CHAPTER THREE

THE SETTING:
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South 24 Parganas District:

During the time of Partition of India i.e. 15 August, 1947, district 24 Parganas was established and it was considered as the largest district of West Bengal. Before 1947, the areas covered were not defined properly as it varied from time to time according to the prowess of the kings. The places were marshy and full of canes. This portion has been identified with Bhagirathi. Prior to the end of the 15th century and according to the availability of records the district formed part of Satgaon revenue division, the jurisdiction of which was Sagar Island on the south to a little above Plassey on the north and Kabadak river on the east beyond the Hooghly on the west. The district gained importance in view of the events of sepoy mutiny of 1824 and 1857. The sepoys broke out and stationed at Barrackpore during the Burmese war in 1824. Again the single 24 Parganas district was bifurcated on 1st March, 1986 into North and South 24 Parganas districts.

I. Physical Aspects

The district is an irregular parallelogram in shape. It lies within the limits of the Gangetic delta. The district has plain surface and is little raised above flood level and the highest ground is that bordering the river channels. The district is divided into two natural divisions having distinctly different characteristics. The first one, is the northern inland
tract of fairly well raised delta land of old formation and the second is the low lying Sundarbans towards the sea on the south. It is seen that Sundarbans are a network of tidal channels, rivers, creeks and islands.

**River System**: The nature of South 24 Parganas district comprises of rivers, creeks or khal, marshes or swamps, mangrove vegetation and islands. These are earmarked in the southern part of the district. The important rivers and islands of this district are stated below:

**Hooghly**: It is the main river of South 24 Parganas district which flows across the western side bordering the district. The river passes from north to south of the district touching Garden Reach (Calcutta), Budge Budge, Falta and Diamond Harbour blocks as well as Sagar Island and finally completes its course in the Bay of Bengal.

**Matla**: The river originates just above Canning block and takes its course towards southern side between Kultali and Basanti blocks and meets with the Bay of Bengal. Matla river was used as navigable by sea going vessels and Lord Canning was interested to establish a port over here during the British period.

**Muri Ganga**: It bifurcates from the Hooghly river and flows between Sagar and two blocks i.e. Namkhana and Kakdwip at the southern portion of the district. Finally, the river ends its course in the Bay of Bengal.
**Sapta Mukhi**: This river originates from Kakdwip block and flows between Namkhana and Pathar Pratima blocks which is extremely southern part of the district, then mixes with the Bay of Bengal.

**Thakurani**: The river passes through Mathurapur and Pathar Pratima blocks and finally throws its course in the Bay of Bengal.

**Sagar Island**: It is situated at the mouth of the Hooghly river, it is bounded by the Hooghly on the west, and by the Baratola or Channel creek on the east, while the Bay of Bengal washes its southern face. Here the Sundarbans steamers leave the Hooghly and pass down channel creek on their eastward route through the Sundarbans. At the south - western side of the island, there stands the Sagar Light House which was built in 1808. On the southern sea face of the Sagar island there is a site for bathing where Ganga Sagar festival takes place.

**Freserganj**: The island is located in the extreme south of the district and at the bottom of the Namkhana block. It is bounded on the north and west by the Pattibunia khal, on the east by the Sapta Mukhi river and Pukuriaber khal and on the south by the Bay of Bengal. It has a sandy beach facing the Bay, north of which are sand dunes, a line of trees separates it from the land to the north. There is one large fresh water jhil lying between two of the dunes. The island is called locally Narayantalla. It was called Freserganj after Sir Andrew Fraser, Lieutenant Governor of Bengal from 1903 to 1908.
during whose tenure steps were taken to develop the place as a health resort for the inhabitants of Calcutta and its neighbourhood.

II. **Occupation**

The economy of the district is agricultural. In the agricultural sector, workers are involved as cultivators and agricultural labourers. It was noted that in Sundarban area of the district a significant proportion of population was engaged in fishing in the riverine tract, fishery farming, prawn cultivation, hunting and honey collection from the forest considered as the main occupation. The people of this locality selected these occupations because the area is located in the riverine tract and island, mangrove forest and the agricultural land was less fertile due to salinity. Besides, there are also existence of some villages where cottage industries are practised by some households. These are cotton weaving in handloom, pottery, manufacturing of wood and wooden products, cane products, bamboo craft, conch products, shola products, tailoring, preparation of fish net etc. It was revealed that before the division of single 24 Parganas district it was considered as the biggest of all industrialized districts in the state of West Bengal.

III. **Traditional Craft**

The main traditional craft identified in this district are indicated as follows:
**Pottery** : Evidence shows that this traditional craft was practised by some of the households in this district since the age of *Mahabharat*. At that time pottery products was having huge demand because it was specifically used for the protection of food and water. Except these products, there was no other alternative. Such occupation was earmarked in some selected places like Mandirtalla, Harinarayanpur, Deulpota, Rakhyakhali, *Aat-ghora*, Sita kundu, Deulbvadi etc of South 24 Parganas district during those days. It was pointed out that two types of pottery products were made. One is for domestic purpose and another for non-domestic purpose. While for domestic purposes various items are prepared such as utensils, pot, tea cup, glass, flower vase, festival pot etc. While in case of non-domestic products it includes god and goddesses, dolls and decorative items. The raw materials used for the manufacturing of pottery products are clay, sand, raw colour soluble in water, straw, painting brush, bamboo etc.

**Weaving** : The traditional weavers of the district involved in such economic activities since the British period. At that time they were using ordinary shuttle looms. They prepared items mainly saree, dhuti and gamcha. It was identified that first weaving activity started in Sitagachi village of Mathurapur Police Station of South 24 Parganas district. Gradually it spread to different places such as Gaujmudi, Raidighi, Jhinki, Siddheshwar, Dhopa hat Krishnapur, Tekphoja, Kalinagar etc of South 24 Parganas district.
**Conch Artisans**: It is interesting to note that conch artisans prevailed in this district before British rule. It was found that Dravid group women were wearing conch bangles in their hand during those days for blessing and well being. Therefore, married women compulsorily use conch bangles as the symbol of marriage. During those days conch bangles were very much important rather than the gold or silver ornaments in the marriage ceremony. Conch bangles were first manufactured in Krishnapur village, attached to Mandir Bazar Police Station of South 24 Parganas district. Then this craft instilled to different places like Joynagar, Benipur, Baruipur and Kakdwip of South 24 Parganas district.

**Carpentry**: Sundarban area is situated nearby the rivers, island and mangrove forest. The inhabitants of this locality are involved in such activity since the British regime. The people of the area prepared country boats from the wood collected from the nearby forest. They used country boats for fishing and transportation purposes in the riverine tract and islands. The country boats were manufactured in different places like Kakdwip, Diamond Harbour, Gosaba, Raidighi etc. of South 24 Parganas district.

**Shola Products**: Some people of this district were involved in manufacturing of shola products before independence of our country. This craft was originally seen in Maheshpur village of Mandir Bazar Police Station (previous Kulpi Police Station). In the same police station area there is Jagdishpur village where "Haudir Hat" market exists and all the Maheshpur shola products are available here for sale. During those days shola products like crown (Mukut) and necklace (Patir Mala) was very much important for
the marriage purpose specifically both for the bride and the bridegroom. It was noted that without these shola items, marriage could not be performed. It is fine to say that the Europeans were also attracted to wear shola cap which were prepared by the poor artisans.

IV] **Main Festivals**

**Ganga Sagar Mela**: This mela is celebrated in the Sagar Island. In the southern part of the island there is a great site for bathing during Ganga Sagar Mela. This is the point of junction of the river and sea at Sagar Island, a celebrated seat of Hindu pilgrimage where thousands of pilgrims visit this place every year during the festival period. The festival is held at the time of the *Makara Sankranti* when the sun enters Capricorn which is identified with the last day of the month of *Pous* (in the middle of January). The fair takes place on the bank of a small creek leading to the sea, on the piece of sandy ground. The fair lasts several days but three days are very much significant of this religious festival. On the first day the pilgrims bathe in the sea early in the morning, shave after bathing, and many people use to perform the *Shraddha* ceremony for their deceased on the sea shore. On the second and third day, bathing in the sea, adoration of Ganga, and the worship of Kapilmuni continue similarly as the first day. Thus pilgrims all over India assemble here to participate in this mela with great fanfare. Sagar, king of *oudh* the thirteenth ancestor of Rama had performed the *Aswamedha Yajna* or horse sacrifice ninety nine times. He showed some
religious miraculous work in this place, as a result of this, people believe that the sea took its name Sagar.

Dakshin Ray – A Popular Folk God of South 24 Parganas

Dakshin Ray is one of the main folk deities of the district South 24 Parganas. The worship of Dakshin Ray is also followed in the districts of Howrah, Hooghly and certain parts of Bangladesh. However, the origin of worship developed in South 24 Parganas. The term Dakshin means South and Ray means Lord. Thus the name of the god Dakshin Ray signifies the Lord of the South. It was identified that Dakshin Ray is the chief deity of Southern Bengal and plays a vital role in the socio-cultural history of this region.

In different parts of South 24 Parganas two types of Dakshin Ray idols are found (i) an image of a warrior, armed with sword, gun, bow and arrows seated on a tiger and ii) a trunkless human head with a leaf like decorated headdress. This trunkless head is known as Dakshin Ray Bara or Bara Thakur.

The worship of Dakshin Ray is performed annually on Pous Sankranti i.e. the last day of the month of Pous or on the Aksin Din i.e. the first day of the month of Magh (December – January) – just after the main harvesting festival. During the course of worship, sacrifice of birds and animals are made along with vegetarian offerings. According to Shastras Dakshin Ray is worshipped by the high caste Brahmin priests, the fishermen, the boatmen, the honey collectors, the wood cutters and the common peasants because
they adore Dakshin Ray. *Dakshin Ray Bara Thakur* is proclaimed as Tiger – deity in different parts of the districts and he is accepted as giver of good rain, protector of the crop from the insect, diseases, lord of the fields and also saves from tiger attack.

Earlier during the establishment of new habitation, cultivation and struggle for existence in this region, the people were attacked frequently by the tigers. Under these circumstances it is assumed that the tiger cult evolved for this reason and it was related with the primitive cult of the worship of the trunkless human head known as tiger – god Dakshin Ray.

**V] Socio – Political Movements**

**Krishak Shreni Andolan and Sangathan:**

During the year 1925 – 26 *Krishak Shreni Andolan and Sangathan* was organized covering Garden Reach, Budge Budge and Metiabruz areas of South 24 Parganas district. The objective of their movement was to resist the exploitation of the farmers by the zamindars and the Europeans and also to maintain their privileges and rights.

**Bangiya Krishak Sangathan Committee:**

A great convention was held in Albert hall, Calcutta in the month of August, 1936. Mr. Bankim Chatterjee took leading role to perform the convention and formed *Bangiya Krishak Sangathan Committee*. Thus propagating this movement some of the freedom fighters were released from jail by the British rulers.
**Gana Vani Patrika:**

A *Gana Vani Patrika* was published in the year 1928 to make consciousness about the peasant movement and their rights.

**Sammelan:**

First Sammelan was organized in 28th March, 1937 covering areas of Canning, Sandeshkhali and Hadua of South 24 Parganas district. The main objective was to resist East India Company for acquiring land forcibly from the farmers and also to protect farmers' right.

**Canal Construction and Excavation Movement:**

This movement started in the year 1938 specifically in the areas of Falta and Diamond Harbour of South 24 Parganas district. The prominent leaders of this movement were Murari Saran Chakraborty, Hemant Ghosal, Probhas Roy and Jyotish Roy.

**No Toll Movement:**

There was forcible collection of toll from the small traders in the 'market or hat' by the market or the hat owners and zamindars. This was seen in the areas of Diamond Harbour and Falta of South 24 Parganas district during British rule. A movement was launched in the year 1938 against the forcible collection of toll from the small traders in *market or hat*.

**Facy Birodhi Prachar and Jana Rakshya Committee:**

Hitler attacked Soviet Union in the year 1941. In view of this *Facy Birodhi Prachar Jana Rakshya Committee* was formed in the year 1942 to protest against this attack.
People Relief Committee:
In the year 1942, a great cyclone took place in Sundarban area of South 24 Parganas district and caused serious damage to the people of that locality. Under such situation, this committee was organized to undertake relief measures for the victims.

Rangalory Pratisthan:
It was established in 1872 to focus cultural shows related to various issue like sati daha, remarriage of widows, exploitation of farmers etc. to create awareness among the general public.

Library Movement:
In the year 1953, all the literacy centres were merged to spearhead the movement for opening of more library centres in the village of South 24 Parganas district.

The aforesaid movements brought an impact upon the people of South 24 Parganas district to give rise of NGOs in order to undertake various rural development programmes for the poor people.

VI] Migration

It is found that there was high migration to this district from different parts of our country due to industrialization. The industrial belts of this district are Garden Reach, Metiabruz, Budge Budge and Behala. The important cause of migration is the availability of employment opportunities that attract the people to come here from different parts of our country.
Further, the district is also located in the Indo-Bangladesh border previously East Pakistan which results infiltration to this district. The main reasons of migration from Bangladesh are to get easy job opportunities and to live peacefully within the same Bengali culture and tradition.

VII] **Places of Religious and Tourist Interest**

**Sagar Island**: This island is located in the Sundarban region of South 24 Parganas district. At the south western angle of the island stands the light house and southern sea face is the site of the great bathing festival of Ganga Sagar. The festival is held at the time of *Makara Sankranti* which is identified as the last day of the month of Pous (in the middle of January) and lasts for several days. Thus the people from different states assemble here to perform holy dip in this sea.

**Baraipar**: The society for the propagation of Gospel erected here a large church in 1846 A.D to spread Christianity. Besides, two melas are held every year, the *Rash Jatra* in November or December and the *Rath Jatra* in June or July. Many people all over the district participate in these festivals.

**Joynagar Majilpar**: It is situated 31 miles away from south Calcutta. There is a large group of twelve *atchala Siva* temple plus *dolmancha* and three separate temples. These temples are considered as the great religious place of importance to visit. The temples are mostly plain, with occasional floral decoration and in one case has terracotta designs. In this place, three melas are held which are stated as follows:
1) The *Doljatra* in March, which lasts for ten days.

2) The *Goshtastami* in November, which lasts for only one day and

3) The *Goshtajatra* in middle of April which lasts for one day only.

**Barisha**: It is located at Behala which is southern side of Calcutta. It was also the home of Sabarna Chaudhuri family who sold the villages of Calcutta, Sutanutee and Govindapur to the East India Company in 1698. In the 19th century they constructed many *at-chala* temples including the present Kalighat temple. The most interesting site in Barisha is a group of twelve *dwadosh Siva* temples dated 1213 *bangabda* (C.1806 A.D) i.e. about the same time as the Kalighat temple (1809). Three of these temples have a single row of terracotta figures up either side of the entrance and across the top.

**Bahara**: This village comes under Joynagar police station of South 24 Parganas district. Syamsundar temple of the Bose family are located here. It is a flat roofed structure built of imported sandstone, forming one end of the courtyard of the Bose family residence. The architecture is a mixture of Mughal and European style but the interesting feature of the temple represents Puranic mythology which relates to Krishna.

**Maheshpur**: A four bungalow design temple of Krishnachandra was constructed in the village which comes under the jurisdiction of Mograhat police station of South 24 Parganas district. The image has been established in a modern structure, the verandah is supported on a series of nine or
more carved wooden pillars. The carving includes Krishnalila scenes and elaborate flora motifs.

**Alipur**: It is the head quarter of South 24 Parganas district and it is situated south of Calcutta. The most interesting building is Belvedere which stands as extensive park like ground. Formerly a country house of Warren Hastings, it was purchased in 1854 for the residence of Sir Frederick Halliday, the first Lieutenant Governor of Bengal. The building was used as Lieutenant Governor of Bengal till 1912. South of Belvedere is the gardens of Agri - Horticultural Society of India founded in 1820 by Dr. Carey, the famous Baptist Missionary and north of it is the Zoological Garden which is opened by Prince of Wales in 1876. It is seen that tourists all over India visit this area in context of historical perspective and also to see wild species maintained in the Zoological garden.

**Diamond Harbour**: It is the most attractive place for the tourist and it is situated on the east bank of the river Hooghly. The local name of the place is Hajipur. Diamond Harbour was a favourite anchorage for ships during the British period.

**Falta**: It is a village in the Diamond Harbour, sub-division of South 24 Parganas district. It is situated on the bank of the river Hooghly just opposite to the spot where it is joined by the river Damodar. This place had some historical importance as there was a fort which was used by the Dutch and the English.
**Garden Reach** : It is located on the Hooghly which is south west of Calcutta. In the eighteenth century it was the site of the small Mughal Fort of Aligarh, opposite to which on the other bank of the Hooghly, stood the fort of Tanna, both of which were taken by Clive in his operation for the recapture of Calcutta in 1756.

**Nadia District** :

Nadia district took its present shape after the partition of India, 15th August, 1947. Before partition the district was included in Jessore, the then East Pakistan presently Bangladesh up till 1854. During that period the office of the Superintendent of Police for the Lower Provinces was abolished and a rearrangement of the Commissioners Division was made under which Nadia division was constituted with headquarters at Krishnagar. Between 1870 and 1947 the district maintained more or less a uniform boundary and jurisdiction by the Radcliff Award of 1947. After the Award, the district lost the bulk of the fertile and prosperous land contained in the sub-divisions of Kushtia, Chuadanga and Meherpur to East Pakistan, presently Bangladesh.

Nadia is a place of historical importance for its cottage and small scale industries. It was the seat of the last independent Hindu Kingdom of Bengal until it fell before the Muslim invaders from North India towards the end of twelfth century A.D.
1. **Physical Aspects**

The district is located in the heart of the Bengal delta bounded by Ganga viz. the Bhagirathi, on the west and the east by Padma running into Meghna estuary. The entire district lies in the alluvial plain of the Ganga and its tributaries dotted with villages and cluster of trees.

**River System** : The district is blessed with different types of rivers. These rivers are the of-shoots of the Padma or main channel of the Ganges. The different rivers flowing in this district are underlined as follows:

**The Jalangi** : The Jalangi leaves the Padma at the north of the district and after that it passes at a point north of Tehatta. Thence it pursue its course towards southernly direction until it reaches Krishnagar, then it proceeds towards west until it falls into the Bhagirathi which is opposite the town of Nabadwip.

**The Bhagirathi** : The Bhagirathi impinges upon the district near Plassey and after some distance form its western boundary. It takes the name of the Hooghly from its junction with the Jalangi opposite to Nabadwip town.

**The Mathabhanga** : The Mathabhanga leaves the Padma from the point where the Jalangi diverges from it. It flows towards south – easterly direction and it bifurcates into two branches. One of the branch passes through Alam danga of the boundary of the district and then it passes into Jessore, now Bangladesh. While the other branch moves towards south until it reaches Chuadanga, then it reaches Kissengunge, east of Krishnagar and again it bifurcates resulting two streams known as the Churni and Ichhamati.
The Churni: The Churni passes in a direction slightly west of south and flows towards Hanskhali and Ranaghat and finally falls into the Hooghly between Santipur and Chakdah.

The Ichhamati: The Ichhamati flows in a south-easterly direction and after passing from the boundary of the district for a few miles passes into the Bongaon sub-division of North 24 Parganas district.

The whole district comprises a network of moribund rivers and streams but the Bhagirathi, the Jalangi and the Mathabhanga are distinctively known as the “Nadia Rivers”. Until the advent of the Railways these water courses afforded the regular means of communication during the British occupation in our country.

II. Occupation

The district is pre-dominantly an agricultural district. Most of the workers of this district are engaged in agricultural occupation. They are involved in agricultural operations either as a cultivator or an agricultural labourer. However, there are also few weavers and clay model artisans who live in this district.

III. Traditional Craft

In earlier days the Nadia district had a glorified history only for its traditional arts. There are two important traditional crafts in this district.
These are weaving and clay models only. The weavers are mainly seen in Santipur, Ranaghat, Phuliya and Birnagar areas of Nadia district. While clay model artisans are concentrated in Ghurni only which is under Krishnagar town of Nadia district.

**Weaving:** Previously the weavers used jackquard looms and ordinary fly shuttle looms. The jackquard looms were specialized for design sarees and the ordinary fly shuttle looms were for Dure (Matha Saree) and ordinary dhuti. Before jackquards looms the weavers used to make design in hand only (Hate Tola Buti). They used shuttle looms for their embroidery works. During that time, the weavers were themselves designer. But, now the designs are done on punched cards set on jackquards machine and not necessarily a weaver is a designer himself. The designs are being evolved as a separate job and the weavers mostly start with designs converted on punched cards by them. The clothes manufactured by the traditional artisans were having good demand in Delhi, Kabul, Iran, Arabia, Turkey, Greece and Italy during that period. The looms, yarn and dye stuff were available from Calcutta and local markets. The products are now sold through private agencies, State Emporia and Apex Co-operative Society.

**Clay Models Making:** Clay model artisans are found in Ghurni only. Ghurni stands on the bank of the river Jalangi locally known as Khorey. The craft received patronage from the Hindu rulers of Bengal viz. Raja Krishna Chandra of Krishnagar and the Maharajas of Lalgola, Nashipur and Cossimbazar.
The artisans had a tradition of eight generations during the year 1960. All the clay model artisans worked independently with their family labour and occasionally with hired labour. The raw materials used for preparation of clay models are clay which is found from the banks of the river. Due to erosion of the banks of the river, there is no scope to collect clay from Jalangi river. Therefore, local agents experienced in the line are deployed to collect clay from the locality for the artisans. Semi plastic as well as sandy types of clay are used by the clay modelers of Krishnagar. Further, other types of raw materials are used by the clay modelers including colours of different kinds viz. Rajmahal white clay and raw colour soluble in water, wire, cloth and costumes, jute, nylon fibre etc. The different types of models and dolls prepared by the clay models artisans are given below:

a) All kinds of Indian fruits and vegetables.
b) Indian spices like cloves, cardamom, betel nut, cinnamon etc.
c) Biscuits and ground nuts.
d) Varieties of animal, birds, fishes and insects.
e) Life sketches of village folk viz. Ploughmen, Carpenter, Brahmin at worship, Baishnab, Santhal etc.
f) Models with Indian and partly foreign motifs viz. Rajasthani and Hindusthani girls, venus, Bathing girls, Magas etc.
g) Indian gods and goddess.
h) Relief work.
IV. **Main Festivals**

**Baradol Festival:** The great Hindu swinging festival (Baradol) is celebrated in Krishnagar annually in the month of March or April, when 12 idols, belonging to the Maharaja of Krishnagar and representing Sri Krishna in twelve different parts of the district and worshipped. Many thousand pilgrims assembled every year for this festival and a fair lasting for three days is held simultaneously.

**Rash Jatra:** This festival is organized in Santipur town which comes under Ranaghat sub-division and Santipur Police Station. The town is visited by a large number of pilgrims at the full moon day in the month of *Kartik* (mid of October). The *Rash jatra* festival lasts for two days and ends with a procession in which the idols of the Gossains are carried on elevated wooden platform.

**Jaga Dhatri Puja:** It is a famous puja held annually in the month of October in Krishnagar town. During the British period once Krishna Chandra Raja was in jail and he was unable to perform Durga Puja. But one day when he was in jail, goddess Durga blessed him in a dream that he could organize a separate festival in the name of goddess *Jagadhatri*. Thus after his release from the jail he organized *Jaga Dhatri Puja* with great fanfare. Till today this festival is performed gorgeously and the pilgrims all over this state come here to participate in it. It is also very much interesting to note that the same festival is also organized in Chandanagar which comes under Hooghly district.
V. **Socio - Political Movements**

**Indigo Industry Movement:**

During the first half of the nineteenth century the manufacture of indigo was the important industry in the district. Gradually it came under the control of the Europeans. The district was actively associated with the Indigo disturbance in 1859 – 61, with other lower Bengal districts. The Krishnagar students trial of 1884 was a memorable incident during that period.

**Opposition Against Partition:**

The district opposed the partition of Bengal in 1905 vigorously.

**Agrarian Revolution:**

*Krishak Sammelan* was organized in Kappasdanga village of Nadia district during the year 1920. *Fr. Bareta* and Harsha Biswas, a school teacher were the leaders of this movement. Their objective was to fight for the farmers’ right against the Europeans and the Nawabs.

**Non-Payment of Tax Movement:**

The non-payment of tax movement began on 13th April, 1932 at Chanderghat against the Europeans.

**Formation of Social Service Institutions:**

Jatin Mukherjee or Bagha Jatin was the son of this district. During the period 1912 – 1913 different centres of social services like libraries and literacy clubs were founded in this district. Some of the important institutions were also established in this year like the *Davidra Bhandar in Krishnagar, Santipur Public Library, Bandhu Sabha and Sahitya Sabha*. 
Establishment of National School:
The first national school was started at Garabani Cottage, Krishnagar in 1921. During that time there was also boycott of educational institutions, picketing in front of liquor shops and campaign against the sale of foreign goods and textiles were organized.

Bengal Provincial Conference:
Annual session of the Bengal Provincial Conference was held in Krishnagar in the year 1926. Nazrul Islam who was residing in Krishnagar at that time supervised and guided the formation of a volunteer corps.

All Bengal Youth and All Bengal Students Convention:
First time All Bengal Youth and Bengal Students Convention was held in Krishnagar in the year 1926 under the Chairmanship of Sri Tulsi Goswami and Smt. Sarojini Naidu. Regular parades and route marches were held by organized Red-shirt volunteers in Krishnagar, Kushtia and other places.

Assemble of Prominent Leaders:
In the year 1930 there was a vast gathering by prominent leaders like Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, Dr. Aney, Dr. P. C. Ghosh and Shri F. K. Nariman in Krishnagar Town Hall. The Krishnagar Bomb throwing case, the Krishnagar Fire arms case and the derailment of railway train near Darshana were some of the important incidents took place during this period.
Krishak Sabha:

Krishak Sabha was organized in the year 1936 in Nadia district. The important leaders were Purna Pal, Madhabendu Maharaja, Bipul Pal and Amiya Roy. Their main objectives was to start sugar factory, sugarcane cultivation, free distribution of land to the farmers, provision of loan facilities, marketing of agricultural produce and awareness generation regarding rights of farmers.

It points out that all these socio-political movements created an intellectual academic environment to give rise the formation of NGOs in Nadia district.

VI. Migration

The district is situated closer to Indo- Bangladesh border. During the course of partition, many people were displaced and migrated from East Pakistan, now Bangladesh due to search of employment and to reside peacefully. These people are settled and rehabilitated in Dhublia, Phulia and Taherpur areas of the district. It was observed that Dhublia was considered as a large centre for the displaced persons from East Pakistan, now Bangladesh. In Phulia, Government of India supported various infrastructural facilities like roads, electricity, hospital, vocational training, schools etc for the development of displaced people. It was seen that in Taherpur, most of the displaced people are from middle class and they are rehabilitated by various welfare measures. It have been earmarked by recent reports that still there is going on huge infiltration of people from Bangladesh to this district.
VII. **Places of Religious and Tourist Interest**

**Mayapur** : It is the most important religious place of the district. Mayapur is claimed by a section of Vaishnavas to be the site where Sri Chaitanyadeva was born. A large temple was constructed here by international society of *Krishna consciousness*. Thousands of pilgrims visit the area both from India and abroad and specifically “Holi festival” is celebrated here with great fanfare. The head quarters of the Chaitanya Gaudiya Math is located here.

**Nabadwip** : Nabadwip is a town of ancient tradition. It is called as the Brindaban of West Bengal. The town is situated on the bank of the river Bhagirathi. The place is frequently visited by pilgrims mainly belonging to *Vaishnava sect* from different parts of the country and also from abroad. They bath in the sacred water of the Ganges and pay their homage at the shrine of Sri Chaitanya. Besides, Vaishnava shrines there are a large number of places of worship dedicated to shiva in the town. Hence the importance of Nabadwip in the history of Bengal is *Vaisnavism*.

*Sri Krishna Chaitanya* was the son of Jagannath Misra and Sachi Devi. He was born in Nabadwip in the year 1486 A.D. He was undoubtedly a man of great intellect, but the key note of his philosophy was universal love and he is still spoken of as the “*Apostle of love*”. He was the founder of the *Vaishnava sect* and has spread Vaisnavism largely throughout Bengal.
Nabadwip was also famous for its sanctity and learning. From its earliest
days the patronage of the Hindu kings and the sanctity of its site attracted,
far and near, erudite scholar, who taught Sanskrit, Philosophy to thousand
of students, Abdhihodha Yogi, a Pandit was the first scholar to set up a
school of logic in Nabadwip.

Plassey: The village is situated towards the north–west of Krishnagar
town. It is famous due to clive’s victory over Siraj - ud - daula, Nawab of
Bengal on 23rd June, 1757. There is a monument commemorating the battle
of 1757.

Phalia: It is a township colony very close to Santipur in the district of
Nadia. It is the birth place of the poet Krittibas who composed the
Ramayana in Bengali. The memorial stone which marks his birth place was
erected in 1916 and its foundation stone was laid by Sir Ashutosh
Mukhopadhyay (1864 – 1924). The memorial stone shows that Krittibas was
born here on a Sree Panchami day in the year 1440 A.D.

Santipur: Santipur town consists of several temples, the largest of which
the Shyamchand temple built in 1726 by Ramgopal Khan Chowdhury and
his three brothers of the weaver caste. The temple is a huge at chala design,
with little decoration beyond floral plaster work and lotus medallions. The
smaller at chala temple of Gokul Chand was constructed in 1740 by
Ghanashyam Goswami. It has a terracotta decorated facade with some
spirited hunting and processional scenes along the base. Earlier to these is
the Jalesvara siva temple, a char - chala design builted in the beginning of
the 18th century by the mother of Maharaja Krishna Chandra of Nadia.
Besides these there is an ancient mosque known as the Topkhana mosque.

**Matiari :** Matiari is situated in the north-east of Banpur railway station. It was the original capital of Nadia Rajas. The grandson of the founder of the Nadia Raj family moved the capital from Matiari to Krishnagar. Matiari is famous for its brass and bell-metal industries.

**Krishnagar :** There is a noted temple of Anandamoyi Kali. It consists of a lower flat roofed chamber and verandah, surmounted by a *char-chala* upper storey and contains a fine large clay image of Kali with traditional flamboyant head dress. The buildings of Rajbari are of some interest including a large *durga dalan* of 19th century.

The original name of Krishnagar is believed to have been *Reui*. In this town a palace was erected by Maharaja Raghab, whose son Rudra Rai changed the name of Krishnagar in honour of Krishna. Since then the town has remained the residence of the Maharaja of Nadia.

The town is a centre of Christian evangelistic society and it is the headquarter of the Roman Catholic diocese and also important place of the church missionary society. Each of these bodies have its own church and schools. A famous Roman Catholic Church was built by *Fr. Loigi Limana* in Krishnagar. It is seen that an important mosque is located at Rathtalla in Krishnagar town.
**Chapra**: It is situated at the northern side of Krishnagar town and it is ten miles away from the town. It has been a centre of work of the church missionary society. A church was built here in 1841 and a school was started in 1850. Now it is a most useful institution. The teaching was carried on in English language in this institution.

**Ghurni**: It is located in Krishnagar town. The area is famous for the manufacture of clay models of remarkable excellence. This model work was carried on by a few men of the potter or *Kumar Caste*. The specimens of this work have received medals from London and Paris exhibitions. Ghurni is also known as the birth place of *Gopal Bhar*, the celebrated jester of the court of Maharaja Krishna Chandra.

**Srinibas**: It is a village on the bank of the river Churni. It is situated at the eastern side of Krishnagar and comes under Krishnaganj Police station. It was established in the first half of the 18th century by the great Maharaja of Nadia, Krishna Chandra. Maharaja selected this place due to two reasons. One is due to natural beauty and another is the area is surrounded on three sides by the Churni river which propagates safety from the attacks of the Mahrathas during those days.

Both the districts i.e. South 24 Parganas and Nadia, are enriched with rivers, agricultural economy, traditional crafts, festivals and important religious and tourist places etc. It was noted that there were series of socio-
political movements in these two districts which in turn gave rise to the formation of NGOs to undertake various rural development programmes.
MAP OF SOUTH 24 PARGANAS DISTRICT
SHOWING RIVERS, RELIGIOUS AND TOURIST PLACES

Howrah

North 24 Parganas

Calcutta

Akhundpur

Diamond Harbour

Bhagirathi

Jaynagar Matilpur

Falta

Maheshpur

Baguipur

Barisha

Places of Religious and Tourist Interest

Rivers
MAP OF NADIA DISTRICT
SHOWING RIVERS, RELIGIOUS AND TOURIST PLACES

NORTH 24 PARGANAS

PLACES OF RELIGIOUS AND TOURIST INTEREST

RIVERS