GLOSSARY

Antyaja: Marginal castes of Hindu society. Placed very low in Hindu social hierarchy.

Bangla san: This era is prevalent in Bengal and Assam. It commences from the 1st day of Baisakh month. We have to make the following calculation to get the corresponding Christian era year: i) Bengali year + 593 = C.E year (April to December) ii) Bengali year + 594 = C.E year (January to April)

Banik: Bengali merchant. Comparable word is Saodagar.

Bhadralok: Formally educated Hindu/Brahmo male generally from the upper castes with some landed property.

Bhati: Coastal Region of Eastern Bengal.

Bhuyian: Local rulers in medieval Bengal. They were often collectively called Baro or 12 bhuyians.

Bibaran: Description of a particular place or an incident. Comparable terms, Itibritta and Brittanta.

Bhum: Term used to describe land inhabited by a particular group of people e.g. Goalabhum (land inhabited by cowherds).

Chaudhuri: Tax collector in medieval India. Later the term of was used as a title.

Dam: Lowest unit of official Mughal currency. A copper coin. 40 dams were equivalent to a silver rupee.

Desh: One’s place of origin. The term may stand for a village, a district, a province or a nation state in various contexts.

Haor: Marshy land. Especially in Howrah district.

Jatra: Form of entertainment popular in the countryside. This combines elements of play with songs and poetry. The plots are based mostly on social, historical and mythological themes. Allied art forms are Kabigan, Palagan and Panchali.
Katha: Annals of a particular place.

Kulajis: Literary works containing genealogical tables of prominent families, maintained by ghataks or matchmakers.

Magh: People of Arakenese (lower Burma) origin residing in Chattagram.

Mangal Kavyas: works of poetry, written in medieval Bengal which described the supernatural powers local gods and goddess, such as Manasa, Chandi and Dharma. Valuable data on society and culture are found in them.

Pargana: Minor Mughal administrative unit. A few villages made up a pargana, and several parganas made up a sarkar or district.

Patuni: Ferry man. Iswari Patuni is a famous character of Annada Mangal.

Pir: Muslim holy man, who is often revered after his death. Closely related terms are fakir, ghazi or auliya.

Pitha: A holy place where Shakti or mother Goddess is worshipped. According to Hindu mythology there are 51 such places spread all over South Asia.

Prasasti: Royal eulogy, often composed by the court poet.

Sadr: Central area of a district.

Sayar: A large water body. Word derived from Sagar or Sea.

Sripat: Centre of Vaishnava worship.

Subah: Province of the Mughal Empire. Its governor was called the Subahdar.

Sanskriti: Culture.

Vamsa: Lineage.