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**SPATIAL MANIFESTATION OF SOCIETAL NORMS: A CASE OF
URBAN DESIGN IN BANGLADESH**

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Abstract: Apparently Chaotic urban morphology provide with socio-spatial dimensions, shows clues to a hidden order that gives a distinctive texture to Bengal settlement morphology. This paper attempts to explain some of the notable Bengali social norms, some of which have transcended from indigenous period to contemporary time. They influenced in producing a set of environmental norms and artifacts using that conceptual framework in subconscious mind. This framework if understood will aid in explaining the link between societal (intangible) values and built-environmental (tangible) artifacts. Other way round, the evaluations of the end product (built environmental artifact) also reveal those human norms and behaviours led to some manifestation in the quality or characteristics of life in terms of comfort or spatial organization. The framework or relationship that has been identified is expected to be a useful tool for future sustainable urban design in this region.

Keywords: Built-environment; Urban morphology; Societal norms

Introduction

One of the most important recent lessons learnt by the western planners and city authorities is that the 'local communities' are the source of all successful planning strategies. Cities of the developing countries are in a planning dilemma as their formal planning is framed on western parameters, while local socio spatial forces are at odds with that framework (Mowla, 1997a). The notion that interventions, if it is to succeed needs to frame its tactics within the local tradition. This demands a clear understanding of the local tradition and foreign implants, and to identify these different strands in the morphology of one of Asia's more complex urban areas - Dhaka. A method of explaining design proposals for our physical environment with its socio-cultural context is often needed (Al-Soliman, 1991 and Boden, 1992) so that meaning attributed by the designer can be generally understood and publicly debated before implementation commences, and be validated or rejected. With this backdrop in mind, the paper tries to explain the spatial developments in urban Dhaka. The study employs a modified version of Rapoport's non-verbal communication method. Unless otherwise mentioned, most of the historical information in this paper has been derived or interpreted from Ahmed (1986), Dani (1962), King (1976) and Karim (1964).

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An Overview of the Context

The process of growth and development at Dhaka has witnessed and embedded imprints of different socio-cultural, geo-climatic, technological and economic influences. Dhaka is an old city and bears all traces in its physical layout of its history, whether as a trading centre or as an administrative capital or sub-capital, and in the detail of house style and neighbourhood of its history under Hindu, Muslim and Christian rulers (Johnston and Herbert, 1976, p. 13). The art and architecture of Bangladesh is essentially an expression of an agricultural society that eked out its living from the soil, which profoundly influenced their creation (Nazimuddin, 1985, p. 17.1). The requirement of openness and ventilation encouraged the extension of household and social activities outdoors. A natural outcome was the socialization spaces like *uthan, gali, morh, chouk* and *bazar*¹ (Mowla, 1997, p. 247).

The colonization of the region by the Europeans acted as a catalyst to disrupt or divert the natural flow of spatial development to a direction that could not be adjusted to the local context. New typology, though coined by many with modernization, raised many questions regarding its validity to solve the prevailing problems. There was and still is a common misconception that western methods and materials promoted a desirable restructuring of traditional building trades to respond to modern institutional commissions. There is also a tendency to characterize the colonial city as an industrializing form, articulating the transition between pre-industrial and industrial cities. This is both inadequate and distorted, largely because it ignores the forces and impact of colonization and imperialism (Mowla, 1999). However, fundamental question is, if was there really a colonial architecture or town planning as a category? There was never a homogeneous colonial style, but there was of course, similarity of attitudes among colonizers that gave rise to certain patterns of development.² The concept, such as stability and change in terms of architectural expression is quite complex, especially when applied to cultures with an already rich and strong building tradition that was suddenly brought into contact with imported ideas and tastes. The fallacy of these arguments can also be judged in the light of contemporary trend of New Urbanism (Katz, 1994), showing that indigenous pattern could have been developed to meet the needs of the time. It was in fact destruction, through negligence, of a traditional know-how and methods of organization.

In order to review the spatial development process in Dhaka and for the sake of the convenience of study, Dhaka's recorded history of about 500 years can be classified in three general phases of development i.e. Indigenous period, Colonial Influence and Contemporary Trend. Whole period before the advent of westerners maybe termed as Indigenous period while the British rule and the native rule thereafter may be termed as Colonial and Contemporary respectively.

Discussion on Spatial Characteristics Associated with Societal Norms

As a regional entity, Bangladesh had been a unique modifier (Nehru, 1956, p. 62). All the external rulers excepting the British, could be tempered and later on could be identified with the local people and culture. May be it is because all of them belonged to oriental cultures having similar values and also that they settled in the region. For the first time during the British rule, the ruling class remained as alien usurpers and failed to identify themselves with the local people. At a later stage, the western educated Bangladeshi middle class assumed a similar role. However, indigenous values could not be eradicated. With the backdrop discussed in the preceding sections, some of the spatial characteristics associated with societal values are discussed here.

Family Structure and Physical Form

Indigenous Culture: The joint family consisted typically of three to four generations. The preparation of food, its consumption, ritual observations, sanitation practices and caste belief and practices (the population being predominantly Hindu) governed all systems of social behaviour. The nucleus of social structure were household (*ghar*) and homestead (*bari*). Neighbourhood or *mahalla* (also called *para*) was mainly composed of family lineage (*paribar*). The social structure was similar to contemporary rural structure in Bangladesh. Physical manifestation of family level out-door activities gave rise to *uthan* or courtyard house and *galies* or lane/by lanes. Male head of the household occupied dominant and better locations in the settlement. Worship was on household basis and individual centered (Nehru, 1956, p. 82).

The central Asian settlers influenced the late indigenous phase and had the houses typified by an inner *uthan* (courtyard), more or less similar to earlier typology. This *uthan* was the central meeting place for the joint family. The private spaces were strictly segregated from public spaces. Courtyard, though generally attributed to the Central Asian and Middle Eastern cultures, was well adapted to the warm humid Bangladesh due to its similarity to the older indigenous *uthan* and house form. In the house of the wealthy, there was likely to have two *uthan*, one for *bhitor bari* or inner house and another for *bahir bari* (*Bangla ghar*) or outer house, each flanked by rooms with female and male domain respectively. In the house of those who are not so wealthy, rooms would be arranged around a single *uthan* with front room facing the street functioning as the entertaining area for males. In the precolonial city, *uthan* was the basic module for the organization of living spaces. Earlier social structure in Dhaka got further consolidated by this time, under a more compact urban context. Prevailing *mahalla* typology was derived from social interaction of families.

Western Culture: The corresponding built-form provided for western culture at Dhaka was the Bungalow-compound complex (King, 1976, pp. 90-94, 123-155). The typology derived from the indigenous 'bangla ghar' typically consisted of a large, single storied dwelling, located generally at the center of large enclosed plot. The servants' quarters were located at the backyard, detached from the main building (Mowla, 1997a, p. 264). Kitchen was also generally detached or at the rear part of the main structure. The house was normally being occupied by husband and wife only with children away in the convents. High value was placed on land owning and property in the form of housing as a symbol of status, on canons of aesthetic taste ultimately derived from past civilizations of Greece and Rome, and on a close attachment to the world of "nature"(Glacken, 1967, p. 33). Front lawns were carefully arranged and cultivated to expose their status and to suit "garden parties", the backyard was assigned to services.

Religious Belief and Built Form

Religion was expressed differently in each of the cultural sections of Dhaka and the differences were likewise reflected in the physical-spatial setting.

Indigenous Culture: Largely influenced by polytheism which does not proselytize and it being an ethnic attitude rather than universalizing concept, gave rise to variety of worship places. Indigenous attitude, unlike Muslim's *masjid* (mosque) or Christian's *girja* (church), was God oriented rather than community oriented.³ Typically, spatial areas were occupied, inhabited and modified according to caste criteria of indigenous settlement. Generally religious observance was at individual and family level which was expressed in the domestic shrines in each house and the many small temples that were scattered throughout the city.⁴ The cyclical world view of Hinduism was associated with the practice of cremation or floating away at the sacred water gave rise to the need for cremation ground or *shoshan ghat* by the

river. Typical settlement layout was concentric with higher caste living near the centre and lower caste away from core.

The Central Asians with the Muslim monotheistic belief system largely influenced late indigenous phase, and had a community based on the principle that faith not kinship acted as a social bond. The tradition began from a Muslim notion of centre, although, not metaphysical but symbolic idea of the earth and the heavens and of the manifested center - which becomes a geometric or physical center. Dickie (1978, p. 18) has observed four levels of prayers and accordingly identified a hierarchy in mosque. The individual, the congregation, the total population of the community and the entire world. For three of these, there were distinct liturgical structures - the first is the *Masjid* for daily prayer generally located at each *mahalla*, the second is the much larger *Jami-Masjid* or *jumma-masjid* (congregation or Friday mosque) located at a convenient place for a group of *mahallas*, and the third level is the *Eid-gah* or place of annual *Eid* prayer, a great open space usually on the outskirts of the city for the assembly of the whole population of the city. *Jami Masjid* was one of the prominent features of central urban space or *chouk*.

Kaba (Mecca) is the fourth level or global level of congregation of Muslims. Perhaps, no other religious practice has been so instrumental in establishing the basic frame of Dhaka urban morphology than of the need of facing towards the *Kaba* for prayer. The hidden axis inevitably determines the orientation of the mosque and also the alignment of the principal streets at whose intersection the rectangular space of the mosque has to be nudged in nicely. This auspicious orientation also governed to some extent the layout of bedrooms and toilets in the dwellings. Belief in the immortality of the soul and the custom of prayer for the salvation of the departed souls gave rise to the need for family burial ground. Numerous tombs of Muslim saints, though discouraged in the Islamic faith, are a definite expression of hybrid indigenous and Persian cultural beliefs.

The European Culture: The colonizers had a monotheistic system of belief. In contrast with the previous practices, there was marked distinction between sacred and secular activities. Formal worship and ritual in the European community, as King (1976, p. 50) observed, were therefore more specialized, both spatially and temporally, with worship generally taking place only once a week and only in church. The legitimization which European doctrine gives for sanctification to both persons and places associated with upholding the faith in the face of attack from opposing ideologies, took symbolic meaning, and are commemorated in the urban landscape. Victoria Memorial commemorating the suppression of mutiny against the rulers is such an example. Belief relating to the resurrection of the flesh and immortality of the soul called for the custom of burial, the place of which is visually commemorated, and is a part of a larger community burial place, whose ground is sanctified.

Economic Institutions and the Physical Expression

Indigenous Culture: The predominant economic activity in urban area was marketing of surplus agricultural products and center of craft production. The economic institutions were concerned with saving which was generally an individual activity and surplus wealth being invested on jewelry or landed property. Indigenous setup had a system of money lenders who acted as indigenous bank. Marketing was done in the *hat/bazar* of more periodic nature and also on shopping streets in the artisan's *mahallas* (Nehru, 1956, p. 102). Because of particular style of marketing behaviour, the *hat* and *bazar*, with its line of open stall or shops organized on big open grounds or directly into the thoroughfare and with constant movement along it, had a spatial structure completely different from European market. *Mela* and *Porbo*, as was done by other religious festivals, related to indigenous society also generated a good amount of economic activities.

The craft and commerce had been the most important source of employment throughout the late indigenous culture. "*The Mughal rulers encouraged these people (the artisans and craftsmen) by granting them rent free lands for habitation*"(Ahmed, 1986, p. 11). Travel accompanies trade, therefore, this propensity for travel found physical expression in the provision of amenities such as caravansaries and *Katras*. The construction of structures to house facilities for travelers and the community was considered a pious act. Therefore encouraging the wealthy people to take these responsibilities and thus relieve the state from this function. These groups of public buildings acted as nuclei of a *mahalla* and also of the city. Exclusive economic institutions were unknown and had a broader function including social, thus generating a series of civic spaces particularly *morh*, *bazar* and *chouk*.

The European Culture: In the European cultures, economic functions like saving or credit facilities were provided by the bank and marketing by specialized shopping centers. Property was represented generally in the form of house or 'share' in industry - usually at home. Thus, according to King (1976, p. 51), in European urban settlement, saving, marketing, property, and employment are embodied in bank, the offices of insurance agents, shops specializing in European goods, housing of different types and sizes allotted according to occupational rank and status which is partly ascribed and partly achieved. Hotel, an important functional unit in European urban settlement, belonged primarily to the economic institutions of the culture. Contemporary shopping streets are a fusion of *bazar* and market typology.

Recreational Pattern and Urban Form

Recreational patterns differ most in the three cultural setups under discussion. These recreational patterns account for much of the contrast in physical-spatial characteristics of that particular cultural era.

Indigenous Society: Work and recreation were the part and parcel of day to day life in the indigenous society, therefore, recreation was family and community centered and frequently related to religious festivals (Nehru, 1956, p. 144; Mamoon, 1990, 1993) accompanied by *Mela* or open air fairs, *Jatra* or drama and *Kavi Gan* or recital programmes. Daily recreation was comparatively unstructured. Depending on the number involved, such activities took place in the house, or, like processions, in the main streets of the city, which serve multiple purposes for recreation, social intercourse, transport and economic activity. Occasionally, a tent is erected in the built-up area of the indigenous settlement or open space/*maidan* within the city for the performance of recreational activities (Nehru, 1956, p. 99).

Although dance, drama, story telling and other forms of representational art were discouraged and instrumental music disliked by the more pious, still indigenous recreational activities continued in the later phase with thematic modifications and transformation. Garden, park, play ground etc. as a representation of paradise got projected as major places for recreation.

The European Community: The recreational patterns were those generally associated with an urban industrial society in such a society, King (1976, pp. 55-57) observes, time divisions were more formal and specialized, demanding not only more specialized equipment but also specialized buildings and spatial areas in which activities could take place. In the major colonial cities, but not at Dhaka, practice of taking holidays away from the usual place of residence gave rise to the creation of hill stations, gardens, reserved forest with forest bungalows etc. in a consciously modified natural environment. Recreational pursuits of the community, such as amateur theatricals, social dancing and the children's party took place in the clubs. At Dhaka, development of river front promenade, the race course and different clubs were the spatial representation of European culture.

Evolving Form and Space in Dhaka versus Societal Norms

Dhaka was at its peak during the Mughal rule but the Mughal city core was settled over a preceding Afghan settlement laid during the reign of Sher Shah in the 16th century. Present Central Jail was an Afghan fort. In Mughal Dhaka, as before, water bodies served as the communication lines. There were two principal roads in the city. One of them ran from eastern defense outpost of Beg Murad Forts land 2 via the Bangla Bazar (early indigenous urban core) and *Chouk* (late indigenous urban core) to the western fringe, extending up to Satmasjid area, the part of the city extending parallel to the river. The other road ran north up to the Fort via Badshahi gardens and Tejgaon to Tongi defense outpost. This road was developed and diverted near the Mughal gate, besides the racecourse towards the newly established European Civil Lines and Civil Station during British rule. The internal road network was secondary to a cluster of *Mahallas* and was paved with brick.

The *Chouk* was well located to serve both the gentry (*Amiri Mahalla*) and services *Mahallas*. *Chouk* came into supremacy over previous Bangla Bazar due to the ruling base and gentry *mahallas* located there. When European establishments moved to the Bangla Bazar area, the core also shifted there. Previously Old fort housed the English Civil Secretariat. In the post-partition and post-liberation periods as the administration moved north, the core also moved to the new location.⁵ However, all the previous cores continued to survive, but transformed to somewhat specialty core. This study shows that, though the specialty of different localities might have changed over time, the basic native morphology has remained largely unchanged. It may be mentioned here that Central Business District (CBD), being a western concept, may not be clearly traceable or defined in Dhaka's urban morphology.

Public square (*chouk morh*), was the extension of the domestic life. Pre-European urban settlements had two economic classes with an expression of two types of houses. The rich class basically had one to two storied courtyard type dwellings, set in a very large plot with rooms opening inwards. The poor had mixed-use type of structure, with shop/workshop in the front and living quarters behind. The structures had narrow frontage opening on-to the street and a deep living area at the rear. The more common indigenous pattern reflects uncontrolled growth, with mixed land use and smaller but more numerous foci of activity. On the other hand western typology features a formal street pattern, segregation of functional areas and similar features. These two typologies are the result of two different types of evolutionary process and stages. "*The models of indigenous cities have their own problems too. Congestion, pollution and traffic chaos may have been synonymous with old neighborhoods but it would be wrong to blame the physical form or the built environment of the place. The culprit is the unhealthy densification and an over taxed infrastructure, and not the spatial configuration*" (Doshi, 1995, p. 6).

The native middle class that rose during the colonial period tried to imitate all that was British but at the same time could not shake off their indigenous characteristics. A native class of bureaucrats also came up after the world wars. When retired, mostly during early post-European days, these people could not go back to their indigenous setting from the 'civil lines' habits and therefore, housing areas were developed for them. The so-called model towns, designed after western suburb model were geometric sub-divisions of big tracts of land into roads and plots, where, the inhabitants built their houses in the bungalow pattern. The pattern of houses and settlements do not have any resemblance to indigenous typology.

Contemporary Urban Morphology: A legacy of Past

Historically ownership of land was the symbol of aristocracy in Bangladesh (Islam, 1991). During the colonial rule, neo-rich people bought *Zamindari* or landlordship in spite of the fact that land control was much less profitable than other trade and commerce. Instead of developing capitalistic

outlook like their English counterparts, the local rich people adopted the old aristocratic value system and thus tradition persisted inspite of radical changes in the social structure under the impact of colonial rule. The value systems still persist in the contemporary society. Bureaucrats enjoy great privileges and power in colonial set-up. The People's culture (nourished by illiteracy and colonial legacies) accepted them as their benefactors and protectors. The people have yet to learn that the bureaucrats are but public servants. Only then an approach of spatial planning can really be developed which would reflect people's aspirations.

In the contemporary architectural and urban design scene, the external forces are still the major determinants. But all of them are not retrogressive or deviations. The deep and sensitive response of some legacies of past has helped to form the contemporary paradigm for a contextual physical-spatial development with respect to Bangladesh. It is believed that, even under different contradictory and controversial forces, these will act as eternal sources of inspiration for the future generation.

The essential image of a traditional city would probably be that of a self contained cohesive community with relatively undifferentiated society and mixed land uses; compactly built low rise buildings along narrow streets. Urban economy based on trade and commerce, hierarchical arrangement of cluster of public buildings, spaces and spontaneous infilling. Irrespective of religious affiliation of the settlement population, the segregation of private *uthan* from public *chouk/morh* (square) within the city and female area from male area within the house are probably the key concepts in the organization of indigenous urban entities in the region.

Transcended Characteristics in the Contemporary Urban Morphology: Some of the architectural artifacts that transcended their cultural boundaries and well adapted in the contemporary morphology can be summarized as follows:

Uthan was the basic module for the organization of living spaces in the indigenous culture. The pre-colonial elements such as hanging eaves, brackets, loggias, verandahs, lattices, kiosks or cupolas etc. transcended in the European typology. Adaptation of *uthan* in the form of family space, verandah and loggia and elements like brackets and lattices mostly in the form of grill work are concepts that screened down into the contemporary typology of form (including high-rise buildings) and space having their structural framework derived from the western schools of thought.

General characteristics of physical form in the indigenous cultures were mixed use of spaces and well integrated indoor and outdoor living where as in western cultures household spaces were assigned for specific uses. This tendency has got its way in different levels of community spaces starting from family space (*uthan*) to city (*shahar*) level urban spaces (*bazar*). Some of the older residential areas planned, during post-European time, in the western concept of functional zoning had to give way to the traditional requirements of the community complex (a *masjid*, shops, tea-house/a British legacy, meeting and gossiping place) within a legible neighbourhood echoing the traditional *mahalla-morh* setup. Indigenous concept of *hat* and *katra* and western concept of *shopping precinct* have got a popular transformation or fusion in the contemporary *New Market* typology. Though not properly planned, the indigenous "artisan *patti*" or *bazar* has got its way into the contemporary specialized shopping streets. Similarly, concept of larger zonal burial grounds or *kabaristan* was well adapted from European practices. Garden and parks got transcended from traditional cultures. It may be mentioned here that the racecourse created during the European rule was converted into a garden/park after independence.

Hybrid Characteristics: European doctrine giving sanctification to both persons and places associated with upholding the faith and having resonance with the indigenous mentality got its expression in the contemporary developments in the form of monuments for the martyrs of the language movement and later for liberation movement. Both of these at national level and many more at local level testify to this psychology and are carefully preserved and developed as a place of pilgrimage in a hybrid fashion

similar to European's and indigenous culture.⁶ Central Asian and Persian culture which have profound influence on the indigenous typology also had the tradition of erecting "minarets" or towers to commemorate some events, therefore, contemporary expression had its sources in some form in all the layers of preceding cultures.

Indigenous recreational institutions of religious festivals got its way down in the form of more secular "boi mela" or book fair, "Vijoy Utsav" or victory celebration to mark victory in the war of liberation and *Amor Ekoishe* to mark sacrifices during language movement respectively and also *Batmul* and "Baishakhi mela" or Bengali new year festival. All these occasions are associated with art and craft fairs, *jatra*, *kavita utsav* etc. *Ananda Michil* (pleasure procession) during *Eid-e-Miladun Nabi* and Bengali New Year, *Tazia* procession during *Muharam*, etc. probably have their roots in indigenous religious processions. Spatial and ceremonial expression of the first two social institutions are found in the above mentioned monuments and for fair and festival part associated with these occasions, some open spaces are allocated, that are, Ramna green, Bangla academy campus and Nazrul Islam Avenue, National square at Tejgaon etc. Most of them are located in the old civil station areas adapted to the present-day need. These are indeed a popular evolution in the synthesis of past typologies.

As a legacy of European culture in Bengal, a popular contemporary social trend for annual picnic parties and outings have got its expression in picnic spots, reserve forests, Botanical and Zoological gardens, park and children park etc. Formal and organized recreational needs gave rise to the spatial expression in the form of auditorium, stadium, sports centres, theaters, art galleries, museums, designed picnic spots, etc. These are also instances of physical language and idioms being gradually transformed to accommodate social changes brought about by stimuli external to the community.

Concluding Remark

While evaluating the urban morphology of Dhaka, it must be remembered that the three dominant acting phases discussed here represent three different socio-economic layers in the social evolution. Naturally their requirements and physical manifestations were different and some times opposing in character. Since all these social changes did not take place under a single cultural background, the evolution was not always continuous. Another aspect that deserves notice is that in some cases metamorphosis is such that it becomes difficult to trace back the original form. The interactions are so intricate and unpredictable that sometimes it becomes essential to interpret certain phenomenon through intelligent speculations and to support them by analogies. However, indigenous form is seen to have prevailed under contradictory situations.

Therefore, it may be concluded that 'community' is the basis of urban morphology. It is also clear from the preceding analysis that the community at Dhaka desired an interwoven system of work and leisure. Also that, privacy at individual household level and emphasis on community interaction within age and gender groups, were the driving force in the evolving pattern of urban morphology at Dhaka. The spatial characteristics associated with societal values provide a distinct identity to the contemporary urban Dhaka. If it is decided that our traditional societal norms are manifested in our contemporary urban spaces then its spatial unit i.e. the *mahalla* and the social institution including the *punchayet*, may be considered as the fundamental to any fruitful study on Dhaka's urban morphology. Moreover, the framework or relationship that has been identified is expected to be a useful tool for future sustainable urban design in this region.

Notes

¹The terms roughly correspond to courtyard, lane, corner, square and market respectively but do not exactly convey the meaning.

²Colonial influence has been explained by different authors in different ways, to some it was a transition between the

Traditional and the Modern, to some colonial city is a product of Cultural contact while other believe it is a function of dependent peripheral capitalism. In fact there is no need of such segmental explanations because all the interpretations hold true in different degrees for all colonial cities.

³Islam is strictly a monotheistic religion and careful study shows that it does not approve of shrines, tombs etc. but a significant portion of so-called Islamic Architecture comprises of these buildings. However, vedic religion (hinduism) was opposed to all forms of idol and image worship. The idea came to India from Greece (Nehru,1956,p.146) in a similar way it had partly influenced Christianity.

⁴Observance of Puja's on more community scale evolved during the Mughals. These used to be patronized by the ruling elits, both Muslim and Hindu, as an act of social duty towards their subjects. Later on it became a fashion and a symbol of status on the part of wealthy people. McDermott (1995) observes that Pujas have always been means of demonstrating wealth and prestige, and the worship of Durga has long been associated with sovereignty, useful in the context of eighteenth century Bengal for bolstering the rajas' claims to identity and power. In other words, the rise of the Pujas in Bengal in the eighteenth century signals an important transformation in the self-perception of the Hindu elite. The *Barowari Puja*, or Puja sponsored by twelve (friends), was first introduced in 1790. Instead of the expanses for the festival being defrayed by one *Zamindar* family alone, the Puja was democratized, its cost spread out and shared among people not necessarily of the hereditary aristocracy. The *Sarbajanin* (or public) Puja of today is heir to this intermediate, *Barowari* type, now Pujas are sponsored by neighbourhood groups and civic associations, which vie with each other to produce the best, most opulent and beautiful displays. Muslims also could not escape this social trend, among Muslims this evolved in the shape of mass observance of *Muharram* and *Eid-e-Miladun Nabi*. The most amazing act of worship, as cited in McDermott (1995), was performed by the East India Company itself: in 1765 it offered a thanksgiving puja (perhaps to appease its Hindu subjects) on obtaining the *Dewani* (right to collect revenues) of Bengal.

⁵Banglabazar to Chouk toBanglabazar to Motijheel/Dilkhusa to Kauran Bazar to Banani.

⁶Park surrounding the Victoria Memorial was named as Bahadur Shah Park, in the name of last Mughal Emperor of India, to commemorate the mutiny as the 1st expression of movement for Independence. *Shaheed Minar* (Martyrs tower) was erected as a memorial for the martyrs of the language movement (of 1952), *Budhijibi Smirity soudha* is a memorial for the Intellectuals killed at the eve of final victory in 1971, *Savar Smirity saudha* is a memorial for the war of liberation -1971, *Shikha Anirban* (Eternal Flame) is a memorial for the martyrs of Liberation war and more recently a memorial to be known as *Vijoy Stambha* (Victory Tower) is being planned to commemorate the surrender of occupation army after the war of liberation.

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