CHAPTER - II

RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS OF BENGAL IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY
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In the central Islamic lands education used to be imparted chiefly through four kinds of institution - mosque, maktab, halqas and Madrasah. The educational system in Muslim Bengal followed the same pattern and traditions because the Muslim rulers and their nobles originally belonged to the central Islamic lands and so brought with them similar ideas and notions. "As a result of Quranic injunction "ليُّمِّلُوهَا في الْدِّينِ" that they should gain sound knowledge in religion, the elementary Madrasahs grew almost on the religious line. Since education began with the Holy Quran it was perhaps inevitable to select a sacred place, and the mosque was found to be more convenient for the purpose". 1 Mosques besides being places of worship were the centre of learning where teaching was offered in all branches of Islamic learning from the elementary stage to the highest level. The imams of the mosques and other scholars and learned people used to teach in the mosque. Maktabs were intended for primary education Majalis or Halgas were developed around individual scholars where the

1. Muhammad Shahidullah, A Brief History of Madrasah Education in India, Bani Book Stall, Calcutta, 1987, p. 3.
bright and inquisitive students used to assemble for higher
education in different fields of Islamic Studies - tafsir,
hadith, fiqh, jurisprudence, literature, natural sciences
etc. Madrasah came into existence as parallel institutions
of higher education by the fifth century of Hijra. In this
respect the most notable madrasah was Nizamiya madrasah of
Baghdad, founded by Alp Arslan's Wazir, Nizam ul-Mulk in
457/1065. The madrasah there by supplemented, but never
supplanted, the mosque as an educational institutions.
"Gradually the madrasah acquired in practice a status of
sanctity, not much inferior to that of the mosque and
teachers and students moved freely from one to the other
according to their inclination or needs".¹

**Motijhil Madrasah Furqaniah**

Nawazish Muhammad Khan, nephew and son-in-law of Nawab
Alivardi khan built a madrasah (Furqaniah Darul Ulum) in
Motijhil area (Murshidabad) in 1751.² He would personally
supervise the madrasah during his life time. Arabic, Persian,
Bengali, Urdu and English were taught there.

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p. 223.
A Jama mosque was built on the bank of the Jhill in 1743 A.D. by Nawazish Khan. On the left hand side of the mosque lies the above mentioned madrasah and on its right hand side the palace of Nawazish Muhammad Khan. In front of the mosque lies tombs of Nawazish Khan, Ikram-ud-Daulah, younger brother of Siraj-ud-Daulah, and the chief commander, Shamsher Ali Khan. The students of this madrasah were provided with free fooding, lodging, books and other accessories related to teaching. The madrasah still exists but its condition is very poor.

The meaning of Motijhil is 'Pearl lake'. It is a long horse-shoe shaped lake and contains seven hundred and fifty Bighas area. Now there is one hundred and fifty students are studying at the Madrasah. Among them sixty five students are residential. Eight teachers are teaching there. Class rooms are not available in the Madrasah. So the balcony of the mosque and the mango garden of the Motijhil are used as class rooms. Due to economic problem the Madrasah was closed in A.D. 1976. After some time it was re-started with the help of certain Hatem Ansari. Ushr, Zakat were the main

sources to maintain the Madrasah. The Government earned several lacs rupees every year from this Motijhil lake but do not take interest about the Madrasah and mosque of the Motijhil.

Mosque of Kartalab Khan

Murshid Quli Khan was given the title of Kartalab Khan by Emperor Aurangzeb for his efficiency in revenue administration. He was appointed Revenue administrator of Bengal by Aurangzeb. During the viceroyalty of Azimush-Shan, he built a mosque at Dhaka which is known, after his name, as Mosque of Kartalab Khan. This mosque is situated in the Begum Bazar area. It was constructed on a raised platform in the year 1700-04. There are vaulted rooms underneath of which are now being used as shops. This attractive Mughal edifice is roofed over by five domes resting on octagonal drums. This mosque carries all the typical features of Mughal architecture such as bulbous dome, slender pinnacles, battlemented parapets, octagonal corner tower capped by cupolas. One interesting feature of the mosque is the do-chala or two regimented hut shaped structure which is used as the residence of the Imam.

Mosque of Khan Muhammad Mirdha

There is an area in the north-Western side of famous Lalbagh fort called Atish Khan Mahalla. This magnificent mosque stands in splendid isolation there. It is known from the inscription that the mosque was built by Khan Muhammad Mirdha at the instance of Kazi Ibadullah during the reign of Emperor Aurangzeb in A.D. 1706. Most probably Khan Muhammad Mirdha was chief mason or architect. It seems the mosque was built over the ruins of some Mandirs as is clear by the inscription. The mosque is situated on a raised platform. The mosque is oblong in type, measuring forty eight feet by twenty feet with four octagonal corner towers. There are three doors on the eastern side and one door each on the northern and southern side. There is a madrasah on the north-west corner of the mosque. Maulana Asadullah used to teach students Logic, Philosophy and Fiqh through the medium of Arabic and Persian at this mosque and used to receive a monthly stipend of rupees sixty from the local Nawabs. He died in 1750 A.D.

2. Dacca: The city of Mosques, op. cit., p. 43.
The famous Buhar Madrasah and Library was an important institution in the eighteenth century. In connection with this library, the two eminent persons are worthy to be remembered. One is Sayyid Sadr-ad-din, the Mir Munshi of Warren Hastings and founder of the afore-mentioned library, the other one is Maulavi Sayyid Sadr-ad-din Ahmad al Musavi, who presented this library to the Imperial Library. So it is desirable to make a brief inquiry of these two historic personality.

Munshi Sadr-ad-din was born in a respectable Munshi family of Buhar. This Munshi or Sayyid family is said to be directly descended from the Prophet of Islam through the seventh Imam, Imam Musa al Kazim. This Sayyid family was well known for their piousness, religiousness, and devoutness. One of the members of this family, named Sayyid Shihab-ad-din, came to India during the reign of Sultan Altamish (A.H. 607-633/A.D. 1210-1235). He is thought to be the ninth in descent from Imam Musa Kazim and the fifteenth from the prophet (P.B.U.H.).

Sayyid Sadr-ad-din, son of Sayyid Muhammad Sadiq and founder of Buhar Madrasah passed a very eventful life. Before the battle of Plassey, he worked for some time as a clerk under Holwell in Calcutta and he is thought to be the first Bengali Muslim to serve under the British.¹

When he was studying at Murshidabad he was acquainted with Mir Muhammad Jafar Ali Khan and both of them studied under the same tutor. When Mir Jafar was elevated to Masnad of Murshidabad, he was appointed as Munshi. Subsequently he held the post of Mir Munshi, Madar-ul-Maham of the Nizamat. He was so trustworthy that he never exposed anything which was confided in him, even at the point of loaded pistols. Because of this trustfulness and sincerity he became the bosom friend of Mir Jafar. Mir Jafar appointed him Atalig (Tutor) to his son Nawab Najim-ad-daula, he extended his full support to him till his (Nawab’s) death.

During the reign of Nawab Saif-ad-Daula, he was also an important figure.

¹ At the time of Mubarak-ad-Daula, his enemies prevailed upon Nawab and tried to execute him but fortunately he escaped and his properties were confiscated. At last Sadruddin got political asylum under Mr John Graham.

Ibid, p. 126
collector of Mednapur. He recommended him to Mr. Barwell collector of Burdwan. By dint of his erudition, he ultimately became the Mir Munshi of Warren Hastings, the then Governor-General. He also became Darugha of all the Adalats. During this time he played an important role in the transfer of Diwani from Nawabs of Murshidabad to East India company. Lord Cornwallis utilized the services of Sadr-ad-din in the Decennial Settlement of Bengal. The Aimma lands were also settled by Sadr-uddin. The Governor-General was so much pleased with him for the services that he was offered the Jaigir of the Parganas of Baharband as a reward.\(^1\) He also enjoyed the favour of Shah Alam, the Emperor of Delhi (A.H. 1173-1221/A.D. 1759-1806) who appointed him Mutawalli (Trustee) of the Bais Hazari Parganah in the district of Malda, Dinajpur and Rajshahi. This Bais Hazari Parganah is an Waqf Estate of the eminent saint Sayyid Shah Jalal-ud-din Tabrizi (D.A.H. 642/A.D. 1244) who came to Pandua in Bengal during 7th century of Hijrah.\(^2\) Sadr-ad-Din was a very learned and pious man. He built several mosques and rest houses where travellers were treated free of cost. He constructed a large mosque at Buhar in 1187 A.H./1773 A.H.,\(^3\) which has

1. Ibid., p. 128.
3. Ibid., p. 503.
still been existing there. The tombs of Sadr ad-Din, his two wives and his little child are also attached to the mosque. He died in A.H./1211/A.D. 1796\textsuperscript{1}. One of his greatest achievements was the establishment of Buhar Madrasah in 1775\textsuperscript{2}, later on he also built a magnificent library attached to the Madrasah. He named this library as Kutub Khana Jalalia Buhar. To commemorate the name of his guru, Jalal-ud-din Tabrizi, he named it Jalalia.\textsuperscript{3} The Madrasah diffused the light of oriental education in Bengal. Students from different parts of Asia used to assemble there to get education. About eight hundred students used to get fooding and lodging free of cost. Most of the Judges of Bengal appointed in different capacities at that time were indebted to Buhar Madrasah for their education.

Maulana Abd-ul-Ali of Lucknow was appointed the Principal to this Madrasah. The Madrasah attained wide reputation under his principalship.\textsuperscript{4} He was popularly known as Bahr-ul-Ulum because of his profound knowledge.

\textbf{References:}

1. \textit{Islamic Culture}, op. cit., p. 130.
2. 'Ibid; \textit{The Calcutta Review}, op. cit., p. 503.
expenditure for maintaining this library as well as Madrasah was provided by the income of Bais Hazari Parganas.\(^1\)

Maulvi Sadr-ad-din, great grandson of Munshi Sadr-ad-din was a great scholar and had a profound aptitude for oriental learning. He himself compiled *Rawaih-al-Mustafa min Azhar al-Murtaza*, a biography of Prophet's descendants and edited *Nasaiz-al-Khasais*. His another work entitled *Al-Murtaza*, biography of Ali Bin Abi Talib, remain unpublished.\(^2\)

How large the Buhar Library was at the time of Munshi Sadr-ad-din, was not known but when Maulvi Sadr-ad-din took up the charge of the Library it contained only one hundred manuscript and some printed books.\(^3\) The Library made a tremendous progress at the time of Maulvi Sadr-ad-din. By 1905 he collected four hundred sixty eight Arabic Manuscript, four hundred eighty three Persian Manuscripts, One Turkish Manuscript and one Urdu Manuscript, besides about nine hundred and forty Arabic, four hundred Persian, one hundred and forty Urdu books, printed or lithographed.\(^4\)

2. *Islamic cultur*, op.cit, p. 132.
Moulvi Sadr-ad-din was a far sighted fellow. He did realise that if the Library remains confined at Buhar, in the course of time it may get extinct, so to save it from extinction and to make this library of rare collections available for the use of the coming generation of Arabic and Persian scholars, he acceded to the proposals offered by Lord Curzon, who wanted to convert the Calcutta Public Library into an Imperial Library. Lord Curzon personally went to Buhar and persuaded Maulvi Sadr-ad-din to donate his library to the Imperial Library. So an agreement was signed between Sadr-ad-din and the then Secretary of state for India on the 22nd August 1904.¹ According to this agreement, the original name of this library, "The Buhar Library" is still being maintained and it is housed in a separate chamber in Metcalfe Hall in Calcutta.

Two illuminated manuscripts one the Quran written in a beautiful minute Nashkh by the Emperor Aurangzib in A.H. 1099 and the other one a copy of the Panj Surah written in a learned Nashkh in gold by the prince Dara Sikoh are kept in the custody of the Trustee of the Victoria Memorial Hall as per the agreement.

¹ Islamic culture, op. cit, p. 132; Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts in the Buhar Library, op. cit. Preface.
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The Persian manuscript is one of the most valuable possessions of the Library. Moulvi Hasib first started to catalogue them but finishing touch was given by Jonab Khan Saheb Abdul Muqtadir. He was a famous cataloguer. On finding the manuscripts very old and original, he prepared a descriptive catalogue named Catalogue Raisonne in 1921. In modern times these catalogues seemed to be inadequate, back dated and misleading. So Mr. S.M. Hasan, deputy librarian, prepared a very useful language index to supply a very up-to-date information of the manuscripts, but he couldn’t finish it. The unfinished work of Mr. S.M. Hasan was completed by Shaikh Mazharul Islam, the present Assistant Librarian of the Arabic and Persian department.

Moulvi Abdul Khair Muhammad Yusuf, the clerk-in-charge of the Buhar Library from July 1905 to Oct. 1906 started to prepare a catalogue for Arabic manuscripts. His successor Moulvi Qasim Hasir Radavi who held the post from 1906-1909 prepared notices of most of the Persian manuscripts. After him, the next clerk-in-charge was a very good scholar but he had no aptitude required for cataloguing. So the work of cataloguing remained suspended for some time. In December 1914, the Secretary of State for India conferred responsibility of this work on Moulvi Hidayat Husain, Prof of Arabic and Persian at the Presidency College, Calcutta.
The Calcutta Madrasah

The Calcutta Madrasah is a pioneer institute in the history of Muslim education in India since the beginning of the British rule. It ranks as the first educational institute established in India by the British government and was founded in 1780 by Warren Hastings, the first Governor-general of the East India company, at the request of the Muslim elite in Calcutta. His object was to promote the study of Arabic and Persian languages and of the Mohamedan law among the sons of the Muslim gentry to make them competent for responsible jobs in the various departments of the British administration.

The Madrasah was first started in a rented building at Baithakhkhana near Sealdah. A piece of land was purchased at Padmapukur area to erect a new building for the college in 1781. All the expenses of the construction and the monthly cost of the Madrasah were defrayed by the Governor-general from his personal purse until 1782 and afterwards he was reimbursed by the company. In 1785 "certain lands and villages in 24-Pargana were assigned for the support of the Institution and a sanad (deed) made out for them in the name

of the preceptor or principal. This lands were called the Madrassa Mahal".  

Due to unhealthy atmosphere the Madrasah was shifted to a more suitable locality now known as Wellesley Square. The foundation stone was laid by William Pitt Amherst, Governor-general of British India. The Madrasah was shifted to this new building in August 1827. 

Maulana Majdood-din was appointed as the Head preceptor and was also given the charge to look after the internal affairs. He used to teach purely religious subjects like Hadith, Tafsir, Islamic Jurisprudence, and Islamic Philosophy up to Fazil. Maulana Majdood-din was a disciple of Maulana Nizamuddin, the founder of the Dars-i-Nizamiya System of Madraasah education. He (Maulana Majdood-din) introduced Dars-i-Nizamiya syllabus in this Madrasah. In course of time changes occured in the curriculum of the Madrasah and it adopted its own syllabus. Known as Dars-i- 


Alia. All the Madrasahs in India followed the system of Calcutta Madrasah and it enjoyed the unique status of an affiliating and Examining body.

In 1791, Maulana Majdood-din was replaced by one Maulana Muhammad Israil as he was accused of irregularity and mismanagement. In this year committee of superintendence was formed, some rules and regulations were framed up for smooth management of the Madrasah.

In 1795, the Zaminder of Nadia Raja Iswarchandra asserted his claim to the proprietor right of the Madrasah Mahal and an inquiry also proved his claim to be justified, so the whole Madrasah Mahal was handed over to Zaminder in 1800 and since this time the whole financial responsibility of the Madrasah came to the shoulder of the Government. The office of the head preceptor came from Md. Israil to Maulavi Mohiuddin. On his death it passed to Maulana Ameenullah. His perfection was so satisfactory that the Governor-General in Council provided him gratuity of Rs. 5000, and with a Khelaut of investiture into that office. According to the recommendation of Madrasah committee for its better

1. A Brief History of Madrasah Education in India, op. cit., 1987, p. 15.

management Captain Irvine of the 4th Native Infantry was appointed to the post of secretary and Maulavi Md. Sa’ar to the post of Head preceptor in July 1819. This time Government sanctioned a sum of Rs. 30,000 per annum from the public treasury for the maintenance of the Madrasah.

A library respectable of Arabic and Persian works was established as per recommendation of the committee of superintendence. First annual examination of the Madrasah was held in the Town Hall on the 15th August, 1821 in presence of many honourable and distinguished persons in Calcutta, despite the opposition from the preceptors and the students. This examination is said to be the first public examination held in British India. The results, however, were satisfactory.

In 1823, as per advice of John Adam, successor of Lord Hastings a general committee of public instruction was formed to inspect the state of public education in this part of India. This committee, according to proposals of Madrasah committee, used to manage the affairs of Madrasah through a sub-committee. This subcommittee assisted by a secretary. The Madrasah committee appointed Hafez Ahmed Kabir in 1823 as an

1. A Brief History of Madrasah Education in India, op. cit., p. 15
Indian assistant to the Secretary (Dr. Lumsden). Hafez Ahmed Kabir held the post of Khateeb of the Madrasah Mosque for twelve years.

In an attempt to extend the facilities of Medical treatment among the Muslims, the British rulers introduced medical classes in the Madrasah in 1827. Dr. Breton, the Professor of Medicine was asked to supply medical treatments and skeletons for the use of Medical classes. An Anatomical work by Mr. Tytler was translated into Arabic for the medical classes. The medical classes continued in the Madrasah till the establishment of Medical college in 1836.

The British authorities tried several times to introduce English classes in the Madrasah in 1826, 1829 and in 1833. They adopted various means by making the attendance compulsory or by increasing the stipends for the English classes but still they failed.

In 1837 they abolished Persian and introduced English as official language. They made another attempt in 1839 by starting Anglo-Arabic department but still they could not succeed. The reason of their failure is obvious. The Muslim in Bengal considered that learning of English might injure their religious belief and also it was an additional burden to the students.
In 1842 the General Committee of Public Instruction was abolished and Council of Education was established.

In 1850, as per suggestion of the Council Dr. Alloys Sprenger, an eminent oriental scholar was appointed principal of the Madrasah college and the designation of the preceptor was changed to Head professor or 'Modarris-i-Awwal'.

In 1851, Dr. Sprengar tried to make some changes into the studies and discipline of the Institution which resulted in discord between the principal and the students. Some changes were made in 1854. Anglo-Arabic Department was abolished and in its place Anglo-Persian Department was established under the control of the Principal and the Arabic Department was solely devoted to the college. The Anglo-Persian Department was upto the standard of senior English scholarship. Another branch school was started at this time for the Muslim boys of lower classes.

The year 1857 is very important in the History of Indian Education because in this year the Calcutta University was established. Now the Calcutta Madrasah college came under the Calcutta University. Anglo-Persian Department was affiliated to the Calcutta University in 1866 upto F.A. class.
In 1857 Sepoy Mutiny took place and the British rulers considered it to be the last attempt of the Muslim to regain power. Since this time, the British rulers began to nurse hatred and suspicion to the Muslims, so the Muslim had to pay greater penalty for this revolt. Many students of the madrasah were actively involved in the revolt. So the British authority considered the Madrasah to be a "Nursery of disaffection". In view of this suspicion the then Lt. Governor of Bengal Mr. F. Halliday sought the opinion of W.N. Lees, the then Principal of the Madrasah about the benefit in maintaining the Institution at Government's cost. Principal W.N. Lees reviewed the matter politically, educationally and economically and submitted a detailed report in which he suggested some reform rather than the abolition of the Madrasah. Inspite of that, Lt. Governor in 1858 recommended that Arabic Department should be abolished, the Anglo-Persian Department should be retained and Arabic professorship should be attached to the Calcutta University. But the India Government was opposed to this proposal. So no remarkable changes took place in the Madrasah.

In 1869 a committee was formed to enquire into the condition and management of the Madrasah. C.H. Campbell, Commissioner of the Presidency Division, I. Sutchiffe, principal of the Presidency College and Maulavi Abdul Latif,
a Deputy magistrate were on the committee. According to their suggestion again in 1871 a Madrasah committee was formed. Justice Norman was appointed as President and Nawab Abdul Latif as Secretary in the Committee. At this time the system of producing Sharafatnama at the time of admission was abolished, Mohsin fund was exclusively employed for the Muslim students and three new Madrasah at Dhaka, Rajshahi and Chita gong were established out of this fund.1

In 1882 Hunter Commission was appointed to review the education system of India. At this time some reforms were made in the Madrasah in 1884.

In 1896 Elliot Hostel was established for the Madrasah students. In 1902 Muslim Institute was founded and the principal of the Madrasah became ex-officio President and Treasurer of the Institute.

In 1909, as per suggestion of Arle Conference Title class was opened and some important change in the syllabi were made at the time.

In 1915 almost all Madrasahs adopted a new scheme drawn up by Shamsul Ulama Abu Naser Waheed of Dhaka Madrasah and

sanctioned by the Government. But the Calcutta Madrasah didn’t accept these new scheme. They retained the traditional scheme known as Dars-i-Nizami. In subsequent years many new High and Junior High Madrasahs were established. Three Islamic Intermediate colleges were started in the three division of East Bengal in 1920.

In 1927 Shamsul Ullama Kamaluddin Ahmad was appointed Principal of the Calcutta Madrasah. This year "Board of Central Madrasah Examination" was established to conduct various examination of the Old Scheme Senior Madrasahs namely Alim, Fazil and Mumtazul Muhaddethin. The Principal, Kamaluddin Ahmad was appointed ex-officio Registrar and Vice President of the Board. "Board of Central Madrasah Examination" was converted into "Bengal Madrasah Education Board" as per recommendation of Moazzam Husain Committee.

In 1947, due to partition of the country every thing became topsyturvy. Dhaka university and many High Madrasahs and Islamic Intermediate colleges under it came under East Pakistan. According to the decision of Separation Council, all the movable properties including Library of the Calcutta Madrasah was transferred to Dhaka Madrasah on 10th August, 1947. "The Bengal Madrasah Education Board" was also shifted to Dhaka. So a large number of old and Reformed Scheme High
Madrasahs and the Hooghly Islamic Intermediate College became orphan without any central control.

In 20th February, 1948 West Bengal Government set up West Bengal Madrasah Examination Board in Hooghly to conduct High Madrasah, Islamic Intermediate, Alim and Fazil Examinations in 1948 and 1949. The Principal of Hooghly Islamic Intermediate College was appointed its ex-officio Registrar.

The 4th April, 1949 is a fortunate date to the Muslim of West Bengal. On this very date, due to persistent demands of the leading Muslims of West Bengal and kind interference of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the Calcutta Madrasah restarted with new zeal and spirit, Mr Wajahat Hussain was appointed the principal. The Board from Hooghly was again transferred to the Calcutta Madrasah and its principal became ex-officio Registrar and Vice-president. Maulana Sayyid Ali Barkati served as officer-in-charge from 1964 to 1967. At his time he introduced Mumtazul Fuqaha course for the first time after partition.

Professor A.J.A. Tyeb came as a principal from Barasat Government College in Sept. 1971. During his time, students were allowed to write answer scripts in Bengali upto Fazil class and Fazil-passed students were also allowed to take
admission in P.U./H.S. Classes. At his time, west Bengal Madrasah Education Board was reconstituted and separated from Calcutta Madrasah College. After the reconstitution the Principal, Calcutta Madrasah College became an ex-officio member of the Board and Calcutta Madrassah College with its Title classes came under this Madrasah Board. "In its career of about two centuries, the Madrasa has seen great ups and downs and frequent changes in its curriculum. Prior to independence, a new curriulum was introduced in the Islamic schools of Bengal which prepared students for High Madrasa and Islamic Intermediate, equivalent to the Matriculation and Intermediate Examinations of the Calcutta University, with provision for such subjects as English language, Mother-tongue, Geography, Islamic History, Arabic Literature, Theology, etc. making them eligible for admission to the Bachelor of Arts classes. This was distinct from the old pattern of Junior and Senior Courses, under which instruction was given in Islamic Law, Arabic Language and Literature, Grammar and Syntax, Logic, etc. in a six-year term leading to the Junior Course, and in Quranic Commentary, Tradition, Islamic law and its principles, Arabic Literature, Islamic History, Logic, Philosophy, etc., for another two years for the Senior Course. Those doing the Senior Course could go in for specialization-Title
examination in their Traditional Science or Islamic Law which was a two years course. Under this curriculum, too, provision was made for the teaching of English, Mother-tongue, Geography etc".  

Professor Md. Shahidullah, present principal of the Calcutta Madrasah was appointed to the post on 18th July, 1983. At his initiative, permission was accorded by W.B.M.E. Board to write answer in M.M. and M.F. examination in Bengali. He had introduced Mumtazul Udaba course for the first time in Calcutta Madrasah College in 1983. This course is equivalent to the course of M.A. (Arabic) of Calcutta University.

Mosque at Inchlabazar

Inchlabazar is in the district of Burdwan. This place is also famous as Malka Noorjhan once resided there. There is a famous mosque which has grown shabby with age. The mosque represents the earlier architecture of Bengal. It is a square brick structure of simple design with gently curved cornice and peculiar form of curvilinear roof.


language in Nastaliq character, states that it was built by Sayyid Tahir in 1115 A.H. or 1703 A.D.¹

**Lalbagh Shahi Masjid**

This mosque was built in the early part of 18th century (1703-06) by Farrukh Siyar, deputy viceroy of Bengal. It is also known as Farrukh Siyar’s mosque. The mosque is situated to the south of the southern gate of the Lalbagh fort. Farrukh Siyar couldn’t complete it, as he had to leave Bengal for Delhi. This mosque was very large, measuring 164 ft by 54 ft, which could accommodate 1500 worshipers at a time.² It was first renovated by Abdul Gani, Nawab of Dhaka in the last part of 19th century and last renovated in 1975.³

**Katra Masjid**

The ruins of Katra Masjid is situated two miles to the east of Murshidabad Railway station. Katra literally means market. At the fag end of his life, Murshid Quli Khan decided to build a market and to construct a mosque and his tomb in its centre. The most faithfull and trusted person of

Murshid Quli Khan, Murad Faras was given the charge to translate the decision into action. The mosque was built in 1137 A.H./ 1723 A.D.\(^1\) Which is evidence from the inscription over the door way. It is reported that Murad adopted many unfair means to construct this mosque. He forcibly collected material of that mosque from the contemporary Zamindars of Bengal and by destroying some Hindu temples.\(^2\) The mosque exactly resembles Kartalab Khan's mosque in Dhaka. The mosque stands on a high platform in the centre of a square courtyard measuring 166' each side. Four octagonal minars were built at the four corners of the quadrangle. Two of these minars are still existing, one at the north west corner and the other at the south-west corner. The courtyard is surrounded by a double storied row of rooms. Some of these rooms are still existing in a delapidated condition. These rooms are said to have been used by those who used to recite Qurân in the mosque.\(^3\)

The proper mosque is rectagonal in shape measuring 130' by 24' with four octagonal corner minerates. The entrance of


\(^3\) Oitihasic Murshidabad, op. cit., p. 16.
this mosque is on the eastern side and below the staircase of the entrance, there is a under-cell where lies buried Murshid Quli Khan. The style of the construction more or less resembles Mughal architecture.

**Qadam Mubarak Mosque**

The inscription of the mosque shows that it was built by a Fauzdar of Chittagong, named Muhammad Yasin Khan, in 1719. The mosque still retains its original features. This oblong structure is situated on a platform at Rahamatgong area of Chittagong city.

The mosque contains the Qadam mubarak or foot print of the prophet (P.B.U.H.). That is why it has been so named. The mosque is said to possess the foot print of Hazrat Abdul Qader Jilani also.

**Begum Masjid**

This mosque stands at Naginabagh in the Lalbagh subdivision of Murshidabad district, near Sarfaraz Khans palace. This mosque is variously attributed to the wife and

mother of Sarfaraz Khan. An inscription on it bears a date corresponding to 1136 A.H./1723-24 A.D.¹

**Qutub Saheb Masjid**

The mosque is situated at Chhoto Pandua, Hughli. It was named after a famous saint, Shah Qutb al-Din who came from Bhagalpur and settled at Pandua. The inscription tablet which was discovered by H. Blochmann, records that the mosque was constructed by Path Khan, Son of Shuja Afghan Sur in 1140 A.H. or 1727 A.D.² in the reign of Emperor Muhammad Shah. The Mosque is like the second Kaba.

**Armanitala Mosque**

It is situated on Sarat Chandra Chakravarti Road, Dhaka. It was built by the wife of Khanjani in 1735 A.D.³ The mosque is covered entirely with a chau-chala vault. "The chau-chala vaulted roof of these mosques is suggested to have been development from the North Indian pyramidal type noticed over the facade of Akbar's tomb at Sikandra (1612-13) near Agra, as well as over Itimad-ud-Daula's tomb (1628)

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at Agra". This chau-chala vault is of Bengali origin and derived from chauchala huts of the land. Though the mosque is small (400 sq feet) but very beautiful.

**Phuti Masjid**

This is one of the largest mosques at Murshidabad. It was built by Nawab Sarfaraz Khan at Kumrapur, Murchidabad. It seems that this huge mosque could not be completed as it’s domes are still unfinished. Most probably it was interrupted by Sarfaraz Khan’s death. It is said that the mosque was built in a single night.

**Baliaghata Mosque**

There is a mosque in the village of Baliaghata under the jurisdiction of Jangipur Subdivision of Murshidabad. It is known from the inscription of the mosque which is written partly in Arabic and partly in Persian that the mosque was built by one Sayyid Qasim in the year 1155 A.H./1742 A.D.

1 The mosque looks like the Kaba.

Mahinagar Mosque

The mosque stands at Mahinagar, not far from Murshidabad town, under Asanpur police station. The mosque as revealed from inscription, was founded by a famous person, named Wasil Muhammad, at the time of Mir. Muhammad Jafar Khan, during the reign of Mughal Emperor Alamgir II, in 1173 A.H./1759-60 A.H.²

Kadam Rasul Mosque

This mosque is situated about a quarter of a mile to the south of Katra Masjid. It is so called because it contains a much venerated stone which bears the foot impression of Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H). The stone is said to have been brought from Gaur. This mosque was founded by the chief eunuch of Mir Jafar Khan in 1782.³

Wali Khan’s Mosque

Wali Khan built this mosque in 1790 A.D.⁴ The mosque stands on the east of Chittagong Medical College at

1. Inscriptions of Bengal, op. cit., p. 301.
2. Corpus of the Arabic and Persian Inscriptions of Bengal, op. cit., p. 505.
Phundan Mosque

This three domed mosque, as is evident from the inscription, was built by **Musammad Phundan**, a lady of English Bazar in 1208 A.H./1794 A.D. The mosque is located at Mahalla Chok Qurban Ali in English Bazar, Malda. It is said that the verses of inscription were composed by Ghulam Husain Salim, author of *Riyazu-s-Salatin*.

The Mosque Gharbi

The mosque Gharbi is located in the vicinity of Berhampore in Murshidabad district. It is known from the Persian inscription on the mosque that it was built by **Faqir Talib** in 1212 A.H./1797 A.D. Faqir Talib was a mystic, and used to preach Islam and Islamic teachings.

Silapur Madrasah

According to Narendra Nath Law, "towards the end of the eighteenth century there were some educational institutions...

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at Silapur in Bengal. Here both Hindus and Muhammadans were
 taught Persian and Arabic.\textsuperscript{1}

The above is the contribution of Muslim rulers, ulama and others in bringing up the religious institutions in Bengal which played an important role in spreading Islam and Islamic rituals in the region.

\textsuperscript{1} N.N. Law, \textit{Promotion of Learning in India}, London, 1916, p. 113.