

WEST BENGAL DISTRICT GAZETTEERS



HOOGHLY

By

AMIYA KUMAR BANERJI

of the Indian Administrative Service

FORMERLY STATE EDITOR

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PREFACE

The present volume is the fourth in the series of West Bengal District Gazetteers now being written under a scheme jointly sponsored by the Union and the State Governments; those preceding it were on West Dinajpur, Bankura and Malda, in that order. Although the initial plan was to revise the outdated Bengal District Gazetteers published in the first quarter of the present century and popularly called the "O'Malley's Series", we found on getting down to the task that the available fund of knowledge on virtually every subject falling within the scope of a treatise of this kind had meanwhile swelled to such an extent that it would have been most unfortunate not to make full use of the same on the ground that our assignment was limited by the narrow standards set during the British regime more than half a century ago. The arrangement of the text prescribed by the Government of India and followed here actually encouraged a liberal use of this wealth of information garnered by numerous scholars in various disciplines over the last several decades. Apart from original contributions of our own (the extent of which is by no means negligible), we admit to have freely drawn from that wonderful storehouse of erudition as the detailed treatment of subjects in the present volume will bear out. How far we have succeeded in this difficult task is best left to the discerning readers.

The manuscript of the present volume was sent to the press in April 1969 and I relinquished charge of my office as State Editor, West Bengal District Gazetteers in September of the same year. The first 176 pages of the text were finally printed off during my term of office while the printing of the rest of the volume was done under the supervision of my successor, who has placed me under a deep debt of gratitude for undertaking this arduous task.

According to the prevailing procedure, the original draft was processed successively by the Central Gazetteers Unit and the West Bengal District Gazetteers Advisory Committee, the latter consisting of, besides myself, Sri B. Sarkar, I.C.S. (Retd.) as Chairman and Prof. Nirmal Kumar Bose, F.N.I., Dr. Nalinakshya Datta, M.A., Ph.D., D.Litt., Dr. Bhabatosh Dutta, M.A., Ph.D., Prof. Sashi Bhusan Chaudhury, M.A., Ph.D., Prof. Pratul Chandra Gupta, M.A., Ph.D. and Dr. P. N. Chopra, M.A., Ph.D. as members. I am deeply indebted to them all for their kind and helpful suggestions for improving the contents and quality of the draft.

To Sarvasri Ramesh Chandra Majumdar, Subodh Chandra Sengupta, Narendra Krishna Sinha, Swami Ranganathananda, Sashi Bhusan Chaudhury, Bimala Prasad Mukherji, Sisir Kumar Ghosh, Dilip Kumar Biswas, Jitendra Mohan Mohanty and Nirmal Sinha—recognised experts in their respective fields of study—I owe a deep debt of gratitude for their learned contributions used in the Appendices which may be rightly regarded as an asset to this volume.

My thanks are due next to the entire team of officers and staff of the Gazetteers Unit who shared my ordeals in facing a challenging task. Although the present volume is the product of their joint efforts, I alone am responsible for the final presentation of the text in its entirety.

Numerous Central and State Government Departments and various branches of the Hooghly district administration rendered valuable assistance by supplying all kinds of information and data. The Anthropological, Botanical, Geological and Zoological Surveys as also the Deputy Director-General of Observatories, Poona helped us with their technical reports. The Geographical Society of India kindly prepared the maps included in the volume. The authorities of the National Library, Asiatic Society Library, West Bengal Secretariat Library, Bangiya Sahitya Parishad Library, Commercial Library and the State Archives gave us all the facilities we needed. Non-official institutions, agencies and individuals, too numerous to mention, also cooperated in ample measure. I am deeply indebted to them all.

Thanks and high praise are also due to the management of Sree Saraswaty Press Ltd. for their efficient printing, block-making and binding which have made the present volume as presentable as it is.

A key to the diacritical marks used in the text, albeit sparingly, is given with the Index at the end of the volume. The photographs are my handiwork and their copyright is held by me.

AMIYA KUMAR BANERJI

ADDENDUM

Preface—read Tapan Raychaudhuri after
Jitendra Mohan Mohanty



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The present State Editor acknowledges his indebtedness to Sri Amiya Kumar Banerji, I.A.S., during whose tenure in office the draft of the present volume was prepared, for having taken great pains in spite of the pressing duties of his present office, to prepare the manuscript for the press and for supplying the photographs printed in this volume. The undersigned also expresses his deep gratitude to Dr. P. N. Chopra, M.A., Ph.D., Editor (Gazetteers), Ministry of Education and Youth Service, Government of India, and to members of his staff for the very painstaking scrutiny of the draft and for making useful suggestions for the improvement of the quality of this volume. Thanks are also due to the officers of this office and to other members of the staff for commendable work done in the matter of reading the proofs, preparation of the index and for processing the data for the preparation of the maps printed in this volume.

D. MAJUMDAR
State Editor