PREFACE

Sandvipi (/sɔndipi/) a Bangla-dialect is spoken in Sandvip (Sondip) an island in the Bay of Bengal, Bangladesh. Sandvipi falls within the South-Eastern sub-group of the Eastern variety of the Bengali language. Grierson, in his Linguistic survey of India (Part I. Vol. V) had wrongly classified Sandvipi among the Dacca varieties of East Bengal speech.¹

The first work on this dialect was done by Grierson, whose data are not quite reliable.² Abul Quasem Sandvip, a native speaker of the island wrote an article on the dialect in 1969,³ although the article is an unscientific, generous collection of words written in Bengali script. Muhammad Waliullah, another writer from the island gave some passing comments on the dialect in his several writings.


2. Rajkumar Chakrabarty and Ananga Mohan Das "সোন্দিপ আখ্যায়িকা" (History of Sandvip), 1330 Bengali year (1923-24).

3. Abul Quasem Sandvip "সোন্দিপ পর্যালোচনা" (The regional language of Sandvip), in সোন্দিপ সাহায্য (Sondip sondorsu/), 1969, published by Sandvip Education Society, Chittagong.
Sandvipi, as we have mentioned earlier is spoken in Sandvip. Sandvip is the biggest of the offshore islands of Chittagong, comprising an area of 187 square miles with a population of 2,22,149 according to 1974 census. It lies between $22^\circ - 16'$ and $22^\circ - 43'$ N. Latitude and between $91^\circ - 17'$ and $91^\circ - 39'$ longitude. 1. Of the total population 2,22,149, the males are 1,14,531 and the females 1,07,618 (Census - 1974). Population consists of both Muslims and Hindus, although the Muslims predominate about 85%. Agriculture is the main profession. Being an island a comparatively large number of people are sailors, many of them being employed in foreign companies. The literacy rate is comparatively high in Sandvip, than it is in many other regions of Bangladesh.

There is another dialect viz. / saigmarai /, (which literally means a dialect of Chittagong) spoken in Sandvip. It is limited to some families and spoken amongst themselves. In formal situations, only Sandvipi is used.

The selection of this dialect for the present analysis, in preference to the standard colloquial of Bengali, has twofold justifications:

(a) An analysis of dialect is also partly an analysis of the language itself2, and Sandvip being the area I come from, I could not do any better by choosing another dialect.

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1 Bangladesh District Gazetteers-Chittagong, 1974.
(b) The Bay of Bengal is incessantly tearing away the island and it may even change the map of that part of Bangladesh within a few years, if Nature does not change her mind. Hundreds of shelterless people are leaving the island every year and I suspect, only a few Sandvipi speakers may remain in the near future. But no attempt had been made so far to describe the dialect scientifically.

The linguistic study presented here is mainly descriptive. However, an analysis of variations or peculiarities of the dialect based on context, social stratification, religions and sex follows sociolinguistic approach. There is descriptive linguistics and there is sociolinguistics but a combination of both that is, descriptive analysis of a dialect in its socio-cultural context, with all its limitations as is done in this thesis is perhaps, the first attempt for any dialect of the Indian subcontinent.

I must however mention that the sociolinguistic approach being only auxiliary to the main thesis, no formal survey, as it has become customary in socio-linguistic works, has been made. The data entirely depend on my own cultural acquaintance with the dialect. A few short trips to Sandvip and confirmation of the data with speakers of the dialect available in India, have been helpful in the analysis.
Mr. Zakaria, Mr. Faizullah, Mr. Pranab Karmarkar and Mrs. Zebunnur Begum, all from the village Mai Bhanga, were my informants in Sandvip. Mr. Manik Mazumdar was my informant in India.

The thesis is chiefly a data-oriented analysis done with the taxonomic model as the background.