarikh-i-Kabir, was compiled under the auspices of Nawab Waziruddula, who brought many of the comrades of Sayyed Ahmad together and got their accounts noted. Waqai'i-Ahmadi is a voluminous account in which the various reminiscences of some associates of Sayyed Ahmad have been collected. The first volume of the work was completed in A.H. 1276 (1859). Several copies of the work are known to exist at different places, including the Rampur State Library. It gives some valuable details about the life of Sayyed Ahmad and Frontier campaigns.

(iv) Shah Isma'il and 'Abdul Hai : Sirat-i-Mustaqim compiled on the basis of the saying and observations of Sayeed Ahmad. It embodies the essential teachings of Sayyed Ahmad, and also describes some of the prevailing socio-religious practices among the Muslims. It may be

1. Ghulam Rasul Mehr author of Sayyed Ahmad Shahid in four volumes.
regarded as a manifesto of the socio-religious objectives of the Movement. Several published editions, as also an Urdu translation of the work are extant.

There are many collections of letters of Sayyed Ahmad and his associates exist at different places. One important copy of letters of Sayyed Ahmad belongs to the Manuscript Section of the Patna University Library. It has a supplement containing an account of the independent State set up by the Muhammadis on the Frontier.

(v) Muhammad Jafar Thanseari : Tawarikh-i-Ajiba or Sawanih Ahmadi, (Printed work in Urdu). He was an eminent Muhammad, and was convicted of high treason in the Ambala Trial. He was sentenced to transportation for life to the Andaman Islands, and wrote the book on his return home after serving an imprisonment of eighteen years. It contains a comprehensive account of the careers of Sayyed Ahmad and some of his companions. Sawanih Ahmadi also gives the text of many of Sayyed Ahmad's letters written to different persons.

(vi) Muhammad Jafar Thansewari : Tarikh-i-Ajiba or Kala Pani and Tawarikh-i-Ajiba. The slight variations of the titles are noteworthy: they constitute chronograms, giving the respective dates of publications.
The former, written in 1884, contains an account of the proceeding of the Ambala Trial, and the sufferings of the prisoners during their journey to and imprisonment in the Andaman islands, about which not much information is otherwise available.

(vii) Maulānā Abul Hasan 'Ali Nadvi : Sirat-i-Syed Ahmad Shahid, based on persian sources and, was the most detailed work on the life of Sayyed Ahmad.

(viii) Sayyed Masud 'Alam Nadvi : Hindustan Ki Pahli Islami Tahrikh, In addition to the Persian and Arabic sources the author has also utilised some important English works and official records. It is concerned primarily with the activities of the Patna Muhmmadis.

(ix) Abdul Rahim : Tazkirah-i-Sadqa, it was first published by Nurul Huda, the younger son of the author, in 1901. The author was co-convict with Jafar and, like, wrote his book after his return from his imprisonment. A biographical account of the family, it is very useful for reconstructing the history of Ahle Hadith movement, dealing with the careers of the Patna leaders, particularly Wilyat‘Ali, Inayat‘Ali, Yahya‘Ali and Ahmadullah. The third edition was brought out by Hakim ‘Abdul Khabir Saheb, the grandson of ‘Abdul Rahim, in 1964.
(x) Hakim 'Abdul Hamid: Masnavi-i-Shahar Ashob
by Hakim Abdul Hamid. The author was the eldest son of
Ahmadullah, and as the head of the family bore the brunt
of the eviction proceedings in 1865. He composed a
versified account in Persian of the sufferings of the
family following the conviction of Ahmadullah. It was
printed in the Unani Dawakhana Press, Allahabad.

(xi) Risail-i-Tisa. It is a collection of some
writings of Wilayat 'Ali, Inayat 'Ali and Faiyaz 'Ali,
dealing with various theological and social topics.

(xii) 'Abdul Haque: Durr-i-Maqal, it was
composed in A.H. 1280 (1869). It is a versified account
in Persian of the battle of Ambala. The author spent
several years in the N.W. Frontier centre, then took
employment under Jabbar Shah, the chief of Sitana, and
died there subsequently. A published edition of the
work, belonging to professor Muhammad Muslim of St.
Columbus College, Hazaribagh, is preserved in the
Manuscript Section of the Patna College Library.

(xiii) Ghulam Rasul Mehr: Syed Ahmad Shahid,
in four volumes, the first two volumes are bound
together. The other two are entitled (iii) Jamat-i-Mujahidin
and (iv) Sarguzasht-i-Mujahidin. Ghulam Rasul Mehr's four
volumes on Sayyed Ahmad and the Muhammadi Movement are by
for the latest and the most comprehensive study of the subject. The painstaking labour and zeal of the author is evident from the perusal of a couple of thousand and odd pages which the four volumes together contain. There is an absence of a discussion of the Muhammadi movement in relation to the movement of 1857-59. The author has surveyed the full history of the Muhammadi Movement from about 1818 to 1947. No doubt the movement of 1851-1859 was an important development during that period, and it should have been discussed in relation to the other one. There is no mention of the causes of the failure of the Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyya Movement.

(xiv) Justice *Abdul Maudud : Wahhabi Andolan (Bengali text) third edition - 1985 published by Ahmad publishing house - 7, Zindabahar 1st Lane, Dhaka- I, chapter - I discusses Sayyed Ahmad Shahid up to 1831, chapter - II is dealing with the role of Titu Mir and the Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyya movement after Sayyed Ahmad Shahid, and finally chapter-III examines the activities of Maulānā Wilayat 'Ali and Inayat 'Ali till their death.

(xv) Hazrat-ul-'Allama Maulānā Muhammad Abdullah al-Kafi-al-Qureshi (R) : Ahle-Hadith Parichiti, (Bengali text), second edition 1983, published by Dr. Maulana
Muhammad 'Abdul Bari, President, Bangladesh Jamiat-e-Ahle Hadith, 98, Nawabpur Road, Dhaka-I, Ahle Hadith printing and publising house. The contents of the book are as follows chapter - I, Address of the Pabna district Ahle-Hadith conference, chapter-II, Address conferred by the Nikhil Banga and Assam Ahle-Hadith conference held in Rajshahi, Chapter-III, Ahle Hadith parichiti, chapter-IV, religious doctrines of the Ahle Hadith Movement and finally chapter - V discusses a short history of the Ahle Hadith movement.


The survey of the sources cited above will show that they mainly relate to the early history of the Movements. But the bulk of the present study is based, largely, on the contemporary official records of the Government of India and the Government of Bengal, which provide valuable information about all aspects of the movement its leaders, their activities and the measures adopted by the government against them. Though biased here and there, they are the most substantial extant source material on the subject.

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