Chapter VI

A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN THE EARLY BENGALI PROSE AND PROSE WRITINGS OF FORT WILLIAM COLLEGE AND OTHERS

The Bengali prose writings of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when studied comparatively with that of the Fort William College Pandits and later writers, shows marked difference with each other. This is quite natural, because, there has been a gap of not less than four hundred years. And also the writers of these two ages were of quite different types.

Many of us have a general opinion that the Bengali prose literature was the creation of the Nineteenth century. That it is far from the fact, has been elaborately discussed in the Chapters I, II and III. Now if the illustrations are discussed comparatively with that of the Nineteenth century prose writings a clear picture of their difference and similarity will be found.

Here our discussion is confined to the writings of sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and those of the Pandits of Fort William College together with some writers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Iswar Chandra Gupta, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar and a few others of their age.
The extent of the Bengali prose composition of the sixteenth century is very meagre as already discussed. We find only four specimens of this century, namely, the two letters of Maharaja Naranarayan of Coochbehar and the Ahom King Sukamfa and the two edicts of Meghanarayan Dev, the king of North Cachar. The writings of the seventeenth century are numerous and those of the eighteenth century are more numerous. The prose composition of the nineteenth century is simply vast and limitless as thousands of books in prose were written during that time alone.

We are now going to discuss one by one the structure, syntax and other characteristics of these prose writings of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in comparison to the writings of the Pandits of Fort William College and the later age writers with illustrations.

EARLY PROSE WRITINGS:

The writings of the sixteenth century are very easy and simple. It is true that some compositions of this age are rather complex. But these are very few in number. The writings of this age reveal some admixture of the regional prose styles of Assam, East Bengal (now Bangladesh) and North Bengal. For example:
The idiom is quite simple. There is an admixture of words from East Bengal (Bangladesh) and North Bengal. The last word 'রহে' (verb) of this sentence has been used in place of 'আকে'. But there is no difficulty in understanding the idea.

This sentence is very small and clear, has an influence of Assamese as exhibited in the verb তৈরী। This kind of simple and small sentences is a characteristic of modern Bengali prose too.

Here also a simple style has been followed. This sentence has also profound Assamese touch. Here 'গোটি'

1. Sajani Kanta Das, Bangla Gadya Sahityer Itihas, p. 16
2. Sudhanshu S. Tunga, Banglar Baire Bangla Gadya Charcha, p. 74
3. Ibid., p. 75
means 'বন্ধন'; 'মি ইতি ইকে' means 'মা থেকে', 'সমস্তে' means 'সমস্তই'. The sentence has lost its normalcy, still there is no difference in the primary structure which is out and out Bengali.

4. "আমরা পূর্ব আতিশানুতে আছি।"

This sentence is also very simple. This kind of sentence is rare not only in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries but also in the nineteenth century. Here 'অভিব্যক্তি' has been used in place of 'অভিব্যক্তি'. But the deviation is very slight. This kind of defect is found abundantly even in modern Bengali prose.

5. "তাহার আমার কর্তব্য নিন্দিত লাই পৃষ্ঠিত ফাকুর হইবেক। আমারা সেই উদ্যোপত্ত আছি।"

This style has also some Assamese element. Such kind of mixtures are numerous in the letters of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Here in 'বার্ণিতক', 'ক' has been used as the second case ending, 'মুখ' means 'মুখী' modern...

1. Sudhanshu S. Tunga, *Banglar Baire Bangla Gadya Charcha*, p. 75
2. Surya Kumar Bhuyan, *Kamrupar Buranji*, p. 75
'ট' in 'উদ্দেশ্য' as the seventh case ending.
In 'ংংং' the suffix 'ক' has been used as 'সার্থক'
(optional). This kind of uses have been prevalent from the
sixteenth century till today.

6. "তোমরা এ কর্ম্ম উচিত হয় নাইয়া .... আর আপনে আমি!"

This sentence is not very complex. Here had 'তোমার'
been used in place of 'তেমার' and 'হয় নাইয়া' used in
place of 'হয় নাইয়া' the sentence had become simply beautiful.
Here 'আপনি' in place of 'আপনি' is the style of the
dialects of East Bengal and North Bengal. Generally the verb
'আন' is used with 'তুমি' in Bengali and 'আনন' is used
with 'আপনি' 'আপনে'. This is one of the defects of
this sentence. Of course there was no difference found
between 'তুমি' and 'আপনি' in the sixteenth and seventeenth
centuries. This kind of use is abundantly found in the
writings of the eighteenth century even in the nineteenth
century in Puran bodhaddipani of Krishna Chandra Siromani.

This simple prose style of the sixteenth century
Bengali has also been frequently used in the seventeenth cen-
tury. Some examples follow:

1. Sajani Kanta Das, Bangla Gadya Sahityer Itihas, p. 18
These sentences are very clear and beautiful. However, we get some peculiarities here, such as 'আমারাকে' < আমাদের and the verb of the future tense (Second Person Plural) 'করিব' which has been used in place of 'করিবে' The sentences of this paragraph are very simple. These kinds of simple and small sentences are characteristics of modern Bengali prose.

This kind of prose style is very simple and easy. Here the suffix 'শন' has been used with the verb having subject 'সে' as a mark of respect. This is funny. In modern Bengali the honorific verb is used only in case of the honourable persons, such as 'আপনি - আপনারা', 'হেন-হেনা' etc.

1. Surya Kumar Bhuyan, Kamrupar Buranji, p. 73
2. Ibid., p. 81
3. "তোমার যে রাজ্যটি বুঝাচ্ছে, আর করা তোমার মনে তেমনি দুঃখ করিবাক উচিত নাহয়!"

This is a complex sentence but its construction is very simple and an easy style has been followed in it. Here the sentence would have been very beautiful if the verb was replaced by 'নয়'. The use of such type of negative verb was however in vogue in those days. But at present the negative particle sits after the verb negated. Here the word 'করিবাক' (inf. 'ইবাক') has been used to mean 'করিএ' during the whole of middle Bengali period this 'ইবাক' for 'ইতে' ruled supreme.

4. "তোমার নিজের সঙ্গে অমিষ, সমাজের পরম শীতে জানিয়া। এখন সেরা দিন দিন অধিক শীতে হয় তাক করিবান, গেন দেশ বিদেশের তাকে পুনর্যা প্রশংসা করে।"

This sentence is very beautiful as well as clear. This sentence is mixed with colloquialism found in East Bengal.

1. Surya Kumar Bhuyan, Kamruar Buranij, p. 75
2. Surya Kumar Bhuyan, Jayantia Buranij, p. 30
There are two types of past verb in this sentence, 'আইনা' and 'আটিনাম'. This is a sort of Sadhu and Chalti mixture not found in the Bengali prose in modern Bengali prose. But it has not effected the spontaneous expression of the sentence. Both literary and colloquial forms were prevalent in those days which the writers followed copiously.

5. "জঙ্গল তারা অতুলি দেবারা সকল শিবের করে গেরিকে সমর্পন করিয়া কথোপকথন পালন করিয়া ইদ্দে ইনিয়ত করিতেছেন।"

This is a very big sentence yet simple in nature and construction. This pattern of sentence conforms to modern Bengali prose. The use of following words and suffixes clearly shows the marks of modern Bengali prose: (a) second case ending 'কে', (b) verbal ending 'ন ন' as a mark of respect, (c) use of infinitive verb as a conjunctive and (d) use of possessive - মন্ত্র as in 'শিবের'. These characteristics are principal property of Bengali prose of modern times. It is significant that they were used in ancient times also.

6. "তোমার উচিত সেকমেদা ও আলোহ এই দুইজন মনুষ্য পরিহিালা, তো আমি গাহিলা।"

1. Ashit Kumar Banerjee, Bangla Sahityer Itibritta, vol. V, p. 34
2. Hema Chandra Goswami, Purana Asom Buranjii, p. 13
This quotation is mixed with Assamese, as the two verbs of this sentence - 'পন্থাহিঙিলা' and 'পন্থিলিনা' are not generally used in modern Bengali. Further the Pronoun 'সে' has been used in place of 'আরা' (they). This type of expression is found neither in Assamese nor in Bengali, but it carries clear meaning of this sentence. 'আহি' is non-finite verb the full form of which is 'আহিয়া'. However, 'আহি' was used as an alternative throughout the middle period.

BRAJABULI AND CHASTE BENGALI:

1. "হে কৃষ্ণ ... শ্রী সে আঞ্জা করে সে অর্থে করিতে পারে।"

This sentence is clear as well as beautiful and there is no complexity here.

2. "হে সঙ্কীর্ণ ... আহি আহর্মন্যে বিশ্বন সূর্যাকাশে আঞ্জা করিতেছে ... স্তম্ভক আঞ্জা হামার নাম পর অনু আর্নাকা কর গিয়া।"

1. Hari Narayan Dutta Barua, Sri Sankar Bakyamrita, p. 10
2. Kaliram Medhi, Ankawali, p. 35
This sentence partly belongs to Brajabuli yet it is simple Bengali. The phrase ‘কর গিয়া’ is still in use in modern Bengali.

3. “হে স্বামী... তিনুকমুখে তোহাক কুল পুষ্ট শানিয়ে রামু কায়নাকায়নে তোহাক পািভাব বরোহি”

This sentence is mixed with Brajabuli. But its structure is perfect Bengali. The verb ‘বরোহি’ is Assamese.

4. “গৌহন বাড়ী সুনিশ্চ সিসুসেবে... সমান নিত্যা বিস্মায় আইনং করিঃ পরাশ করিঃ... চলিস গেল”

This sentence is very clear and easy and mixed with Brajabuli words. The non-finite verbs ‘সুনিশ্চ’, ‘করিঃ’, ‘গেল’ are very significant as they all echo the modern Bengali, especially the standard colloquial prose.

After the seventeenth century and during the eighteenth century similar simple sentences were in use. Some examples are given below:

1. Keshabananda Dev Goswami, Ankamala, p. 25
2. Ibid., p. 350
Here the sentences are simple but they are a little archaic. And the language is not spontaneous and is very much influenced with Sanskrit idioms. The verb ‘বে’ at the end of the sentence was used to mean ‘কিন্তু’. This sort of use was in vogue in the letters of sixteenth century but the format does not hinder the sweetness of the sentence.

2. “আপনার হয় আমি এখা আসিয়াছি। খানার কার্যকে অব্যাহত ইয়াছি। এইদিগের খানা দুই কারিয়া সেহাড়ের খানাতে সেজ পাঠাইতেছি।”

The above sentences are very fine, simple and lucid. The language is also pure Bengali very much like that of our times. Here for the seventh case the ending ‘ত’ has been used. However, a better form should have been ‘য়’. This is a simple defect visible in modern Bengali also. The small sentences of the section are true to the perfection of modern Bengali prose.

1. Surya Kumar Bhuyan, Tripura Buranji, p. 17
2. Sibratan Mitra, Types of Early Bengali Prose, p. 114
3. “তোমার কুশা মঙ্গল সবকদা বাঙ্গা কারি। সূর্য্য পূর্ব ছায়া সূর্য্য পশ্চিমে উদয় হৈব, তাটির তোহিত উজানেচলির থানে আপনি প্রাস না তৈবে”

Here ‘ছায়া’, ‘তৈব’, ‘চলিব’ etc. are the verbs used in East Bengal and North Bengal, but they had not in any stood in carrying the clear meaning of the expression. The section, however, appears more Assamese than Bengali in respect of vocabulary. But the sentence structure is like perfect Bengali of modern times.

4. “মহাশেষর শারির . . . গিড়ার সমাচার শুনিয়া চিহির মধ্যে কুড়ই বেদনা পাইলাম . . . আরি মুন্ডকে এ সকল সম্বাদ জানিনা”

The language is very fine and perfect. Sentences are also simple unmixed with any foreign words. Only the spellings are peculiar. But in spite of this defect the language has not lost its sweetness.

1. Surya Kumar Bhuyan, Jayantia Buranji, p. 86
2. Debesh Roy, Atharo Sataker Bangla Gadya, p. 6
There are two simple sentences in this section. Two Persian words 'গোষ্ঠা' and 'ফরমাইস' occur here, which is very natural in the language of seventeenth to eighteenth centuries. In those days there was a tendency of writing long sentences. But it was mostly found that in a long sentence small sentences were used almost without any exception. Here one of the most significant factors of this sentence is that to indicate plurality the suffix 'গুলিত' had been used in place of 'গুলি'. The use of Plural suffix 'গুলিত' was not found in Bengali of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. But the Plural form 'গুলিত' had been in much use in the Bengali language of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. At present it is also abundantly used in East Bengal and in North Bengal, though it has little influence on the standard colloquial Bengali prose. The sentence is very clear, simple and unambiguous exactly as in our times.

The style and structure of the sentences is very simple and clear in every respect. This sentences are however mixed with the regional idioms and phonetic peculiarities of Dacca, Mymensing and Sylhet of Bangladesh. Here a great deal of peculiarities are found in spelling; of course the writers of those days were not conscious of spelling mistakes. But in spite of it, the section is an example of very fine prose similar to the prose writings of the twentieth century.

1. "তাহান (রামের) শ্রীরে রাবনে ধরিয়া নিয়াছিলেন সেই শ্রীরে পাখায় ধাব্যা আনিতে বিদ্যুৎ যুদ্ধে করিলেন, সীতারে আনিয়া বিষ্ণু পরীক্ষা দিলেন, যে রাবনে নি- যাহারে পরাম করিয়াছে, পরীক্ষা নীতা নাচা হইলেন, তাহারা রামে তাহানে পত্তা হইলা।"  

2. "বলিয়া গেল দৃঢ় ছিলো, মহাকাতা ছিলো, যে হাতে কাহিনা, তাহার সাহা হিলো।"  

2. "রাজা বিদানশা ... কন্যার হাত ধাবিয়া আপনার হাতে পাঠান... সামাজিক ব্যবস্থা করিয়ান তারা দিন তোজনের কন্যার বিলাত দিলো।"

1. Surendra Nath Sen, Brahman-Roman Catholik Sambad, p. 37
2. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, Bangla Bhasa Prasange, p. 38
The above expression is simple and nice. In those days a paragraph was composed of a few small sentences and no punctuations were used among these small sentences. Such kinds of illustrations are found in plenty in the Bengali literature of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It is true that Bengali literature of those centuries was very developed.

3. "বলী বলা কর্ণে ছিলো, মহাদের ছিলো, মে মাহারে
চারিখার তাহারে তাহা দিবে।"!

The style of sentence is very easy but is construed with many East Bengali peculiarities like 'বোলা' for বড়, 'মাহারে' for মহাকে, 'তাহারে' for তাহাকে etc.

4. "... এখানকার সমাচার বোধের সকল কামুখানে বাঁধিয়া আছেন কর্মকার্য কাহার নাহি আমি বদীয়া থাকিতে পারি না ... এক হাজার তাহার স্থানে তিন হাজার তখন কুজ করিয়া ... মোকাম প্রস্তুত করিবার মূহাদশ আশীর্বাদ করিবেন জন জান জান সেই আশায় দোষি।"²

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1. Ashit Kumar Banerjee, Brahman-Roman Catholik Sambad, p. 19
2. Debesh Roy, Atharo Sataker Bangla Gadya, p. 7
This is from a letter (Letter No. 11) of Debesh Roy's book Atharop Satak Gadya. The quotation is a combination of a few small sentences. Here the use of some regional and peculiar idioms like 'তাহার স্বানে', 'অনন্য স্বান', etc. has to some extent impeded the spontaneity of the sentence. In fact, the sentences are not easy, clear and straightforward.

5. "... জোরাণ মগধা সর্কার বাসনা করন্ড অনে কানা। 24 তারিখের পহ ২৭ রোজ রায়ে দায়া সর্কার জানি- নাম শুধু ফেরত আলিয়া এর আর আইনের সহৃদয় জো লিখিত হইতে এত্তঞ্চ তৃত পঁচিশ নাই।"

There is some mixture of Sanskrit idioms and colloquial forms of East Bengal of Bangladesh in it for which the usual clarity and simplicity is lacking here. Here 'করন্ড' is not used in the early Bengali Sanskritic non-finite verb but profusely found in the writings of the post-Fort William era as a direct result of too much Sanskritisation.

It deserves to be mentioned here that from the middle of the eighteenth century the style and composition of Bengali prose is advancing in a complicated way with too much Arabic-

1. Sibratan Mitra, Types of Early Bengali Prose, p. 120
Persian mixture in one side and Sanskrit format in another. A few examples:

1. "... পামুদগ্র শ্রী বুদ্ধবন্ধ ও রামেশ্বর অতির অস্ত্রকে গারনা বসত করি ... ইরসন পামুদগ্র জাজকরের স্থান ভাগ্নার ও নাইব হারিহর শক্তা আখেজ করিয়া মাতভা তাহর বাণি হইতে মিনার করিয়ার শৈষে জনবদের্তে পাকায়া নিয়ম বেহার মারণ করার করিয়া একপত্ত পাবল টাকা পাইয়াছেন ... পুরাওতু বাণিয়া নিয়াছে ... মুনিবা ঠাকীম ... নিকট মালিখ করি তবে মুনা টাকা পাইয়ে।"

Obviously, the sentence construction is easy and simple. But the components are of diverse origin. The combination of so many foreign words has made sentences queer. Here the phrases 'আখেজ করিয়া' and 'মিনার করিয়ার শৈষে' etc. have impaired the spontaneity and beauty of the sentence.

2. "... অনেক দিনের পর বাটির পথ পাইয়া সাগরের পথেই ইন্দিরা আনার নাটি জাইতে শিখি-য়াছেন সংগ্রিতিক পরিষ্যে বস্তা নাটি ... ওস্তুলতর

1. Anisuzzaman, Atharo Sataker Bangla Chithi, p. 106
Here the language is mixed with Sanskrit and regional idioms of East Bengal. One of the features of the sentences is that there is a Sanskrit verb at its end in the form of 'বদ্ধ নাসি' However, the section is free of Persian-Arabic admixtures, which is to be specially noted. It may be inferred in the light of the above discussion that Bengali sentences are becoming more and more complex in nature day by day.

1. Debesh Roy, Atharo Sataker Bangla Gadya, p. 21
2. Ibid., p. 77
The language of the expression is mixed with Arabic and Persian words. Here no punctuation had been used at the end of the sentence but it had been used haphazardly making the meaning of the sentences more complicated. If the sentences are rearranged in this forms:

(i) 'শ্রী রামনাথ কৈবর্ত... খুন করিয়াছে' ;
(ii) 'আমি আহাকে মারি নাই' ;
(iii) 'সে মৃকা মিশ্যা' ;
(iv) 'আমি মরিয়া থাকি... সাবুদ করিতে পারেন';
(v) 'তবে আমি মহারাজার... টাকা পুনাপার দিন।'

the sentences would have given the clear meaning of the letter.

The another defect of first sentence is that 'মর্যা খুন করিয়াছে' had been used instead of 'মার্যা খুন করিয়াছে'

But this may be just a slip to be overlooked.

FORT WILLIAM COLLEGE PERIOD:

From the middle of the eighteenth century Bengali prose became complex. As a result the writings of the Fort William College scholars are found mixed with a large number of Sanskrit words. It is also found that the composition of Bengali prose of this period is not only mixed with Sanskrit
but also Arabic and Persian. In a word, this mixed and highly complicated prose has become artificial without any similarity and sometimes having generated difficulty in understanding of the meaning. Some of the writings of those centuries are quoted here.

1. "আমাদের দেশে একটা অন্ধকার বিভ্রমে ও বিবেচনাতে তিনি অতি ভাল লোক, তিনি গেলেই আমাদের দেশের ও পারে লোপ।"

The composition is artificial because here too much Sanskrit is used. And the use of the words ‘বিভ্রমে’, ‘বিবেচনাতে’ and ‘পারে লোপ’ etc. has made the meaning difficult. This use has also made the sentences complicated. Here the word ‘আমাদের’ in place of ‘আমাদের’ is significant in early Bengali prose such use was common but in present Bengali no such use is found.

2. "আমাদের উপর করিয়েক মে নর ক্রান্ত অপারের জন্য আমাদেরকে উঠিয়ে তাহে করিয়েক এই আমাদের এই বনে অশুরু বাসিয়া থাকি।"

1. Ashit Kumar Banerjee, Kathopakathan, p. 151
2. Pramatha Nath Bisi, Bangla Gadyer Padanka, p. 4
This is from Itihasmala of W. Carey. This sentence is not easy and simple. Here the use of two words - 'একাশীজীবন' and 'আশী' has diminished its spontaneity to a great extent. Happily for us, modern Bengali prose has not been influenced by this Sanskritic format in sentence.

3. "হে কান্তার বিনাশ হে হোসাই আমার তখন ভালোবাসে গড়ে কে কিছু এবং বিশ্বব্যাপী স্বাভাবিক সাধনা লিখতে লিখতে বেদাঙ্কান পাঠান হৃদয়ান্ত হইতে হইতে হইতে হইতে।"!

This is from Raja Pratapaditya Charitra of Ram Ram Basu published in 1802 A.D. The style is complex. Sentences are blended with too many Arabic and Persian words. Most of the composition of the Fort William College Pandits is mixed normally with Sanskrit words and phrases but here it is mixed with Arabic and Persian ones. The proper use of punctuation in Bengali is the creation of the nineteenth century but there is no use of punctuation here though it was used in haphazard way in early Bengali prose. Here the unnecessary use of the words 'তাহে', 'তাহে হইতে' and 'বাবুল হইতে' etc. has made it more difficult. This style is artificial and therefore there is no life and liveliness in it. This is, however, an

1. Ashit Kumar Banerjee, Raja Pratapaditya Charitra, p. 65
exceptional case. Prose writers of the early nineteenth century belonging to the Fort William College were great Sanskrit scholars and so they used to write Bengali in Sanskrit style. For this reason their prose writings were heavily Sanskritised. There were of course some exceptions. Ram Ram Basu was one of them. He had very little schooling in Sanskrit tradition. On the other hand he picked up knowledge from the society at large which at that time was under the Nawabi - and for that matter, Persian influence. This is one reason why Ram Ram Basu used too many Persian and Arabic words and phrases in his writings.

In earlier period, especially during the eighteenth century, the Bengali society was under the influence of Muslim culture. One of the areas of this influence is visible in the people's habit of using Persian words in everyday speech. We have enough evidence of this. Almost all the deeds, grants and personal letters written in Bengali prose during this century are full of Persian words and phrases as well as Arabic words and phrases so much so that the whole pieces looked more Perso-Arabic than Bengali. However, the prose writings of this century available in Eastern Bengal and Assam were free of this Perso-Arabic influence. The specimens cited above in this chapter as well as in other chapters will clearly show this.

Thus it is proved beyond doubt that the prose writings of the three centuries - sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth -
which are available in Assam and Eastern Bengal are simple, clear, easy and lucid just as the modern Bengali prose writings. These writings are free of both Sanskrit and Perso-Arabic influences and hence they may be called true Bengali prose. The prose writings of the Fort William College pandits are not so pure, simple and easy. They are highly Sanskritised.

Examples:

4. “এবং সময় রাজা বসবর্ম মহারাজ বিদ্মানিতের সময়ে বৃত্তান্তি কারিগরি নিবেদন করিয়েছেন একি দুর্গা মহাস্থ অবধান করুন আমরা এখানে সর্ব বিষয়েই মুখে ইহুদিহি কিছু এক দুইটা কথের নিবেদন করে নাই।”

This is from Ram Ram Basu's *Raja Pratapaditya Charitra*. The sentences are to some extent mixed with Sanskrit here. This mixture has lost the natural lucidity of the sentences.

5. “বারুজি মহাস্থের ... স্থানে প্রাচ্যো করিয়েছি ... এ বৎসর হয়মাস এ সরকারে আমিয়িছি ইহার মধ্যে বারুজি মায়ের কাজ দুইবার নিবেদন নিমিয়িছিলাম ... তাহার সুলভে উভয় কিছুই আজ্ঞা হয় নাই।”

1. Ashit Kumar Banerjee, *Raja Pratapaditya Charitra*, p. 75
This is from Lipimala of Ram Ram Basu, 1802. Here also a Sanskrit style is followed. This paragraph comprises a few sentences. The division of the sentence into four parts would make it beautiful and clear. Here the use of the words 'স্বাস্ত আক্রান্ত' and 'নিভেন লিখিয়াছিলাম' etc. has affected the simplicity of the sentence to a great extent. Here the word 'মানোহার' for 'মানোহার' is a feature of early Bengali prose.

6. "...পাহাড় পাহাড় সমাচার অত হইলাম লিখিয়াছেন অনুর পরগনার প্রজালোক এ বলোর রাজার নিখি প্রাকৃত আমাদিগের অতুল অধিকারে পাহাড় আসিয়াছে।"

This is also from Lipimala and here the pattern followed is much more simple.

7. "...এক দিবস রাজা মলিগনেরদের সহিত কথা সঙ্গে দেবদত্ত রাণার মে উলকার করিয়া ছিলেন সেই উলকার সত্ত্ব লোকেরদিগকে কহিয়া রাণের অনেক প্রশংসা করিলেন।"

1. Ashit Kumar Banerjee, Lipimala, p. 122
2. Bijit Dutta, Batrish Simhasan, p. 5
This is from Batris Simhasan of Mritunjoy Vidyalankar published in 1818. The paragraph conforms to Sanskritised style of writing and therefore simplicity and lucidity is wanting here. Plural forms such as 'माणिगन्धरेद्रे' and 'आकैरदिकै' has made the sentence look rather difficult and cumbersome.

8. "माणुषः राजाज्यं चक्र उदयं ना हेतु केवलि बुद्धी नक्ता अज्ञानार नाश करिते शारीर।
आदुषं एकशं सूर्य पुष्यं चुंबत्रे पुष्य नहे।"

This is from Hitopadesh of Goloknath Sarma. The structure of this sentence is fully Sanskritised. If the Bengali verb is deleted here it becomes almost Sanskrit. It is noticeable that Bengali words are gradually becoming Sanskritized as the Fort William College era progressed.

9. "ভো ভো পলিতেরা অবধান কর। আমার
প্রেমের নিঃশ্চ উচ্চা পথগামী অতএব সাহারের
পূর্বার জ্ঞান দেহ।"²

1. Ashit Kumar Banerjee, Hitopadesh, p. 127
2. Ibid., p. 128
This is from Hitopadesh of Goloknath Sarma. Here the composition is fully Sanskritised. The phrases ‘নিজে ঔষধ’ and ‘জন্ম দেহ’ have hindered its smooth expression.

10. "জগৎ সেন্তো দুই তাই সেই মহাশবরায় ও মহাশবরায় স্বর্গধর্মকে প্রকৃতি কারণ পবনের রাশির মধ্যে মণিময়া দিলেন। ও বৈষ্ণবরাজ রাজবাগ্নকে ও তায় জ্যোতির সূচনকে সদাতে অভ্য বাঁধিয়া গঙ্গাতেত ডুলিয়া দিলেন।"

This is from Rajabali of Mritunjoy Vidyalankar published in 1808. The composition is very complex. Here in the 1st sentence ‘সদে’ and in the second sentence repeated use of ‘তা’ has done away with the sweetness of the language.

SIMPLICITY OF STYLE:

However, sometimes simplicity, sweetness and an easy straightforward style is also discernible in the prose writings by the pandits of the Fort William College era. This may certainly be considered as an exception and not a rule and the occurrences in which this simple style is found unlimited. Sanskritisation is the main characteristic of the age. Naturally, there is very limited scope for writing

simple prose with popular, desanskritised pattern as most writers in those days followed a uniform pattern which was the tradition. But there are certainly some deviations however small in number they may be, they look quite vibrant and lively like the specimens of earlier centuries available in Eastern Bengal and Assam. A few examples are given here. It is noteworthy that these examples are all drawn from the famous writers of the day who were well-known Sanskritists.

1. "একসমস্ত আলোক উপাদান মাধ্যমে আর নিতে উদাহরণ এক বান্ধ মধ্যে গিয়া আসিতেছিল। সে স্বাতন্ত্র্য এবং মাধ্যমে এই আলোক প্রাপ্তি করিতে উদিত হইতে প্রাপ্ত শুক্র মধ্যে তীর্থা ইহেক আসন তিত ইহেক আসন করিতে উদিত।"

(Itihasmala of W. Carey, 1812)

The sentence is very beautiful and lucid. The composition, highly developed, has little similarity with most writings of the era but it has great resemblance with the modern Bengali prose. This style of writings is indeed rarely found in the early nineteenth century.

1. Ashit Kumar Banerjee, Bangla Sahityer Sampurna Itibritta, p. 385
This paragraph is easy and simple. It is free from the dreaded Sanskritism. It has followed both the ancient and modern style of prose, even though the writer, Mritunjoy Vidyalankar is a very famous Sanskrit scholar. Here the words used are popular and are brought from everyday speech of the common people. The use of words such as 'মুই', 'মা', and 'ছেলেলিটামাটা' etc. is regional; these words are still used in the dialectal Bengal of West Bengal. The words like 'আমাকে', 'পাড়া' are also used in modern Bengali prose.

Rammohan Roy, who was popularly called the father of modern Bengali prose, can be grouped in this category. He belonged to an era which was influenced by the Fort William College but he was in no way a Sanskritistmost pandits of the

1. Ashit Kumar Banerjee, Prabodh Chandrika, p. 280
era were. He was a very learned man, having his schooling in Sanskrit, Arabic-Persian and western background. But he did not write Bengali prose on the model of Sanskrit prose: he wrote, on the other hand, in a simplistic style combining both Sanskrit and English models. Iswar Chandra Gupta assessed his prose style very objectively: he wrote

দেওয়ানজী জানাতেন মত পাল্টি যিনিঃ তার ভাষার অদৃষ্ট মিঠা ছিল না।

Dewanji here is Rammohan Roy. His prose was really very easy and simple but there was no sweetness in it. And his prose was free from both Sanskrit and Perso-Arabic influence. Some examples:

1. "জে আকাশ হইলে সকল ভুদ্র তুঃ তুঃ হইলেন সকল ভুদ্র তুঃ তুঃ করা ব্রৈষের কার্য্য হয় জুঃ জুঃ কানের কার্য্য নয়।"

   - Vedanta Grantha

The construction is simple but not very simple. Words are not in perfect order and setting. The word 'হয়' in the 'ব্রৈষের কার্য্য হয়' is superfluous. We use in modern

1. Ajit Kumar Ghosh, Rammohan Rachanavali, p. 11
Bengali honorific verbs ending in 'শনি' with honorable, animate object, but here an honorific verb with this 'শনি' is used for an inanimate object (তুমি). This has diminished the beauty of the sentence. Such use is not permissible in modern Bengali.

2. "পরমেশ্বরে আর ছীবে তেদ আছে মেহতুজ জীবের
ভার দ্বারা পরমেশ্বরের সত্তা না হয় বরং পর-
মেশ্বরের সত্তা জীবের সত্তা হয়।"

The style and syntax are similar here and there is moreover a tendency towards pedanticism.

Bhabanicharan Bandyopadhyay who was disciple of Rammohun Roy also used to write a symplistic Bengali prose not much different from Rammohan's. An example from his writings:

1. "মহাশয়ের আমি পুনর্নিমাণে যে অনেক আন্তর্যাবেক লোকের নিকট কলস্পুলিন লোক নিয়ত মান্যতা
করে প্রতিদিন রাজঃকালে মায় বেলা দশ এগার
খুশী পর্যন্ত বিস্মৃত থাকে এবং তবাকাত মায়
মায় ধীরে ধীর পর্যন্ত তার কা মানন করে।"  

1. Ajit Kumar Ghosh, Rammohan Rachanavali, p. 48
2. Pramatha Nath Bisi, Bangla Gadyer Padanka, p. 15
This is from *Kalikata Kamalaya* published in 1823.

The structure of the sentence is very simple as well as lucid and there is no complexity anywhere in the passage. The use of the plural form 'গুলিন' in place of 'গুলি' was abundant in those days; it was also used in earlier times as much as in late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the writings of many. The prose on the whole resembles the early Bengali prose of seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in many respects.

Another writer of this category of contemporary Bengal was Iswar Chandra Gupta.

Iswar Chandra Gupta, of whom we have said earlier, also wrote beautiful and simple prose on many occasions. An example:

2. "রাজা কালিকাতা হইতে বঙ্গনগরে গমন করিলে পর তারতচন্দ্র তথায় গিয়া তাহার সহিত মাঙ্কাৎ করিলেন। রাজা জানাইয়া পরিত্যাগ হইয়া ৪০ টাকা মাসিক বেতন নিদিষ্ট করত বাংলা শব্দ করিলেন, এবং কহিলেন "তুমি শত শত আজও সন্ধ্যার পর আসিয়া আমার সহিত মাঙ্কাৎ করিবা।" তিনি করিয়া ঐ তারতচন্দ্রকে "রাজপুতাকর" উপাধি প্রদান করত আঙ্গা করিলেন "তারত! গেলার
The expression is simple and clear. There is not much high sounding Sanskritism in it. The language has great similarity with the letters of seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

PEDANTIC PROSE STYLE:

But the characteristic prose style developed in the early nineteenth century through the initiative of Fort William College is pedantic and not simple. A few specimens of this pedantic highly Sanskritised prose:

1. “হিমালয় শিবেতে শারীর স্নান করিয়া অকাল হরণ।”
2. "আপনার কন্যা আশানে অশান কুলশ্রেষ্ঠ করিয়াছেন।"

3. "কলহসম্প্রভাকে সারাদিন ঐ কন্যা দূরসাতে অনন্ত করেন।"

These are from Puranabodhoddipani of Krishnachandra Siromani published in 1828.

The sentences are clear and simple. But here 'হে', 'হে' are used in place of dative 'কে' (সম্প্রভা করিয়া) (সম্প্রভা করিয়া). Perhaps grammatic rules were not followed in Bengali syntax at that time.

 Again, there are such kinds of sentences in this book which have no similarity with the writings of the pandits of the Fort William College. Rather these are quite similar to the style employed in the letters of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. For example:

1. "প্রেমগুলি সমুদ্র না ইতে আমার নাম লিখ নাই।"

2. "আকৃষ্ট সমুদ্র সমুদ্র আমার আমার আমার প্রেম সমাহন হই।"

1. Krishna Chandra Siromani, Puranabudhoddipani, p. 33

2. Ibid., p. 1
The above compositions are very beautiful and clear. The sentences are small. Here the marks of punctuation have been used. But in some sentences there are more Sanskritism than is permitted in normal, popular sentences. However, we get some words in older style as in 'আমারদের' for 'আমাদের', 'ফলাফল' for 'ফল' (imperative use), etc. Such kinds of uses are also found in Sri Krishna Kirtan of Baru Chandidas.

Parallel to the simple and easy style, sentences with high Sanskritic formats are also found in Puranabodhoddipani.

1. Krishna Chandra Siromani, Puranabodhoddipani, p. 2
2. Ibid., p. 3
3. Ibid., p. 4
For example:

"এক সময়ে শ্রীকৃষ্ণ বালকেদের সঙ্গে অপরনে গোপনভূত একটি বাক্সে গোপন করিয়াছেন, ইত্যাদি গোপন বাক্সের কোন জন্ম ছিলো একে বলিয়া বলিয়া যে এই কৃষ্ণ, আমার 'এক কৃষ্ণ হিয়া' এই ছিল। এ গোপনের নামাং পরিলক্ষি করা আছে, যদি আপনার অনুমতি হয় তবে আনন্দ করি।"

Obviously, this is similar to the most popular way of prose writing of the era. There is therefore no novelty in it. Here the words 'সাক্রায়েন', 'ইঙঘরেন', 'জাগাও-পালন নাম পালন', 'মৌলিক ভাষা বলিয়া', 'গোপন করি', etc. have marred the sweetness and spontaneity of the sentence.

Now we are going to discuss the prose writings of some later pandits of the Fort William College. They all were basically Sanskritists but their writings were much simple. Various kinds of defects are, however, found in their composition. For example, complexity in the sentences due to non-integrity of words, over use of Sanskrit words and over lengthy sentences. But in spite of these defects the meaning

1. Krishna Chandra Siromani, Puranabuddhipani, p. 18
of the sentences is clear because the construction of the sentences has simplified and word order established to a scientific basis.

Here we can quote and discuss some of the writings of this age. For example:

1. "এদেশে বিশ্বাসিত হইবার যে কল্পনা করা 
ইহায়াতে তাহা অতি উচ্চ, ইহাদেশে যে সমস্ত বিশ্বাসিত হইয়া 
পে আর সিদ্ধার শিষ্য হইয়া থাকে এ দেশীয় তাহাকে শাসার 
কোন বিষয়েই শিষ্য করিতে সক্ষম না।" 

This is a complex sentence, yet its structure is simple and accordingly its meaning is clear. What is of special significance is that the sentence was written with more Sanskrit words. But these Sanskrit words are simple and much familiar.

2. "পারিসাহিত্যে যদি এক ফোটা জ্ঞান দিয়া 
যাহি করিয়া সহজে পারেন তবে কি আমরা তবে 
রসান বিষয়কর তাকে এক নামের যুদ্ধে পূর্ববর্তী স্মরণ এখন করিতে পারিবনা?" 

1. Iswar Chandra Gupta, Sambad Prabhakar, 27th July, 1854
2. Ibid., 25th April, 1851
Sanskrit words have been decreased here and they are not high sounding and pedantic. The sentence is also not very complex. It is a completely modern sentence with the word order put scientifically.

3. "ঋষিকেরা আন পিঙ্কা কন্ননের উপায় আস্ত না চিকাল কর রিবলে আমাদিগর কৃষ্ণবোধ হই- ওতে তা লিখিয়া বর্ণনা করা যায়না।"

This is also a simple sentence with some high sounding Sanskrit words used in order.

4. "এদেশে নিম্নকিন্তু স্বাগন কারিয়া অন্য শলাক- লিঙ্গক স্বাস্বকর্ম কৃষ্ণা গান করিতেন মরিয়া ভালো, মানুষে কুলভূত হইয়া উঠিতে।"

The style of sentence is easy and clear. But it is mixed with many Sanskrit words.

1. Iswar Chandra Gupta, Sambad Prabhakar, 7th Aug. 1850
2. Ibid., 27th July, 1854
Both old and modern sentence patterns are found here. However, there is absence of simplicity. In fact, the first sentence of this paragraph is simple and lucid. But in the second sentence the repeated use of 'বুঝি' and the use of 'চৌঘু বাক্যনিঞ্চ', 'সমানিন্ত' and 'বাক্যনির্ণয়' etc. have hindered the spontaneity and simplicity of the sentence. The use of such words confuses the meaning and its use is not found even in the early Bengali prose.

6. 
“মাঝারা স্বল্পার্থের স্বাধীনতা সমাধান অস্বাভাবিক করে, অন্যান্যকার পাইলেও দেওয়াই উচিত”

This is a complex sentence. But the expression is very clear. Here the use of the words 'জ্ঞানী' and 'নিশিন' has affected the sweetness of the sentence.

1. Iswar Chandra Gupta, Sambad Prabhakar, 7th July, 1851
2. Ibid., 7th July, 1850
Rammohan Roy wrote in a similar fashion. We have given above some illustrations from him. Some more illustrations are presented here to show that his prose writings have both popular and pedantic formats although his pedanticism is never as lifeless as others' of his era.

"এ জগতের এক পরমেশুর আছেন তেঁই পকলের নিম্না তাহার সুরুপ আমরা জানিনা তাহার আরাধনাতে সর্বসিদ্ধ হয়।"

The structure of the sentences is simple. Here 'তেঁই' means 'তিনি' (he). This is an 'অবহেলা' word. This kind of use is not found in modern Bengali prose. The passage is divided into four small sentences, such as -

(i) 'এ জগতের ... এক পরমেশুর আছেন';
(ii) 'তেঁই পকলের নিম্না';
(iii) 'তাহার সুরুপ আমরা জানিনা';
(iv) 'তাহার আরাধনাতে সর্বসিদ্ধ হয়।'

In absence of punctuation marks, the division is not clear. But it is not an unusual factor.

1. Ajit Kumar Ghosh, Bhattacharyer Sahit Bichar, p. 116
2. "...জীবের কর্মাঙ্গিয়ার ফলাফল অস্ত্রদায়র ন্যায় এক্ষণ্জা কর্ম হইলেন!"

The construction of the sentence is styled with a mixture of Sanskrit and Bengali. Here the use of the words 'তেঁতু অস্ত্রদায়র...কর্ম' has hindered the sweetness of the sentence.

3. "দ্রীকের বুদ্ধির পরিকল্পনা কেন্দ্র কালে পাইয়াছেন, মে আনন্দেই আবারানগকে অপে বুদ্ধি করেন?"²

This sentence is simple, very simple although by construction it is a complex sentence. The subject of the sentence is understood. Here the word 'আবারানগকে' has been used in place of 'আবারানগকে'.

4. "অতএব সঙ্গের কেন্দ্র বন্ধন করিয়া, পরে আপনি দ্বারা দান করা এ সর্বশান্ত নিমিত্ত, এবং অভিনিয় পানের কারণ হয়।"³

1. Ajit Kumar Ghosh, Brahman Sebodhi, p. 224
3. T-11, p. 202
The style of the sentence is mixed with Sanskrit as well as English models. Here punctuation has been used without any purpose. The words and phrases 'বাংলাধর', 'ব্রক্ষণ করিয়া', 'সর্বশাস্ত্র নামিঙ্গ' and 'গানের করা' etc. have diminished the normalcy of the sentence. They have also hampered the sweetness of the sentence.

5. “আমাদের সংকুচিত বুঝতির বিকাশে থাকিবেক আর আমার বুঝতির গোকের সহিত সংবাদ দ্বারা পাশ্চাত্যকে কহেন আমাদের অপলোহী ইহাতে আধিকার জানিবেক।”

This is a complex sentence and very long. The construction has a touch of Sanskrit style. Generally sentences become long with uses of infinite verbs. But here the sentence has been lengthened by the use of relatives like, 'মাহাদের', 'শাহারা' and 'ঝাহাদের' etc. As a result of such kind of use of words the sweetness of the sentence has been marred.

A remarkable feature about this Sanskritised prose style is that it was practised in the Fort William College era by almost all writers. Undoubtedly, that was the age of Sanskritisation not only in West Bengal but elsewhere in the

1. Pramatha Nath Bisi, Bedanta Grantha, p. 12
Bengali speaking areas. We even notice this special features in Bengali prose written at that time in Assam also, which sounds rather queer. Assam was a traditional kingdom of popular and simple writings whether it is Assamese prose or Bengali prose. Enough of evidences of this popular and simple prose style were given above. What is puzzling about this is that in the six letters written in the beginning of the nineteenth century, i.e., at about the time of the initial stage of the Bengali prose writings through the Fort William College, a marked Sanskritisation is noticeable. These letters were recorded in the Tunokhungia Buranji and were written by the Ahom and Kachari courts. Examples:

1. “পিতৃতে পুত্রের যদি অলাভ হয় তথাপি পিতৃতে অলাভ ভাবা কারিতে উপস্থিত। ... পিতৃতে সরুলোকে থাকিয়া আমার হর্ষ হারা করিয়া নাই”

2. “অলাভ আমারি লিখিয়াছে অমৃতোপে রঞ্জুর রঞ্জুরে অমৃতোপের একতাশাষ্টি মীলের অভ্যস্ত এবং আপনির বিস্মৃত না হয়”

1. S.K. Bhuyan, Tunokhungia Buranji, p. 150
2. Ibid., p. 153
The specimens clearly show their affinity with the prose written by the pandits of the Fort William College almost in every respect - style, syntax, word order and Sanskritism. It seems queer as Assam was a distant land where there was no representative of the college. Neither did also anybody from that land come here to study the Sanskritised prose.

It is possible, and we believe reasonably true that a kind of prose developed at that time throughout all the Bengali speaking areas on a set pattern. That was the era of decaying Islamic influence, which means Arabic-Persian education was gradually fading down. English education was just introduced and so it was not popular; in fact English education did not reach the people at large, beyond those living in Calcutta. Old Sanskrit education depending on the tol and pathsalas was prevalent all the time despite the rise and dominance of Arabic-Persian education. This tol and pathsala based education received a new lease of life once the Arabic-Persian education started receding due to the end of Muslim

1. S.K. Bhuyan, Tungkhunqja Buranji, p. 139
rule and rise of the British to replace it. Under this situation, Bengali prose, which has a history of three hundred years of cultivation in a very wide area, took a uniform shape at the hands of the tol and pathsala pandits. The Sanskritised language of the six letters in the Tungkhunga Buranji is a concrete proof of this. So it is not correct to say that the Bengali prose as we find it in the writings of the Fort William College is their creation and that they are the sole inventors of this method of writing. Far from it.

As we have seen, Bengali prose developed as early as the sixteenth century and it was cultured and nourished vigorously. There was no trace of Sanskritism in this prose for three long centuries; occasional Arabic-Persian mixtures, of course, did occur in it but that was not a characteristic feature of it. In a word, the prose we find to be vigorously cultivated in all the Bengali speaking areas - West Bengal, East Bengal and parts of Assam - is very fine, beautiful and scientific: this prose was not artificial or pedantic. It has liveliness and is very effective as a means of communication. True, no great literary work was written in it. But the royal letters, deeds, grants, gospels and advices, etc. were plentifully written in it and these are all graceful works; the language, here the prose, in which they were written, was also equally graceful. The beauty and charm of
this language cannot be ignored, sometimes this prose was so nice, vivid and explicitly artistic that we cannot but recognise it as a true literary prose.

To sum up, we find that Bengali prose was evolved in the sixteenth century itself. The style of the writings of the three earlier centuries particularly the historical letters has striking similarity. Bengali prose have right from the eighteenth century down to the Fort William College age, and later even the modern writers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and others who entertained the Arabic and Persian influence, entered the trap of English and Sanskrit style. As a result, Bengali prose has become harder and harder in course of time. Consequently, this prose lost its lucidity, simplicity and natural character. The prose composition of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries has admixture of regional colloquialism of East Bengal. Notwithstanding all these, the prose of this period is neat, easy and simple. Of course, the language style in some letters of the eighteenth century is not neat and clear. But such writings are few in number.

The language style of letters of the sixteenth, seventeenth and part of the eighteenth centuries has close resemblance with the modern Bengali prose. But no such resemblance can be traced in the language of the pandits of the Fort William College. This has been vividly shown with
numerous examples. The reason why Bengali prose had taken this abnormal shape in the hands of the pandits of the Fort William College is easy to find. In fact, we have discussed it above quite sufficiently and made the point clear. From all this, we come to the conclusion that Bengali prose is not the creation of the early nineteenth century writers, rather it is the creation of the sixteenth century scribes and authors of royal letters. There cannot be an iota of doubt about this.