An Outline of the Geo-historical Context of Shyamnagar 'Garh'

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Abstract: Regional history is always significant to explore the associated macro-historical incidents of a region. The physiographical setup of a region usually has an influence on the historical decision-making of a region irrespective of its scale. While exploring the geo-cultural history of Shyamnagar 'Garh' or Fort, it is found that the Garh or fort was built to provide temporary shelter to the powerful Burdwan royal family during the Bargi (group of Maratha soldiers) invasion. Simultaneously the influence of the physiographical setting on the decision to select the site to establish a temporary capital of Burdwan and an earthen 'Garh' or fort to provide a secure stay for the Burdwan Raj family also seemed an important political decision of contemporary times. At present, there is no ruin of the 'Garh' in the place; only the moat remains as a witness of the significant incident and geo-historical decision in the history of Bengal of the 17th century.

Introduction

In general, the historical background of a region has a noteworthy effect on the socio-cultural set-up of that region. It is true that micro-historical movements and incidents from time to time stay as folklore or as significant historical incidents in the minds of the local people. Even the shifting focus of history on microhistory, or oral history, since the 1970s has helped to strengthen the interrelation between folklore and history (Xue, 2022). To make the history of a region comprehensive, it is essential to reveal historical events that have never been revealed before (Tarwiyani, 2018). But sometimes these micro-historical incidents also preserve important historical relations and subjects inherited within them. Microhistory focuses more specifically on a place, event, or person in history that helps to exemplify large incidents of themes in macrohistory (Waddell, 2017). However, they could also have a direct or indirect relationship with the major historical incidents that occurred at that time. Actually, the development of any civilization is associated with space and culture, where space is a geographical environment. Some scholars (Diamond, 1999; Herbst, 2000) suggest a prominent impact of the geographical environment on the development and expansion

of civilizations and also accord importance to culture (Woods, 2003). Numerous civilizations have evolved with the assistance of suitable physical setups, and there are many examples that will help to advocate this truth. Even from a sociological perspective, microhistory surely emerges prospectively from social life and its temporal practices (Handelman, 2005). Grey, C.S. (1988) suggested that the political behaviour of a country is associated with its history, and history in a greater context is the product of the geographical setting (Scholvin, 2016). So significantly, it can also be depicted that politico-historical decision-making is always noted to be influenced by the physiographical or overall geographical settings of a region.

It is known to all that history and associated activity have a great relationship with the physical aspect, geography, or geographical set-up of a region or area. "Geography" is usually understood to mean the physical features of the area under study, with emphasis on identifying physical areas that may have influenced past human activity (Sindiga, 1985). Such an incident is the main focus of discussion in the paper. It is needed to bring the 1970s physical environment and historical situation of a small portion of the lower Bengal into the light to understand the subject, which is worthy of discussion. Shyamnagar is a small town located 32 km north of Kolkata; it has witnessed many historical events related to the "Garh" or fort situated here. This formation or establishment of Shyamnagar Garh is full of historical incidents and is one of the significant evidences of the historical as well as the political situation of that time. Human history itself is all about changing patterns of human response to our physical surroundings and natural resources, such as the soil, animals, plant life, etc. (Young,1987).

Historically, this place was known as 'Mulajore / Mulazore / Moolajore' and was popular as it belonged to the famous Tagore family. Even now, it is known to all that the Tagore family had four branches, and Pathuriaghata and Jorasanko were the most famous. Rabindranath Tagore took birth in the Jorasanko branch, and Gopimohan Takur was the Zaminder of Pathuriaghata (Ali, 2014). Mulajore became famous for Gopimohan Thakur. However, due to a lack of awareness among local residents, excessive population expansion, and changes in land use, this historical architecture, for which the town of "Shyamnagar" is known and named, is nowhere to be found (Bhowmick, 2007). In this paper, a conscious attempt has been made to explore the native geo-historical context related to the "Shyamnagar Garh" and also to find out the existing fluvio-physiographical setup of the region and surroundings that encouraged the decision to establish a 'Garh' particularly at this location.

Objectives and Methodology

Methodologically the work mainly follows two phases of research. First of all the study area has been selected after knowing its history from the local people. Then its field visit has been done to find out its extent. Number of books related to this topic has been used for reference. Some of the oldest maps are utilized and studied to find out the probable fluvio-physiographical setup of the study area. Survey of India toposheet

no 79B/5 (1930's) and the newest toposheet are some of those. G.I.S software like Arc map10.3.1, QGIS 2.8 has been used for preparation of maps. To reveal present scenario Google earth images have been utilized.
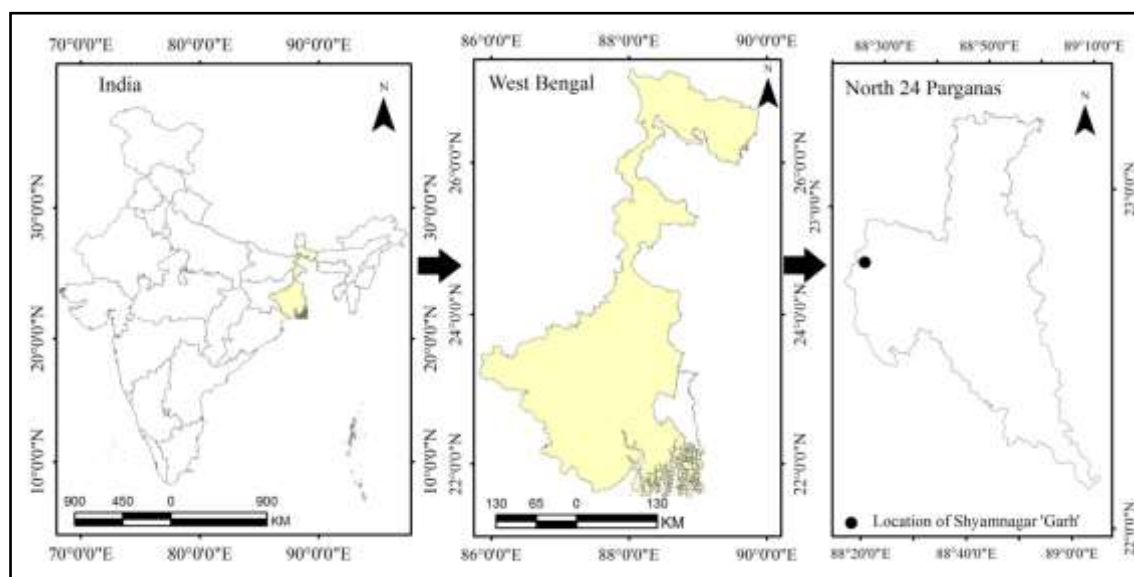

Figure 1: Location map of Shyamnagar Garh- a) West Bengal in India, b) North 24 Parganas in West Bengal, c) Location of Shyamnagar 'Garh' in North 24 parganas

Location of the Study Area and Its Importance

Shyamnagar (22° 49' 46.3764" N, 88° 23' 26.808" E) is a small town in the 24 PGS (N) District of West Bengal, India (Figure 1). It is located 32 km north of Kolkata and connected by the Sealdah-Krishnagar main rail line. The 'Garh' or fort falls within the Garulia Municipality at present (Figure 2). In the 17th century, this place was known as 'Mulajore'. This is named after the Mulajore Kali temple situated here. Actually, in the month of "Powush[1], an annual puja[2] was organized many years ago. This was customary; one had to give a pair of mula[3] with the dala[4] during puja. For this custom and the spiritual success of the Kali temple in this village, it has become well known to every one of the surrounding villages, and the place was named Mulajore. Nikunjabihari Bhowmik, a well-known local writer, has revealed another site on the history of the name Mulajore. According to him, there was vast, suitable land used for vegetable cultivation at that time. From the local folk tales, it can be known that this village was well-known for radish cultivation. These radishes were sold in pairs in the local market. This is one of the most trusted reasons to give a name like Mulajore to the village. There was a popular saying or idiom in this region for the name Mulajore: " আম, নারিকেল, বাঁশের গোড় । তাই না নিয়ে মূলাজোড়" or " Aam, narikel, bansher gorh tai na nie Mulajore" Means 'Mulajore' is a land of mango coconut and bamboos. Literally up to the partition (before 1947), the mangoes, coconuts, and bamboos of Mulajore was very popular**.**The name Shyamnagar was awarded or given in 1862, when the foundation work of the 111-mile railway line from Sealdah to Kushtia was going on. The railway authority decided to establish a station at Mulajore after considering the

religious importance of the "Mulajore Kali temple" or "Bramhamayee Kali temple" that was established in 1809 on the eastern bank of the Bhagirathi Hooglhly River (Bhowmick, 2007). Even though the station was established, it was not named after Mulajore; instead, it was named 'Shyamnagar', and thus Trilokchandra Mahatap's (the king of Burdwan Raj) temporary capital, 'Garh Shyamnagar' got historical memory. In Bengal district gazetteers, L.S.S. O'Malley described Shyamnagar as "a village in the Barrackpore sub-division, situated on the bank of Hooghly, 19 miles north of Calcutta"(o'Malley, 1914, p. 258). The fort, or Garh, was located almost 2 kilometres east of the Shyamnagar railway station. In the toposheet no. 79 B/5 surveyed in 1918–1919 and 1920–21, the existence of the Garh surrounded by a moat is clearly demarcated (Figure 3).
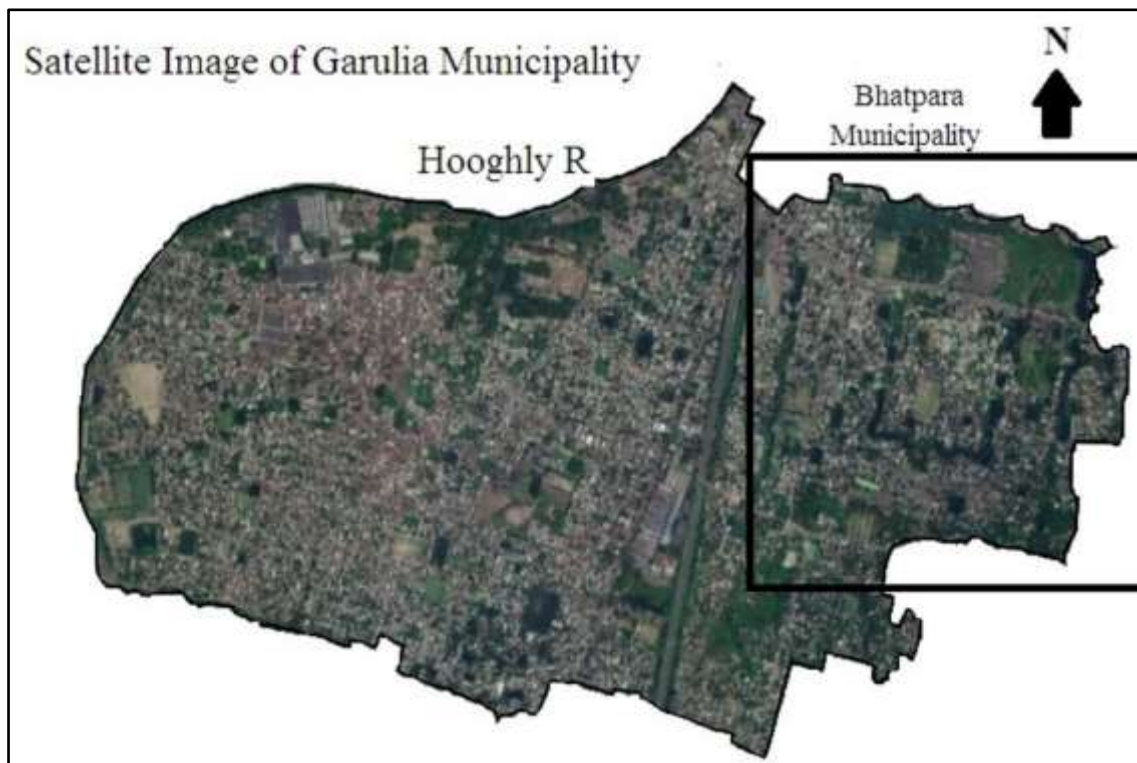

Figure 2: Satellite image of Garulia Municipality showing the Moat

Contemporary Geo-historical Context

At that time, complete political turmoil was prevailing in Bengal. The region was ruled by the Mughal Emperor. Murshid Quli Khan was appointed *Diwan* of Bengal in 1700, and after 6 years, he became *Naib Subedar* in 1707 of that region *(*Bhowmik, 2007; Sengupta, 2011). A conspiracy against Murshid by Azim-Us-Shan had transferred him from the Dewani Department of Maksudabad (renamed Murshidabad) to Dacca after 1707. But political instability in Bengal had brought Murshid Quli Khan back and appointed him administrator of Bengal in 1710 (Sengupta, 2011). This gave an enormous boost to civil administration and stability to the Mughal power in Bengal. Within this period of his kingship, the Zamindars, Fauzdars, Amins, and other

administrative posts functioned efficiently to bring back the proper civil administration in Bengal. In his book entitled "Land and local kingship in eighteenth-century Bengal", McLane (1993) has depicted the role of Murshid Quli Khan as "In the quarter of a century between Murshid Quli's arrival in Bengal and his death, he significantly strengthened the zamindars of Burdwan, Dinajpur, Nadia, and Rajshahi at the expense of both their neighbouring zamindars and the non-Bengali Mughal mansabdars" (McLane, 1993. p.143). This reveals very clearly the role of Murshid Quli Khan in the establishment of the Zamindari system in Bengal. Sengupta. (2011) revealed that "it was Murshid Quli Khan, not Lord Cornwallis, contrary to a common belief, was the founder of the Zamindari system"(p.154). However, this phase of kingship projected prosperous Bengal in front of India. After the death of Murshid Quli Khan (1727), Sahuj-ud-din (1727–37) and his son Sarfaraz Khan (1737-1740) took charge. In the reign of Sarfaraz Khan, Alabardi Khan got a chance to penetrate Bengal and rule. Alibardi became the Nawab in 1740, and his reign continued up to 1756. Within this phase, Bengal has struggled against Maratha attacks, and Alibardi Khan has successfully defended the Marathas.
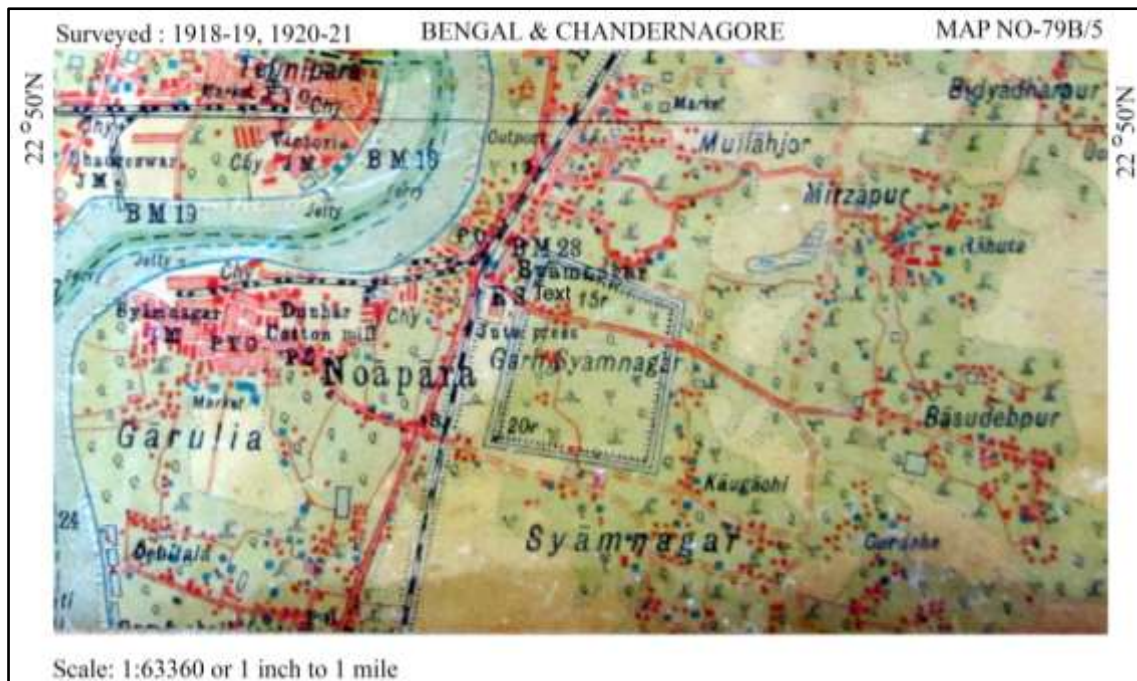

Figure 3: Garh Shyamnagar with mote in Toposheet no 79B/5

However, the Zamindars also contributed to the local history and were actually owners of microunits of a total *pargana.* As mentioned earlier, in the reign of Murshid Quli Khan, a number of parganas were established, and the *Zamindars* and *Talukdars* were given more power to maintain the administration.

The Mughal systern, with its insistence on standardization of revenue arrangements through uniform appointment or confirmation of zamindars to the charge of regularly defined parganas (fiscal units grouped together under sarkars or districts and comprising mauzas or villagcs),

substantially modified the fluid structurc of land rightsheaded by the practically independent bhuiyas who had mushroomed during the anarchy of the transition from Afghan to Mughal rule (Ray, 1975 p.264).
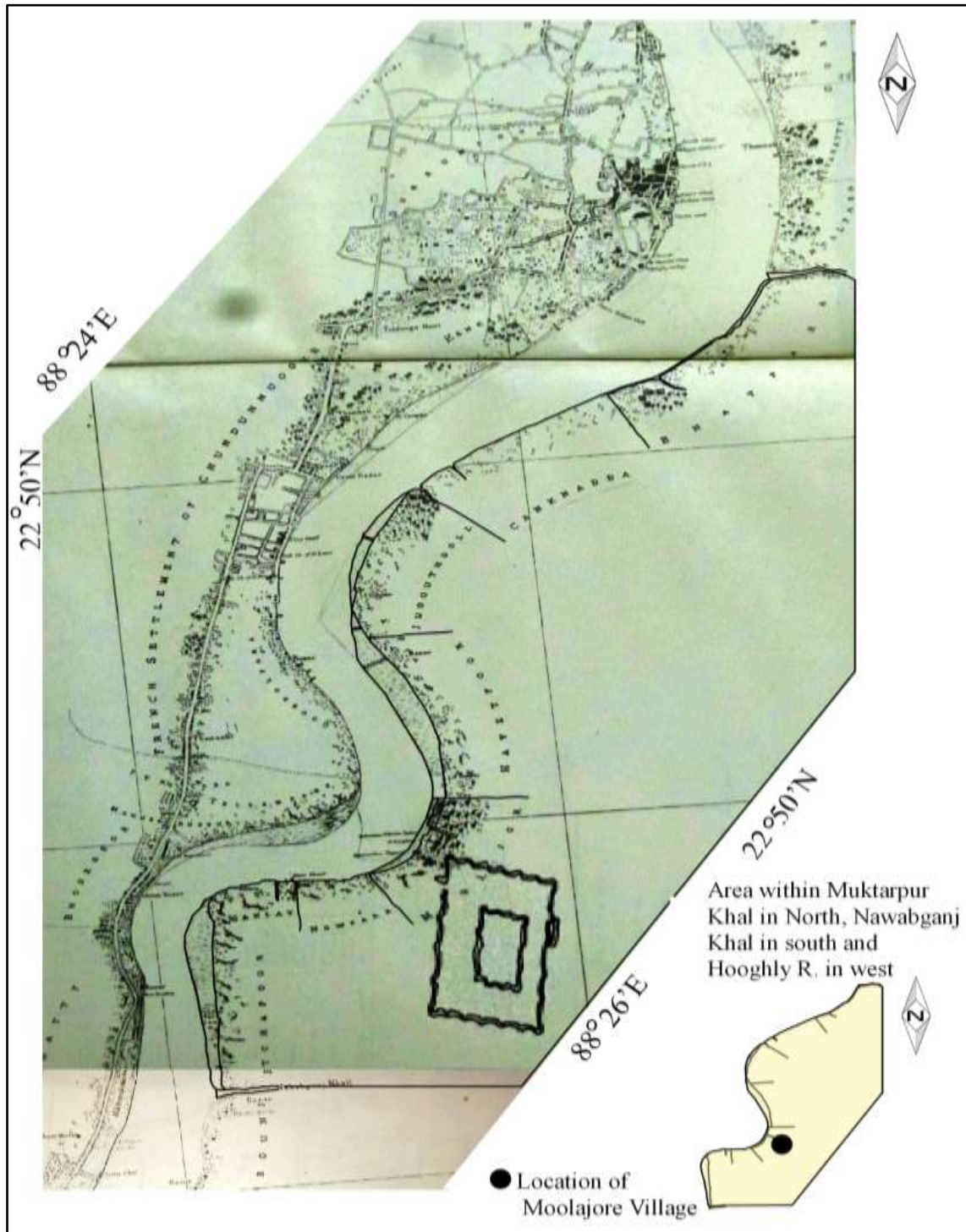

Figure 4: Areal extension from Muktarpur Khal in North to Ichapore/Nawabganj Khal in South (Source: Atlas of the City of Calcutta and Its Environs. National Atlas and Thematic Mapping Organisation Special Atlas Series 1. P.43).
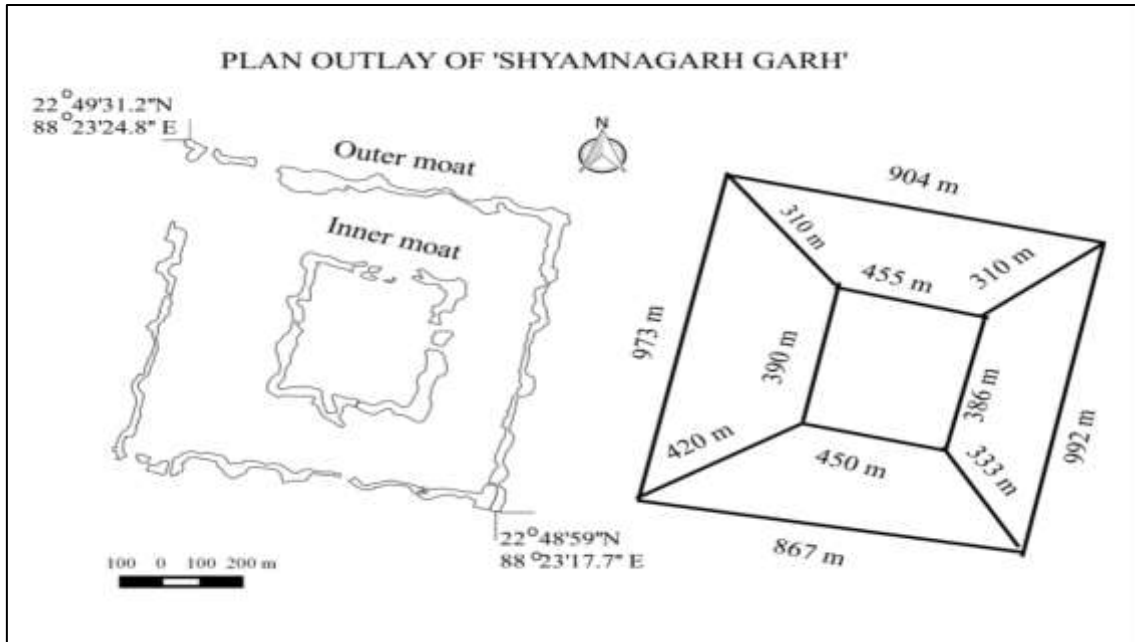
Figure 5: Plan outlay of Shyamnager Garh as present on the basis of Google Earth Image

As an example, Burdwan Raj had 57 parganas under it and was founded by Abu Khetri. A revenue collector appointed in 1680. Maharaja Kirtichand, between 1701-1739 brought this raj together. Similarly, the Zamindars of Nadia had 73 parganas. There were a total of 1260 Zamindaries, including Birbhum, Culcutta, Bishnupur, etc. (Ray, 1975, pp. 274–275). So the inter-politics of these zamindars also had a great impact on regional history. Our discussion topic on the formation of Shyamnagar garh or the history behind the establishment of Shyamnagar garh is significantly correlated with two Raj families, one of them was Burdwan Raj and another was Nadia Raj. These two Raj families were quite eminent at that time. About the origin of the Burdwan Raj in Bengal, McLane J.R. (1993) has stated:

The Burdwan raj family was non-Bengali, belonging to a 'Khatri jati' of the Punjab. Punjabi Khatris were prominent among the groups who mediated between Mughals and agrarian society as administrators, bankers, and power brokers. An ancestor of the Burdwan rajas migrated from his native state of Punjab to Bengal a shortly after the Mughal conquest of the Afghans began in the 1570s (p.25).

Burdwan Raj was located to the west of the Bhagirathi Hooghly River. At that time, or historically, the Raj family was considered "one of the largest and wealthiest zamindaris in eighteenth century India" (McLane, 1993, p. 25). However, Abu Rai (in 1657) of this family got the first appointment from the Mughals as kotwal and chowdhury of Rekabi bazaar in Burdwan. With great dedication and confidence, he and his ancestors (descendants) fulfilled their responsibilities and got patronage from the Mughals. During the period of Krishnaram Rai, the Burdwan Raj family got a Firman[5] from Aurangzabe (1996–97), which declared and confirmed him as Zamindar

and Chowdhury. During his kingship, Burdwan had expanded significantly, but family politics was a major problem, and it still has importance in the history of the local kingships of Bengal. The kingship of Krishnaram Rai, who had delivered prosperity to his pargana and benevolence to the people of Burdwan Raj, was suffering from a number of attacks from external enemies like Sobha Singh, Rahim Khan, and specifically the Marathas.

Figure 6: a) (22° 49' 32" N, 88° 23' 23.78"E) **c)** (22° 49' 37"N, 88° 23' 2"E) **e)** 22° 49' 24"N, 88° 23' 23 " E), Portion of Outer moat as separate water body **b)** (22° 49' 38" N, 88° 22' 54" E) d) 22° 49' 23"N, 88° 23' 22"E, Present status of different part of outer moat filled with hydrophytes plants, f) Portion of moat under ESI(MB) Scheme (22° 49' 26" N, 88° 23' 2o"E). g) Outer moat converted into waste dumping ground (22° 49' 27"N, 88° 23' 16"E), h) Sitalamata (22° 49' 20"N, 88° 22' 59"E), Twice in a year puja is performed, Known as 'Garher Pujo' or the (Annual Puja of Garth) locally. i) Existence of inner moat as segregated water body (22° 49' 17"N, 88° 22' 59"E. (Source: Primary survey).

After Krishnaram Rai, Chitra Sen became Zamindar of Burdwan. With Chitra Sen Rai, the second phase of Burdwan Raj starts. He adorned the title of 'Raja' in 1740 by a farman provided by the Mughal Emperor. During his kingship, the Burdwan Raj faced continuous attacks from the Marathas. In 1740, the devastating Maratha army under Bhaskar Pandit entered Bengal from the North-West. After defeating Rustam Jung in the battle at Falwari in 1741, the contemporary nawab of Bengal, Alibardi Khan, started for Murshidabad. Within that phase, Rustam and Maratha ruler Bhonsle again attacked

Orissa, re-conquered it, and were again defeated by Alibardi in a counterattack. During that phase, Maratha soldiers also found out the easiest route to attack Bengal, specifically the western part (Bhowmick, 2007; McLane, 1993). To describe the strength and speed of Maratha riders, Sengupta, (2011) has noted:

"But having once discovered how easy it was to plunder Bengal's rich countryside through lightening raids, the Marathas were attempted to invade Bengal over and over. Thus, even before Alivardi could reach Murshidabad, a Maratha cavalry under Bhaskar Pandit was sent to Bengal by Bhonsle. It entered Burdwan through Panchet and started looting the countryside (p.158)".

In 1742 and 1745, they attacked Murshidabad (the capital of Bengal from 1704 to 1772) and looted the city (Sengupta, 2011). During that period, the Burdwan Raj family was facing tremendous insecurity due to the Maratha attack. Simultaneously, with the death of Raja Chitra Sen in 1744, the condition became more complicated. After Chitra sen Roy (1740–44), his cousin's son, Trilak Chand Mehtab (1744–1770), became Zamindar, but he was under age. During that time, i.e., in 1744, it became necessary to provide protection for the Raj family. Renowned Ramdev Nag was prime minister of the Burdwan Raj family at that time. He took on the responsibility of the Raj family and took a radical step to provide safety for the family. Ramdev Nag got information about the Maratha attack in advance and decided to shift the Burdwan Raj family to a safe place. Ramdev Nag was a resident of Mulajore Village. He decided to shift the entire family to the uninhabited land of Kowgachi, adjoining Mulajore village. That segment of land in Kowgachi was under the control of Maharaja Krishnachandra Roy (born 1710; died 1783), the Raja of Nadia from 1728–1782. On the status and origin of Nadia Raj McLane. J.R(1993) wrote:

"The Nadia zamindari was neither new nor huge but it did grow during the Murshid Quli Khan's rule. In terms of social status, the raja of Nadia probably stood first in Bengal. The Brahmin raj family traced its ancestry and the origin of its estate back to Bhattanarayan, chief of the five Brahmins who came from Kanauj in the time of Adisura (AD 1032)" (p.145).

From the above statement, the social status and importance of the Nadia Raj in Bengal during this time period can be understood. However, Ramdev Nag had requested that Nadia Raj Maharaja Krishnachandra give that portion of land for the required purpose. Krishnachandra agreed wholeheartedly and gave conditional permission to use that rented land and its surroundings for the Maharaj of Burdwan. After this, in Kowgachi, a temporary capital of Burdwan State was established. This was a moat-surrounded earthen fort established to give temporary shelter to the Burdwan Raj family. The moat is a significant feature in the history of West Bengal as well. There are many "Raj baris", or palaces, that are surrounded by moat and those can be traced clearly from maps as well as from satellite images. As an example, the *Hangeswari Temple* and adjoining Rajbari are surrounded by a moat (22° 57' 52.01799" N, 88° 23' 59.2605" E) and can be found in Hooghly district. This is located at a distance of 60 kilometres from Kolkata.

Another example of a moat surrounding a Rajbari or palace is found in Krishnanagar City, Nadia district (23° 23' 51.46332" N, 88° 29' 46.3445" E). It is located at a distance of approximately 134 kilometres from Kolkata. However, the office of government officials was established outside of the royal residence. Simultaneously, an army awning, armory, and stables had been established within the periphery. Rajmata[6] with his relatives and family members came to their new residence and also carried their Kuladevta[7] Shyamkishore here and started to reside. As a result, a new small township was developed at Kowgachi and named 'Garh Shyamnagar' after the name of the *Kuladevta Shyamkishore.* The Maratha invasion and related shifting of the Burdwan Raj family can be considered one of the most important incidents in local history and also related to major historical incident. The impact of the Maratha invasion was so strong that it changed the motivation of the zamindars from resisting the Maratha attack to protecting their own families. Actually, the nature of the fear injected by the Maratha raids was enough to incite a nightmare among the zamindars (Bhowmick, 2007).

To describe this motive change, McLane.J.R (1993) referred to Ghulam Hussain Salim and, supporting his view, stated, "During the Maratha invasions, zamindars were more interested in protecting their families than organizing resistance."(McLane, 1993, p.170). So, the migration of the Burdwan Raj family from Burdwan to Mulajore was a common strategy that was followed by or tried to be followed by all zamindar families. But the shifting of the Burdwan Raj family has gained separate importance due to its socio-political position in Bengal and its geographical location. However, this important, strategy or step was quite significant to McLane J. R. also. To describe the situation, he referred Dutta.K 's thesis "Alibardi and His Times" (1939) and informed, *"The mother of the raja of Burdwan crossed the river and lived on land at Mulajor rented from the Nadia zamindari while the maharaja of Nadia moved his residence from Krishnagar to a safer site."* (Dutta, 1939.p.170)**.** This strategy ultimately helped the raj family survive and also evolved the history of the region. In Bengal district gazetteers, L.S.S. O'malley (1914) described "*A short distance east of the station are the ruins of mud fort, surrounded by a moat, four miles in circumference, which is said to have been built in the eighteenth century by the then Raja of Burdwan as a refuge from the Maratha.s*"(P.258). It is well known that behind any historical incident, strategy and decision-making physiography play an important role. Here is also the existing fluvio physiographical set-up has influenced the decision to establish the 'Garh' particularly in the position beside its political competence.

Significance of Physiography of the Region and Surroundings

The physiographical set up of this region was not complicated at that time, but had locational significance. The Hooghly River is flowing in the west and separating this location from the Chotanagpur massive and Rurh of Bengal. To the east, the vast depression, locally named Bariti bil[8] was located. Such a location and significant boundary determining landform and river gave this place or pocket the desired security. L.S.S. O'Malley described the bils as large marshes and swamps. According to him:

"The 24 -Parganas, like other deltaic districts, is studded with large marshes and swamps ('bil's) situated between the elevated tract which mark the courses of river. Their presence is the natural result of the configuration of the country. The river bank silts up till they become the height levels, from which the ground gradually slopes downwards, forming a depressed tract between each set of two rivers. The depressed portions so constituted are natural basins, in which water collects and from which it has no exit" (p.11).

According to the folk narratives, Bariti Bil was located at the boundary of a vast jungle at that time. This dense and extensive jungle was known as "*Jay-chandir jungle*"(Bhattacherjee, 2007.p.23). This jungle extended from Barrackpore in the south to Naihati in the north. This extensive jungle had made the total tract impenetrable, and the presence of the Bariti Bil made that more difficult to raid. To description of the environment of the Mulajore village of the mid-17th century is given by, Bhattacherjee (2007):

"Mulazore of that time was a marsh. A dwelling place of snake-fox covered with Ulu-khagra⁹ and filled with thickets. The total neighborhood was full of bamboo, coconut & mango gardens. Total area was under the jurisdiction of the descendant of contemporary renowned landlord Ramdev Nag" (p.52).

The north and south of the region were also bounded by Muktarpur khal to the north and the well-known Ichapore khal to the south. So, politically, this location was safe from any attack from enemies (Bhowmick, 2007). Muktarpur khal decayed a long time ago. Even in the survey of India toposheet no. 73B/9 surveyed in 1918-19 to 1920-21, there was no evidence of the existence of Muktarpur Khal at its location (Figure 4).

Reviewing the Decision to establish 'Garh'

After analyzing the geopolitical and historical as well as the fluvial set up of the region, it can be well understood the importance of the 'Garh' establishment to the regional history. As the safety of a state depends on the physiographical set-up, aside from the political condition, another important aspect is to find out how the fluvio-physiographical set-up influenced the motive or decision to establish the 'Garh' particularly at that spot. Research, folk narratives, and old maps reveal that the spot selected for the survival of the Raj family was basically a pocket surrounded by Muktarpur khal to the north, Ichhapore khal to the south, the Bhagirathi River to the west, and Bariti bil to the east. The most important thing is that the width of these rivers and khals were sufficient for naval movement. A number of statements and depictions are available on the nature of rivers and khals in the pre-colonial and colonial periods. Basically, there were two causes behind the decision. The first was to select a specific position where the raids of the Maratha would become inactive. The selected location was ideal for that, as crossing the Bhagirathi River was one of the most difficult tasks for Marathas, and as the position was surrounded by khals, that also gave the position the desired safety. The struggle that Alibardi and the contemporary Zamindars faced in the western part of Bengal during the Maratha

attack is clearly depicted. It was also clarified that the Bhagirathi River was the main hindrance for the Marathas in looting the villages located on the eastern bank of the Bhagirathi River (Bhowmick,2007). According to Sengupta,N. (2011), "*Only the Ganga-Bhagirathi River line proved an effective barrier to their movements. They crossed over to the eastern side only on a few occasions.* So the incident of the Maratha invasion on the eastern bank of the Ganga-Bhagirathi River was quite uncommon. This helped Ramdev Nag select the spot in order to establish an earthen fort for the Raj family. Another aspect could be the lack of naval power and experience of the Marathas. Bhowmick (2007) opined that the Rajas of Bengal of that period of time i.e. the time when Krishnachandra ruled Nadia, had enough naval power to conduct a war, but as the Marathas were weak in naval power, they consciously avoided the invasion many times during this period at the eastern bank of the Bhagirathi. The then Maharaja Krishnachandra had enough power and also had good relations with other Rajas in Bengal. The Marathas' thought was that if they attacked the region, they would have to face a strong naval force already existing there.

Conclusion

Although the emergence of the history related to the Burdwan Raj family at Mulajore started extraordinarily, that did not continue for a long time. It is known that during that time, eminent writer Bharatchandra Roy was residing permanently in Mulajore village on rented land provided by Nadia's Raja Krishnachandra. Bordeaux,J (2015) stated the following about Bhāratcandra's importance:"*Annadā-maṅgal seems to have been very widely appreciated even before the introduction of print, but various (and by 1816, illustrated) editions of Bhāratcandra's opus raised its profile— and that of the raja as a patron of Bengali literature —still higher*"(p.30).

However, there was a family brawl between Burdwan Raja Kirtichandra and Raja Narendranarayan, the zamindar of 'Penro'(a village) in Howrah. Bharatchandra was the son of Narendranarayan. After knowing this, *Rajmata* of Burdwan tried to completely occupy the lease of Mulajore village as a revenge for the brawl with 'Penro' Zamindars. Her political strategy worked, and Mararaja Krishnachandra unconditionally donated Bharatchandra almost 156 bighas[10] of land at Guste village. Afterwards, the lease of Mulajore village was given to *Rajmata*, but she intentionally gave the zamindari to her faithful Prime Minister, Ramdev Nag. But this temporary, suitable set up was discarded within a short span of time due to the accidental death of a Brahman within the periphery of the fort (Roy, 2007). In 1914, O' mally quoted the In Hunter's (1875) report on Shyamnagar to depict an ideal description of the fort, this incident, and its contemporary status have been mentioned as follows:

"*A short distance east of the railway station lie the remains of an old fort build by the Raja of Burdwan in the last century as a refuge from the Marahattas, who were continually making incursion on his Burdwan estate. The fort, however, was abandoned after a short time, in consequence of a Brahman having been accidentally killed in it. It was mud erection, surrounded by a deep moat about four miles in circumference. It has now passed out of the*

hands of the Rajas of Burdwan, and belongs to the wealthy Tagore family of Calcutta, who has studded its ramparts with thick date plantation" (p.79).

At present, there is no Garh in the place; only the moat is present as a keepsake of this masonry, though the area and circumference may have shrunk. Still, the region is named 'Garh Shyamnagar," and the local areas are named "Anjangarh,Shantigarh," etc. One temple of Sheetala Mata (one of the Hindu goddesses and an incarnation of goddess Parbati) is situated here. She is venerated in north India and many other places in West Bengal and India as well. She is the godess of pox and other diseases like sores, ghouls, pustules, etc. (Mukhrjee, 1999). Annually, the puja of goddess Sheetala occurs in the month of Chaitra (a month of the Hindu calendar). The particular puja is known as 'Garh-er Puja," or the veneration of goddess Sheetala. It is significantly popular among the local people of Shyamnagar.

However, history and micro and macro historical incidents have always been influenced by the physiographical and geographical setup of a region. It can be admissible that microhistory is bounded both spatially and temporally (Cohen, 2017). The strategies and historical decisions were always taken keeping the physiographical as well as geographical set-up of the region in mind. Though on a small scale, this same tradition is maintained in this case too. This clearly reveals the fluvio-physiographical impact on the politico-historical decision-making and micro-historical incidents. Sometimes this could also have a relation to macro-regional history. It may be understood that the Garh establishment or formation was a small-scale incident with respect to the macro-historical events going on in Bengal in mid 17th century. But such a significant politico-strategically taken step by using the fluvio-physiographical environment was influentially important in the context of regional as well as in the glorious history of Bengal.

Notes

1. *The ninth month among the twelve months of the Bengali calendar ranges from mid-December to mid-January.*

2. *Bengali term used to denote worship of God or Goddess.*

3. *Radish.*

4. *A burned earthen saucer-shaped container or small to medium-sized bamboo basket that contains different components (like flowers, sweets, incense sticks, candles, etc.) required for worship.*

5. *A decree, an edict, or to issue an order.*

6. *The Queen Mother.*

7. *Deity worshipped by particular clan.*

8. *Large lakes, or local depressions filled with water, sometimes become marshes, swamps.*

9. *A variety of reeds or reedy grass.*

10. *A Bengali term used to depict one acre, but usually less than a standard acre, i.e., 4840 square yards; sometimes it can extend up to 1.2 hectares.*

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