

**THE MUNICIPAL MARKETS OF CALCUTTA, 1876-1947:  
'NATIVE' NEGOTIATIONS AND COLONIAL TRANSLATION  
OF A METROPOLITAN MODEL**

**THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR  
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**By**

**Devina Gupta**

**Department of History**

**Jadavpur University**

**Kolkata 700 032**

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**Certified that the Thesis entitled**

**The Municipal Markets of Calcutta, 1876-1947: ‘Native’ Negotiations and Colonial Translation of a Metropolitan Model**, submitted by me for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Arts at Jadavpur University is based upon my work carried out under the Supervision of Dr Sudeshna Banerjee, Associate Professor, Department of History, Jadavpur University. And that neither this thesis nor any part of it has been submitted before for any degree or diploma anywhere / elsewhere.

Countersigned by the

Supervisor:

Candidate:

Dated:

Dated:

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## **Abbreviations**

|             |                                                                       |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| EEIC        | English East India Company                                            |
| CIT         | Calcutta Improvement Trust                                            |
| CMG         | Calcutta Municipal Gazette                                            |
| OUP         | Oxford University Press                                               |
| CUP         | Cambridge University Press                                            |
| WBSA        | West Bengal State Archives                                            |
| HOGG MARKET | Sir Stuart Hogg Market                                                |
| PUMSC       | Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, Calcutta Corporation |

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## Glossary

|                      |                                                                                                     |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Arhatdar</i>      | a wholesale merchant who receives goods and disposes them off on commission                         |
| <i>Arhat</i>         | a warehouse or store of a wholesale dealer                                                          |
| <i>Ashraf</i>        | persons of rank, Muslim gentleman                                                                   |
| <i>Ayurveda</i>      | a traditional system of medicine practised especially in India                                      |
| <i>Ayah</i>          | maid-servant                                                                                        |
| <i>Achar</i>         | pickle                                                                                              |
| <i>Ata</i>           | flour                                                                                               |
| <i>Amdani wallah</i> | middle men buying wholesale from the wholesale merchants and selling to the retailers in small lots |
| <i>Anna</i>          | an Indian currency unit                                                                             |
| <i>Baboo</i>         | a title of respect attached to a name like Mr.                                                      |
| <i>Baksheesh</i>     | a small sum of money given as tip                                                                   |

|                     |                                                                                                                                 |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Bazar/Bajar</i>  | permanent sites of buying and selling of a variety of goods, especially in India and the Middle East                            |
| <i>Bhadrolak</i>    | middle-class man, respectable man                                                                                               |
| <i>Bhadramahila</i> | middle-class woman, respectable woman                                                                                           |
| <i>Bhandar</i>      | store                                                                                                                           |
| <i>Bepar</i>        | trade                                                                                                                           |
| <i>Basti</i>        | slum                                                                                                                            |
| <i>Bepari</i>       | trading farmer who brought his produce for sale in the <i>hats</i> and also sometimes carried them to the market towns in India |
| <i>Baniyan</i>      | trader, shopkeeper or moneychanger                                                                                              |
| <i>Biri</i>         | a type of cigarette                                                                                                             |
| <i>Bakr-Id</i>      | annual festival of Muslims                                                                                                      |
| <i>Baba</i>         | child                                                                                                                           |

|                  |                                                                                                  |
|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Bauls</i>     | mystic minstrels constituting a syncretic religious sect and musical traditions of Eastern India |
| <i>Chowkidar</i> | watchman                                                                                         |
| <i>Chotolok</i>  | lower-class                                                                                      |
| <i>Chasi</i>     | primary producers cum sellers of fruits and vegetables. Peasants doubling up as sellers.         |
| <i>Chandney</i>  | a covered area for the primary producers cum sellers of fruits and vegetables                    |
| <i>Chutney</i>   | type of sauce in Indian cuisine                                                                  |
| <i>Chhanna</i>   | cottage cheese                                                                                   |
| <i>Dhuti</i>     | garment for the lower body                                                                       |
| <i>Desi</i>      | Indian                                                                                           |
| <i>Doolie</i>    | a simple stretcher on poles for carrying the wounded or ill                                      |
| <i>Dal</i>       | Pulses that are widely consumed in India                                                         |
| <i>Dayabhaga</i> | the law of inheritance followed in Bengal. It relates                                            |

|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                           | to the partition of heritable property amongst heirs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <i>Dahi</i>               | curd                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <i>Dasakarma articles</i> | articles needed to worship the various Hindu Gods and Goddesses during festivals of Durga puja, Saraswati Puja, Ganesh Puja, etc. These articles include vermillion, betel leaf, mango leaf, five types of gems (pearl, sapphire, gold), turmeric, rice, flower garland, pot, mirror, etc |
| <i>Dekshis</i>            | large cooking vessels                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <i>Dewan</i>              | intermediaries in judicial and revenue administration                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <i>Dalmut</i>             | Indian savoury or snack food item                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <i>Durga Puja</i>         | an autumn festival in Bengal celebrated to worship Goddess Durga                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <i>Doshad</i>             | low-class Hindu trading in pigs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <i>Daridra Narayan</i>    | concept that service to the poor is equivalent to service to God                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <i>Fakír</i>              | Sufi ascetic                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

|                 |                                                                                                            |
|-----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Faraizi</i>  | the law of inheritance in Islam, in accordance with which property is partitioned                          |
| <i>Fariah</i>   | petty retailers in the markets of India, who receive their supplies from the wholesale traders and brokers |
| <i>Ganj</i>     | permanent local grain markets in India                                                                     |
| <i>Gaja</i>     | a kind of sweetmeat made of flour                                                                          |
| <i>Gomastah</i> | a commercial agent                                                                                         |
| <i>Ghi</i>      | clarified butter                                                                                           |
| <i>Garri</i>    | a carriage for conveyance of persons                                                                       |
| <i>Goonda</i>   | hooligan                                                                                                   |
| <i>Goala</i>    | milkmen                                                                                                    |
| <i>Guddee</i>   | office-room                                                                                                |
| <i>Gur</i>      | molasses                                                                                                   |
| <i>Guzrathi</i> | language of Gujarat                                                                                        |

|                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Hat</i>            | periodic, small rural markets in India                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <i>Hundi</i>          | a bill of exchange, a mercantile note of credit                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <i>Hartal</i>         | strike                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <i>Hilsa</i>          | a variety of fish cooked and eaten in Bengal                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <i>Holi</i>           | a spring festival celebrated in February or March in honour of Krishna                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <i>Ijaradar Bazar</i> | <i>bazars</i> were held on the Company's <i>khas</i> land (belonging to the government, which the government alone had the right to use) but were farmed out to individuals for a specified period of time. The revenue farmers or <i>ijaradars</i> collected revenue from these bazars and paid a fixed sum to EEIC |
| <i>Jilapi</i>         | a form of sweet condiment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <i>Jalpan</i>         | slight or occasional refreshment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <i>Jardah</i>         | a form of chewing tobacco                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <i>Jama Bazars</i>    | <i>bazars</i> owned by individuals and held on their own land on the condition that they paid a specified and                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

an estimate amount of revenue or *jama* to the EEIC in lieu of this privilege, which enabled them to enjoy the rents received from the sellers in the market.

*Khadi/ Khaddar*

Indian homespun cotton cloth

*Kebabs*

a dish of roasted or grilled meat, fish or vegetables

*Kesur/Kesar*

saffron

*Khansamah*

a male servant in charge of buying food and other supplies from the market for the English household in colonial India

*Kochuri*

a round flattened ball made of fine flour filled with pulped pulses

*Kartabhaja*

a sect founded in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Eastern India, tracing its roots to *fakir* Aulchand, considered a reincarnation of the Vaisnava ascetic Chaitanya.

*Kasai*

butcher

*Keramat*

refers to supernatural wonders performed by Muslim saints

|                    |                                                                                               |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Khoa</i>        | dried whole milk or milk thickened by heating in open air pan. The base of many Indian sweets |
| <i>Kirtan</i>      | devotional song                                                                               |
| <i>Kharif</i>      | autumn or monsoon crop                                                                        |
| <i>Lungi</i>       | cloth passed between the thighs                                                               |
| <i>Mehtar</i>      | name of a sweeper caste                                                                       |
| <i>Mandis</i>      | markets in towns surrounding the main cities                                                  |
| <i>Memsahib</i>    | a European woman living in India                                                              |
| <i>Mudi</i>        | a grocer                                                                                      |
| <i>Mudir Dokan</i> | a grocer's shop                                                                               |
| <i>Monihari</i>    | glass bangles                                                                                 |
| <i>Nahabat</i>     | a band of musicians playing an assortment of musical instruments                              |
| <i>Nimki</i>       | made of flour doughs, a savoury that gets its name from 'namkeen' or salty taste              |

|                     |                                                                                                                                       |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Nizamat</i>      | provincial government of Bengal in the 18 <sup>th</sup> century                                                                       |
| <i>Nazims</i>       | provincial governor of Bengal in the 18 <sup>th</sup> century                                                                         |
| <i>Pan</i>          | fresh betel leaves wrapped around pieces of betel nut, slaked lime, spices, and other ingredients and traditionally chewed            |
| <i>Para</i>         | neighbourhood                                                                                                                         |
| <i>Poddar</i>       | a cash keeper, money changer                                                                                                          |
| <i>Pir</i>          | a Muslim saint or holy man                                                                                                            |
| <i>Pice</i>         | an Indian monetary unit, equal to one-quarter of an <i>anna</i>                                                                       |
| <i>Paharawala</i>   | a guard                                                                                                                               |
| <i>Purdah</i>       | the practice of seclusion practiced by some women in accordance with the custom of the particular community to which she belongs      |
| <i>Purdahnashin</i> | the women who follow the social practice of seclusion. Their affairs (legal and others) are handled by the male members of her family |

|                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Puja</i>       | worship or adoration                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <i>Pona</i>       | a variety of fish, cooked and eaten in Bengal                                                                                                                                                         |
| <i>Papad</i>      | a thin crisp cake made of flour of any kind of pulse                                                                                                                                                  |
| <i>Rabri</i>      | thickened and sweetened milk                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <i>Rathayatra</i> | the festival of the procession of Krishna as Jagannatha held in Ashárh (July to August)                                                                                                               |
| <i>Rosogolla</i>  | cottage cheese dumplings cooked in sugar syrup                                                                                                                                                        |
| <i>Rajah</i>      | king                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <i>Salami</i>     | a sum of money given to the Corporation for garnering preferential treatment in the lease of market stalls or settling of market stall rents                                                          |
| <i>Sari</i>       | traditional Indian dress for women                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <i>Sahib</i>      | European man living in colonial India                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <i>Swaraj</i>     | Independence                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <i>Swadeshi</i>   | literally means belonging to or made in one's own 'native' land. Specifically, it was a part of the Indian national movement, promoting the boycott of foreign goods and favouring Indian industries. |

|                    |                                                                                                                                              |
|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Sircar</i>      | accountant                                                                                                                                   |
| <i>Sherboth</i>    | a cooling drink of sweet, diluted fruit juices                                                                                               |
| <i>Shemai</i>      | popular during Id, sweet dessert form of vermicelli                                                                                          |
| <i>Seer</i>        | a unit of measurement                                                                                                                        |
| <i>Sadhu</i>       | holy men of various Hindu sects                                                                                                              |
| <i>Sahebhdhani</i> | a sect founded by a fakir known as Sahebhdhani in 18 <sup>th</sup> century Bengal. Popular amongst the farmers and labourers of rural Bengal |
| <i>Samiti</i>      | association                                                                                                                                  |
| <i>Salami</i>      | a fee given for receiving a preferential treatment in matters of stall allocation or rent settlement                                         |
| <i>Thana</i>       | police station                                                                                                                               |
| <i>Zenana</i>      | the inner apartments of the house where the women of the family live                                                                         |
| <i>Zamindar</i>    | landholder                                                                                                                                   |
| <i>Zulum</i>       | torture                                                                                                                                      |

## **Introduction**

The present thesis focuses on the emergence and development of a municipal market system in colonial Calcutta between the years 1876 and 1947. The system was part of the colonial government's project of reorganizing the space of retail in the city. The study intends to be mainly historical and takes into account the historical process whereby the municipal market experiment in Calcutta proceeded under the aegis of the Calcutta Municipal Corporation, involving the establishment of Sir Stuart Hogg Market, Sir Charles Allen Market, Lansdowne Market, College Street Market, Entally Market, Lake Road Market, Gariahat Market and Park Circus Market over a period of seventy-one years beginning in 1876.

However, the thesis does not study the genesis and development of the municipal market system in Calcutta as a matter of institutional history, isolated from the surrounding and embedding currents of economic, social and political history. Rather, the work seeks to understand the municipal market experiment as integrally situated in a wider web of historical developments that marked and transformed the urban life of Calcutta in late colonial times. And, given colonial Calcutta's integral ensconcing in the dynamics of an imperialist British world-system, the present examination of the municipal market system in Calcutta probes the relevant intersection of the global and the local in examining why the system emerged when it did and how it transformed over time.

## The History

Before proceeding with an elaboration of the central argument of the thesis, a brief narration of the historical backdrop against which the municipal market experiment was initiated may be necessary. In this connection, it is pertinent to describe the way in which the local markets in Calcutta functioned before the Calcutta Municipal Corporation intervened in the scenario to 'reform' it by establishing the municipal markets as exemplary institutions. Before the British Crown directly took over the administration of the Indian possessions of the English East India Company (henceforth EEIC), the Company had loosely overseen the markets in Calcutta. However, a close look at the specified jurisdiction and role of the Justices of Peace, in charge of the administration in Calcutta during the Company rule, reveals that controlling and ordering the local markets was partly a concern on the part of the EEIC.

Indeed, most of the spaces of retail buying and selling as part of civic arrangements in the then Calcutta had been under private ownership and management, whether they were *hats* (periodic, small rural markets), *ganjs* (permanent local grain markets) or *bazars* (permanent sites of buying and selling of a variety of goods).<sup>1</sup> The bazars during the rule of the EEIC were divided into two categories - *ijaradar bazars* (bazars under the control of EEIC and farmed out to revenue farmers. The revenue farmers or *ijaradars* collected revenue from these bazars and paid a fixed sum to EEIC) and *jama/jumma bazars* (bazars established by the individuals on their own lands, who paid a fixed amount of revenue to the EEIC for this privilege). The *ijaradar bazars* were held on the Company's *khas* land (belonging to the government, which the

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<sup>1</sup> For a detailed discussion on the precolonial markets in Bengal refer to Tilottama Mukherjee, *Political Culture and Economy in Eighteenth-Century Bengal: Networks of Exchange, Consumption and Communication*, (New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2013).

government alone had the right to use) but were farmed out to individuals for a specified period of time. The *jama bazars* in their turn were owned by individuals and held on their own land on the condition that they paid a specified amount of revenue to the EEIC in lieu of this privilege, which enabled them to enjoy the rents received from the sellers in the market. The *ijaradar bazars* notably included – the Barabazar, the Bow Bazar, the Dhurumtollah Bazar, the Jan Bazar and the Baitakkhana Bazar. While the *jama bazars* included - Chandney Chowk Bazar, Sobha Bazar and Taltollah Bazar. These holders of *ijaradar bazars* and owners of *jama bazars* were usually drawn from among the rich zamindars (landholders) and banians (trader) of the late eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century Calcutta. Notable among them were Radhakanta Deb, Dewan Kasinath and Rajendra Mullick. These *bazars* provided the members of the emerging Calcutta elite not only with huge amounts of rent but also social pre-eminence and prestige in their own neighbourhoods. During the rule of the EEIC, the Fever Hospital Committee Report (1848) was critical of the state of *bazars*, *ganjs* and *hats* in Calcutta and gave certain prescriptions in this regard.<sup>2</sup> However, the EEIC does not seem to have given much attention to these prescriptions, which indicates complacency on their part.

The scenario changed after the Municipal Act of 1<sup>st</sup> July 1863 established the Municipal Corporation in Calcutta.<sup>3</sup> In 1871, the Health Officer of Calcutta Municipal Corporation, Fabre Tonnerre submitted a list of European and ‘native’ bazars in Calcutta. His list included the two bazars frequented by the Europeans - namely - the Dhurumtollah Bazar (Chowringhee Road) under Heeralal Seal and the Tiretta Bazar (Lower Chitpore Road) owned by the Rani of Burdwan. Some of the important

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<sup>2</sup> For a detailed discussion on the prescriptions of Fever Hospital Committee Report see Partho Datta, *Planning the City: Urbanization and Reform in Calcutta 1800-1940* (Tulika Books, 2012).

<sup>3</sup> S.W Goode, *Municipal Calcutta: Its Institutions in their Origin and Growth* (Macmillan, 2005).

‘native’ bazars in the list included - Taltala Bazar, Bow Bazar, Sobha Bazar, Baithakkhana Bazar, Mechuabazar and Notun Bazar under the ownership of Jotendra Mohan Tagore, Ramnarayan Motilal, Radhakanta Deb and Rajendra Mullick respectively. The Health Officers were extremely critical of the state of the bazars, especially the Dhurumtollah Bazar and wanted more powers for the Calcutta Municipality not just to reform the state of markets in the city but also establish a new market directly under the control of the Calcutta Municipality.<sup>4</sup>

The Calcutta Markets Act was passed in 1871. Under this Act, the Sir Stuart Hogg Market (henceforth Hogg Market) was commissioned in 1874. However, the Calcutta Markets Act was again amended to enable the Justices of Peace to use municipal funds for the construction and maintenance of the Hogg Market. Even after that, the revenue from the Hogg Market increased only after its amalgamation with the Dhurumtollah Market. With the municipal funds at its disposal and with the amalgamated Dhurumtollah Market to augment its revenue, the Hogg Market finally became operational from 1876. The thesis is concerned with the establishment, the administration and the functioning of the municipal markets at the junction of the colonial and the national, the global and the local, specifically during the period of colonial rule. Hence the thesis has chosen the years between 1876 to 1947 to study the emergence and development of the municipal markets in Calcutta.

In order to understand why in such circumstances, the white-dominated Calcutta Corporation would become keen to experimentally institute municipal markets in the city, this brief historical survey needs to refer to the reform of the Calcutta Corporation in 1876 that gave prominence to the electoral principle. With immediate

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<sup>4</sup> “Bengal Bill for the Regulation of Markets in Calcutta,” *Legislative Department, Government of India*, June 1871.

effect, forty-eight out of a total of seventy-two commissioners of the municipal body came to be recruited on the basis of the votes of the rate-payers in the city. This was happening at a time when the European and Eurasian population in the city had registered a sixty-four per cent increase, even as the total population of the city had also exponentially grown.<sup>5</sup> The European Chambers of Commerce, especially the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, were not only scripting the contours of the economy in the Bengal Presidency but were also voicing the elite European reservation about the quality of life available to them in the city of Calcutta. The European public opinion, expressed in newspapers and periodicals published by the Europeans, was increasingly ventilating its dissatisfaction with the existing state of civic amenities, including the condition of the marketplaces. It is no wonder, therefore, that the European public opinion in the city would be eager to have itself better represented in the domain of civic administration to be able to spearhead the kind of ‘reformed’ urban environment they envisaged for a better European living. The reform of 1876 gave it the opportunity. So, it is not a coincidence that the first municipal market in the city became operational from 1876. The municipal market appeared to be a totally different paradigm relative to the typical sites of buying and selling that the city had hosted so far. The municipal markets were planned, constructed, maintained and managed by the civic body. If the Calcutta Corporation required a model to emulate

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<sup>5</sup> Total European population in Calcutta in 1837 had been 7884. Total European population in Calcutta by 1872 had increased to around 13000. H. Beverley, *Report of the Census of Bengal, 1872*, Bengal Press Secretariat: 1872. See also *New Castle Courant*, “British subjects in Calcutta,” September 1871. *The Leeds Mercury*, 1875 October.

or learn from in this regard, municipal markets had already been established in the metropole – in 1860.<sup>6</sup>

## **The Argument**

The municipal markets in Calcutta are apparently micro spatial and micro historical in significance. But this thesis argues that the municipal market system in the city as a historical phenomenon veritably stands at the intersection of the metropolitan and the colonial, the colonial and the national, the institutional and the social, the economic and the cultural. In other words, the municipal market experience in Calcutta can – and, indeed, should - be situated on the one hand in the transnational space of metropole-colony flows of capital and ideas, and, on the other, at the complex intersection of the different forms of power that locally constituted the social, economic and political life of the city.

The argument starts off by making out a strong case in favour of necessarily situating the genesis of the municipal market experiment in Calcutta in the late nineteenth-century dynamics of national capitalism in Britain and its signature on the life in the colony, especially on the ‘second city of the Empire’. The thesis, thus, discerns in the municipal market experiment the clear imprint of the British imperial economy that had marked a new turn from the 1870s, characterized among other things by a

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<sup>6</sup> For a detailed discussion on the municipal market system in the metropole, refer to James Schmiechen and Kenneth Carls, *The British Market Hall: A Social and Architectural History* (Yale University Press, 1999). Robert Thorne, *Covent Garden Market: Its History and Restoration* (The Architectural Press, 1980). Stephen Halliday, *London's Market's: From Smithfield to Portobello Road* (Great Britain: The History Press, 2014).

transition to mass-produced consumer goods;<sup>7</sup> the manufacturers of these consumer goods now vied for many more spaces of retail, with the pressure of price competition egging them on in this quest. The colonial control over Calcutta, with its enclaves of elite Europeans, the better-off Eurasians, wealthy ‘native’ landlords and educated middle-class Indians, was deemed as conducive to the creation of new spaces of retail, where a taste for mass-produced consumer goods could be nurtured and whetted. The founding of marketplaces directly planned and controlled by the city’s civic administration, that too dominated by European mercantile interests, was in consonance with the British industrialists’ pointed quest in the colonies for ready, and favourable sites of retail.<sup>8</sup>

However, it would be too reductionist and econocentric to imagine that exclusively economic interests accounted for the imperial attitude to marketplaces in Calcutta. The civilizing mission that ideologically legitimized the British Empire was, at the end of the nineteenth century, no longer organized as much around a paternalist idealism of the Baptist-missionary kind, as around the pronounced racism that had

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<sup>7</sup> For a detailed discussion of the new turn in British capitalism at this juncture see J.F Wilson, *British Business History, 1720-1994: An Introduction* (Manchester University Press, 1995). Tom Kemp, *Industrialisation in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Longman Group Limited, 1985). Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire 1875-1914* (Abacus 1997). Michel Beaud, *A History of Capitalism 1500-2000* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2001). Gary B. Magee and Andrew S. Thompson, *Empire and Globalisation: Networks of People, Goods and Capital in the British World, c. 1850-1914* (Cambridge University Press, 2010). Teresa Da Silva Lopes and Paulo Guimaraes, “Trademarks and British Dominance in Consumer Goods, 1876-1914,” *The Economic History Review*, Vol. 67, No. 3 (August 2014).

<sup>8</sup> For a detailed discussion on the relation between India and British capitalism and imperialism see Amiya Kumar Bagchi, *Private Investment in India, 1900-1939* (Cambridge University Press, 1972). Tirthankar Roy, *The Economic History of India, 1857-2010* (Oxford University Press, 2020). Narendra Krishna Sinha, *The Economic History of Bengal, 1793-1848, Vol III* (FIRMA K.L. Mukhopadhyay, Calcutta: 1970). G Balachandran ed. *India and the World Economy, 1850-1950* (Oxford University Press, 2003).

emerged since the 1860s.<sup>9</sup> The imperial construction of racial difference and its typical imagining of ‘other’ variously represented the colonized as racially different and inferior.<sup>10</sup> It is germane to the present thesis that the imperialist selfhood that the British national culture arrogated for itself was predicated upon ‘modernity’ and ‘progress’; this modernity was represented as animated by ‘universal reason’ – a reason that the capitalist West with its legacy of the Scientific Revolution, the Industrial Revolution and the Enlightenment could supposedly claim to possess in exclusivity. Whether in the evangelically moralist late-Evangelical representation or in the Utilitarian construction, people in India were looked upon as essentially degraded, incapable of linear social progress and bereft of traditions of rational thinking.<sup>11</sup> The evolutionary difference between the metropole and the colony that came to be forcefully propagated in the second half of the nineteenth century predictably rubbed off on this portrayal of the colonized. It reflected in, among other things, the way the ‘oriental bazar’ was represented in the world of print in the metropole – in the various genres like creative literature, medical tracts and journals, manuals on hygiene – as a veritable site of economic irrationality, disorderliness, tropical disease and social backwardness.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Barbara D. Metcalf and Thomas R. Metcalf, *A Concise History of Modern India* (Cambridge University Press, 2006). Harald Fischer-Tine, Michael Mann ed., *Colonialism as Civilising Mission: Cultural Ideology in British India* (Wimbledon Publishing Company, 2004).

<sup>10</sup> Edward W. Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (Penguin India, 2001). Ronald Inden, “Orientalist Constructions of India,” *Modern Asian Studies* (Vol. 20, Issue 3, July 1986).

<sup>11</sup> Carol A. Breckenridge and Peter van der Veer ed., *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia* (University of Pennsylvania, 1993).

<sup>12</sup> Anonymous, “Shopping in Calcutta,” *The Northern Whig* (19<sup>th</sup> September 1882). Anonymous, “Shopping and Shops in the East,” *Torquay Times and South Devon Advertiser* (25<sup>th</sup> December 1903). *The Homeward Mail* (16<sup>th</sup> October 1860). Anonymous, “Indian Scenes,” *The North Devon Journal and General Advertiser* (1830). Anonymous, “Indian Jottings,” *Trove* (18<sup>th</sup> September 1865).

However, this begs the question whether the municipal market as a model, derived from the metropole, relocated itself smoothly and verbatim in Calcutta to remain throughout the period from 1876 to 1947 an unmediated inscription of the ‘civilized’ metropole on a blank colonial parchment. Of course, the role and importance of the model are not to be minimized at all. The thesis, indeed, brings out the significance of the importation of a metropolitan model in the colonial scheme of things. Since the British elite in Calcutta, along with other elite Europeans in the city, had urgently called for ‘reform’ of the typical marketplace in Calcutta, it is not unexpected that the model of ‘reform’ would be derived from the metropole, particularly as the metropole had already ‘improved’ the marketplace in Britain through municipalization in the Age of Improvement.<sup>13</sup> By 1860, the Market Hall became the dominant architectural style for the municipal markets in Britain. The Market Hall with its iron columns and glass roofs allowed large scale ventilation, lighting, modern display and pricing practices, even as it satisfied the Victorian ideal of imposing order on market activities.<sup>14</sup> The derivation of this municipal market model from the metropole gave British rule in India and the British-led municipal administration of Calcutta yet another occasion to reiterate the superiority of the supposedly enlightened and racially superior ruling race. However, the colonial administration also had had its own locally perceived interest in importing the model. Thus, it is important to emphasize that that the model appealed to the colonial municipal administration also because it seemed to answer the requirements of a specifically colonial scheme of things.

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<sup>13</sup> For a detailed study of the so-called Age of Improvement, refer to Asa Briggs, *The Age of Improvement, 1763-1867* (London: Longmans, 1963).

<sup>14</sup> James Schmiechen and Kenneth Carls, *The British Market Hall: A Social and Architectural History* (Yale University Press, 1999). Robyn S. Metcalfe, *Meat, Commerce and the City: The London Food Market, 1800-1855* (Taylor and Francis, 2015). Martin Spring, “Smithfield Savored,” *Building* (2<sup>nd</sup> August 1996).

However, acutely aware of the exigencies of colonial rule specific to the city of Calcutta in the late nineteenth century, the European-led municipal administration took no time to realize that the Market Hall model would have to be modified in order to address the realities of the contingent situation in colonial Calcutta. The thesis, thus, demonstrates the ways in which the Calcutta Municipal Corporation modified the model in order to draft in mechanisms of control appropriate for the specific problems of ordering, disciplining and surveillance that the colonizers confronted in Calcutta, especially in the city's marketplaces. Again, in applying the model to Calcutta, the Corporation had to factor in concessions to crucial 'native' interests, without whose cooperation the success of the market experiment was thought to be in jeopardy.

But, an important question that is bound to arise is whether the modification of the metropolitan model of market municipalization in Calcutta was determined only by the colonial agenda. Indeed, the everyday of the municipal market in Calcutta under British rule demonstrates the ways in which the colony, with its own contingent history and the agency of its own 'native' population, too, could very well transmute the modular. Unpacking the contingent situation in the colony in all its specificity,<sup>15</sup> the thesis identifies the different 'native' agencies specific to Calcutta's colonial context - agencies which variously inscribed their signature on the municipal market

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<sup>15</sup> For historically situating the markets in India and Bengal, refer to Tilottama Mukherjee, *Political Culture and Economy in Eighteenth-Century Bengal: Networks of Exchange, Consumption, and Communication* (Orient Blackswan, 2013). C.A. Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars: North Indian Society in the Age of British Expansion 1770-1870*, (Oxford University Press, 2012). Kumkum Chatterjee, *Merchants, Politics and Society in Early Modern India, Bihar 1733-1820* (E.J. Brill 1996). Mark Bevir and Frank Trentmann ed., *Markets in Historical Contexts: Ideas and Politics in the Modern World* (Cambridge University Press, 2004). To critically understand dominance and agency in the colonial context, read, Sumit Sarkar, "Orientalism Revisited: Saidian Frameworks in the Writing of Modern Indian History," *Oxford Literary Review*, vol. 16, No.1/2 (1994).

system in Calcutta. So, the point is to argue that far from inseminating a mimesis of the Market Hall in Britain, Calcutta's urban specifics under late colonialism produced a veritable colonial translation of the metropolitan model; that too, a translation that transformed over time as the life in the city traversed from one historical moment to another.

The implantation of a metropolitan model was easier contemplated than immaculately done, with the pre-municipal bazar scenario and its constitutive interests tending to significantly linger. Even while 'native' economic initiatives, compatible with the institutional requirements of the municipal market system, did develop upon the introduction of the system in the city, the various economic actors and interests like the *chasis* (primary producers cum sellers of fruits and vegetables) *arhatdars* (wholesale merchants who receive goods and dispose them off on commission) and *beparis* (trading farmers who brought their produce for sale in the *hats* and also sometimes carried them to the market towns), who had peopled the pre-municipal bazar space, far from clinically distancing themselves from the new institution, quickly came around to negotiate for space within the new system. The Market Hall model that Calcutta's municipal administration derived from the metropole was about controlling the marketplace experience in the interests of capitalism and the middle-class.<sup>16</sup> The model enshrined fair competition, profitability, competitive pricing, standardised buying, and selling practices and was predicated upon the assumption of

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<sup>16</sup> For discussions on the connection between the Market Hall, the middle-class and capitalism in Britain, refer to, James Schmiechen and Kenneth Carls, *The British Market Hall: A Social and Architectural History* (Yale University Press, 1999). Frank Trentmann, "Beyond Consumerism: New Historical Perspectives on Consumption," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 2004, vol. 39, No. 3 (2004). Stana Nenadic, "Businessmen, the Urban Middle-Classes and the Dominance of the Manufacturers in Nineteenth-Century Britain," *The Economic History Review*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (February 1991).

a clear separation between the public and the private.<sup>17</sup> Compatible with metropolitan milieu dominated by the capitalist ethos, the model was, however, practically challenged to graft itself on to a very different social environment and an everyday experience of buying and selling, where the pre-existing culture of bazars, marked by multiple concurrent domains of exchange and authority within the space of the market, predominated. Without the presence in Calcutta of the preconditions that would enable the municipal market to develop as an anonymous/abstract sphere of exchange,<sup>18</sup> it was just a matter of time for the ‘native’ agencies like *arhatdars*, *beparis* and *chasis* to negotiate this mismatch between the model and the contingent situation to work their way into the precincts of the municipal market. These important ‘native’ economic actors, indeed, often became successful in considerably tweaking the system and accommodating their modes of operation into the economic world of the municipal market in the city.

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<sup>17</sup> For studies of the kind of capitalist rationality that dominated Britain in the late nineteenth century and the way in which it underpinned the municipalization of the marketplace in the metropole, see James B. Jefferys, *Retail Trading in Britain, 1850-1950* (Cambridge University Press, 1954). J. H. Clapham, *An Economic History of Modern Britain: The Early Railway Age, 1820-1850* (Cambridge University Press, 1939). Deborah Hodson, “The Municipal Store: Adaptation and Development in the Retail Markets of Nineteenth Century Urban Lancashire,” *Business History*, Vol. 40, No. 4 (1998). Gareth Shaw and M.T. Wild, “Retail Patterns in the Victorian City,” *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, Vol. 4, No. 2, *The Victorian City* (1979). Paul Dobraszczyk, “Victorian Market Halls, Ornamental Iron and Civic Intent,” *Architectural History*, Vol. 55 (2012). Colin Smith, “The Wholesale and Retail Markets of London,” *The Economic History Review*, Vol. 55, No. 1 (February, 2002).

<sup>18</sup> Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time* (Boston: Beacon Press Books, 2001). Karl Polanyi, *The Livelihood of Man: Studies in Social Discontinuity*, ed. by Harry W. Pearson (London: Academic Press, 1977). According to Karl Polanyi it was a distinct historical transformation in Europe where a self-regulating market enabled a fundamental separation between the sphere of economic and political in social life. It would be an economic fallacy to impute facets of an autonomous realm of market economy to societies and cultures removed from this specific moment.

A market being basically an economic entity, the question of ‘native’ economic agencies, negotiating its everyday workings, and transforming it, is understandably germane to our discussion. But, then, markets are so inextricably entangled in the social! So, the role of social power, institutions, and developments in challenging the verbatim implementation of the Market Hall in Calcutta is an important dimension to necessarily explore. Calcutta’s urban condition was shot through not only with race but also class, caste, gender, and religious difference of a historically contingent kind; each of such dynamic had its own role in the cumulative colonial translation of the metropolitan model.

Talking about the role of class in giving distinctive contours to the municipal market experience in colonial Calcutta, the thesis particularly emphasizes the role of the middle-class in the city. The thesis argues that the project of municipally administering markets in the city could be more or less successful because of the proactive role of the educated middle-class in the city – overwhelmingly Bengali – in welcoming the experiment as ‘modern.’ The thesis argues that the Bengali middle-class, with its nurture in colonial educational institutions and Western discourse of modernity, participated in an interactional colonial modernity in tandem with the colonial masters – a colonial modernity in which the municipal market scheme in the city can be squarely mapped; the planned, ordered and hygienic environment promised by the new market experiment broadly matched the Bengali middle-class’s desired order of things.<sup>19</sup> This, however, does not mean a complete convergence

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<sup>19</sup> For a critical understanding of the world of consciousness of the Bengali middle class and its imagining of modernity read for example Sumit Sarkar, *Writing Social History* (Oxford University Press, 1997). Dipesh Chakravarty, *Habitations of Modernity: Essays in the Wake of Subaltern Studies* (The University of Chicago Press, 2002) Tithi Bhattacharya, *The Sentinels of Culture: Class, Education and the Colonial Intellectual in Bengal (1848-1885)* (Oxford University Press: 2005). John

between the official intentions and the (resident) European expectations, on the one hand, and the Bengali middle-class's imagining of the colonial 'modern,' on the other.<sup>20</sup> The colonial middle-class's growing sensitivity to the rule of colonial difference,<sup>21</sup> congealing into a nationalist self-perception, made them assert their difference with the colonial administration and the resident British population in the space of the municipal market, too, even while remaining broadly committed to the shared assumptions of colonial modernity. Indeed, it was largely the middle-class's participation in the municipal market scheme that also paved the way for the decided imprint of nationalism on space of the municipal market from 1924, when the nationalists electorally wrested control of the Corporation from the Europeans. Indeed, there ensued a process of nationalist contestation of the European domination of the space of the municipal market in terms of merchandise, display, hoardings, and even the ideological justification of the markets' relevance to society. However, the thesis is simultaneously sensitive to the emergence of more than one imagining of the

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McGuire, *Making of a Colonial Mind; A Quantitative Study of the Bhadrolok in Calcutta (1857-1858)* (Australian National University, 1983). Prof. Rai Bahadur Gupta (Professor of Economics, DAV College, Cawnpore), "Municipal Sanitation - II," *The Calcutta Municipal Gazette* (1926). Bipin Chandra Pal, "Calcutta Sixty-Years Ago: Some Personal Reminiscences," *The Calcutta Municipal Gazette* (6<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Issue, 1932).

<sup>20</sup> For scholarly works on the Indian and Bengali middle-class and the reconstitution of modernity in a colonial context, refer to, Swati Chattopadhyay, *Representing Calcutta: Modernity, Nationalism and the Colonial Uncanny* (Routledge, 2006). Sanjay Joshi, *Fractured Modernity: Making of a Middle-Class in Colonial North India* (Oxford University Press, 2001). Henrike Donner ed., *Being Middle-Class in India: A Way of Life* (Routledge, 2011). A Ricardo Lopez-Pedrerros and Barbara Weinstein, ed., *The Making of the Middle Class: Toward A Transnational History* (New York: Duke University Press, 2012). Douglas Haynes, Abigail McGowan, Tirthankar Roy and Haruka Yanagisawa ed., *Towards a History of Consumption in South Asia: Tiny Middle-Class and Huge Moral Anxieties* (Oxford, 2010).

<sup>21</sup> The term rule of colonial difference is being derived from Partha Chatterjee. For a detailed explanation of the rule of colonial difference, refer to Partha Chatterjee, *Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton University Press, 1993).

nation in the subcontinent by the 1920s.<sup>22</sup> The thesis, thus, gives the nationalist inscription on the space of the market a nuanced reading for traces of communal sensibility informing the nationalism that was coming to permeate the everyday of the municipal market experience in the city.

But could the role of elite Indians, whether Hindu or Muslim, have been the only ‘native’ imprint on the colonial translation of the metropolitan scheme? After all, the space of the market in the city, even under the municipal administration, was hardly a closed one with any rigorously surveilled or restricted entry. Therefore, deriving from the pre-existing social practice of the marketplace in city, various subaltern people - from peasants and stray hawkers to porters and carters, from lepers and mendicants to *sadhus* (a holy person in Hinduism) and *fakirs* (ascetic) from street performers and *kirtan* (devotional song) bands to prostitutes and other subaltern women - regularly moved through and/or inhabited the municipal market space. What is important to emphasize is that these subaltern agencies,<sup>23</sup> with their cultural specificities, context-specific mobilizations and pressing material concerns, developed their own narratives of claim to the space of the municipal market. Such subaltern mediation, in particular,

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<sup>22</sup> For scholarly discussions on the two-nation theory read the following. Mushirul Hasan, *Nationalism and Communalism in India, 1911-1928* (Delhi: Manohar, 1979). Gyanendra Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India* (Oxford University Press, 2006). Suranjan Das, *Interrogating Politics and Society: Twentieth Century Indian Subcontinent* (Delhi: Primus Books, 2014). Nariaki Nakazato, “The Role of Colonial Administration, Riot Systems and Local Networks during the Calcutta Disturbances of August 1946,” in *Calcutta: The Stormy Decades of Calcutta* ed. Tanika Sarkar and Sekhar Bandopadhyay (Social Science Press, 2015).

<sup>23</sup> For scholarly discussions on the history of the subaltern, including the theoretical origin of the term subaltern refer to. Ranajit Guha, “On Some Aspects of the History of Colonial India,” in *Subaltern Studies I: Writings on South Asian History and Society* ed. Ranajit Guha (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1982). Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Habitations of Modernity: Essays in the Wake of Subaltern Studies* (The University of Chicago Press, 2002). Rosalind C. Morris ed., *Can the Subaltern Speak? Reflections on the History of An Idea* (Columbia University Press, 2010).

irrevocably transmuted the derived model of the municipal market with an infusion of immense plurality and complexity,<sup>24</sup> specific to every day in the immediate colonial situation.

It is because of this subaltern inscription of the space of the market that the municipal market scheme, despite its best efforts, could never really dispel the various elite apprehensions about the marketplace as a potential site of disorder. The question of disorder brings us to the second crucial aspect of the thesis's argument that is no less important than the argument about colonial derivation and translation. This aspect relates to the way in which the municipal market was devised and administered as a mechanism of control by the powers that be in colonial Calcutta.<sup>25</sup> The reason why the British-dominated civic body and its European voters so urgently desired municipalization was because they perceived social instability as inherent in the 'disorderliness' of the privately managed *bazars*. By inaugurating the municipal market system, the Calcutta Municipal Corporation sought to control the market experience in the city predominantly in the interest of British capital, the British-owned mercantile firms in the city, the European residents of Calcutta and, of course, the permanence of colonial rule.

Reference has already been made to the interest of British manufacturers in creating an ever-widening market for their mass-produced consumer items in the Indian cities.

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<sup>24</sup>For historically situating the market related practices of the peasants and petty traders in colonial India read, Anand Yang, *Bazaar India: Markets, Society and Colonial State in Gangetic Bihar* (Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 2000). Sudipta Sen, *Conquest of Marketplaces: Exchange, Authority and Conflict in Early Colonial North India*, PhD Dissertation (The University of Chicago, 1994). Rajat Kanta Ray, "The Bazaar: Changing Structural Characteristics of the Indigenous Section of the Indian Economy Before and After the Great Depression," *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 25, 3 (Sage: New Delhi 1988).

<sup>25</sup> Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, Peter Miller ed., *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (University of Chicago Press, 1991).

It was somehow a foregone conclusion that the sale of such mass-produced items and the creation of taste for them was impossible in the *hats* and the privately-owned *bazars*, given the strong lingering traces of the pre-colonial culture of buying and selling at those sites. The municipal markets could create a controlled environment in which the sale of such products could be ideally promoted and ‘native’ preference for such products nurtured. However, this imperial economic interest in the inauguration of officially controlled markets in Calcutta could readily materialize because, at the local level, the colonial authorities – both the Bengal government and the Calcutta Municipal Corporation - were already contemplating modalities whereby they could start controlling the ‘disorderly’ market situation in Calcutta. In recent years, complaints by resident Europeans had been burgeoning about the ‘filth’ and the ‘fraud’ that accosted them in the city’s *bazars*, even as the European medical opinion in the city increasingly identified the *bazars* as depots of adulterated food and of disease.<sup>26</sup> The city’s Europeans even invoked their intimate sensory perceptions of sight and smell to denounce the bazars of the city as pits of appalling sight and unbearable stench.<sup>27</sup> The municipal authorities, thus, felt all the more the urgency of devising spaces where official control would reassure the resident Europeans’ expectations regarding the quality and security of life in the city. Because of their

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<sup>26</sup> P.M Cranenburgh, *Hygiene of Calcutta* (Bengal Printing Company Limited: October 1863). Mark Harrison, *Climates and Constitutions: Health, Race, Environment and British Imperialism in India, 1600-1850* (Oxford University Press, 1999).

<sup>27</sup> For works on how olfactory imperatives shaped the discourse of colonial difference and determined the planning schemes that laid out the city, its neighbourhood and market, see David Arnold, *Colonising the Body: State Medicine and Epidemic Disease in Nineteenth Century India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993). Dipesh Chakravarty, “Of Garbage, Modernity and the Citizen Gaze,” *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 27, March 1992. James Ranald Martin, *Notes on the Medical Topography of Calcutta* (Calcutta: Bengal Military Orphan Press, 1837). Debjani Bhattacharya, *Empire and Ecology in the Bengal Delta: The Making of Calcutta* (Cambridge University Press, 2018).

class location and their own stake in the social order, the ‘native’ elites in the city – whether the landlords and Calcutta notables, on the one hand, or the educated middle-class, on the other - equally subscribed to the opinion that the urban market situation needed to be rigorously controlled by the authorities.<sup>28</sup>

The colonial political establishment had its own specific apprehensions, too, about private *bazars* and *hats*; it saw them as potential threats to its law-and-order regime. The uncontrollable range of human actors, particularly of the subaltern kind, who thronged the nooks and crannies of the congested and non-geometric precincts of the *bazars* made the latter appear to the authorities and the Europeans in Calcutta as inviting disorderliness and clandestine criminal activities.<sup>29</sup> And yet, the colonial administration and the municipal authorities had no direct means to control these sites of exchange. Thus, the colonial concern to directly control the space, the transactions, and the human participation in the market was a crucial determinant of the Calcutta Municipal Corporation’s decision to inaugurate a chain of municipal markets in the city; a municipally owned and administered market enabled them to institute modalities of control right from the stage of planning the architectural execution to

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<sup>28</sup> “Bengal Bill for the Regulation of Markets in Calcutta: Extract from the Proceedings of the Council of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal for the Purpose of Making Laws and Regulations,” *Proceedings of the Legislative Department, Government of India*, June 1871. For an overview of the approval of the educated Indians for the various ‘improvement’ schemes, see Partho Datta, *Planning the City: Urbanization and Reform in Calcutta 1800-1940* (Tulika Books, 2012).

<sup>29</sup> John Campbell Oman, “Bazaar Gup; Or, Rumours of the Market-Place,” in *Cults, Customs and Superstitions of India* (Adelphi Terrace, London: 1908). The anxiety in the minds of the colonisers regarding the connection between rumours in the bazars and political subversion is reflected in the following remarks of John Campbell Oman. According to J.C Oman, the baseless rumours in the bazars especially at war times were an indication of the hostile feelings of the people generally towards their foreign rulers. He further mentioned that it was undeniable that the false and absurd rumours afloat in the Indian bazar could at a critical moment be productive of grave consequences to the state. For the link between rumour in the bazar and political disaffection in colonialist thinking read, Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India* (Oxford University Press, 1986).

the structuring of the administration of the market to employing market superintendents to tying up with the police administration for keeping criminal activities under leash. But the creation of the municipal markets did not, of course, ensure order once and for all. Created to address the problem of 'disorder', the municipal markets in Calcutta, however, never managed to assuage the elite's fear of disorder, if only because of the peculiarity of the market as public space, with its quintessential openness of access and its remarkable proportion of subaltern presence. The problem of disorder worsened when Calcutta's marketplaces, linked to the global networks of trade and commerce dominated by the capitalist system, invariably experienced the impact of price rise, hyperinflation during the tumultuous years of the Great Depression and Second World War. Thus, the instruments of control, as this thesis argues, had to be frequently revamped and reoriented during the period under consideration. Nor is there any reason to assume that the nationalist takeover of the reigns of the municipal administration marked any relaxation of concern for order and control in the municipal market. Class, after all, was a prominent structuring element of the nationalist discourse of power; and, caste, gender and (religious) majoritarianism, in their turn, intersected with it to determine why the nationalist leadership would have its own peculiar susceptibilities about apprehended disorder in the marketplace.

Talking about the concern for control that is deeply implicated in the genesis and transformation of the municipal markets, the present author repeatedly draws attention to another argumentative strain that informs the thesis throughout - that no form of power and no mechanism of control can be understood in isolation from the politics of

space.<sup>30</sup> In other words, closely implicated in the workings of the municipal markets as mechanisms of control in colonial Calcutta were the ways in which the powers that be imagined space, represented space, inseminated space, ordered space, reoriented space and even aestheticized space. Thus, the British capitalist quest for a ready market in the colony for mass-produced goods had a spatial dimension – carving out organized, sanitized, well-lit-up market spaces of retail that would best facilitate the promotion, display, familiarization and the sales of the mass-produced consumer goods. Again, in Calcutta, the Orientalist susceptibilities of the colonial authorities and the resident Europeans essentialized the *hats* and the *bazars* as veritable pits of the irrational, uncivilized, disorderly, and diseased ‘other,’ thus denying these spaces any existence on the map of modernity. Accordingly, the municipal authorities in Calcutta acquired for the proposed municipal markets unencumbered spaces so that they could smoothly execute the place-making for what they envisioned as rationally organized sites of ‘civilized’ buying and selling practices, free from any built, habitational or institutional traces of the pre-modern. The plans and layouts of the markets were prepared in the light of the spatial ideals of architectural modernism that was sweeping the West at that time, in tandem with the ideal of capitalist rationality and the logic of state surveillance. It is not surprising, therefore, that the market plans of the Calcutta Municipal Corporation drew the market space as a centralized homogeneous unit and rigorously geometricized the layout. It should not be missed

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<sup>30</sup> For theoretical works on the politics of space read for example James D Faubion ed., *Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984, Vol 3: Power* (New Press: 2000). Doreen Massey, “Philosophy and Politics of Spatiality: Some Considerations. The Hettner-Lecture in Human Geography,” *Geographische Zeitschrift* (1999). Edward B. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (Verso: 1989). Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991). David Harvey, *The Condition of Post Modernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Blackwell Publishers, 1989).

that even while such geometricization was following the current architectural aesthetic, it was also inchoately a spatial quest for order and control, facilitating centralized vigilance by the market administration and, if need be, the police. Interestingly, the nationalists, on taking over the reins of municipal governance from the mid-twenties, had no less a stake in the guarantee of centralized surveillance built into the geometric layout of the municipal markets. But, coming to the question of the nationalist takeover, the thesis also points out that the change was clearly accompanied by a nationalization of the municipal-market space through the introduction of a new set of signs, symbols, activities and ideological markers, in a show of national difference with the colonizer's ethos and aesthetic. However, whether under the colonial administration or the nationalist, the space of the market was definitely gendered, as the thesis demonstrates. And, both the colonial and the nationalist phases of market governance were equally rattled by the way in which various subaltern agencies often sought to assert their claim/s to the market precincts by contesting the dominant spatialization.

Another question that has informed the present thesis is the significance of the web of interrelations that tied the colonial world to its metropolitan counterpart. This thesis argues that the site of Calcutta's municipal markets can unravel the inter-constitutive nature of the colony and metropole and their deeply connected histories. It was not a one-way determination of the colony's municipal markets by the metropolitan model of market, but a complex, two-way, incessant intermingling where the municipal market experiments in the colony also inscribed the metropole.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose ed., *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World* (Cambridge University Press, 2006).

## **The Present Thesis in Relation to the Existing Literature**

The body of historical literature on Calcutta is very rich. However, the history of the municipal markets of Calcutta has been only referred to, in passing, in books and briefly studied in chapters and sections thereof. There has been no comprehensive and critical historical work on the municipal markets, even though municipalisation of marketplace was a significant experiment that the colonial administration undertook. This thesis attempts to fill this vacuum. It attempts to understand the municipal markets as a site where capitalistic impulses from the metropole interacted with the agency of indigenous actors in Calcutta.

Since the municipal market in Calcutta was derived from a metropolitan model, the thesis draws upon the works on the metropolitan municipal markets. In this connection, James Schmiechen and Kenneth Carls's book on the British Market Hall has been crucial in understanding the metropolitan market model.<sup>32</sup> According to James Schmiechen and Kenneth Carls, in mid-nineteenth century Britain, markets shifted from the open-air to enclosed areas, with several shops under one roof. It reflected an anxiety on the part of the authorities to control and redefine social interaction in public places. This evolved into a new architectural building style that came to be labelled as Market Hall in late nineteenth-century Britain.<sup>33</sup> St John's Market Hall (Liverpool), Aberdeen Market Hall, Birmingham Market Hall, and Norfolk Market Hall (Sheffield) were prominent Market Halls in late nineteenth-century Britain.

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<sup>32</sup> James Schmiechen and Kenneth Carls, *The British Market Hall: A Social and Architectural History* (Yale University Press, 1999).

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

This thesis has drawn upon the works that incidentally refer to the municipal market system in Calcutta. In this connection the works of S.W. Goode and M. Sinha Roy have directly dealt with the municipal markets in colonial Calcutta. S.W Goode, has contended that the Hogg Market, Lansdowne Market and Charles Allen Municipal Markets, established between 1876-1910, were part of the ‘improvements’ that were inaugurated by the European dominated Calcutta Municipal Corporation.<sup>34</sup> M. Sinha Roy, has asserted that the upper-class-oriented Hogg Market (1876), the Lansdowne Market (1903), the Charles Allen Market (1910), the College Street Market (1917), the Entally Market (1923), the Lake Road Market (1929-1930), the Gariahat Market (1937) and the Park Circus Market (1930-1931) encouraged the growth of shopping streets and grew simultaneously with the urban growth of Calcutta.<sup>35</sup>

The thesis has drawn upon the following works in trying to understand the pre-colonial and pre-existing bazars in India and Bengal. In Christopher Bayly’s book,<sup>36</sup> the bazar was a site at the intersection of urban, rural societies and merchant networks. The town and rural bazars were linked to the political order’s consumption and revenue extraction activities by the new merchants. Kumkum Chatterjee’s book focusses on the history of grain trade, traders, and merchants-bankers of the Eastern kingdom of Bengal, Bihar, Orissa between the years 1733-1820.<sup>37</sup> She has argued that

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<sup>34</sup> S.W Goode, *Municipal Calcutta: Its Institutions in their Origin and Growth* (Kolkata Municipal Corporation, 2005).

<sup>35</sup> M. Sinha Roy, *The Municipal Markets of Calcutta: Three Case Studies*, Unpublished Thesis (University of London, 1976).

<sup>36</sup> C.A. Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars: North Indian Society in the Age of British Expansion 1770-1870*, (Oxford University Press, 2012).

<sup>37</sup> Kumkum Chatterjee, *Merchants, Politics and Society in Early Modern India, Bihar 1733-1820* (EJ Brill 1996).

market/market actors in Bengal were a medium to assert political authority over Bengal, Bihar and Orissa by the English East India Company.

Tilottama Mukherjee in her study reflects on the nature of bazars in precolonial Bengal.<sup>38</sup> According to her, by the onset of the eighteenth century, the bazars were located within a finely tuned trading network comprising thousands of small transactions and bulk trading by indigenous traders, Asian merchants and European companies. In this scenario, a diverse set of people, ranging from *nazims* (provincial governor of Bengal in the eighteenth century), nobles, landed proprietors, *fakirs* (ascetics), merchants and the East India Company could initiate licensed markets in eighteenth century Bengal. Her work has also stressed on the commercial functions of temples and religious institutions in the period of her study wherein markets emerged around mosques.

Sudipta Sen in his study, has shed light on the variegated nature of political control over trade and commerce in the marketplaces.<sup>39</sup> According to Sen, unlike the autonomous and self-regulating market in relation to the formation of one dominant class in capitalist society, the bazars in early colonial Northern India were located within multiple and different, often concurring domains of authority and exchange. Exchange in this kind of marketplace denoted much more than traffic in things of exclusive economic value - and included sacred, festive transactions, marriage, inheritance and presence of traders and rulers alike. According to Sen, there was an absence of an anonymous/abstract sphere of exchange in the bazars. However, nor was it feudal or despotic. He further states that lineage, dynasty and religious rights

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<sup>38</sup> Tilottama Mukherjee, *Political Culture and Economy in Eighteenth-Century Bengal: Networks of Exchange, Consumption, and Communication* (Orient Blackswan, 2013).

<sup>39</sup> Sudipta Sen, *Conquest of Marketplaces: Exchange, Authority and Conflict in Early Colonial North India*, PhD Dissertation (The University of Chicago, 1994).

over the bazars would confound our present-day sense of both personal and public. The colonizers wished to weed out all modes of appropriation and distribution of wealth from the marketplace which did not conform to a strict measure of bonafide property. This thesis has immensely benefited from this rich history of the eighteenth-century marketplace in colonial north India. Sudipta Sen further argues that the reforms by EIC in the mid eighteenth century sequestered the indigenous marketplace in North India from its traditional lineage (i.e., based on an intricate network of social, political and religious relationships) and replaced it with standardised and homogenised marketplaces. This thesis, with a focus on colonial Calcutta, and not on North India, argues that the efforts of the EEIC to sequester the marketplace in colonial Calcutta from its traditional lineages was incomplete. Even in 1871, the British rulers could not interfere with the privately-owned zamindars' bazars in Calcutta.

Anand Yang concentrates on the bazars of Gangetic Bihar between the eighteenth century and the end of the colonial period. This thesis has drawn upon his work in connection with the nature of the bazars and *hats* of the precolonial and colonial period. According to him, the bazars of Gangetic Bihar of this period were dynamic sites of circulation, redistribution, exchange, negotiation with larger ties and networks - in short of extra-community or supra-community connections and institutions.<sup>40</sup> They were not isolated. Bazars in Bihar between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries were connected spatially to the regional, district, and periodic markets and temporally to local agricultural and religious calendar. The bazars saw the movement of local agricultural and craft commodities as well as non-local products from higher

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<sup>40</sup> Anand Yang, *Bazaar India: Markets, Society and Colonial State in Gangetic Bihar* (Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt Ltd, 2000).

levels. According to Yang, only the periodic markets at rural levels became sites of contestation between the rulers and ruled. The peasants in these periodic markets did not passively accept colonial penetration but contested colonial rule. According to Yang, even while lower tiers received European goods and exported village level goods to higher tiers of the marketing system, the lower levels were largely beyond the pale of direct governmental control. He left out the contestations in the marketplace at the city/municipal level, a gap which this thesis tries to fill.

Rajat Kanta Ray's study on the bazars in colonial India has been crucial in understanding the bazar in twentieth century India. He states that the bazar located in the market towns surrounding the great cities like Bombay, Calcutta were the point of assembly of primary produce that was to be exported.<sup>41</sup> The bazar also distributed imported goods for internal wholesale or retail distribution. The bazar was connected to the big cities and to the rural periodic markets. Between 1920-1929 there were attempts by the Europeans foreign import-export houses to bypass the bazar. This was checked by the Great Depression of 1929. This thesis is in consonance with his analysis of the role of the *arhatdars* (wholesalers) in the bazar economy after the Great Depression.

This thesis has drawn upon Ritu Birla's argument that between 1870 and 1930 the idealised opposition between bazar (premodern, personal site of exchange) and the market (rational, impersonal site of transaction) was put to test.<sup>42</sup> She historicizes the failed efforts of the colonial state to disembed the market in India from indigenous

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<sup>41</sup> Rajat Kanta Ray, "The Bazaar: Changing Structural Characteristics of the Indigenous Section of the Indian Economy Before and After the Great Depression," *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 25, 3 (Sage: New Delhi 1988).

<sup>42</sup> Ritu Birla, *Stages of Capital: Law, Culture, and Market Governance in Late Colonial India* (Orient Black Swan, 2011).

modes of trade and credit. The indigenous capitalist class or vernacular market actors enabled social formation of capital (including the public and private trusts, chamber of commerce, the nation) even as they affirmed the patriarchal authority of the joint family, charitable gifting, religious orthodoxy and currency of culture. Though this thesis takes a cue from her analysis that the market in colonial India included both pre-colonial and colonial features, this thesis concentrates on the municipal market system to historicise the particular nature of the interactions between the global and local in colonial Calcutta's marketplace.

Ajay Gandhi, Barbara-Harris White, Douglas Haynes, Sebastian Schwecke,<sup>43</sup> in the introduction to their edited volume delineate what according to them are the three main features of the Indian markets. These features are that of embedded exchange, contested jurisdiction and pliability. They argue that the rupture between capital and community in England was not seen in India. In India exchange was interwoven with social relations and social reciprocities. Capitalism had only partially succeeded in this effort to disembed markets from society, meeting resistance from various sources. They have also argued that in the late colonial period the colonial state robustly intervened in the market sphere. The colonial state exercised wide powers to ration, prohibit or control the movement of commodities and market actors during the Second World War. However, according to them, the market relations evaded such a sway of the colonial state over the market. They also contend that the markets in India were pliable in nature. It meant the markets in India have an adaptive quality where the solid binary between the formal and informal are not tenable. This thesis has drawn upon their analysis while also diverging from their arguments because this

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<sup>43</sup> Ajay Gandhi, Barbara- Harris White, Douglas Haynes, Sebastian Schwecke ed., *Rethinking Markets in Modern India: Embedded Exchange and Contested Jurisdiction* (CUP: 2020).

thesis particularly focusses on the municipal markets in colonial Calcutta. This thesis for instance does not emphasise on contested jurisdiction; because after all, the control of the municipality over the municipal markets in colonial Calcutta was continuously re-enforced.

The above historical literature on markets have dealt with the market as a network of transactions, mainly mercantile in colonial India. Understandably the focus has been on actors like the colonial state, the European mercantile firms, the Indian merchants and the bankers. However, this thesis has tried to locate the municipal market at the intersection of the global and local, where the capitalistic impulses from the metropole interpenetrated with colonial Calcutta's municipal governance and the agency of 'native' actors in colonial Calcutta.

One of the major concerns has been to address the question of spatiality. Markets can also be read in the spatial matrix. This brings me to the relation of the present work to the clearly discernible spatial trend in history writing. Historians of colonial India are using various notions of spatiality from a historical perspective. The questions of spatiality, representation of space, place-making and the politics of spatiality, bearing traces of theoretical impulses generated by the authors like R.E Lefebvre are being brilliantly taken on board by historians with a lot of historical insight. This thesis also seeks to meaningfully bring on board the question of space, spatiality and politics of space, even while ensuring that the engagement is historical. In trying to understand the various kinds of social space, this thesis has drawn upon Henri Lefebvre. According to Henri Lefebvre, social space can be of three types - spatial practice (perceived), representation of space (conceived) and lived space.<sup>44</sup> Spatial practice

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<sup>44</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Blackwell Publishers: 1991).

links the daily routine to networks/routes in reality. Representations of social space (buildings, monuments) are tied to the order, knowledge, signs, and codes imposed by the relations of production. Representational space, is scripted by the inhabitants and users and organically emerges out of daily lives felt needs and urges.

In arguing that the metropolitan model could not be translocated in totality in the colony, the thesis has drawn from the scholars who have lent support to the idea that architecture in the colonial South Asia was not just derived from the European models but was very much rooted in local culture of the colony. In this connection this thesis has drawn from Peter Scriver and Vijay Prasad,<sup>45</sup> who contend that buildings of colonial South Asia were not just authentic representations of modernity associated with the European imperial core. Rather the architectural representation in the colony derived from modern Britain was mediated in complex ways by the local practices and the modern colonial situation. In the process, the cultural norms and aspirations of both the colonizers and colonized were materially and symbolically embodied in the walls and spaces of the buildings; forming hybrid identities of the colonial social classes.

Swati Chattopadhyay asserts that by making history spatial, one can uncover the everyday use of space, blurring boundaries between the artificial categories of white and black town in Calcutta's urbanism. She brings out these everyday spatial uses by problematising the colonialist and nationalist representations of the city of Calcutta and exploring the structures of power and knowledge that underlined the representations. The paintings of the bazars of Calcutta by European painters were

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<sup>45</sup> Peter Scriver and Vijay Prakash ed., *Colonial Modernities: Buildings, Dwelling, Architecture in British India and Ceylon* (Routledge, 2007).

representations that were layered with Orientalist notions. The representations of Calcutta produced by the nationalists negotiated the British representations of the colonial city. According to Swati Chattopadhyay, the emergence of modernity in colonial Calcutta was contingent on translations inherent to the process of colonial encounters.<sup>46</sup> Debjani Bhattacharya argues that the mobile landscape of deltaic Bengal was fixed into urban property by colonial laws, architecture, and pulls of capitalism. However, the colonizers also had to negotiate the vernacular meanings given to the mobile landscape of Bengal. While the colonial officials reconstituted the landscape, the latter also resisted but was often overwhelmed by it.<sup>47</sup> Even while the thesis draws upon these, it diverges by concentrating specifically on the way in which the local and global impacted the materiality of the municipal marketplace in colonial Calcutta. In arguing that the metropolitan Britain was informed by the municipal markets in colonial Calcutta, the thesis draws upon the study of Catherine Hall. She argues that Britain's imperial project affected the everyday lives of the British in the metropole. The British Empire was one of the influences on the constitution of Britishness and a part of the everyday life in the metropole.<sup>48</sup>

## **Methodology**

This thesis is anchored in historical methodology. Moreover, the historical methodology has entailed a critical reading of different kinds of sources, including governmental and non-governmental records. The Proceedings of the Billingsgate

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<sup>46</sup> Swati Chattopadhyay, *Representing Calcutta: Modernity, Nationalism and the Colonial Uncanny* (Routledge, 2006).

<sup>47</sup> Debjani Bhattacharya, *Empire and Ecology in the Bengal Delta: The Making of Calcutta* (Cambridge university Press, 2018).

<sup>48</sup> Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose ed., *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World* (Cambridge University Press, 2006): 1-31.

Market and the Leadenhall Market of London, and other markets in Britain studied at the Public Record Office, Kew Gardens, and the London Metropolitan Archives in London were valuable in understanding the metropolitan municipal market setup that was the model for the municipal markets in Calcutta. The thesis consulted the Proceedings of the Legislative Department, Government of India, and the Bengal Legislative Assembly, and the Proceedings of the Intelligence Bureau, Office of the DIG of Police, Government of Bengal, from different archives, notably the National Archives (New Delhi), West Bengal State Archives (Kolkata) and the India Office Records at the British Library (London). These government documents have been read critically, keeping in mind that they were the products of the colonial government's points of view. The archives, after all, represented the ways in which the colonial government tried to order, control and police the municipal markets. Yet if read against the grain, they can reveal the divergent responses and inscriptions of the 'native' groups.

The records of the Calcutta Municipal Corporation - its Annual Reports, Proceedings of the General Committee, Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee and Calcutta Municipal Gazettes, located at the Kolkata Municipal Corporation Town Hall Archives and the National Library, Kolkata, as well as the Annual Reports of Calcutta Improvement Trust at the Kolkata Improvement Trust Library (Calcutta) - have been vital primary sources for critically analyzing the Orientalist ideologies and the imperatives of economic and political control which induced the British colonizers in the Calcutta Corporation to establish and administer the municipal markets in colonial Calcutta in a way that was inspired from Western spatial organisation and also incorporated crucial 'native' interests. A critical reading of the middle-class in the municipal market administration reveals that there certainly

was an anxiety on their part to maintain the middle-class nature of the municipal markets. The records are replete with instances of the acceptance of the municipal markets as 'modern' by the middle-class. But their nationalist politics made them administer the markets in a different way, as a critical reading of the sources reveal. The articles in the Calcutta Municipal Gazette by the Europeans and 'native' middle-class were deconstructed (to the extent possible) to critically understand the layers of different responses and variegated sensibilities of the European men and women residing in Calcutta towards the municipal market system in colonial Calcutta; as well as the ways in which the 'native' middle-class of colonial Calcutta were converging and diverging with the European administration of the municipal markets. The traces of the marginal and subaltern lives were not absent in these archival sources. But a sensitive and informed reading of the material enabled the thesis to bring out the ways in which the subaltern groups were contesting the dominant power and ideology of Calcutta's municipal market system, which propelled those in power to revamp and adapt their instruments of control to the changing circumstances.

Among the non-governmental records in the public domain - English Newspapers, English periodicals, and English journals - were important in teasing out the variegated Orientalist attitudes of the Europeans towards the pre-municipal markets or bazars in colonial Calcutta. The English newspapers were deconstructed to understand that the Orientalist attitudes towards the markets in Calcutta were not homogenous but differentiated by class, sex, occupational and age differences among the Europeans. In this connection, the photographs and private letters perused at the Asian and African Studies Room of the British Library, London were examined to understand the changing attitude of the Europeans towards the municipal markets in Calcutta. The Bengali newspapers and magazines were helpful in critically analyzing the responses,

sensibilities, aspirations and anxieties of the 'native' middle-class in connection with the municipal markets in colonial Calcutta.

The visits to the Leadenhall Market, Covent Garden Market, Billingsgate Market, Smithfield Market and Borough Market in London provided me with a first-hand experience and an actual feel of the metropolitan municipal market, the model for the markets in Calcutta. Most of the municipal markets, with the exception of College Street Market, Charles Allen Market, and Lake Road Municipal Market, still exist in Calcutta. Most of the bazars in Calcutta, mentioned in the thesis, also survive to the present day. I made it a point to visit the Hogg Market, Lansdowne Market, Park Circus Market, Entally Market, and Gariahat Market, as well as the various bazars all over the city, like Mechuabazar, Tiretta Bazar, Bara Bazar, Jagoo Babu Bazar and Dhurumtollah Bazar. These visits to the municipal markets allowed me to move beyond the archive and physically explore the subject of my historical study. The archives reflected the concern for control and order that the colonizers were intending and expecting to maintain through the municipal markets. A walk through the enclosed architecture and ranges of Calcutta's municipal markets gave me a sense of the control and order that was possibly envisaged by the colonizers. It also gave me a sense of how the dominant spatial control was also tempered by the relatively open market, surrounding the building of the municipal markets in Calcutta - making one realize, the interpenetrative nature of the Western model and the pre-existing culture of markets in colonial Calcutta, in the making of the municipal markets in Calcutta. The Western model had been translated and adapted by the precolonial and pre-existing market culture, which invariably lingered into and morphed the blueprint of the West derived municipal market plan. It made me think about the way in which the remnants of the precolonial market culture in the municipal market building could

have found a place in the municipal markets, propelling me to re-read the sources against the grain to unearth the contestations of the 'native' subaltern groups. The experiences in the municipal markets and bazars needless to say, helped me critically analyze the archival sources. It enabled me to visualize and bring out the silent voices and processes in the archival material. It allowed me to draw inter-connections and divergences between the municipal markets, as represented in the archival sources and as experienced first-hand, without losing sight of the historical framework. These different kinds of sources and the field work in London and Calcutta enabled me to situate the municipal markets in Calcutta at the intersection of the global and local.

### **The Chapters of the Thesis**

The thesis is organized into five chapters besides an Introduction and Conclusion

Chapter 1 argues that the larger interest of the metropolitan capitalists in the age of new imperialism was crucial for forming the municipal market system. However, one cannot ignore the contingent situation in the colony. In this connection this chapter has brought forth the various kinds of the Orientalist perceptions of the European residents of Calcutta, the representatives of European commercial and trading associations, the European municipal administration officials, the European women and the white subaltern groups towards the bazars in Calcutta. It has argued that these variegated Orientalist perceptions of the Europeans towards the bazars in Calcutta, in the backdrop of the 1870s turn in capitalism and the pronounced racist ideology of the British Empire after 1857 were important agents and factors in pushing for a municipal market system in colonial Calcutta.

Chapter 2 highlights the roles of the European and 'native' councillors of the Calcutta Corporation, the *memsahibs* (European women living in India), the European and 'native' architects, the administrators of the market department of the Calcutta Corporation and the 'native' stall holders in the municipal markets of Calcutta in determining the extent of deviation, negotiation, contestation and adaptation of the metropolitan model of markets. These actors played a part in implementing the metropolitan model. However, the European-led municipal administration realised that order and control could be exercised only by modifying the metropolitan model to address the realities of the contingent situation. The crucial 'native' interests, without whose cooperation the system would not function, also adapted the model to the contingent situation. Each municipal market took on a different shape depending upon the specific interplay of caste, class, ethnicity, religion, race and gender. Moreover, this chapter argues that even the municipal markets of colonial Calcutta were inscribing the metropole. It reflected the deeply connected histories of the metropole and the colony.

Chapter 3 is concerned with the changing politics in colonial Calcutta in the ensuing years as another significant factor that shook the certainty and determined the different historical trajectory of the metropolitan model of markets in colonial Calcutta. This chapter demonstrates that even though the middle-class accepted the municipal market project as modern, their nationalist self-perception made them modify the metropolitan model that was underpinned by the colonizers intention to maintain order of a capitalistic and imperialistic kind. They asserted their nationalist kind of order over the space of municipal markets. At the same time, even the nationalist inscription and control on the space was nuanced by communal sensibility informing the space of municipal markets.

Chapter 4 focusses on Calcutta municipal markets digression from metropolitan model of markets when the global order was in crisis from the 1930s to 1940s. The original expectation of the colonizers to make the municipal market system a mechanism of disciplining the market in the interest of British capitalism and imperialism, was tending to crumble after the Great Depression and Second World war. The municipal administration had to revamp its instruments of control to meet the new demands of the changing situation so that the municipal market system does not collapse. From the mid-1930s, the demands of the retailers and wholesalers, welfarist expectations of the educated middle-class, the expectations of the Indian enterprises, the changed expectations of the *memsahibs*, perceptions of the new group of Westerners in the city, began to inscribe new expectations on Calcutta's municipal market system. In the process, the negotiations between the actors in the market and the authorities modified the derived metropolitan market model.

Chapter 5 argues that the agency of the subaltern groups shot through the municipal market plan, as envisaged by the colonial state and middle-class's further translating the derived model of municipal markets in the colony. The chapter focusses on the *chasis* (lower-class sellers cum primary producers), the *fariahs* (petty retailers receiving their supplies from the wholesale traders and brokers), the coolies, the beggars, the lepers, the *fakirs*, the lower-class 'native' women, women beggars and prostitutes and engages with their manoeuvrings, as they shot through the various restrictions placed on their access to the municipal markets, and imprinted the derived metropolitan market model with their pre-existing culture of marketplace interactions and transactions. This chapter asserts that the historical agency of these actors converging on and surrounding the market variously inscribed their imprint on the

actual practice of the municipal markets and contested the dominant spatialisation of the municipal markets.

## Chapter 1

### The 'Bazar': As the Europeans Saw It

#### Introduction

The present chapter intends to bring out the European, especially the perceptions of the British colonizers towards the pre-existing and pre-municipal market system of retail in Calcutta to bring out the reason and the situation in which the Municipal Market scheme was inaugurated in 1876. The present author seeks to analyze the pre-colonial system of exchange to understand why the municipal markets were inaugurated despite the presence of many pre-existing spaces of exchange (*bazars, hats and gunges*) in the city. This chapter argues that retail developments in the metropole and more significantly, the interest of metropolitan capitalists in the age of new imperialism were very germane to the formation of the municipal market in Calcutta. At the same time, this chapter argues that the variegated Orientalist perceptions of the Europeans in Calcutta such as the European residents of Calcutta, the members of the European commercial and trading associations in Calcutta, the European women and the white subaltern towards the pre-municipal markets or bazars of colonial Calcutta facilitated the formation of the municipal market system in the city. These experiences were diversified by class, sex and occupational differences, but they were all invariably Orientalist. This chapter seeks to ascertain the ways in which the Orientalist perceptions towards the spatial distinction and cultural practices of the pre-existing spaces of exchange in colonial Calcutta were crucial in the development of Calcutta's municipal market setup. These stereotypes were not reflecting reality but were bound up with the West's construction of the bazars as

‘inferior’ for the purpose of domination over it. Throughout the nineteenth century, the colonizers were uneasy about the bazars and characterised it as uncivilised, insanitary, inferior, small, aesthetically unappealing, dirty, crowded, ill-ventilated, unhygienic and smelly.<sup>1</sup>

However, the urgency of a separate market space intensified after 1857, when the lasting fear of revolt and sense of insecurity in the colonizer’s mind, induced the rigid enforcement of the idea that the supposedly superior European race and the supposedly inferior Indian race should be kept apart in racially segregated spatial enclaves in colonial Calcutta. However, this rigid separation between the colonizer and colonized was becoming impossible in the bazaars of Calcutta, as the bazars continuously destabilised race, class and gender hierarchies. The projection of a supposedly superior and unified European community became even more crucial post 1857. However, the bazars were perceived as marking a dent in the idea of a supposedly homogenous European community in the city by exposing its fault lines along class, sex and occupational differences. The European business and commercial interests in the city were always dissatisfied with the bazars. Their Orientalist perceptions always made them perceive the bazars as a space which was inferior to the retail environment in England. The Orientalist attitude was also a means by which the European commercial and trading groups legitimised and justified the idea that the taste for the Britain manufactured goods could not be nurtured in the bazars. The European health officers in the Calcutta Municipal Corporation had their own Orientalist attitude towards the bazars. All these reasons - the different kinds of Orientalist attitudes of the Europeans in the backdrop of the 1870s turn in capitalism

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<sup>1</sup> Anonymous “Epidemic and Contagious Diseases Prevention Act,” *The Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian* (10 October 1846). See also Trove, “Indian Jottings,” (18 September 1865).

in the age of new imperialism, and the stark racism underlining the British imperial ideology of civilising mission after 1857 - converged in the making of a separate marketplace under the Calcutta Corporation. The colonizer's hoped that the municipal market, unlike the bazars, would nurture a market for consumer goods manufactured in Britain, would be comfortable for the elite Europeans living in the city, and would be politically, socially and economically ordered in ways suitable for the imperial project.

### **The Interests of the British Industrialists in the Metropole**

That the EEIC had a distinct political and economic interest in intervening in the markets of Bengal and North India has not been missed by historians. This chapter argues that the municipalisation of the markets in colonial Calcutta was linked to the 1870s turn of capitalism. It was in the late nineteenth century, that India was being closely integrated into the global capitalist order at the behest of the British imperial capitalist interests. It is not a coincidence that the first municipal market in Calcutta came up at that historical juncture when India was being integrated into the global flows of goods and capital. The industrial capitalists in the metropole and the colony desired that the spatial circulation of goods should be spatially uninhibited. This was the age of mass production in Britain, induced by the rapid strides in the industrialization of the Western world. In the 1870s, the industrial interests of the British capitalist world were in search of markets for their mass-produced goods, produced on an unprecedented scale. It needed a market where all retailing strategies could be used to sell the British industrial manufactures and commodities. The creation of a market for the distribution of British manufactures could be possible because India was a colony where its retail experience could be easily controlled.

Hence the British industrial capitalists could readily find outlets for their mass-produced consumer goods in India.<sup>2</sup> It was becoming even more possible because Eastern India was becoming intimately and directly connected to global flows. By the mid-nineteenth century, inland custom duties and prohibitive export duties under the regime of the EEIC had killed Indian textile export industry. This had in turn allowed for a free import of British piece goods into India. This export of Manchester and Lancashire cloth to Eastern India allowed Britain to maintain the upper hand in the international payment systems in the East. It also allowed the British Empire to maintain its political and economic control over India.<sup>3</sup>

The imperialist interests that were congealing on a global space to reorder the channels of buying and selling were naturally coming to impinge on colonial Calcutta as well. The industrial capitalist in colony and metropole, producing large quantities of cloth, textiles and other consumer goods, naturally looked for an organised retail sector in Calcutta. It was even more possible in Calcutta because urban centres were intimately and directly connected to global flows. Moreover, the port of Calcutta made it easier to bring goods from the rest of the world especially from the British Empire to the city of Calcutta. The development of telegraphy also helped in increasing the speed of transmitting information on goods between the metropole and the colony. The British industrial capitalist hoped to establish a municipal market in Calcutta, through which everyday buying and selling, involving vast majority of colonizers could be penetrated more effectively. The British industrial capitalists did

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<sup>2</sup> Tirthankar Roy, *A Business History of India: Enterprise and Emergence of Capitalism from 1700* (Cambridge University Press, 2018). Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire, 1875-1914* (Abacus: 2014), pp. 53, 66.

<sup>3</sup> N.K. Sinha, *The Economic History of Bengal, 1793-1848, Vol III* (Calcutta: K.L Mukhopadhyay, 1970).

not think the bazars of Calcutta would be the ideal space for the retail of mass-produced British consumer goods. They were concerned about effectively reaching down to the level of retail in Calcutta. This could happen if the entire field of retail disciplined, organized and structured. The control of retail in Calcutta would be deemed as no major problem when the right modality i.e., of municipalization was put in place. The municipal market, this chapter argues, was one of the ways in which the British industrial capitalist wanted to reach down to every nook and corner of retail in Calcutta and India. Through municipalisation of markets, the British wanted to bypass the bazar as the conduit of distribution and sale of the mass-manufactured goods from Britain. To ensure that British goods reached every nook and corner of possible demand in Calcutta, the British industrialists wished that a controlled retail environment in colonial Calcutta would act as a channel through which the circulation and consumption of British-manufactured goods and commodities would increase by leaps and bounds in the second city of the Empire. The municipal market in Calcutta made this possible.

Calcutta was the nerve centre of the economic connection between Britain and India. From this city, the tentacles of British economic imperialism spread to the vast North Indian hinterland during the nineteenth century. The historians have already pointed out that the overall subordination of the Indian economy to British capitalism happened through Calcutta. Calcutta's business, industry and commerce was dominated by British capital.<sup>4</sup> European commercial interests were protected through built in safety devices in the machinery of the Calcutta Corporation. Recent scholarship has highlighted that the planning of Calcutta was tied to legitimating

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<sup>4</sup> Ray, Rajat Kanta. *Urban Roots of Indian Nationalism: Pressure Groups and Conflict of Interests in Calcutta City Politics 1875-1939* (Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd, 1979).

capitalist economy.<sup>5</sup> The city was further planned and structured by the Calcutta Improvement Trust in such a way that it would ensure the efficient circulation of goods and services.<sup>6</sup> The planning and administration of Calcutta's municipal markets, this thesis argues, cannot be separated from such capitalistic motives, with its centre in the metropole.

The interests of the manufacturers in Britain and the British mercantile interests tied up with the British manufacturing interests in colonial Calcutta. They considered the municipal markets as instruments for converting buyers into consumers by introducing modern commercial practices that had already brought changes to the retail and consumption sector in Britain in the second half of the nineteenth century. By 1880, stores in England had created opulent surroundings to envelope middle-class shoppers into a sense of luxury, however transient. The glass windows and brightly lit shop fronts legitimised window shopping and made visible to the lower-class the fashionable clothes/goods of the upper-class. The shoppers were encouraged to stroll through the shops and look at the goods without feeling pressurised to buy. By this time, Britain had moved from haggling to fixed prices, while personalised interaction between the retailer and the customer became more routinised.<sup>7</sup> The particular western type of consumption tried to entice the consumer into buying above his/her needs.<sup>8</sup> The British industrialists wanted to introduce these retail changes in the

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<sup>5</sup> Partho Datta, *Planning the City: Urbanisation and Reform in Calcutta c. 1800 - c. 1940* (Tulika Books, 2012).

<sup>6</sup> Partho Datta, "A Short History of the Calcutta Improvement Trust," in Saibal Kumar Gupta and Partho Datta ed. *Improving Calcutta: Notes and Essays on Urban Government* (Bibhasa: Calcutta, 2000).

<sup>7</sup> Kelly Graham, *Going to the Shops: Shopping in Victorian England* (ABC-CLIO-LLC, 2008).

<sup>8</sup> The term western type of consumption has been explained by Frank Trentmann, "New Historical Perspectives on Consumption," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 2004, Vol. 39, No. 3. See also

municipal markets of Calcutta. The British believed that the moment the marketplace in city was sanitised, securitized, and an imagined comfort zone created, then there was a possibility of creating a compulsive buyer. Their experience in Britain had made them believe that with better organisation and display, there was a tendency on the part of the buyer to spend more time in the market.

Britain became the world's leading consumer goods manufacturing sector between 1870 and 1914.<sup>9</sup> This thesis argues that the municipal markets under the Calcutta Corporation had a significant role in this. Many of the leading British manufacturing companies were able to popularise their products amongst the buyers and sellers of Calcutta through the municipal markets. The municipal markets in Calcutta especially the Hogg Market were stocked up with English branded products,<sup>10</sup> like Crosse and Blackwell (vinegar sauce), Peak Freans (biscuits), Lipton (tea), Huntley and Palmer (biscuits), Britannia (biscuits), Carr (biscuits), Brooke Bond (tea), Red Ensign (coffee), Horlicks (malted milk), Lea and Perris Worcestershire (sauce), Bovril (canned beef), Horlicks and Milkmaid (condensed milk). Besides Sloan (liniment), Zam Buk (patent medicine), Eno (fruit salt mixture), Imperial (tobacco), State Express 555 (cigarettes) Cobra (boot polish), Hubbuck's (paint), Glasgow (smoking mixture),

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Sharon Zukin and Jennifer Smith Maguire, "Consumers and Consumption," *Annual review of Sociology*, Vol. 30, 2004.

<sup>9</sup> To understand Britain's position in the world economy between 1870 and 1914 read Teresa Da Silva Lopes and Paulo Guimaraes, "Trademarks and British Dominance in Consumer Goods, 1876-1914," *The Economic History Review*, Aug 2014, Vol. 67, No. 3. Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire, 1875-1914*, (Abacus: 2014).

<sup>10</sup> "Municipal Market Price Current," *Calcutta Municipal Gazette* (January 1942). Weekly price currents in Calcutta Municipal Gazette give an account of the commodities and their prices.

Shell and British Oil Company (petrol tins) were sold in Calcutta through the municipal markets, especially the Hogg Market.<sup>11</sup>

In the late nineteenth century, the British manufactured cotton piece goods, selling in India at prices lower than the cotton manufactures of India were being worn by the upper and middle-classes in Calcutta.<sup>12</sup> The total import of Manchester piece goods into India increased between 1900 and 1914 by fifty per cent. Calcutta was the largest single market in the East for British imported piece goods.<sup>13</sup> This thesis argues that the municipal markets in Calcutta acted as a catalyst in opening up the Indian market for British manufacturers of piece goods. There were many imported piece goods from Britain that also found a place in the municipal markets, especially the Hogg Market. These included British manufactured silk dress, silk hats, apparels (haberdashery, drapery, millinery), cloth hosiery (piece goods such as *lungi* or cloth passed between the thighs, cotton tweed, bedcovers, table cloths, quilts, towels, napkins, zephyr cloth, and fabrics such as drill, flannel, dobby in various colours and patterns checked, striped, warp, weft etc)<sup>14</sup> and Lillywhite Limited (London) costumes pertaining to golf, tennis, rugby and cycling. The supply of these European manufactured goods was matched with the growing demand for such goods among the European, Anglo Indian and Eurasian elite in Calcutta and the westernized educated upper and middle-class Bengalis in the city. There were British industrial products like picture post cards, sporting goods, golf shoes, golf sticks, patent medicines, cycles, cameras, gramophone musical instruments, artwork and brushes,

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> N.K. Sinha, *The Economic History of Bengal, 1793-1848, Vol III* (Calcutta: K.L Mukhopadhyay, 1970).

<sup>13</sup> Amiya Bagchi, *Private Investment in India, 1900-1939* (Cambridge University Press, 1972).

<sup>14</sup> *Calcutta Gazette*, 1912.

cabinet ware and furniture, gold and silver-plated jewellery, bicycles and tricycles (manufactured by Raleigh Cycle Company), clocks-watches, leather boots-shoes, hardware (appliances like butter dryer, needles, shuttles for power looms), paper and cutlery (metal) which also found a place in Calcutta's municipal markets.

### **The Attitude of the Europeans in Calcutta**

The European civilian and business community had major grievances with the indigenous market environment which they could not bypass because of their physical colonial location. In December 1829, an article in the Calcutta Gazette featured the complaints of the Europeans residing in Calcutta regarding the difficulties they faced in the Tiretta Bazar in Calcutta.<sup>15</sup> The essay aimed at drawing the attention of the Calcutta Municipal Corporation to the grievances of the European residents of Calcutta. One of these grievances was about the Tiretta Bazar in Calcutta. Each of the complaints in the article carried imprints of the Orientalist attitude of the British towards the 'native' bazar. In the article, the Europeans complained that Tiretta Bazar was 'ill-ventilated', 'crowded' and 'filthy'. The meat sold in the Tiretta Bazar was considered 'bad, stale and prejudicial to health'. They referred to an alleged nexus between the sellers in the bazar, on the one hand, and the 'dishonest' and 'rapacious' *khansamahs* (a male servant in charge of buying food and other supplies from the market for the English household in colonial India) who made the purchases in the bazar on behalf of their European employers. The article complained about 'loathsome' profusion of the beggars and lepers 'infesting' the bazar who supposedly extorted money from the Europeans, as they did not evoke any feeling charity in the

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<sup>15</sup> Anonymous, "Calcutta Bazar" in *Days of John Company: Selections from Calcutta Gazette (1824-1832)* (31<sup>st</sup> December 1829).

Europeans. The Europeans feared that the lepers would ‘contaminate’ food with their touch. The Europeans feared there was a nexus between the *khansamah*, the sellers and the lepers to disgust the Europeans out of the bazar. It was imagined that the *khansamah* could then be free to give an inflated account of the prices of the articles purchased for the European household and earn unlimited profits by allegedly ‘cheating’ his European master. The Europeans also complained of a ‘defective system of weights and measures’. The racial and class prejudices of the Europeans overlaid their derogatory descriptions of the bazars as ‘ill-ventilated’, ‘crowded’, ‘filthy’, selling ‘contaminated’, ‘stale’ food, fraught with ‘dishonest’ *khansamahs*, ‘loathsome’ beggars and lepers, and ‘defective’ weights. They suggested various measures to ‘control’ the bazars. They wanted that an experienced European should be appointed as a market clerk to destroy the ‘rotten’ meat. They also wanted a *chowkidar* to guard the entrance to market to keep away the beggars and lepers. They also wanted the European market clerk to keep the Tiretta Bazar clean and a set of regulations drawn and pasted on different points in the Bazar.<sup>16</sup>

The Europeans were apprehensive of the quality of the food sold in the bazars because the health officers linked food and smell in the bazars with disease. The medical topographies of Ranald Martin extended this by theorising that disease was partly due to climate and partly due to the moral and social conditions of the ‘natives’. This way the characterisation of bazars as ‘diseased and unsanitary’ was not a reality but rather an Orientalist representation that was linked to racial politics.<sup>17</sup> The politics of race determined the representation of the bazars in Calcutta as ‘diseased’, ‘unsanitary’ and

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Partho Datta, *Planning the City: Urbanisation and Reform in Calcutta, c.1800-1940* (Tulika Books, 2012), 111-112.

‘filthy’. These theories linking disease and the ‘native’ habits made European experience in the bazars even more problematic. While walking in the Chandney Bazar and China Bazar, the Europeans felt disgusted when the ‘native’ sellers keen on selling their goods, brought the photographs, cheroots, perfumes and matches very close to the face of the Europeans.<sup>18</sup> While walking in the bazar, the European felt his white body invaded by the brown/black body of the ‘native’. The ‘native’ sellers rushing to the streets, crying out the praises of their silk, handkerchiefs and shawls in the shops,<sup>19</sup> were an annoyance for the English officer, merchant, and trader passing in carriages through the bazar.<sup>20</sup> The Europeans considered the ‘natives’ as racially denigrated. The Europeans were recoiling from a typically Indian milieu, from Indian bodies and contact with such bodies. According to the Europeans, the Muslim shoemakers and sellers of Chandney Bazar were most ‘notorious’. The European felt as if they were the property of the shopkeeper. They could not find fault with the articles. In their extreme moments of aversion for the bazars, they even exaggerated the way the ‘native’ shopkeepers treated the Europeans. They accused the ‘native’ shopkeepers of physically assaulting the Europeans when the latter protested against the prices and tried to leave the shop. The Englishmen felt they were hustled into the shops, and mistreated when trying to bargain. They assumed that damaged articles were palmed off to them and ‘downright robberies’ took place on crowded days of *holi* (a spring festival celebrated in February or March in honour of Krishna) and *durga puja* (an autumn festival in Bengal celebrated to worship Goddess Durga). They portrayed the ‘native’ shopkeeper in such a way as to make the reader feel that

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<sup>18</sup> Anonymous, “Shopping in Calcutta,” *The Northern Whig* (19 September 1882).

<sup>19</sup> This was the view of W.H Leigh (English surgeon of Australian Company's ship) (1838), in P.T Nair, *Calcutta in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century* (Firma KLM, 1989).

<sup>20</sup> Anonymous, “The Bazaar at Calcutta,” *The Illustrated London News* (30<sup>th</sup> May 1874).

all the fault lay with the ‘natives’ while the European was the epitome of innocence. One can discern the conjunction of the class and race politics of the Europeans in the above descriptions of their experiences in the bazars.

In 1863, the European residents again complained about the bazars within the similar Orientalist framework. This time, the European residents of Chowringhee, led by one J.N.T. Wood, wrote to A. Eden (Secretary to the Government of Bengal), about the need to reform the Dhurumtollah Market according to British needs and preferences.<sup>21</sup> These British and European well-off European residents with their typical racist frame of mind, complained of ‘intolerable filth’,<sup>22</sup> ‘contaminated’ food articles, ‘noxious’ smelling, ‘diseased’ vagrants, beggars and a sickly ‘native’ village within the ‘crowded’ Dhurumtollah Bazar boundaries. They also represented the ‘native’ vendors and servants in the Dhurumtollah Bazar as ‘corrupt’ and ‘greedy’. These British residents demanded the publication of price-lists in English and Bengali, use of ‘proper’ weights in the Dhurumtollah Bazar, regulations against the supposed adulteration of food, institution of water and drainage mechanisms and removal of beggars/diseased persons from the bazar premises by the Police Commissioner. In response to the above demands, the Calcutta Corporation appointed health officers and officers under the Commissioner of Police. However, these

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<sup>21</sup> “Petition of J.N.T. Wood, Esq. and others, British subjects, Foreigners and others residing in Calcutta and the suburbs, to the Hon. Cecil Beadon, Lt. Gov. of Bengal on 29<sup>th</sup> June 1863,” in *Proceedings of the Judicial Department, Government of Bengal*, July 1863.

<sup>22</sup> Amongst other Europeans, the accounts of De Grandpre (French navy officer) in 18<sup>th</sup> century and Captain Leopold Von Orlsch (His Majesty’s Guard) (1843) describe the Calcutta bazars as ‘insanitary.’ Their perceptions can be gleaned from the following books- P.T Nair, *Calcutta in the 18<sup>th</sup> century: Impressions of Travellers* (South Asia Books, 1984). P.T Nair, *Calcutta in the 19<sup>th</sup> century* (Firma KLM, 1989).

reforms were not successful, mainly because the bazar was under private ownership and could not be interfered with by the Corporation authorities.

The European elites were exasperated with the *khansamahs*, lepers and beggars in Calcutta's bazars. These lower-class groups became a nuisance for the European elite as they constantly flouted the class hierarchies which the Europeans wished to maintain in the bazars. The *khansamah* became the mediator between the English household and the 'native' bazars as his chief duty was marketing for the European household's kitchen in the East.<sup>23</sup> He cooked so he knew which ingredients to buy from the market. He became important because he was the one who did the bazar for the European household. The *khansamah* was a suspect at the level of the household and the bazar because he moved between the two. The figure of the *khansamah* who was sent to the bazars to buy the daily necessities (meat, fish, vegetables, fruits) for the European household soon came to acquire all the features of deception, cunningness, dishonesty and corruption bestowed on the Orient.<sup>24</sup> They distrusted the *khansamah* and blamed him for pocketing and charging a large amount of money over and above the original price. The *Khansamah* needed to be surveilled as he could be depended upon but not trusted. The *khansamah* stood at the intersection of the class and racial politics of the nineteenth-century society in Calcutta.<sup>25</sup> He entered the

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<sup>23</sup> *The Homeward Mail*, 16 October 1860.

<sup>24</sup> Anonymous, "The Ladies Tour: Round the World, Summer in India," *The Dundee Courier* (12 July 1894).

<sup>25</sup> For theoretical understanding of class experience, class consciousness and class as an active process rather than an a priori category read, Pierre Bourdieu, "What makes a social class? On the theoretical and practical existence of groups," *Berkeley Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 32 (1997). E.P Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Penguin Books, 1980). For theoretical work on the intersection between race, class and gender read, Kathleen Guidroz, Michele Tracy Berger, *The Intersectional Approach: Transforming the Academy Through Race, Class and Gender* (University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

bazar, so the bazar also needed to be surveilled. Moreover, the bazars like the Dhurumtollah and Tiretta Bazars in the intermediate zone of Calcutta were surrounded by the residences of the *khansamahs* and Muslim occupational groups.<sup>26</sup> It increased the anxiety of the Europeans regarding a nexus between the *khansamahs* and the bazar people. The colonial government's policy of condescension and not the slightest degree of familiarity towards all the lower-class in Calcutta after the revolt of 1857 stimulated the class-ridden interactions with the *khansamah*.<sup>27</sup>

The colonizer's depiction of the beggars in the bazars was heavily Orientalist in nature. One such member of the colonized race described the bazars as the hunting grounds of 'deformed' and 'diseased' beggars who pushed through the crowd in search of alms. He anxiously described leprous beggars forcing their unwelcome presence on shoppers in the China Bazar of late nineteenth-century Calcutta. He characterised the beggars in the China Bazar of Calcutta as evil and a public danger.<sup>28</sup> The spheres of marketplace and temples are seldom antagonistically opposed. Nineteenth-century colonial bazar was the central knot in the complex fabric and complex network of political, economic and religious life.<sup>29</sup> There existed an interplay between religion and commerce in the bazars. The reason why there was a temple within the precincts of the bazar,<sup>30</sup> or why the lepers and beggars would be attracted

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<sup>26</sup> Pradip Sinha, *Calcutta in Urban History* (FIRMA K.L.M.: Calcutta, 1978)

<sup>27</sup> For the attitude of the English towards the lower-class in Calcutta after the revolt of 1857 see Anonymous, "Concerning Calcutta: The Low-Class Native," *The Globe* (7 May 1901). Anonymous, "Calcutta Servants: Some Fresh Facts," *The Englishman* (30 April 1903).

<sup>28</sup> John Campbell Oman, "Mendicancy and Mendicants of Sorts," in *Cults, Customs and Superstitions of India*, (Adelphi Terrace, London: 1908).

<sup>29</sup> Hugh B. Urban, "The Marketplace and the Temple: Economic Metaphors and Religious Meanings in the Folk Songs of Colonial Bengal," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 60, No. 4, (Nov 2001).

<sup>30</sup> The European children imagined jangling the brass bells in the Hindu temples in the bazars when they crossed the bazars. The European parents were always dissuading them from harbouring such

to the bazars in search for alms was because of this centrality of the bazar in the social life of the city of Calcutta. The bazars produced resources for and economically sustained the religious sites like temples. They carried on trade in commodities of ritual significance that were required by those who visited the temples or religious sites in the vicinity of the bazars. Moreover, the *zamindar* (landholder) owned bazars formed the nucleus of native neighbourhoods. Bazars formed the socio-cultural core of the *zamindari* mansions, as well as the residences of the artisan classes (carpenters, goldsmiths, and Muslim weavers) serving the wealthy elites. There were various categories of ‘natives’ who lived and worked around the bazars.<sup>31</sup> The *zamindars* controlled the bazar space, garnered huge amounts of rents from the tenants but also earned social prestige for providing the necessities of life to the general populace. Economic rationality and cultural values were intertwined in the questions of trust and reliability.<sup>32</sup> The acts of benevolence and kindness of the *zamindars* towards the tenants and the religious mendicants was guided by the hope of earning social and religious merits, without losing overall control over the bazars. This kind of ‘native’ ownership and control over the bazars shaped the bazars as a part of the ‘native’ socio-cultural and economic world that was considered alien and unusual by the typically racist bent of mind of the British/Europeans. The Europeans were unfamiliar with and disliked such a complex space of bazar and wanted to disentangle religious life from the economic life, to make it simpler for them in their exercise of control

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fantasies. Charles Allen ed., *Plain Tales from the British Empire: Images of British in India, Africa and South East Asia* (Abacus, 2008).

<sup>31</sup> Pradip Sinha, *Calcutta in Urban History* (FIRMA K.L.M., Calcutta, 1978). See also A.K Ray, *A Short History of Calcutta Town and Suburbs* (Riddhi: India, 1982).

<sup>32</sup> For a discussion of the interconnections between economic rationality and socio-cultural values in 18<sup>th</sup> century markets of Bengal, see Tilottama Mukherjee, *Political Culture and Economy in Eighteenth-Century Bengal: Networks of Exchange, Consumption and Communication* (Orient BlackSwan, 2013).

over the bazars. These guided the Orientalist attitude of the Europeans towards the lepers and beggars in the bazars.

According to another European, even the *fakirs* (ascetics) sat in a convenient spot, outside the grocer's shop, where men and women passed by. He was described as someone who scrutinised and scanned the faces of the passers-by.<sup>33</sup> The Europeans anxiously observed the figure of the dust-covered *fakir* with long unwashed matted hair receiving alms in the bazars. The European nervousness over the presence of *fakirs*, religious mendicants and *sadhus* in the bazars increased since they began to perceive the bazar as a special site of critique and contestation of colonial rule by the lower-class and vagrants. In the bazars of Bengal, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, *rajahs* (kings) and zamindars would often gift entire marketplaces or grant of market privileges in order to run temples, and mosques. *Fakirs* and *sadhus* belonging to *Kartabhajas* (a sect in Eastern India, tracing its roots to *fakir* Aulchand, considered a reincarnation of the Vaisnava ascetic Chaitanya), *Sahebdhanis* ( a sect founded by a *fakir*),<sup>34</sup> and *Bauls* (mystic minstrels constituting a syncretic religious sect and musical traditions of Eastern India) were often found wandering in these markets granted to religious specialists.<sup>35</sup> In their songs, they were critical of the bazar, wherein they inverted the image of the bazar as a site of business, trade, buyers, shopkeepers, company, import-export, profit, invoice, contract, money and used it as

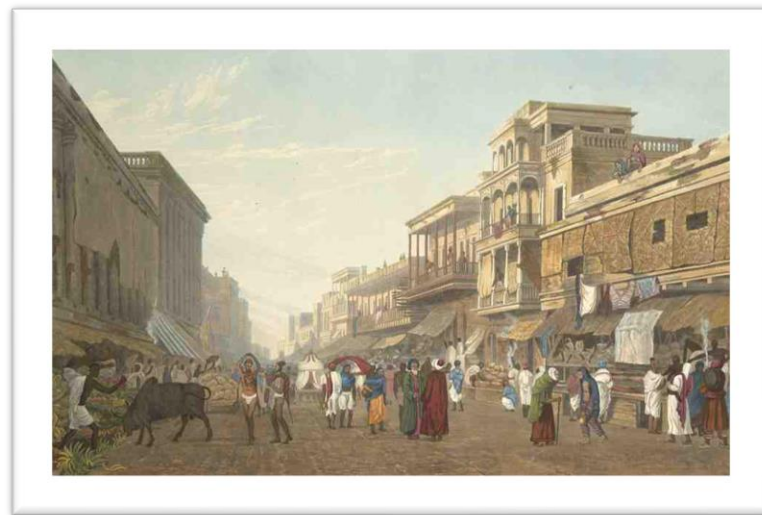
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<sup>33</sup> John Campbell Oman, "Mendicancy and Mendicants of Sorts," in in *Cults, Customs and Superstitions of India*, (Adelphi Terrace, London: 1908).

<sup>34</sup> Sujata Mukherjee, "Popular Sects and Elite Culture in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Bengal: Some Aspects of Interaction and Assimilation," *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Vol. 57 (1996), pp. 612-623.

<sup>35</sup> Hugh B. Urban, "The Marketplace and the Temple: Economic Metaphors and Religious Meanings in the Folk Songs of Colonial Bengal," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 60, No. 4, (Nov 2001). Sudipta Sen, *Conquest of Marketplaces: Exchange, Authority and Conflict in Early Colonial North India*, PhD Dissertation (The University of Chicago, 1994).

a spiritual metaphor for material illusion in mortal life. The bazars were depicted as a snare that the enlightened must renounce.<sup>36</sup> In the late nineteenth century, there was a lingering fear in the European mind that the discourse of religion of the subaltern actors in the bazars could easily translate into the discourse of militancy.<sup>37</sup> They feared that the humble objects and commodities could be magically appropriated, stolen by subordinate groups and made to carry secret meanings - meanings which expressed in codes, a form of resistance to the order which guarantees their subordination.<sup>38</sup>



*Figure 1.1 The Chitpur Bazar, 1826 by James Baillie Fraser*

Right from the beginning of the nineteenth century, there was an unease with the bazars. It became evident that the representation of the bazars was particularly

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<sup>36</sup> Hugh B. Urban, "The Marketplace and the Temple: Economic Metaphors and Religious Meanings in the Folk Songs of Colonial Bengal," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 60, No. 4, (Nov 2001).

<sup>37</sup> Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India* (Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 257-259.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

emblematic of the way in which an essential cultural difference was being constructed about the colonized other. This did not manifest so much in the early EEIC paintings - where realism was replete with a spirit of curiosity. In the early EEIC paintings, there was a sense of complacency about the way in which the bazars were distinctive to oriental climes. The paintings of James Baillie Fraser focussing on the bazar space of nineteenth-century Calcutta, very evidently invoked the picturesque. At the same time, his canvasses represented the bazars as typical sites of archaic buying and selling in an environment of decadence. The bazars were represented in these pictures as essentially different from the idealised sites of modernity. The artist tries to highlight the difference of the oriental bazar. This difference, as manifesting in Calcutta was depicted as archaic - as if a past still lingered in nineteenth-century Calcutta. (Figure 1.1 above)



*Figure 1.2 The Chitpur Road, Calcutta by William Simpson, 1867*

The illustration of the Chitpur Road by William Simpson (Figure 1.2 above) carried a description by John William Kaye (J.W. Kaye). His description of the Chitpur Bazar was very evidently racist. According to J.W Kaye, the Chitpur Road which branched out of Calcutta to the north was one great continuous bazar or a long line of ‘native’ shops. Just like Thomas Macaulay, he believed that the Englishman could gain more knowledge on India by only driving through the Chitpur Bazar than from all the books he had ever read. Here, all sorts of trades and persons of different nationalities could be seen. J.W Kaye did not highlight the charm of the cosmopolitan nature and the international and regional trade networks within which Chitpur Bazar was embedded. Instead, he had an Orientalist attitude towards the structure of the shops, the people and the means of transport in the Chitpur Bazar. He described the shops of the ‘native’ grain, idol, fruit, and sweetmeat sellers, money changers and workers of silver and gold. According to him the shops were made of ‘rude’ mat work which were open in front and housed in the lower storey of a large brick house. Besides the bazar became a site to observe and categorise the buyers and sellers through the Orientalist lens, typical of the English colonizer’s bent of mind. Adjectives like ‘small and delicate’, ‘supple and slender’, ‘tall and bearded’ and ‘obese’ were used by the J.W Kaye to represent the ‘Ooriyah’, ‘Pathan’, and the ‘Bengalee baboo’ respectively. He typified the Aracnese and Chinese as ‘flat-faced’ and ‘shaven head with descending pig tail’ respectively.<sup>39</sup> Among the other races, he observed a Eurasian, turbaned Parsee from Bombay, a Rajpoot sepoy, and an English sailor who he suspected of returning from a brothel/punch house. While observing the costumes worn by these people, there was a tone of sarcasm for the kind of clothes worn by the

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<sup>39</sup> ‘Chitpore Road,” in William Simpson and John William Kaye, *India Ancient and Modern: A Series of Illustrations of the Country and People of India and Adjacent Territories* (London: Daye and Son Ltd., Lincoln’s Inn Fields, 1867).

‘natives’ and other nationalities in the bazars. J.W Kaye condescendingly remarked that some wore so less that he described them in ‘Adam's livery’; while others were so heavily garmented that according to him, the muslin would cover a ‘couple of European ladies in the warm summertime’. He even described a bright scarlet *chudder* (blanket) hanging from the door of a house or from an overhanging balcony which he attributed to a professional courtesan.

J.W Kaye further went on to narrate that the Chitpur Road led to Cossipore, Dumdum, Barrackpore where the English officers and the English merchants resided. He was prejudiced about the lack of pavements, and the crowding together on the roads of the bazar without a care about safety. His judgemental attitude made him characterise the carriages in the bazar as ‘primitive’ constructions and of grotesque appearance. The bullock of the bullock-drawn cart suddenly lying down and blocking the road for hours and the swaying of the horse-drawn carriages as if they were ‘ridiculously drunk’ were his characterisations of transport in the bazar.<sup>40</sup> For him the palanquin in the bazars was a long wooden box that was carried by human bearers and in which an ‘obese’ person of a Calcutta baboo could be seen travelling. In these characterisations, the racial politics of the Europeans was working very significantly. He represented the Chitpur Bazar as a microcosm of Eastern life, in such a way that any Englishman’s ‘false’ impressions of Indian greatness would be set straight; or in other words the Orientalist image of India would be etched into the Englishman’s mind.

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

## **The Perceptions of the European Trading and Commercial Associations in Calcutta**

The European traders and men of commerce in Calcutta with their pressure groups - Calcutta Trades Association and the Bengal Chamber of Commerce - expressed dissatisfaction with Calcutta's existing bazars and pressed for a municipal market in the city. The Bengal Chamber of Commerce represented the European manufacturers and merchants. By the second half of the nineteenth century, the Bengal Chamber of Commerce became more powerful as a result of the expansion of the imperial commercial and industrial complexes centred in Calcutta. The Calcutta Trades Association represented European traders operating in the city.<sup>41</sup> They were critical of the bazar because they found them uncomfortable for the Europeans as well as incapable of promoting their business and industry. The bazars, according to these European business and trading groups, could not forge a 'native' consumer of goods manufactured in Britain. These British business and trading groups in Calcutta were connected to the British industrialists in the metropole. They desired that the marketplace in Calcutta evoke a consumer spirit in the residents of Calcutta in the interest of British capital. The relation between consumer spirit and reformed market place had already been established in England by this time. So, they naturally wanted the same retail formats in the colony, which would economically benefit British capital and industry.

The British traders and men of commerce were dissatisfied with the bazars in colonial Calcutta since they felt that the culture in these pre-existing markets was informal and not ingrained with the 'bourgeois' spirit found in the contemporary marketplaces of

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<sup>41</sup> Rajat Kanta Ray, *Urban Roots of Indian Nationalism: Pressure Groups and Conflict of Interests in Calcutta City Politics 1875-1939* (Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd, 1979).

Europe. The British traders wanted to replace this with a retail space that allowed the display of goods to lure customers into buying out of desire and not just out of need, imbuing the features of the Western consumer-driven society into the East. European men of commerce and trade wanted to create an environment to nurture the ever-flowing desire to buy the British goods. The bazars did create an environment where, luxury goods from India and all over the world, could be seen and bought by all. The European traders represented the bazars in a negative light because they wanted to replace the buying and selling of luxury goods from all over the world in the bazars with a marketplace where the buying and selling of the British manufactured products would be given preference. The European-led Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Calcutta Traders Association controlled trade and commerce in Calcutta. They imported numerous commodities such as cotton goods, electrical appliances, hardware, chemicals, wool, tobacco, paper, oilman stores and glassware which were manufactured by British manufacturing companies.<sup>42</sup> The import of these British commodities into the colony necessitated the continuous expansion of market centers and wholesale trade centers in Calcutta.

The British commercial community wanted to reform the bazars in the image of the retail changes in Europe because the bazars in Calcutta were becoming obstacles in the ‘rational’ distribution/consumption of mass-produced goods manufactured in Britain. They wanted the mats, and open-fronted shops spilling on to the streets of the bazars to be replaced by ‘rational’ retail formats like showcases, advertisement boards

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<sup>42</sup> For the list of products imported into Calcutta see M.P Gandhi (Secretary of Indian Chamber of Commerce, Calcutta), “The position of Indians in Trade of Calcutta,” *Calcutta Municipal Gazette* (6<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Issue, 1932).

and bounded stalls.<sup>43</sup> The Europeans wanted to replace what they perceived as ‘lawless’, irritating and barbaric manners of the ‘native’ shopkeepers in bazars with supposedly more civil and courteous manners of shopkeepers, back in England. They disliked the practices of sellers sitting along with craftsmen like weavers, silver and gold workers in the bazars. The Europeans wished to impose a strict division between spheres of production and of distribution. They were contemptuous of the Indian cultural markers in the form of the images of Hindu gods and goddesses and temples within the area of bazars.<sup>44</sup> The Calcutta Trades Association, dominating the European participation in retail pushed for a new retail space that would be suitable for the colony. They envisaged it to be a controlled system that would push trade in Calcutta out of its customary channels and make it subservient to the British commercial interests; as well as open Calcutta’s market to the consumer goods mass-produced in British industries.

The Orientalist perception-driven experience in the bazars provided a justification that the various British commodities could easily reach every nook and corner in the city only if an adequately controlled retail and wholesale system replaced the bazars. The smell, colours and food items in the supposedly ‘insanitary’ and ‘over-crowded’ bazars jolted their senses, making the European traders assume that they had left behind what they perceived as everything ‘Western’ and entered what they believed to be the real ‘East’. The European traders disliked the ‘crime-ridden’ neighbourhoods of bazars.<sup>45</sup> They also disliked the lack of respect for private property, lack of security

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<sup>43</sup> Mr. Johnson (English Naval Officer) in 1840 in Calcutta in P.T Nair, *Calcutta in the 19<sup>th</sup> century* (Firma KLM, 1989).

<sup>44</sup> Edwin Arnold, “Shopping and Shops in the East,” *The Torquay Times and South Devon Advertiser* (25<sup>th</sup> December 1903)

<sup>45</sup> *Days of John Company: Selections from Calcutta Gazette 1824-1832. Englishman*, 19 July 1842.

of belongings<sup>46</sup> and personhood in the bazars. The lack of policing in bazars and the desire for an assured security system made the European retail leaders of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Calcutta Trades Association dislike the bazars. The European groups believed the solution to their problems in bazars lay in forming new spaces of trade and commerce like municipal markets, directly under the control of the British-led Calcutta Corporation, with no links with the ‘native’ forms of business. Besides these traders had enough clout and representation in the Calcutta Municipal Corporation to be able to voice their grievances and demand. Around 1870s, most municipal commissioners in the Calcutta Corporation were British traders and commercial men who pushed the Calcutta municipal government to protect their business and trade interests.<sup>47</sup> Their vested interest and political clout was another reason why the municipal corporation, in 1876, would push for a municipally controlled market for the distribution of British goods in Calcutta.

The Traders Association felt the need for a municipal market to nurture the buying capacities of the Westernised Bengali elite in Calcutta. The British business community was eager to exploit the presence of a western-educated middle-class Bengali elite, who were considered as likely to develop a taste for the consumer products manufactured and imported from Britain. The supply of these European-manufactured goods by the distributors would find a ready and growing demand not only among the European, Anglo Indian and Eurasian elites in Calcutta but also among the educated upper and middle-class Bengalis in the city if the appropriate tastes could be fostered through the display in a ‘proper’ market. It was keenly

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid

<sup>47</sup> Chris Furedy, “British Tradesmen and Shopkeepers of Calcutta (1830-1900): A Preliminary Study of their Economic and Political Roles,” in C.B. Sealy ed., *Women, Politics and Literature in Bengal* (East Lansing: Asian Studies Center, Michigan State University, 1981).

registered by European traders in the city that this class of ‘natives’ was already, in the 1860s, buying English-made patent leather shoes, mattresses, western glassware, cutlery from John Davis and Company, Lazarus and Company and other such salerooms in Dhurumtollah.

The Calcutta Trades Association and British traders like Cuthbertson and Harper and Watts and Company had a role in creating a favourable public environment for the establishment of the municipal market. They argued that the municipal markets would promote British manufactured goods among the potential European and ‘native’ consumers in Calcutta. British/European traders imported the goods manufactured in Britain. Between 1834 and 1864, the Calcutta trading community sent memorials to the British government for establishing institutions to promote the prosperity of Calcutta’s European trading and business community.<sup>48</sup> One of these memorials related to the proposal to establish a municipal market in Calcutta to fill the supposed vacuum in the retail infrastructure in the city.

### **The Gaze of the European Women**

The European male noticed that only the lower-class and the lower-caste Indian male and female visited the bazars.<sup>49</sup> The Bengali upper-class sent their house *sircar*, maid, factotum to the market for daily necessities. To sell luxury goods, the bazar men visited the house of the Indian upper-class. The Europeans similarly adopted this

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<sup>48</sup> Chris Furedy, “British Tradesmen and Shopkeepers of Calcutta (1830-1900): A Preliminary Study of Their Economic and Political Roles,” in C.B. Sealy ed., *Women, Politics and Literature in Bengal* (East Lansing: Asian Studies Center, Michigan State University, 1981).

<sup>49</sup> Rev. H. Malcolm in P.T Nair, *Calcutta in the 19<sup>th</sup> century*, (Firma KLM, 1989).

practice.<sup>50</sup> In this period, the Indian upper-class male and the upper-class European male found common ground in their gender-related anxieties.<sup>51</sup> The European patriarchy contained the shopping practices of the English women in the colonial situation by patterning the behaviour of the upper-class English females on the behaviour of the Bengali upper-class females.

Even before arriving in the East, the Englishwomen were trained to differentiate between the West and East. The observational/travel modality trained the European female's eye (even before they set foot in India) to see in the bazar, a specific set of images/typification significant for imperial rule. And then to view those images from historically specific aesthetic principles of sublime, picturesque and romantic. The white patriarchal authority brainwashed the European women into thinking that, unlike in the West, the women in the East did not go shopping because of the lack of adequate and satisfying retail facilities in the East.<sup>52</sup> This was primarily to restrict the European women's possible explorations of the bazars in Calcutta. The surveillance modality entailed viewing of scenes in the colony from a comfortable and safe distance, i.e., from a carriage, boat or train.<sup>53</sup> The European men could use the 'surveillance modality' for viewing the bazars. The European women could not use the surveillance modality as the specific nature of interactions in the bazars stoked the British male colonizers sexual, social and racial fears. These anxieties were

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<sup>50</sup> "Shopping in Calcutta," *The Northern Whig* (19<sup>th</sup> September 1882). "Shopping and Shops in the East," *Torquay Times and South Devon Advertiser* (25 December 1903).

<sup>51</sup> Hsu Ming Teo, "Romancing the Raj: Inter-racial Relations in Anglo-Indian Romance Novels," *History of Intellectual Culture*, 2004, Vol. 4, No. 1. According to Hsu Ming Teo, in 19<sup>th</sup> century India, caste and class combined to determine for whom the colour bar could be lowered.

<sup>52</sup> Anonymous, "Indian Scenes," *The North Devon Journal and General Advertiser* (1830).

<sup>53</sup> The surveillance modality has been explained in Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India*, (Princeton University Press, 1996), 5-11.

aggravated especially because the improved conditions in the colony encouraged many Englishwomen to live in India.

English men trained the English women in England who were travelling to Calcutta/India to perceive all 'native' bazars in a similar Orientalist fashion. They learnt from the European/English men that the 'native' bazars had shops of humble scale, like a little roofed shed where the items on display would be nothing like the delightful articles in Oxford Street or Piccadilly Square in London. They also learned that the *kebabs* (a dish of roasted or grilled meat, fish or vegetables) of Muslim butchers, the bangle shops, copper plates filled with coloured powder to make caste marks or to ornament the floors, the brass, copper and painted plaster images of Gods and Goddesses would not tempt the English women. The 'native' sweetmeats would supposedly cause 'indigestion' in the 'Western' stomach. The European men especially feared the possible interactions between the European women and the *banian* (trader, shopkeeper or moneychanger) who was described as 'wrapped in little more than a towel'. The European women were told that in the bazars, the cattle muzzled into the grain bags in the grain depots and the book stalls had manuscripts and 'strange ill-drawn' pictures.<sup>54</sup> Hence the best thing, according to the English men, would be that the English women should not venture into the bazars but that the shops/merchants must come to the English women in India. In these representations, what was glossed over was that the bazars in Calcutta were rich in commodities, where merchants from all over the world bought and sold their wares. For instance, Burrabazar, north of China Bazar was a cosmopolitan wholesale market where a variety of articles from all over India and the world such as Kashmir shawls,

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<sup>54</sup> Edwin Arnold, "Shopping and Shops in the East," *The Torquay Times and South Devon Advertiser* (25<sup>th</sup> December 1903)

Golconda jewels, Benaras silk, Persian brocades, Ceylonese perfumes, and Turkish sweetmeats were bought and sold by buyers and sellers. There was a reason why the bazars that had so much to offer was kept hidden from the European women. The European/English men feared that the European women would get attracted to the bazars, and destabilize the hierarchies of race and class that these European men wished to maintain in the bazars.

As a result of such training, between 1860 and 1890, the English women believed that the shopkeepers in the bazars were ‘irredeemable cheaters’. In 1777, Nathaniel Kindersley (wife of Artillery captain of EEIC) described the bazars as full of ‘shabby-looking shops’ or boutiques.<sup>55</sup> In 1828, Christina Pringle (wife of a European judge of Jessore) described the bazars as a ‘straggling mass of huts, with warerooms and no gay windows to tempt one’.<sup>56</sup> These descriptions betrayed the racial and upper-class bias of the European women. Between 1826 and 1830, Elizabeth Fenton, during her Calcutta trips, visited Burrabazar with her European friends. Her bazar experience was a blend of anxiety and disgust. She described the bazar lanes as ‘narrow and filthy’ and the shops as ‘barbarous’ looking.<sup>57</sup> Another anonymous European woman published her experience in Calcutta in the Dundee Courier of 1889.<sup>58</sup> She wrote that the ‘native’ bazars were filled with shirts, dancing shoes, bits of ribbon, boot laces and scraps of Western cast-off garments passed from the *sahib* to the male chamber

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<sup>55</sup> P.T Nair, *Calcutta in the 18<sup>th</sup> century: Impressions of Travellers* (South Asia Books, 1984).

<sup>56</sup> P.T Nair, *Calcutta in the 19<sup>th</sup> century* (Firma KLM, 1989).

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Anonymous, “Woman’s Life in Calcutta: By One Who Has Tried It,” *The Dundee Courier* (16<sup>th</sup> January 1899).

servant.<sup>59</sup> The European women had their own role in perpetuating this oriental revulsion towards the bazars.

However, sometimes, despite all the restrictions, the European women were enamoured and lured by the charm of the bazar. Elizabeth Fenton's anxious-ridden bazar experience was tinged with awe as she found 'wonderful' specimens of boxes, lacquered work, playthings, flowers, china, silk and chintz akin to the European taste in the bazars. Bessie Maxwell also described shopping in the 'native' bazars as inexpensive and entertaining. She remarked the 'native' bazar shopkeepers were gentle and courteous even when the buyers purchased nothing.<sup>60</sup> Sophia Goldbourne and Eliza Fay described the bazars in Calcutta as 'plentifully' supplied with cheaply priced cheese, butter, bread, tarts and other necessary food items.<sup>61</sup> One cannot miss these different perspectives on the bazars. Sometimes two or more European women argued amongst themselves when they had set their hearts on the same cap, lace, fringes, bonnet or glove in the bazars.<sup>62</sup> It clashed with the quest to project the unity and civilisational superiority of the Europeans. According to the English male colonizers, the appropriate behaviour for the European women was sending *ayahs* (maid servant) to buy vegetables in Calcutta markets and hire cooks for preparing food. However, the wife of Lewis Cooper deviated from this by making daily morning buggy trips from her Dhurumtollah home to the Dhurumtollah Bazar with

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> "Anonymous, "The Ladies Tour: Round the World, Summer in India," *The Dundee Courier* (12 July 1894).

<sup>61</sup> B.V. Roy, Collection Department, Calcutta Corporation, "Old Calcutta – II The Cost of Living in the 18<sup>th</sup> century," *Calcutta Municipal Gazette* (10 march 1928).

<sup>62</sup> Anonymous, "A Letter from a Lady in Calcutta to her Friend in England," Vol XXII, No. 4-15, *Anglo Indian Review* (12 August 1784).

her husband Lewis Cooper to buy vegetables and fruits before she could cook herself.<sup>63</sup>

In the late nineteenth century, the bazars enamoured the European children. While the European parents were scared their children would ‘catch something’ in the bazars, the European children were too excited about the prospect of venturing into the bazars. The strong smell of spices, the brightly coloured goods sold in the stalls, the great movement of the people in the bazars attracted the European children. They wanted to jangle the brass bells in the Hindu temples in the bazars.<sup>64</sup> This fascination of the European women and European children with the bazars shows that Orientalism was not just about the stark distinction between the civilised and primitive. It was also about learning about the different kinds of cultures of the Orient. It was about the fascination with the picturesque and romantic in the oriental bazars. The European poets have penned down their childhood fascination for the bazars. In the poem *Ships of Yule* by Bliss Carman, the poet writes about his childhood longing for the seas and ships, especially because he imagined that the ships would bring lovely things from the Indian bazars. As a child, he longed for the sea and all the lovely things the ships could bring from all across the globe - ivory, silk from Tyre, dates from Samarkand, sugar from Spain, and paper lanterns from Peking. Amongst all these, he also imagined that the ships would bring ginger jars and scented silver amulets from the Indian bazars. When the poet was a child, the smell of the ginger jars and the scented amulets from the Indian bazars accentuated his longing for adventure and exploration.

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<sup>63</sup> Anonymous, “Anglo Indian Ghost Stories,” *Bengal Past and Present* Vol. 3 (1), 7th ser. (Jan - March 1909).

<sup>64</sup> Charles Allen ed., *Plain Tales from the British Empire: Images of British in India, Africa and South East Asia* (Abacus, 2008).

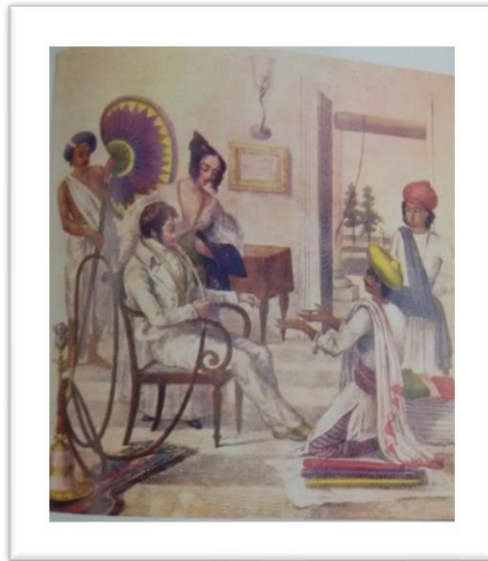
It was pretty problematic for the European elite men that the bazars could seduce the European women and children in the city. The gaze of the European women towards the bazars was oriental, gendered and racial. Yet the gaze of the European women could be different and less degrading than the European males.<sup>65</sup> The European patriarchal authority did not want their women and children to go to the bazars for they feared the breach of the gender, racial and class hierarchies.<sup>66</sup> Gender and class were used as tools to silence the presence and voice of women in the bazars. In case of European women, there existed an additional subtext of racism. Even with relation to the space of the bazars in colonial Calcutta, the European women were guided by the norms of their upper- or middle-class status group, their racial position and the patriarchal rules of European society. However, sometimes the romantic and softer aspects of their nature could fashion their attitude towards the bazar that was less degrading than their male counterparts. This increased the anxiety of European men, who further tried to curtail the visits to the bazar by the European women. Recent scholarship has highlighted that race, class, gender are not separate issues, but they intersect and are integral to the individual's position in the social world.<sup>67</sup> This section has tried to show that race, class and gender intersected in determining the relation of the European women to the bazars of colonial Calcutta.

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<sup>65</sup> Reina Lewis and Roger Lewis. *Gendering Orientalism: Race, Femininity and Representation* (Psychology Press, 1996).

<sup>66</sup> For an introduction into how gender can be a tool for historical analysis read Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 91, No. 5, 1986

<sup>67</sup> Kathleen Guidroz, Michele Tracy Berger, *The Intersectional Approach: Transforming the Academy Through Race, Class and Gender* (University of North Carolina Press, 2010).



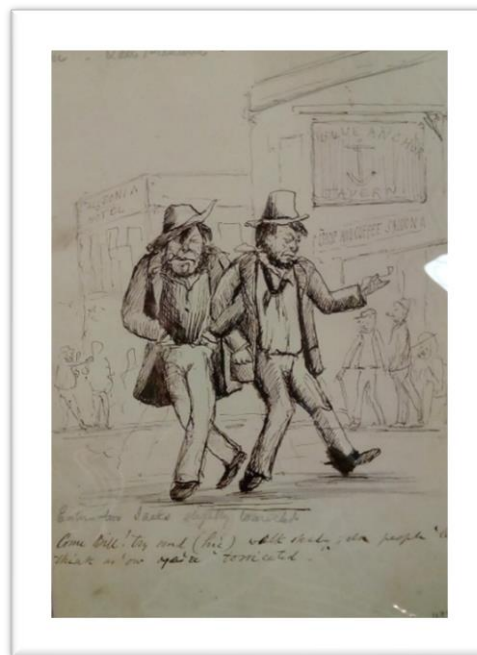
*Figure 1.3 The Cloth and Silk Merchant, 1832, from 'A Coloured Lithograph from 24 plates Illustrative of Hindoo and European Manners in Bengal' by Mrs Belnos*

### **The Experiences of the White Subaltern**

The bazars also dented the myth of a homogenous European community in the city by exposing its fault lines of class, gender, occupation and political differences. However, especially after 1857, the necessity to project a strong and unified European community increased the desire of the European elites to remove any visibly stark differences that could fracture the projection of unity within the colonizer's community in the colony. The desire to project the supposedly superior status of the British and its civilisation also increased after 1857. The bazars of colonial Calcutta, as hindrances to achieving this ideal, became another reason why the European discourse around the bazars developed the way it did.

In 1837, the European vagrants who loitered the principal bazars of Calcutta, extorting money from the respectable people were an embarrassment to the colonial

establishment.<sup>68</sup> In 1832, the Lal Bazar and Bow Bazar were the chief resorts of the European sailors and the lower order Europeans. To cover up for the inadequacies of the sailors, Europeans like Rev. J. Statham, put the blame on the liquor, cheese and ham sold at cheaper rates in the ‘native’ shops in Lal Bazar and Bow Bazar. According to him, these food items were damaged and ‘infected’ the sailors with diseases like cholera.<sup>69</sup> The European sailors caused embarrassment and exposed the myth of racial superiority of the Europeans by walking drunk and unsteady in the ‘native’ bazars. This is illustrated by the picture below, where two ‘jacks’ pretend to walk steadily to hide from the ‘native’ gaze their intoxicated and uncontrolled selves.



*Figure 1.4* The 'Lal Bazar: Enter two jacks slightly 'toxicated' (Source: British Library, London

<sup>68</sup> *The Englishman*, 1837

<sup>69</sup> *The Friend of India*, “Food and Drink in Calcutta” (2<sup>nd</sup> June 1864). Abhijit Datta, *European Social Life in 19<sup>th</sup> century Calcutta* (Minerva Associates Pvt Ltd, 1994).

The EEIC tore down lower-class/caste-owned toddy shops in the Lal Bazar to dissuade the European sailors from entering the Lal Bazar (and drinking the allegedly immorality-inducing native drink ‘*dhol*’). The reaction of the lower-caste owner of the toddy shop is illustrated by the Figure 1.5 below. The representation of his reaction is heavily stepped in the Orientalist discourse. The class and race susceptibilities of the Europeans is clearly visible in the second illustration below. The second drawing depicts an exaggerated reaction of the ‘native’ *mehtar* (sweepers) after his toddy shop was demolished. He is depicted as crying out - “Aree Hi! Hi! Hi! It really is too bad, they have pulled down my favourite toddy shop, and my heart is very sad, oh Companee Bahadoor jee, my heart is racing hard, Aree Hi! Hi! Hi! It really is too bad (beats his breast and weeps with ghory emotion)”



*Figure .1.5 'The Mehtars lament after the loss of his favourite toddy shop' (Source: British Library, London)*

The European elite could not always monitor the English sailors and their uncivilised behaviour in the bazars. The members of the lower class were frequently deterred

from damaging racial prestige by behaving in a fashion characterised as ‘immoral’ by the elites.<sup>70</sup> But they were difficult to control, even more so when they were drunk. The European sailors continuously escaped the power of the British state because they worked for merchant ships and belonged to different nationalities, who were not subject to the British laws. Besides, by 1866, the population of the European sailors had increased. The total number of permanent European inhabitants was 11,000, out of which more than 2,000 sailors were ‘transient members of white Calcutta’.<sup>71</sup> These European sailors, along with the ex-soldiers, unemployed railwaymen, were labelled as the European loafers as they had become a pressing problem for the colonial authorities. In the 1860s, their acts of begging, extortion and petty crimes in the bazars became a problem for the colonizers even in the bazars. It exposed the myth of the colonising race as civilised, superior and unified.<sup>72</sup> Even the most racist and elite among the Europeans, could not dare to tear down every bazar which was the haunt of the European sailors, especially in a scenario where most of the bazars belonged to ‘native’ *zamindars*. The elite Europeans tried to strictly and carefully regulate the lower-order Europeans in the bazars, which was becoming impossible by the 1870s.

The white prostitutes in Calcutta's bazars were another group of white subalterns who were becoming a problem for the elite Europeans. In 1850, white prostitutes were concentrated around Collinga Bazar, surrounded by the posh localities of

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<sup>70</sup> Kenneth Ballhatchet, *Race, Sex and Class Under the Raj: Imperial Attitudes and Policies and Their Critics, 1793-1905* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980)

<sup>71</sup> Harald Fischer-Tine, “The Drinking Habits of our Countrymen’: European Alcohol Consumption and Colonial Power in British India,” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* Vol. 40, No. 3 (September 2012): 383-408.

<sup>72</sup> That the European community in India was not unified has been explained in Harald Fischer-Tine, “The Drinking Habits of our Countrymen’: European Alcohol Consumption and Colonial Power in British India,” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* Vol. 40, No. 3 (September 2012). Sarmistha De, *Marginal Europeans in Colonial India: 1860-1920* (Thema, Kolkata, 2008).

Chowringhee and Wellesley Street. The respectable European citizens of the area protested and petitioned against their ‘obscene’ activities.<sup>73</sup> The Contagious Disease Act of 1868, the colonizers hoped, would facilitate police control of the red-light districts of Calcutta. But the police were unable to do.<sup>74</sup> The colonial establishment tried to tighten the control over the European prostitutes in the bazars, but were uneasily becoming aware of the problems in doing so.

### **The Response of the Calcutta Municipal Corporation**

The EEIC and the developing British-controlled municipal administrative system in the city after the mid-nineteenth century understood the economic and social importance of the bazars; both tried to bring the bazars under their control through various indirect ways. The EEIC brought the bazars into the vortex of the revenue administrative mechanism through the *zamindars*, *dewans* (intermediaries in judicial and revenue administration) and the Company servants. In the next stage, the dense population crowding around some of the very important bazars, mainly in the northern part of Calcutta, were brought within the fold of the city's local administration by being made into administrative divisions or wards.<sup>75</sup> Some amount of bazar restructuring was part of the activities of the Justices of Peace of the Calcutta Corporation, the Lottery Committee (1817), the Fever Hospital Committee (1837), the Board of Commissioners (1848) and the Justices of Peace under the Provisional

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<sup>73</sup> Sarmistha De, *Marginal Europeans in Colonial India: 1860-1920* (Thema, Kolkata, 2008) pp. 193-196.

<sup>74</sup> Kenneth Ballhatchet, *Race, Sex and Class Under the Raj: Imperial Attitudes and Policies and Their Critics, 1793-1905* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980)

<sup>75</sup> A.K. Ray, *A Short History of Calcutta Town and Suburbs* (Riddhi: India, 1982).

Government (1863).<sup>76</sup> Yet this control was not enough as the British-led Corporation could not interfere in the bazars to supposedly reform them. The bazars were the private property of the *zamindars*. Hence any kind of change in the bazars, which hurt the interests of the *zamindars*, could not be executed.

In the late eighteenth century, the bazars were owned, established and managed by the wealthy Bengali traders turned zamindars or the East Indian Company officials and private traders. By the late 19<sup>th</sup>-century, mostly the Bengali trader turned *zamindars* and 'native' princes/princesses were the owners of the bazars in the city.<sup>77</sup> The land was the only investment opportunity open to the land-owning Bengali *zamindars* as the British monopolised trade and industry. *Zamindars* and *banians* like Sobaram Basak,<sup>78</sup> Nabakrishna Deb, Radhakanata Deb, Dewan Kasinath, Rajaballabh, Nemoo Mitra, Gokul Mitra, Gobindaram Mitra and Ramnarayn Motilal were the owners of many bazars in the city. Some of these bazars, between the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries were Barabazar, Baitakkhana Bazar, Sobhabazar, Shyam Bazar, Hatkhola Bazar, Ram Bazar, Mechuabazar, Raja Bazar, Simla Bazar, Chandney Bazar, Dhurumtollah Bazar, and Bowbazar. The direct control over the bazars of Calcutta by the Bengali *zamindars* and *banians* could be a reason for the Orientalist attitude of the Europeans towards the bazars. The 'native' ownership of the bazars

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<sup>76</sup> S.W. Goode, *Municipal Calcutta: Its Institutions in their Origin and Growth* (Kolkata Municipal Corporation, 2005), 3-40. Justices of Peace comprised the Governor General, Justices of Supreme Court, covenanted servants, British inhabitants appointed by Government of Bengal and in charge of maintaining peace, order, conservancy, levying rates on houses, grounds, buildings in the city of Calcutta.

<sup>77</sup> See *Jumma and Ijaradar Bazars* in Soumitra Sreemani, *Anatomy of a Colonial Town Calcutta, 1758-1794* (Firma KLM, 1994).

<sup>78</sup> Radharaman Mitra, *Kolkata Darpan* (Subarnarekha:1988).

was problematic for the Europeans especially because the bazars, under private ownership, could not be interfered with by the British.

In 1863, the Health Officer, Dr. Cranenburgh tried to 'improve' the sanitary condition in the bazars.<sup>79</sup> However even in 1868, Dr. Tonnerre, the Health officer of the Calcutta Municipal Corporation disapproved of the sanitary conditions of the bazars. Commenting on the 'ill-ventilated' and 'dirty' state of the Dhurumtollah Bazar, these Health Officers pressed for a market under the control of the Calcutta municipal corporation to check the 'abuses'.<sup>80</sup> Even V.H. Schalch (the Chief Magistrate of Calcutta Corporation and the Police Commissioner in 1863) was dissatisfied with the food, meat and vegetables supplied in the bazars of Calcutta. He was of the opinion that the construction of a new market could best be carried out by the Calcutta Municipal Corporation.<sup>81</sup> In 1871, Stuart Hogg, the Chairman of the Justices of Peace and the Police Commissioner, Calcutta, was aligned to the same line of European opinion who were critical of and had an Orientalist attitude to the state of bazars in the city. He was of the opinion that a market under the Calcutta Corporation was a 'crying imperative'.<sup>82</sup> This imperative was underlined by Orientalist and racist susceptibilities. The first municipal market in the city, established under Stuart Hogg was enmeshed within such European attitudes towards the bazars in the city.

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<sup>79</sup> P.M. Cranenburgh, *Hygiene of Calcutta* (Bengal Printing Company Limited, 20 October 1863).

<sup>80</sup> "Health Officer's Report on Calcutta Bazars, 1868," in the Bengal Bill for the Regulation of Markets in Calcutta, *Proceedings of the Legislative Department of India*, June 1871.

<sup>81</sup> "Calcutta Markets Bill: Extract from the Proceedings of the Council of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal for the Purposes of Making Laws and Regulations, 11<sup>th</sup> February 1871," in Bengal Bill for the Regulation of Markets in Calcutta, *Legislative Department Proceedings, Government of India*, June 1871.

<sup>82</sup> "Municipal Market in Calcutta," in the Legislative Department Proceedings, Government of India, February 1871.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter argued that the larger interest of the metropolitan capitalists in the age of new imperialism was crucial for forming the municipal markets. However, one cannot ignore the contingent situation in the colony. In this connection this chapter has brought forth the various kinds of the Orientalist perceptions of the European residents of Calcutta, the representatives of European commercial and trading associations, the European municipal administration officials, the European women and the white subaltern groups towards the bazars in Calcutta. It has argued that these variegated Orientalist perceptions of the Europeans towards the bazars in Calcutta, in the backdrop of the 1870s turn in capitalism and the pronounced racist ideology of the British Empire after 1857 were important agents and factors in pushing for a municipal market in colonial Calcutta. The next chapter examines the metropolitan model of markets and the problems faced while instituting the municipal markets in the contingent situation of colonial Calcutta.

## **Chapter 2**

### **The Model and its Adaptation**

#### **Introduction**

The previous chapter argued that the colonizers wanted municipal markets in colonial Calcutta in the expectation that such markets would adhere to the Western ideal of a sanitary, controlled, ordered, architecturally bounded, well-illuminated, standardised, impersonal space, sustained not by patronage but by an unalloyed spirit of modern commerce. The proposed administrative intervention in Calcutta market scenario was sought to be justified on the ground that the pre-existing markets in Calcutta were ‘disorderly’, ‘irrationally run’, ‘insanitary’, ‘unhygienic’ and ‘uncivilised’. It is not surprising that in implementing a municipal market setup in colonial Calcutta, the Calcutta Corporation looked up to the imperial metropole for the model; as the previous chapter has pointed out, cities in Britain had already instituted municipal markets; they provided the Calcutta’s municipal administration with a ready model.

This chapter examines how far the metropolitan model could be transplanted in Calcutta. On the basis of a close examination of the available historical evidence, the chapter argues that a verbatim transplantation did not take place. After all the Calcutta situation was no socio-cultural vacuity that a metropolitan model would be able to smoothly and completely implant itself there. How could the historically congealed socio-cultural specifics of Calcutta of the late nineteenth-century possibly vanish! This chapter, however, does not claim that Calcutta erased all traces of the model. There can be no denying that it was the traces of derivation from the model that made

the municipal market in Calcutta paradigmatically different from the privately-owned pre-existing bazars. And, yet, the municipal market(s) in Calcutta was not a mimesis of Market Halls in Britain.

This chapter brings out the roles of Corporation officials, councillors, architects and the European and 'native' stall holders in determining the complex chemistry of the adaptation of the metropolitan model; complex because negotiation and contestation dialectically constituted the exact contours and extent of derivation. The present author has also – almost playfully - tossed in the role of the *memsahib* in making the municipal market in Calcutta have a very different ambience from the Market Halls, keeping in mind the peculiarly colonial genesis of the category *memsahib* with its locational difference with the elite European woman in the metropole.

The chapter also finds it pertinent to argue that almost ironically the European councillors and officials of the Calcutta Municipal Corporation had an important, albeit indirect, role in indigenising the model derived from the metropole. In their effort to make the municipal markets revenue-yielding, they felt the need to first ensure the popularity of the municipal market in its surrounding neighbourhood. And for that they had to coax the sellers of the local bazars to come and set up shop at the municipal market. Through these sellers, so long affiliated to the culture and practices of the bazar environment, some features of the established bazar practice spilled over into the municipal market space.

The final point that this chapter makes is that the use of the word adaptation in the singular in this thesis, however, should not imply that the adaptation was unitary and uniform, with all municipal markets in the city appearing to be built in the image of the Hogg Market, the first municipal market in Calcutta. The municipal market

picture in the city, indeed, admitted of a significant degree of variation over time and space. Just as the specificity of the historical moment of establishment could give a municipal market certain unique features, so could the distinctiveness of the surrounding neighbourhood; after all, the interplay of caste, class, ethnicity, religion and race often varied from one neighbourhood of the city to another.

### **A Metropolitan Model Translocated**

By the end of the nineteenth century, the colonizers had moved away from the orientalist fascination with India's ancient culture. Modernization and reform had come to be considered peculiar to Europe. India, on the other hand, was seen as traditional, superstitious and degenerate. It is not surprising, therefore, that the model for municipal markets in colonial Calcutta was derived from the imperial metropole. The colonizers considered the markets in the metropole as the commercial (and architectural) product of a 'superior' Western civilization; the spatial organization of the Market Halls was considered as rational and scientific.

For the British municipal administrators in Calcutta the surest way a 'civilized' market space could be made possible in colonial Calcutta was by modelling the municipal markets in Calcutta along the lines of the mid-nineteenth century Market Hall in Britain. The civilising mission and its disciplining exercise in the colony were very much about the imperial models. It was also as much about using the colonial milieu as a site of experimentation with the different metropolitan paradigms of 'improvement'. Britain's progressive, rational and scientific reorganisation of market space in the Age of Improvement deeply influenced the market reorganisation in colonial Calcutta.

The markets in London, the premier city of the British Empire, influenced the reform of the marketplace in Calcutta. The architects and planners, who planned the municipal markets of Calcutta, were trained in European planning and design methods. They sought to follow the style of the Market Hall for the municipal markets in Calcutta. The Market Hall with Greek Doric colonnades, pedimented porticoes, iron columns and iron roofs were imposed on the Covent Garden Market in the 1870s. In Britain, the shops had moved from the open areas into the Market Hall. The Market Hall had several shops under a glass roof, large-scale ventilation, lighting, modern display and pricing practices with the Victorian ideal of imposing order on the world.<sup>1</sup> It was a particular historical moment when the Market Hall came to dominate the architectural landscape of London. Hence it was very natural that when looking for inspiration for Calcutta markets, this Market Hall seemed to fit the ideals of the colonial government. The Market Hall, if replicated in colonial Calcutta, would disseminate the modernist ideology and universal principles of truth, beauty and order that underpinned the ‘superior’ Western architecture. It sought to satisfy the European craving to live in a physically unifiable world and their penchant for order.<sup>2</sup> It was believed that the Market Hall and its grid-like patterns would not only guarantee repetition and standardisation but also morally elevate and control the subject population. It was also hoped that the principles of fair prices, profitability, fair competition, standardised buying and selling,<sup>3</sup> enshrined in the model of Market Hall

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<sup>1</sup> James Schniecheu and Kenneth Carls, *The British Market Hall: A Social and Architectural History* (Yale, 1999).

<sup>2</sup> Richard Sennett, *The Conscience of the Eye: The Design and Social Life of Cities* (Faber and Faber Limited, 1990).

<sup>3</sup> James Schniecheu and Kenneth Carls, *The British Market Hall: A Social and Architectural History* (Yale, 1999).

would disseminate the consumer capitalistic rationality in the municipal markets of Calcutta.

The market laws and administration of the Market Hall in the metropole guided the municipal markets in Calcutta. In 1837, every borough in England, such as Kings Lynn, Hellestone, Kendal, Leicester, Penzance, Lyme Regis, Kingston upon Hull and Slanidoes legislated bye-laws to reorganize the marketplaces within the Market Hall with the expectation of taming the unruly. Even in case of Calcutta, the colonial state was trying to supposedly civilize the colonized by introducing the Market Hall in Calcutta. With this in mind, the Bengal Legislative Assembly framed the Calcutta Municipal Market Act of 1871 based on the bylaws legislated in 1837 for reforming the market in the boroughs of England.<sup>4</sup> They seemed appropriate because, just like the Age of Reform in England, even the colonial state aimed to do away with the ‘uncontrollable’ and the ‘unruly’ in the marketplaces of colonial Calcutta. Each aspect of the 1837 bylaws came in use in solving what the Europeans perceived as problems of short weights, unwholesome food, small stall size, insanitary conditions, encroachments and uncertainties about prices experienced in the markets of Calcutta. The Calcutta Market Act of 1871 was also inspired by the 1868 laws governing the municipal markets in England like the Rochdale Corporation Market and Whitby Corporation Market in Manchester and York respectively.<sup>5</sup> The Billingsgate Market Hall and Leadenhall in London were administered on the basis of capitalistic principles like partnership, profit, competition, anti-monopoly, demand<sup>6</sup> and supply.

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<sup>4</sup> Bylaws of Borough Kings Lynn, Hellestone, Kendal, Leicester, Penzance, Lyme Regis, Kingston upon Hull, Slanidoes between 1834 and 1840 (National Archives, London).

<sup>5</sup> *The London Gazette* (November 1868). See also Dartford Corporation market improvement in the *London Gazette*.

<sup>6</sup> *Leadenhall Collectors Book*, 1878-1896 (London Metropolitan Archives, UK).

The administration of these markets in London, based on the Market Hall, also guided the market space reorganisation by the Calcutta Municipal Corporation.

### **Adjusting to the Opinions of the European Councillors**

The Market Act of 1871 allowed the Justices of Peace for Calcutta to establish, regulate and supervise markets for the sale of fish, meat, fruit and vegetables within Calcutta and charge rates for the shops and stalls therein.<sup>7</sup> The first municipal market in Calcutta called the Hogg Market came up in Chowringhee, the European quarter of the city, after the European residents of Chowringhee wrote to the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal about the supposed ‘difficulties’ faced in the Dhurumtollah Bazar. They also wrote about the features they expected out their ideal marketplace in Calcutta. So, catering to their needs, complaints, and demands became the priority of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee of the Calcutta Corporation (henceforth PUMSC). The food inspectors, staff, and sergeants were appointed in the Hogg Market for maintaining the food quality, cleanliness and security respectively. Yet, the European councillors continued to receive complaints about the Hogg Market from the European buyers in the city.

With the metropolitan municipal markets as the model, the Hogg Market was established to cater to the needs and sensibilities of the European community in Calcutta. However, no plan and no model can ever be completely transposed. The city of Calcutta had a historically specific way of buying and selling. Hence the municipal markets could not be completely separated from its hinterland. The precolonial market

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<sup>7</sup> “Calcutta Markets Bill: Extract from the Proceedings of the Council of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal for the Purpose of Making Laws and Regulations,” *Government of India*, Proceedings of the Legislative Department, June 1871.

practices in Calcutta lingered and often trickled into the municipal markets. The Europeans in the city complained about these precolonial practices in the Hogg Market. This is because they were perceiving the latter through their own lens of race and class. The European residents complained that sellers were ‘cheating’ on weights. According to the Europeans, they were selling less quantity of food stuff for full money.<sup>8</sup> Two European female buyers complained to the market committee of the Calcutta Corporation that a ‘native’ shopkeeper in the Hogg Market cheated them. According to the European women, the ‘native’ seller passed off broadcloth as Venetian cloth.<sup>9</sup> The European public complained about the ‘sickening’ odour that prevailed in the ranges of the Hogg Market.<sup>10</sup> They complained that the high prices in the Hogg Market were due to high rents.<sup>11</sup> The European customers complained of ‘verbal abuse’ by some ‘native’ sellers in the Hogg Market.<sup>12</sup> They also complained about several stall holders quarrelling amongst themselves to secure the patronage of the European customers.<sup>13</sup> Even the European notion of architectural precision of the West derived plan faced reversals. The European public complained that the European ladies were slipping and hurting themselves due to waterlogging in specific pathways of the Hogg Market.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Committee, 1907-1908*.

<sup>9</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1913-1914*.

<sup>10</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Committee, 1911-1912*.

<sup>11</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1913-1914*.

<sup>12</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Committee, 1902-1903*.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1913-1914*.

The Europeans conveyed their grievances to the PUMSC through newspapers like the *Statesman* and *Englishman*. The Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee of the Corporation (PUMSC) established on 15<sup>th</sup> January 1874 advised the Chairman of the Corporation in all matters connected with the management of municipal markets in Calcutta. The plan was translated and debated in this Committee. The plan was thoroughly discussed in this Committee. The Committee members debated and discussed which parts of the plan could be possibly implemented in the contingent situation of Calcutta. They realised that the municipal market model, derived from the West, had to be adapted to the contingent situation of Calcutta to solve all marketplace-related problems. The municipal markets, modelled on the West, made certain changes to the market scenario in Calcutta. But it also had to be adapted to suit the specific situation in Calcutta. Calcutta, after all, had its own history of buying and selling. The model was brought over from the imperialist and capitalist West. But the municipal markets, modelled on the West, had to take into account the contingencies and the specific history of buying and selling in Calcutta. The European councillors realised that that the model had to be adapted to plug all the problems; after all, the priorities of the European councillors in colonial Calcutta were very different from the Europeans in the metropole.

Nor did the opinions of the European councillors of the PUMSC of the Calcutta Corporation always converge. Some European councillors suggested that market bye-laws should be enacted to deal with the complaints regarding corrupt ‘native’ shopkeepers.<sup>15</sup> Other European councillors wanted to solve the issue case by case. The ‘native’ shopkeepers in the Hogg Market, accused of corruption, were asked to return the sum of money to their European customers. To reduce corruption, the

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<sup>15</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Committee, 1907-1908*.

European councillors in the PUMSC, revised the rules on stall allocation in the market.<sup>16</sup> The Statesman carried an article on stale fish sold in the Hogg Market. To deal with the problem, one European councillor wished to increase the number of surprise visits by the food inspectors, while, another Councillor, namely C.F. Payne (the nominated member of the Government) suggested solving the problem of adulterated food by an amendment to the market law.<sup>17</sup>

Opinions also varied depending on the nature of the individual councillor's occupation. In 1900, there were differences of opinion amongst the European councillors on the question of installing skylights in the Hogg Market. According to Councillor Bertram (a nominated member representing the Bengal Chamber of Commerce) skylights would be a convenience for the market tenants and the public. The bright display of the goods would benefit the sellers and buyers in the market. On the other hand, Braunfield (elected from ward Ekbalpur) opposed the considerable expenditure.<sup>18</sup> In another case, European councillors felt that the expensive and 'well-ventilated' fowl range of the Hogg Market had not been able to counteract 'sour and pungent' smell. The European-led Calcutta Corporation sanctioned the French 'Ozonateur' as a solution.<sup>19</sup> According to Bertram, it would be helpful as it was successfully used in all the top hotels of Paris and London to counteract the smell of urinals and privies. On the other hand, Councillor Bradshaw (of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce) did not want to buy the expensive and imported Ozonateur. He suggested that the fluid should be manufactured in Calcutta at a minimal cost.

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<sup>16</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Committee, 1907-1908*.

<sup>17</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Committee, 1912-1913*.

<sup>18</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Committee, 1900-1901*.

<sup>19</sup> Calcutta Corporation, "Minutes of the Proceedings of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Markets Special Committee held at the Lansdowne Market," Saturday, 21<sup>st</sup> May 1904 at 7.30 am, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1904*.

Sometimes innovations such as the cold storages that had been introduced in the municipal markets in the metropole, were not considered suitable or practicable in Calcutta.<sup>20</sup> Between 1909 and 1918, a refrigerating room in the Hogg Market could not be started because of the tiff between the Linde British Refrigeration Company and the Lightfoot Refrigerating Company.<sup>21</sup> In 1918, J. Wyness (of the Calcutta Trades Association) was not in favour of a cold storage depot in the municipal market. According to him, the Calcutta Corporation could provide cold storage wagons to rapidly bring supplies from the cold storage depots at Belliaghata and Howrah to the municipal markets when required.<sup>22</sup> In 1889, several stallholders, to protect their unsold goods, began to sleep in the Hogg market at night. According to Councillor Doucett, theft and trespassing could be prevented by issuing tickets to these stall holders.<sup>23</sup> The plan to rigidly separate ‘public’ and ‘private’ activities in the Hogg Market, did not always materialise.

The system of letting shops/stalls in the Hogg Market was derived from the metropolitan markets. However, in the specific situation of Calcutta, it ended up unduly stimulated prices. The European councillors realised that this system was turning out to be flawed in Calcutta. Even then they blamed the ‘natives’ for this. The European councillors had their own race and class biases. The ‘native’ sellers were accused of pocketing money by ‘secretly’ leasing several stalls in the name of relations and then letting them out at a profit. They also believed that the ‘native’ sellers were engrossing stalls selling a particular item. Once they became the only

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<sup>20</sup> *Leadenhall Market Clerk Letter Book*, 1874-1896.

<sup>21</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Committee*, 1909-1910.

<sup>22</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Report of the Municipal Administration of Calcutta, 1917-1918* (Calcutta: Corporation Press, 1918). See also Anonymous, “Calcutta News: Cold Storage Scheme,” *The Times of India* (11 Nov 1921).

<sup>23</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Committee*, 1889-1890.

sellers of these items, they demanded high prices for the articles.<sup>24</sup> According to G.P. Shelton, the stall holders formed rings and cliques. He described it as ‘curse’ to the market. The European councillors labelled these as ‘monopolistic’ practices. These shut out all fair competition and led to the high costs. Monopoly had acquired a bad name in England by this time.<sup>25</sup> The European councillors were employing European notions to grapple with the different historical reality in Calcutta. What was perceived as monopolistic, was actually a historically contingent way of buying and selling that had evolved over the years in the city. The European councillors were prejudiced against the pre-existing ways because they wished to impose the practices prevalent in England. To lower prices, Councillor Marr suggested that the vendors of different articles should always be in different groups.<sup>26</sup> Yet different methods of allocating stalls were constantly experimented with in Calcutta because the municipal markets had to be constantly adapted to the historically specific marketplace scenario in Calcutta. The European councillors in the Calcutta Corporation experimented by establishing auction stalls in the municipal markets. The auction stall holders sold consignments of the imported peaches, grapes and apples in wholesale lots to the market vendors.<sup>27</sup> This way, the Corporation ensured that the manufacturing companies would not face losses when goods were returned on ‘false’ pretexts by the stall holders. The Calcutta Corporation also expected increase in revenue and an increase in the supply of foodstuff through the auction stalls.

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<sup>24</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1913-1914*.

<sup>25</sup> Colin Stephen Smith, *The Marketplace and the Market's Place in London, 1660-1840*, Unpublished PhD Thesis, University College London, 1999.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1913-1914*.

The European buyers complained that bicycles were ‘encroaching’ on the passages of the Hogg Market.<sup>28</sup> The Calcutta Corporation legislated the bylaw of 1889. It disallowed cycles in the passages of the Hogg Market. It ruled that all the cycles had to be kept in the bicycle stand provided by the Calcutta Corporation. However constant experiments had to be made even with respect to the bicycle stand in the Hogg Market. In December 1901, according to Councillor Bertram, the bicycle stand in the Hogg Market was not constructed according to the plan.<sup>29</sup> If built according to the plan, the sunshade would have prevented the bursting of cycle tyres, he further stated. Others, like, R. Braunfield, were of the opinion that the bicycle stand was a piece of luxury and unnecessary. Instead of a bicycle stand, the coolies were entrusted with the custody of the bicycles. However, this did not solve the problem either. G.P Shelton (representing the Calcutta Trades Association) was unsatisfied with the procedure of leaving the bicycles of buyers and sellers in the custody of the coolies.<sup>30</sup> He proposed reverting to one of the earlier practices. He suggested that either the bicycles should be looked after by the market peons or bicycle stands should be let out to a firm/contractor. Braunfield and Bepin Chandra Mallik (elected from Bowbazar) agreed with Shelton. This again did not solve the problem. In 1924, the Statesman reported the complaints of the European buyers regarding the insecurity in keeping their cycles in charge of the contractors, especially when the Calcutta Corporation would not take any responsibility for the loss of the bicycles.<sup>31</sup> The report

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<sup>28</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Committee, 1889-1890*.

<sup>29</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Committee, 1901-1902*.

<sup>30</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Committee, 1901-1902*. Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1913-1914*.

<sup>31</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1924-1925*.

also carried the complaint that several *annas* (currency unit) were charged by the contractors, even if the bicycle stand was used for a few minutes.

The European councillors realised that the other municipal markets such as the Lansdowne Market, Charles Allen Market and Entally Market established in the neighborhoods where the Europeans resided, could be a success, only if it adopted various measures in consonance with the already established market practices in the city. The Lansdowne Market was established in 1903 for the upper-class Europeans of Ballygunge. However even in 1908, the European councillors of the PUMSC struggled to make the Lansdowne Market popular among the European residents of Ballygunge.<sup>32</sup> Even though the municipal markets had been established so that the Europeans would not have to depend on the *khansamah* (a male servant in charge of buying food and other supplies from the market for the English household in colonial India), the latter continued to make purchases in the municipal markets on behalf of the Europeans. The *khansamah* favoured the Hogg Market over the Lansdowne Market.<sup>33</sup> They felt the Hogg Market had a variety of products and its prices were lower as compared to the Lansdowne Market.

The European councillors established a post office in the Lansdowne Market,<sup>34</sup> following the practice of the Market Halls.<sup>35</sup> Post Offices aided trade and commerce by accepting and also sending out letters, parcels and orders. However, it did not

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<sup>32</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Report of the Municipal Administration of Calcutta, 1907-1908* (Calcutta: Corporation Press, 1909).

<sup>33</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Report of the Municipal Administration of Calcutta, 1911-1912* (Calcutta: Corporation Press, 1912). Calcutta Corporation, *Report of the Municipal Administration of Calcutta, 1912-1913* (Calcutta: Corporation Press, 1913).

<sup>34</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1926-1927*.

<sup>35</sup> *Leadenhall Clerk Letter Book, 1890-1904*.

become the standard in all municipal markets in Calcutta. The Charles Allen Market was established in 1910 on Chitpur Road. It was situated at the interface of the European and ‘native’ neighbourhoods. Between 1911 and 1912, the European councillors decided to give free stalls, *jalpani* (snacks), medical aid and presents on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the Bengali New Year and Hindu festival *rathayatra* (the festival of the procession of Krishna as Jagannatha held in Ashárh or from July to August) to the vendors to make the Charles Allen Market popular.<sup>36</sup> In 1923, the municipal market at Entally came up the junction of South Entally Road and Lower Circular Road.<sup>37</sup> The European councillors wanted the Entally Market to convert Entally into a very ‘desirable’ neighbourhood in the image of Chowringhee;<sup>38</sup> they therefore wished for a market with features that were in tune with the preferences of the upper-class Europeans. However, even the Entally Market could not completely fulfil this desire. In 1933, Europeans complained about the Entally ward (including Entally Market). In 1933, Frank Bancroft, a resident of Entally, complained of the danger of typhoid due to the smell, the open garbage containers and mixing of water and drain pipes in the

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> “Construction of Entally Market at cost of Rs 91,245,” *Proceedings of the Municipal Department, Municipal Branch*, Government of Bengal, 15 April 1920. Letters exchanged between Maulvi Afzal Ur Rahman, 3<sup>rd</sup> Land Acquisition Collector of the Calcutta Corporation and Mr. Mc McAlpin, Secretary of Municipal Department, Government of Bengal regarding the acquisition of land at the junction of South Entally Road and Lower Circular Road for Rs. 4,05,700.

<sup>38</sup> “Construction of Entally Market at cost of Rs 91,245,” *Proceedings of the Municipal Department, Municipal Branch*, Government of Bengal, 15 April 1920. Letters exchanged between Maulvi Afzal Ur Rahman, 3<sup>rd</sup> Land Acquisition Collector of the Calcutta Corporation and Mr. Mc McAlpin, Secretary of Municipal Department, Government of Bengal regarding the acquisition of land at the junction of South Entally Road and Lower Circular Road for Rs. 4,05,700.

cosmopolitan and overpopulated residential area of Entally.<sup>39</sup> He found Ballygunge on the other hand ‘very green with fresh air, where life (unlike in Entally) was more than harmoniums, daily walks to the lake and three sarees a day!’. These complaints reflected the racial biases of the Europeans. The ‘native’ socio-cultural life of the Entally ward had evidently interfered with the European-dominated environment that the European councillors had wished for.

### **The *Memsahib* Inscribes the Adaptation**

Once the Hogg Market came into existence, the *memsahib* was frequently seen in the precincts of the market doing her shopping. The race-and class-bound susceptibilities of European patriarchy in Calcutta were always concerned that the upper-class Europeans in Calcutta should ideally appear as poised and graceful. This was especially so because European men were always sensitive about the presence of ‘native’ men, particularly subaltern men in the marketplace. The PUMSC received reports that the European women were slipping and hurting themselves in the Hogg Market because the passages in the market were not as dry and broad as they should have been. On hearing this, Councillor Mackertich John remarked that it was ‘disgraceful that the cramp and congestion was making the Hogg Market just as inappropriate for the European ladies as the Chandney Chowk Market’.<sup>40</sup> Councillor Mackertich John was voicing the patriarchal anxiety of the European community in Calcutta. European women in a prostrate position in front of the ‘native’ male gaze

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<sup>39</sup> *Calcutta Municipal Gazette*, “Calcutta Corners,” Frank Bancroft (2<sup>nd</sup> December 1933). Frank Bancroft further commented that all religion, races, languages, economic conditions, cultures, living styles, philosophies were found in Entally.

<sup>40</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1937-1938*.

was an embarrassing prospect for the European men to digest. After all, the majority of the sellers in the municipal markets were ‘native’ men.

However, it is doubtful if the *memsahib* were thinking in the same way. The *memsahibs* made themselves at home in the municipal markets in their own way. Their actions were not always in consonance with European patriarchal expectations. The European patriarchal anxieties characterised the *memsahib*’s trips to the Hogg Market as a ‘waste of time and money’. They expected the *memsahib* to send a servant.<sup>41</sup> There are newspaper reports to show that the *memsahibs* developed their own way of negotiating the specifics of buying and selling in the municipal market of colonial Calcutta. These reports show that the *memsahib* often managed to have the upper-hand, while haggling, bargaining or making a purchase. One newspaper report in particular, registers a typical European woman in the city as she went about her shopping. The European male reporter described the *memsahib*’s tone when asking for the price of commodities as ‘strident’, her attitude towards the shopkeepers as ‘no-nonsense’, her gait as that of a ‘perfect terror in petticoat’,<sup>42</sup> and her overall way of shopping in the Hogg Market as ‘fierce’. Of course, the reporter’s representation of the *memsahib* is evidently gendered.<sup>43</sup> Possibly the sensibilities of the European upper-class men in the city expected European women to behave in a more ‘refined’ manner in the marketplace; but the *memsahibs* themselves were quite comfortable fashioning their own role and space in the space in the Hogg Market.

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<sup>41</sup> *Toronto Saturday Night*, “A Visit to Calcutta: Hugli Pilots, Oriental Types of Head Gear, Types in the Market,” (21<sup>st</sup> March 1903).

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> For an introduction into how gender can be a tool for historical analysis read Joan W. Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 91, No. 5, 1986.

The majority of the buyers in the Hogg Market were Europeans. Yet the Hogg Market became very different from the metropolitan markets. In the metropole, the European ladies were the main clients of the markets. The *memsahibs* derived from the same social origin as the European women in the metropole. Yet the *memsahibs* were a new phenomenon, specific to the colony. The way the *memsahib* fashioned her life in the colony was very different from the way in which the European women did in England.<sup>44</sup> The *memsahibs* were bringing in their self-hood to the municipal markets in Calcutta. This changed the everyday of the municipal markets and made it very different from the metropolitan markets.

In the figure 2.1, a *memsahib* can be seen confidently negotiating the space in the Hogg Market.

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<sup>44</sup> Reina Lewis and Roger Lewis, *Gendering Orientalism: Race, Feminity and Representation* (Psychology Press, 1996). Margaret Mcmillan, *Women of the Raj* (Thames and Hudson, German Democratic Republic, 1988). Nupur Chaudhuri, "Memsahibs and Motherhood in Nineteenth-Century Colonial India," *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 4 (1988): 517-535



Figure 2.1: New Market, 1920s. (Source: British Library, London)

### **The Adaptation of the Model by the Architects and Planners**

The predominant architecture of the West at that time was guided by notions of perpendicular lines and geometricisation of space.<sup>45</sup> These notions also underpinned the Market Hall. The architecture of the Market Hall in England followed the Gothic or Classical style.<sup>46</sup> Similarly, it became a beacon of light for the colonial administration. The Victorian Gothic style was chosen as the architectural style for the Hogg Market. With their typical colonial bent of mind, they wished that the bounded space would disallow the ‘native’ spirit from unexpectedly popping up in the precincts of the market. The architects in the Calcutta Corporation hoped to order, discipline and sanitise the municipal market space for the comfort and security of the

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<sup>45</sup> David Harvey, *The Condition of Post Modernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Blackwell Publishers, 1989).

<sup>46</sup> James Schmiechen and Kenneth Carls, *The British Market Hall: A Social and Architectural History* (Yale University Press, 1999).

upper-class Europeans. With this in mind, stalls, wooden tables, platforms, covered passages, skylights, glass roofs, water closet with automatic collecting locks, counters, wooden folding doors, glazed tiled walls, ladies and gent's lavatories and refuse receptacles were constructed in the Hogg Market.<sup>47</sup>

Just like the Market Hall in the metropole, the municipal market in Calcutta was segregated into blocks. The Hogg Market was divided into ranges from A to F. Each block was reserved for a fixed category of goods. Block A (toys, fancy goods, stationery, sports, equipment and flowers), Block A and F (confectionery), Block A, F, and G (jewellery), Block B (books and picture post card stalls), Block C (shoes), Block D (lace and cloth), Block E (vegetables), Block K (fresh fruits) and Block G (hosiery and ready-made cloth).<sup>48</sup> By the Calcutta Market Act of 1884, the municipal market had to have at least thirty shops, stalls and standings erected therein for the sale of goods. Just like the stalls in the Market Hall in England, the stalls in the municipal markets in Calcutta were meant for elaborate exchanges between the shopkeepers and their patrons in the privacy of the shop interiors. In the markets in the metropole like in the Leadenhall Market, the stalls were numbered. Similarly in Calcutta, the shops in the municipal markets were numbered. The name of the stall was inscribed on a signboard above the stall. In Calcutta, the architects provided the Hogg Market with collapsible gates for protection against the possible theft of the various imported goods in the market. The architects hoped that the distinctive

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<sup>47</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Committee, 1899-1900, 1902-1903, and 1903-1904*. Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926*.

<sup>48</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926*.

architecture of the Market Hall would assuredly discipline and order the space of the municipal markets in Calcutta.

At the same time, the city architects often added new structures to the already established municipal markets to fix the ‘deviations’ in the market. The Calcutta Corporation had to constantly reconstruct the market structures because the pre-existing architectural forms trickled into the municipal markets. The original architecture had to be again reinforced. In 1914, after the fire incident in the Hogg Market, the city architect Ballardie wanted to replace all the wooden stalls with concrete stalls of expanded metal so that the fire could be easily spotted at night.<sup>49</sup> Based on the complaints received from the Europeans, Ballardie converted the flat roofs of the Hogg Market stalls into sloping roofs so that the shopkeepers did not use them for storing what the British perceived as ‘unsightly’ boxes and ‘rubbish’. He also wanted to replace what his racial bias made him describe as ‘unsightly’ corrugated iron sunshades with a continuously supported verandah. The latter was in accordance with his notion of inculcating ‘coherence’ and ‘wholeness’ to the ‘heterogenous’ lived space of the Hogg Market. To brightly illuminate the municipal markets, the Oriental Gas Company installed power lanterns in the Hogg Market as an experiment.<sup>50</sup> Messrs. Norton and Sons refixed the meteor lamps in the municipal market.<sup>51</sup> These were described as ‘experiments’ because power lanterns and meteor lamps were not part of the municipal market plan. After the fire incident in 1914, Superintendent Limpus, drew up a set of fire instructions, on the basis of fire

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<sup>49</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1913-1914*.

<sup>50</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Committee, 1907-1908*.

<sup>51</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Committee, 1900-1901*.

precaution rules followed in the markets in the metropole. It was approved by Westbrook, the Chief Officer of Fire Brigade.

In the Market Hall in the metropole, buying produce for speculative purposes (regrating), making transactions before or outside market (forestalling) and buying up supplies to gain monopoly power (engrossing) were offences.<sup>52</sup> The British architects tried to prevent the sellers from committing these ‘offences’ in the municipal markets of Calcutta through the architecture of the market. They tried to disseminate the economic principles of consumer capitalism, namely anti-monopoly, fair prices, profitability, grouping, fair competition<sup>53</sup> and standardised buying and selling through the architecture of the municipal markets. The architecture of Calcutta’s municipal markets, especially the Hogg Market, had to adhere to these capitalistic principles because one of the reasons why the municipal markets in Calcutta had come up in the first place was to convert the people of Calcutta into consumers of British manufactured products. The constant rebuilding in the Hogg Market denoted that the capitalistic principles underpinning the architecture of the building had to be continuously reinforced. The ‘native’ socio-economic-spatial relations guiding the buyers and sellers in the market constantly found a way around the capitalistic control built into the geometric layout of the market.

At times, the construction companies deviated from the West derived plan. They had to take into consideration the in-situ problems faced during the construction work. It necessitated many additional works that had not been taken into account before. The PUMSC’s plan to shift the refuse platform in the Hogg Market from Korabardar Lane

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<sup>52</sup> Colin Stephen Smith, *The Marketplace and the Market’s Place in London, 1660-1840*, Unpublished PhD thesis, University College London, 1999.

<sup>53</sup> James Schniecheu and Kenneth Carls, *The British Market Hall: A Social and Architectural History* (Yale, 1999).

to Market Street could not materialise because the construction company found a temple on the site.<sup>54</sup> The contractors Messrs. Bhattacharjee and Company explained that in order to incorporate the suggestions and approvals of the PUMSC, they had to make many changes to the original drawings of the beef and mutton ranges of the Hogg Market.<sup>55</sup> Through the agency of the subaltern groups, changes were made to the architecture of the municipal markets. Through their agency, features of the pre-colonial markets such as *chandney* (a covered area for the primary-producers cum sellers) and bathing platforms were constructed in the municipal markets. This has been elaborately discussed in chapter 5.

Sometimes the architects tweaked the dominant architecture of the municipal markets by adopting 'native' architectural features. In 1917, Kali Sankar Mitra designed the College Street Market in the Indo Saracenic style of architecture. In the intervening period - between the establishment of the Hogg Market and the College Street Market, the architectural styles were changing. It is true that at that time Indo-Saracenic was becoming the practice. The British Empire, by 1914, was claiming to be modern and oriental.<sup>56</sup> But there could be another possible reason for the adoption of this style. The Indo-Saracenic style appealed to the architect of the College Street Market because he was Indian. This could have reinforced the Indian architect's selection of the Indo-Saracenic style for the College Street Market façade. The top storey of the College Street Market had shops on either side of a central passage that ran in the

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<sup>54</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926*.

<sup>55</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1927-1928*.

<sup>56</sup> Sumit Sarkar, *Modern Times: India, 1880s-1950s (Environment, Economy and Culture)* (Permanent Black, 2014), 288-289. Thomas A. Metcalf, *Forging the Raj: Essays on British India in the Heyday of Empire* (OUP: 2000).

north, south, and east directions. It had a staircase in the centre of each corner, with fireproof doors like in all large buildings in England.<sup>57</sup> The middle-class had come to appreciate such rectilinear planning. After all, they had ideologically accepted the principles of Victorian rationalism and self-discipline that underpinned the planning of the College Street area.<sup>58</sup> Gradually, however, the middle-class came to imprint their own style on the College Street Market. The middle-class Bengali architects changed the design of the College Street Market, prioritising the principle of utility over form.<sup>59</sup> They reversed the importance given to form by the European architects. The city's middle-class wanted the city architect to build the extended southern portion of the College Street Market in Indian fashion as far as possible, without marring the architectural features of the building.<sup>60</sup> This suggests that even in case of the architecture of the municipal markets, the architect was responding to the contingent situation, and the specific nature of the neighbourhood. The architecture of each municipal market was thus becoming different from the other municipal markets in the city.

### **How the 'Native' Councillors Scripted the Adaptations**

Racial difference set apart the attitude of the Indian councillors from their European counterparts, even in case of the administration of the municipal markets. The 'native'

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<sup>57</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1913-1914*.

<sup>58</sup> Partho Datta, *Planning the City: Urbanisation and Reform in Calcutta 1800-1940* (Delhi: Tulika Books, 2012).

<sup>59</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926*.

<sup>60</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1930-1931*.

members of the Council of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal like Jotendra Mohan Tagore (the Secretary of the British Indian Association) and Digumber Mitter (representative of the British Indian Association) were against the establishment of the Hogg Market.<sup>61</sup> The ‘natives’ in the Council of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal considered the municipalisation of markets as unnecessary. On the other hand, the European members in the Council of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal argued that the ‘improved, better-constructed, arranged, regulated and ventilated’ municipal market would cater to all the communities in a ‘caste undifferentiated’ and ‘equal environment’.<sup>62</sup> The ‘native’ members did not agree. According to them, the city already had enough bazars, catering very well to the buying and selling needs of the city. They insisted that it would be unwise to waste the ‘native’ taxpayers money for a municipal market that was meant for a tiny population of the Europeans of the city. They had realised that the intention behind the municipalisation of markets was to marginalise the traditional channels of trade. The ‘native’ elites argued that a private company should bear such large expenditures, while the Europeans argued that a private trading company, if asked to set up a market, would monopolise it and add to the dearness of provisions. The ‘native’ elites critiqued the racial bias in the functioning of the Hogg Market when the Calcutta Corporation was dominated by the Europeans between 1876 and 1912. In 1900, Sitanath Roy (elected representative of Kumartoli) complained that money was always available for minor conveniences for

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<sup>61</sup> “Calcutta Markets Bill: Extract from the Proceedings of the Council of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal for the Purpose of Making Laws and Regulations,” *Government of India*, Proceedings of the Legislative Department, June 1871.

<sup>62</sup> The European members of the Council of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal such as the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal George Campbell, Mr. Schalch, Mr. Wordie, Mr. Wyman and Ashley Eden in “Calcutta Markets Bill: Extract from the Proceedings of the Council of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal for the Purpose of Making Laws and Regulations,” *Government of India*, Proceedings of the Legislative Department, June 1871.

Europeans in the Hogg Market; but never available for any convenience of the 'natives'.<sup>63</sup> Councillor A.C. Banerjee, fed up with the constant comparisons with England, sarcastically commented that 'at least milk in Calcutta came from the cow, unlike in England where it came from handpumps'.<sup>64</sup>

Once the municipal markets were formed, the 'native' elites as elected or nominated members of the PUMSC, did come around to accept some aspects of the municipal markets in their own way. Their decisions and suggestions regarding the administration of the Calcutta municipal markets sometimes converged with the model of municipal markets derived from the metropole. The 'native' councillors had accepted the rectilinear planned structure of the metropolitan model. This can be understood by the fact that the College Street Market was established in 1914 at the behest of a 'native' councillor Dr. Haridhan Dutt (elected from Muchipara). This was typical of the way in the middle-class had readily come to accept the municipal markets as 'modern'. The 'native' councillors in the Corporation realised that the enormous revenue expended on the construction of the municipal markets would not yield returns if a private market or bazar were nearby. Hence, they wanted to transfer the tenants of the Madhab Babu Bazar to the College Street Market and then dismantle the private market altogether. The rebuilding activities initiated by the Calcutta University presented the Calcutta Corporation with the 'golden' opportunity to purchase the Madhab Babu Bazar.<sup>65</sup> However, it was not possible even till 1922. Till 1922, the Madhab Babu Bazar continued to be a competition for the College Street Market.<sup>66</sup> Some of the 'native' councillors, moreover, represented and were

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<sup>63</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Committee, 1901-1902*.

<sup>64</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Committee, 1906-1907*.

<sup>65</sup> S.W Goode, *Municipal Calcutta: Its Institutions in their Origin and Growth* (Macmillan, 2005), 299.

<sup>66</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Committee, 1921-1922*.

part of the 'native' middle-class in the city. There was a concern on the part of the authorities to take the predilections of the middle-class into account. The petitions of the Bengali middle-class for municipal markets in their neighbourhoods led to the establishment of the Lake Road Market, Park Circus Market and Gariahat Market between 1930 and 1938.

The racial sensibilities of the Europeans and the class sensibilities of the 'native' councillors found a common ground in some cases. This made the European and 'native' councillors agree on some aspects of the market administration. One such convergence was on the question of lethal chambers in the Hogg Market. The dog nuisance was sought to be handled by killing dogs in these lethal chambers. The lethal chamber in the Hogg Market was a deviation from the metropolitan market model. It was introduced as an experimental measure in the city.<sup>67</sup> The notion of 'improvement' current in Britain at that time had tinges of Victorian upper-and middle-class prejudices. The class interest of the 'native' councillors made them conform to such an upper-class oriented metropolitan market model. The concern over smell vexed the European and the 'native' councillors alike. Councillor H.M. Ariff recommended a boundary wall around the plot of land to the east of the fish range in the Hogg Market to block 'obnoxious' smell flowing from the scavengers place. His class biases were reflected in his anxiety that the consumption of such 'dirty' fish would harm both the 'natives' and Europeans.<sup>68</sup> Councillor Dwijendra Chunder Ghose (elected representative of the Bhowanipur Ward) favoured standard weights and scales

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<sup>67</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Committee, 1918-1919*. Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926*.

<sup>68</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1939-1940*.

punched with the Calcutta Corporation monogram. It was his class prejudice that made him describe the sellers as ‘dishonest’, who could be prevented from ‘cheating’ the customers by marking the sticks and plates of the weighing scales with the Calcutta Corporation seal.<sup>69</sup> Between 1917 and 1925, Messrs. Lipton Tea was leased space in the rotunda of the Hogg Market for advertising purposes.<sup>70</sup> This revolving kiosk of Messrs Lipton Tea was labelled as a ‘beauty’ spot in the Hogg Market by the ‘native’ councillors.

In 1925, there were reports of ‘encroachments’ in the municipal markets. According to the elites, encroachments were the spatial deviations from the modernist architecture of the municipal markets. Encroachments in the marketplaces of England had already developed as an administrative problem. It became a problem for the European and the ‘native’ councillors in Calcutta too. For the ‘native’ councillors, the encroachments jeopardised the upper-class and middle-class nature of municipal markets. The broad market passages, where buyers and sellers could freely move about, became essential for the expression of the upper-class and middle-class way of life. Hence the ‘native’ councillors of the PUMSC labelled the stallholders’ stools, benches, and chairs on the ‘public’ passages of the market as ‘encroachments’.<sup>71</sup> This reflects the ways in which the ‘native’ councillors had accepted many of the ideals of the metropolitan market model.

However, the ‘native’ councillors wanted the municipal markets to be their version of ‘ideal’ markets, in tandem with the upper-class and middle-class sensibilities of the

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<sup>69</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1940-1941*.

<sup>70</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926*.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

‘native’ councillors. This made them give new meanings to the West-derived model of the municipal markets. The colonial state also realised that their agenda of control over the city’s markets could not be realised without concessions to the crucial ‘native’ interests. The Calcutta Corporation had to take into account the recommendations and suggestions of these influential ‘native’ groups. The ‘native’ councillors did not speak in one voice. The discussions in the PUMSC throw light on the ways in which their heterogeneous opinions adapted the metropolitan model to the specifics of Calcutta. Councillor A.C. Banerjee (elected representative of Beniapukur) wanted to ensure the ‘purity’ of food in the municipal markets.<sup>72</sup> Netai Charan Paul (elected representative Satpukur ward) proposed a pasteurising plant to ‘purify’ milk and a cold chamber to keep the articles fresh in the Hogg Market.<sup>73</sup> This was not a deviation as even in the markets in London, the availability of wholesome and unadulterated food was closely monitored by the administrators. The Europeans wanted to ensure ‘pure’ food in Calcutta’s municipal markets to uphold notions of the civilisational superiority of the West. On the other hand, in case of the ‘native’ councillors like J.M. Sengupta, the question of adulterated food (such as edible/vegetable oil) in the Hogg Market was a problem from the point of view of the possible extinction of the Indian race.<sup>74</sup>

The class concerns of the ‘native’ councillors also modified the derived model of the municipal markets. In 1924, the ‘native’ councilors gave official recognition to the

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<sup>72</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1927-1928*.

<sup>73</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1934-1935*.

<sup>74</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Committee, 1929-1930*.

Hogg Market Traders Association (HMTA).<sup>75</sup> The formation of an association by the stall holders was not part of the plan. Even in London, the Borough Market Tenants Association came up only in 1934.<sup>76</sup> Councillor Nagendra Nath Chatterjee (elected representative of Alipur) and Councillor K.C. Roychowdhury (nominated by the Calcutta Port Trust) were in favor of the HMTA in order to maintain the upper-class and middle-class control over the stallholders. Councillor Moulvie Abdur Razzak (elected representatives of Muslim constituencies in Bhowanipure, Alipur, Ballygunge, Ekbalpur, Hastings, Tollygunge) saw the HMTA as a way to promote good feeling among stallholders and improve their condition. In 1925, the 'native' councillors gave recognition to the College Street Market Traders Union. However, such trade unions did not come up in any other municipal market in colonial Calcutta.

The 'native' councillors played roles in deviating from the principle of grouping. A fancy goods stallholder in the Hogg Market applied to sell imported silk and voiles ladies dress in contravention of the license granted to him.<sup>77</sup> This violated the system of grouping, i.e., the principle of arrangement that organised all the stalls selling the same kind of goods in one range. P.N. Guha favoured the violation of the grouping principle. He was looking to the convenience of the Europeans whose interests he represented as the nominated member of the Calcutta Port Trust. He felt the European ladies and Anglo-Indian ladies who bought silk dresses and matching silk hats from the same shop would be inconvenienced if, for silk hats, they had to run to other

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<sup>75</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926*.

<sup>76</sup> Letters from the Borough Market Tenants Association to the Trustees of the Borough Market, London (October 1934) (London Metropolitan Archives, UK).

<sup>77</sup> Calcutta Corporation, "Minutes of the Proceedings of the 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee at Central Municipal Office on 11<sup>th</sup> September 1930," *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1930-1931*.

places. In another instance, Councillors Bhupendra Nath Banerjee and Amritlal Chatterjee allowed the Lake Road Market *mudi* stall keepers to sell common spices like red chillies, turmeric and betel nut. They also allowed the Lake Road Market spice stall keepers to sell soaps. Councillor P.N. Guha was advocating deviation from the grouping principle for the convenience of the European ladies and Anglo-Indian women buyers of the Hogg Market. Councillors Bhupendra Nath Banerjee and Amritlal Chatterjee were in favour of deviating from the grouping principle in the interest of the respectable ‘native’ buyers who were the main customer base of the Lake Road Market.<sup>78</sup> H.M. Ariff wished to convert his revenue-losing advertising kiosk in the rotunda of the Hogg Market into a more remunerative tobacco and confectionery stall despite the violation of the grouping principle.<sup>79</sup> Councillor H.M. Ariff was allowed to do so as he was not only a stallholder but also an influential person as he was a Councillor elected from Colootollah ward.

The chairman of the Calcutta Corporation emphasised that the ward councillors had a duty to protect the interests of the wards they represented as much as the interests of the Corporation.<sup>80</sup> Hence the interest of these wards guided the ‘native’ councillors. This reshaped the municipal markets in many ways. The European-led municipal administration of Calcutta wished to eliminate the socio-religious elements of ‘native’ life in the marketplace by modelling the municipal markets on the markets in the metropole. However, this was not always possible especially when there existed ‘native’ councillors as representatives of ‘native’ wards. Each ward in which the

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<sup>78</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1930-1931*.

<sup>79</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1933-1934*.

<sup>80</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1931-1932*.

municipal market was situated was different. Each ward had a different and specific socio-cultural composition. This came to impinge on the functioning of the markets through the 'native' councillors. M.G. Rasool (elected from the Muslim constituency of wards Belgachia, Satpukur, and Cossipur) and Mohammad Akbar (elected from Muslim constituencies in Colootollah, Bowbazar, Puddapukur, Muchipara), proposed that the mosque gates between the Korabardar Fish Range of the Hogg Market and an adjoining mosque be kept open permanently from 5 am to 11 pm for the convenience of the Muslim tenants of the Hogg Market who went to offer prayers in the mosque.<sup>81</sup> This was allowed. However, the question of closing the passage between the market and the mosque again came up. Councillors Shamsul Huque and H.M. Ariff stopped the construction of a collapsible gate between the Hogg Market and the adjoining mosque. They did not want the Muslim sellers and buyers to be restricted in their movements between the mosque and the Hogg Market.<sup>82</sup> Through incidents like these, one realises how much the Hogg Market, derived from the metropolitan model, had in practice been reshaped by the local culture. The free movements between the Hogg Market and the adjoining mosque modified the municipal markets by infusing the Hogg Market with the features of the eighteenth-century bazars in Bengal wherein markets were emerging around and inextricably connected to its surrounding mosques and religious places.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1932-1933*.

<sup>82</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1938-1939*.

<sup>83</sup> For an in-depth understanding of the bazars of 18<sup>th</sup> century Bengal, refer to Tilottama Mukherjee, *Political Culture and Economy in Eighteenth-Century Bengal: Networks of Exchange, Consumption, Communication* (Orient Blackswan, 2013).

### **The Ingenuity of the Administrators on the Spot**

The comptrollers, clerks, superintendents, and constables were some of the administrative officials in the Leadenhall Market in London.<sup>84</sup> They looked after the sanitation, cleanliness, policing and lighting arrangements in the Leadenhall Market.<sup>85</sup> The municipal markets in Calcutta had a similar administrative setup. Over the years, a retinue of officers were employed for the upkeep of the municipal markets.<sup>86</sup> The deputy executive officer was the chief officer of the municipal markets. The superintendent was in charge of the general administration of the municipal markets. However, since the colonial state was more apprehensive about 'control' in the colony, the municipal markets in Calcutta had additional staff members as compared to the metropole. The revenue officer, inspectors, food inspectors, sergeants, sub-inspectors, controllers, collecting sircars, head clerk, cashier and checking clerks were some of the additional staff members in the municipal markets in Calcutta.<sup>87</sup> These administrative officials at the grassroots level had a significant role in shaping the municipal markets in the image of the Market Hall. They were in charge of issuing cash receipts, stall application forms, coolie badges and price currents. They also maintained public complaints book and fixed staff duties in all municipal markets.<sup>88</sup> No doubt, the administrative officials did play a part in laying down the 'rational and ordered' municipal markets, derived from the West. This can be understood from the following instances. The superintendents had a role to play in ensuring the sense of

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<sup>84</sup> *Leadenhall Market Clerk Letter Book*, 1874-1896.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> *The Calcutta Municipal Corporation Market Manual* (Calcutta Corporation Press, 1938).

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

security that the European-led Corporation expected out of the municipal markets. The PUMSC resolved to issue tickets to stall keepers and their relatives from the mofussil for sleeping in the Hogg Market. The nitty-gritty of this new arrangement was left to Superintendent Jones. According to the Corporation, Jones knew how to identify ‘trespassers and thieves’.<sup>89</sup> The racial biases of the Europeans made them characterise the ‘natives’ as thieves.

Not just the European superintendents but even the ‘native’ superintendents played roles in organising the municipal market on the principles of market administration, derived from the West. The ‘native’ superintendent of the Hogg Market believed that the Hogg Market was the premier market of Calcutta and the East.<sup>90</sup> One of its reasons, according to him, was its supply of ‘pure, unadulterated, and cheap foodstuff’ for the citizens of Calcutta. According to the superintendent, the milk stalls in the Hogg Market were ‘hygienic’ as they were ‘medically approved and clinically tested’ in the laboratory in the Hogg Market itself. At the suggestion of the superintendent of the College Street Market, the big stall holders were allowed separate meters for installing electric lights, on ceremonial occasions. According to him, it would add to the ‘beauty’ of the market, especially those facing the roadside.<sup>91</sup> Such notions of ‘purity’ and ‘beauty’ were enmeshed in the Western ideals of market organisation. On the superintendent’s recommendation, the proposal of Councillor Hooper to shift the post office from the first to the ground floor was rejected. It was the ‘native’ superintendent of the College Street Market who had drawn the attention of the

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<sup>89</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Committee, 1888-1889*.

<sup>90</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1936-1937*.

<sup>91</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926*.

PUMSC to the location of the post office that was preferred by the public.<sup>92</sup> The class-biases of the ‘native’ superintendent was evident when he remarked that the security of the expensive goods and money orders at the College Street Market post office might be put at risk by the ‘pickpockets’ in the neighbouring Kala Bagan bustee. According to a ‘native’ superintendent, the success and prosperity of the Lake Market depended upon ‘proper’ facilities in the form of godowns for storing goods, protection against sun-rain, and brick on edge pathways in and about the market. He felt that personal names of markets led to bitter controversies. Hence the new and growing municipal market at Lake Road was named the Lake Road Market.<sup>93</sup> On the recommendation of the food inspector, the PUMSC resolved that the petty vendors/hawkers of sweetmeat from outside the market would not be allowed to sell inside the municipal market for some time.<sup>94</sup> Instead, the sweetmeat vendors who occupied shops and stalls inside the market were allowed to hawk sweetmeat inside glass cases. This was done to help the food inspector take samples and trace the source of ‘contamination’, if any.

However, being so close to the situation on the ground, these officers often played a crucial part in deviating from the metropolitan market model. M. Rafique, the chairman of PUMSC, explained that the control and supervision of the markets in Calcutta rested with the PUMSC, although direct administration was left to the man on the spot.<sup>95</sup> According to the controller of markets, there was no hard and fast rule

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<sup>92</sup> Calcutta Corporation, “Minutes of the Proceedings of the College Street Market,” 14<sup>th</sup> June 1925, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926*.

<sup>93</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1930-1931*.

<sup>94</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926*.

<sup>95</sup> M. Rafique, “The Corporation Markets,” *Calcutta Municipal Gazette*, (1932): 87-88.

regarding partnerships/transference of stalls and each case was decided on its merit.<sup>96</sup> These officials were grappling with the everyday problems and hence had every reason to feel exasperated with the modular that was not serving the specific realities of the Calcutta market situation. These administrators knew what the public wanted, and understood the pulse of the neighbourhood. In many cases, the administrative officials adapted the model to align it to the situation in Calcutta. To increase the revenue from the Corporation markets, the 'native' superintendents recommended that the municipal markets should not just cater to the upper-class and the middle-class customers but to the lower-class customers as well. The superintendent recommended that the sale of third-class beef by the two Muslim hotels and the seventy-two beef stalls of the Hogg Market should not be stopped. According to him, if stopped, the Calcutta Corporation would suffer revenue loss as the lower-class customers of these beef stalls would go elsewhere.<sup>97</sup> The racial bias of the European health officer of the Calcutta Corporation made him characterise all the private markets in the city as 'deplorable and unsanitary'.<sup>98</sup> He suggested that the Corporation Markets should be established all over the city to regulate the supply of milk and other foodstuff. On his suggestion, in 1923, the Entally Market came up at Lower Circular Road. However, another health officer, later recommended that the beef stalls of the already established nearby private market called Napit Bazar be transplanted in Entally Market, to make the latter revenue-earning.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926*.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Committee, 1910-1911*.

<sup>99</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926*.

The Deputy Executive Officer S. Chatterji informed the PUMSC that the Park Circus Market did not deserve the name of a market. He further stated that calling it a Corporation Market only incited a sneer from the public.<sup>100</sup> After his suggestions, the PUMSC took steps to shape the Park Circus Market as a revenue earning institution. On the suggestion of the deputy executive officer, the Corporation increased the number of stalls in the Park Circus Market to meet the demands of the marketing public. Yet the sellers were not getting attracted to the Park Circus Market. The ‘native’ superintendent of the Park Circus Market suggested that just like in the case of the College Street and the Entally Market, the Calcutta Corporation should spend money to attract the fish and vegetable vendors in the Park Circus Market too.<sup>101</sup> He suggested that just like in the other municipal markets, even in the Park Circus Market, the Corporation should compensate the vendors for their losses on account of unsold merchandise. The profit motive or sanitary conditions alone were not attracting the ‘native’ sellers and buyers automatically to the Park Circus Market. The Park Circus Market was suffering a loss and many tenants were running away to the private market or bazar close to Park Circus Market.<sup>102</sup> These officials realised that it was not enough to institute ‘modern’ facilities in the municipal markets. The market administration had to be sensitive to the marketplace related cultural requirements of the ‘native’ sellers to make them comfortable enough to trade in the municipal markets. In case of Park Circus Market, the ‘native’ superintendents suggested that the Calcutta Corporation should organise a *nahabat* (a band of musicians playing an assortment of instruments) for a few days to attract the ‘native’ buyers and sellers.

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<sup>100</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1933-1934*.

<sup>101</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1930-1931*.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

They could also organise the celebration of some religious festivals to popularise the Park Circus Market. These reflect the experimentation done by the Corporation. The officers of the Corporation markets were experimenting and thinking in their own capacities of the culture-specific attractions/practices pertaining to the marketplace in Calcutta that could be introduced to attract the ‘natives’ to the Park Circus Market. The culture of the pre-existing bazars was drawn upon and weighed for their ability to attract the ‘native’ sellers. They realised that the culture of the pre-existing bazars was too deeply ingrained in the city’s consciousness. Hence, unless adopted, the municipal markets would not be able to compete with the existing private markets or bazars surrounding the municipal markets. The ‘native’ officers who were aware of the socio-cultural environment of the private markets drew the attention of the Corporation to the intense competition provided by the nearby private markets or bazars. According to Deputy Executive Officer S.M. Yakub, these measures had to be taken so that the Park Circus Market would be able to compete with the rival private market called the Dhangar Bazar.<sup>103</sup> As a result of these experiments, the Park Circus Market became different from the other municipal markets in the city.

### **The Negotiations of the ‘Native’ Stall Holders**

The ‘native’ stall holders in the municipal markets adapted the metropolitan model of markets to the situation in Calcutta.<sup>104</sup> By the Calcutta Market Act of 1871, Calcutta Corporation was allowed to grant licenses to tenants to use any stalls in the municipal markets for the sale of various products. The Calcutta Corporation divided the

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<sup>103</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1940-1941*.

<sup>104</sup> The term sellers, stall holders and tenants have been used inter-changeably.

‘native’ sellers into three categories on the basis of the rents and the frequency of attending the municipal markets. These were - permanent, seasonal and temporary tenants. The permanent tenants were those who regularly attended the market, paid daily rents and an initial rent or fee for acquiring the stall lease. The seasonal tenants paid daily rents but did not pay initial rent. The temporary tenants comprised the squatters, hawkers and wholesale dealers.<sup>105</sup> Gradually, the permanent stall holders in the municipal markets, besides the daily rent, gradually began to pay *salami* (a fee given for receiving preferential treatment in matters of stall allocation or rent settlement) or large sum of initial rent to purchase the lease for market stalls from the Calcutta Corporation.<sup>106</sup> This practice of *salami*, a lingering practice of precolonial marketplace, adapted the model to the specificities of the situation in Calcutta. The tenants in the municipal markets of Calcutta placed sign boards on top of their stores, indicating the name and store number so that their shops could be easily identified. This was a common practice in the markets in the metropolitan markets by this time.<sup>107</sup> The permanent stall holders in the municipal markets of the metropole were retailers in the modern sense. They did not produce the articles they traded. Instead, they procured their goods from wholesale producers.<sup>108</sup> The permanent stall holders in the municipal markets of Calcutta fell into the same category. In the Hogg Market, the permanent stall holders were full time retailers who applied for stalls to sell imported goods from Europe or from wholesalers. The stallholders like Joynab Ali Mullick, M.

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<sup>105</sup> Calcutta Corporation Market Manual, 1938.

<sup>106</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926*.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> James Schmiechen and Kenneth Carls, *The British Market Hall: A Social and Architectural History* (Yale University Press, 1999).

Ishaq sold lace, ready-made cloth, haberdashery/drapery;<sup>109</sup> Md. Ismail, Jonab Ali, and Osman Guny sold hats.<sup>110</sup> In the Hogg Market there were picture-postcard stalls of K.K. Kar, Bajinath Tewari, Abdul Hye, and Idris Mullick;<sup>111</sup> glassware stalls of Sahadat Khan, Khosber Ali Mullick, T. Dutt, and A.L. Shaw;<sup>112</sup> bookstalls of Kalicharan and Bajinath, and Md. Soleman;<sup>113</sup> perfume stalls of N.C. Shao, K.N. Dutt, M.N. Ghosh, and Nur Bux;<sup>114</sup> gramophone, musical instruments, and electrical goods stalls of Messrs. H.M. Yusuf and Md. Yunus, Saiyiddulanam; canvas, photo, and electrical goods stall of R.L. Saha, Dey's Mercantile Store;<sup>115</sup> fancy goods stalls of Locumut Tolaram, Abdul Rashid, Netai Chandra Ghosh, E. Shaque Mullick, and

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<sup>109</sup> See Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926* for the Muslim sellers of lace namely Joynab Ali Mullick, M Ishaq, WA Mollah, Arshar Ali Nusker, A Rashid. See Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926, 1938-1939* for the Muslim sellers of readymade cloth namely A Jubber, Shamsuddin, HM Monaff, HA Razzak, A. Aziz, SK Rahaman. See Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1935-1936 and 1936-1937* for the Muslim sellers of haberdashery/drapery namely Kazi Nurul Huda, Sultan Ali Mollah.

<sup>110</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926 and 1940-1941*. The other hat sellers were Sk. Abdul Waheb, Sk Manwar Ali.

<sup>111</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1913-1914, 1925-1926, 1936-1937, 1940-1941*. Other picture post card sellers were Radha Ballav Pal, Birendra Kumar Bose.

<sup>112</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee 1925-1926*.

<sup>113</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926, 1930-1931, 1936-1937, 1941-1942*. Other book stall owners were A.K. Pal and R.N. Shao, Amrita Krishna Mukherjee.

<sup>114</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926*.

<sup>115</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926, 1935-1936, 1946-1947*.

Abdul Hye;<sup>116</sup> toy stalls of A. Quyyum, S.C. Pal, and B. Shaw;<sup>117</sup> watch stalls of Meer Akbar Ali, Subalack Chunder Paul, and V. Gulab;<sup>118</sup> silk cloth stalls of Ahmed Fazelbhoy, Haji Abdul Monaff, Hassaram, Gopibai and Nanikaram;<sup>119</sup> silk and jewellery stalls of Messrs. Sitaldas, Thakurdas and Doyaldas,<sup>120</sup> Chandiram,<sup>121</sup> and GC Ghosh.<sup>122</sup> In the Entally Market, there was the oilman store of Aubinash Chandra Ganguly,<sup>123</sup> condensed milk stall of Messrs. George Brothers,<sup>124</sup> and coffee stall of Perris Brothers.<sup>125</sup>

The social composition of the sellers in each locality or neighborhood of the municipal market had a different historical specificity. It defined the varied nature of the products and the different socio-cultural atmosphere in each municipal market. It negotiated the model's intention to standardize all the municipal markets. The

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<sup>116</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926, 1930-1931, 1936-1937*. Other sellers of fancy goods were Sarat Chunder Lal, Manik Lal, Biswanath Ghose, O.A. Khan.

<sup>117</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926, and 1935-1936*.

<sup>118</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926 and 1939-1940*.

<sup>119</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1932-1933 and 1939-1940*.

<sup>120</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1930-1931*.

<sup>121</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1946-1947*.

<sup>122</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1927-1928*.

<sup>123</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1930-1931*.

<sup>124</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1929-1930*.

<sup>125</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1930-1931*.

cosmopolitan culture of the Hogg market made it very different from the other municipal markets. The Hogg Market was in the European quarter of city. In the Hogg Market, the stall holders included the big English companies and hotels such as mutton stalls of the Great Eastern Hotel,<sup>126</sup> dairy stalls of Keventer and Company,<sup>127</sup> lace stall of Messrs Wearwell and Company. There were also stall holders of different nationalities in the Hogg Market such as Mr. Abro and J.O. Brien, manager of Donny Brook Dairy,<sup>128</sup> confectionery stalls of M.E. Brittain and Company,<sup>129</sup> tea shops of Messrs. Balmer and Lawrie.<sup>130</sup> Tedson, Wilson, Folley, Kingson sold lace;<sup>131</sup> J. Tomkins and Juppins sold shoes. There were also Chinese stallholders like shoes and boots stalls of Mr. Yok and Yeith Yan.<sup>132</sup> The European sellers included German Pork Vendor Eahil,<sup>133</sup> pork stall holder R.F. Arnold<sup>134</sup> and pork stall keeper De Croix Brothers.<sup>135</sup> There was a South-East Asian company by the name of My Maung and Company (Burmese cigars and curios) in the Hogg Market.<sup>136</sup> The Hogg Market also

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<sup>126</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Committee, 1899-1900*.

<sup>127</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Committee, 1911-1912*.

<sup>128</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General committee, 1901-1902*.

<sup>129</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926*.

<sup>130</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Committee, 1907-1908*.

<sup>131</sup> See Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926*. See Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1913-1914*.

<sup>132</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1932-1933 and 1937-1938*.

<sup>133</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Committee, 1899-1900*.

<sup>134</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1935-1936*.

<sup>135</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1934-1935*.

<sup>136</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Committee, 1911-1912*.

had Jewish sellers like the confectioners Nahoum and Sons,<sup>137</sup> and Mozelle Ezra's jewellery and ready-made dress stall.<sup>138</sup> Both the Europeans and the Muslims engaged in the sporting goods trade in the Hogg Market.<sup>139</sup>

There were many Bengali and non-Bengali immigrants from U.P., Behar, and other parts of East, West, North India in Calcutta.<sup>140</sup> They also formed a vital segment of the sellers in the Hogg Market. The majority of the migrant sellers in the Hogg Market were Muslims. In the Hogg Market, the middle-class Muslim stallholders like Joynab Ali Mullick, M. Ishaq sold lace, ready-made cloth, haberdashery/drapery;<sup>141</sup> M.D. Abdus Shukoor, Messrs. Ali, and Sons, Abdul Sayeed sold leather shoes and leather trunks;<sup>142</sup> Immamuddin, Sk. Hossainey, Abdul Azizi were sellers of cold

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<sup>137</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1930-1931*.

<sup>138</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1934, 1937*.

<sup>139</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1927-1928, 1930-1931, and 1935-1936*.

<sup>140</sup> Manimanjari Mitra, *Calcutta in the 20<sup>th</sup> century: An Urban Disaster* (Asiatic Book Agency: Calcutta, 1990)

In 1911, as many as 3,41,000 Bengali immigrants from 24 Parganas, Howrah, Hugli, Midnapore, Dacca, Burdwan settled in Calcutta. And 3,43,689 non-Bengali immigrants from Gaya, Muzzafarpur, Gaya, Patna, Shahabad, Cuttack, Balasore, Azamgarh, Benares, Bikaner, Jaipur settled in Calcutta. This non-Bengali population tripled by 1921. In 1921, many shoemakers and cobblers in Calcutta were from Monghyr and Gaya districts of Bihar.

<sup>141</sup> See Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926* for the Muslim sellers of lace namely Joynab Ali Mullick, M Ishaq, WA Mollah, Arshar Ali Nusker, A Rashid. See Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926, 1938-1939* for the Muslim sellers of readymade cloth namely A Jubber, Shamsuddin, HM Monaff, HA Razzak, A. Aziz, SK Rahaman. See Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1935-1936 and 1936-1937* for the Muslim sellers of haberdashery/drapery namely Kazi Nurul Huda, Sultan Ali Mollah.

<sup>142</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1946-1947*.

drinks; Md. Amin, Golam Kader, and Molvi Abdulla had shoe stalls;<sup>143</sup> and Mofizuddin had a pork stall.<sup>144</sup> There were Punjabi, Sindhi, and Marwari sellers in the Hogg Market such as the Punjabi ready-made cloth sellers like Bissen Singh, LP Benia.<sup>145</sup> Almost all the silk and jewellery stalls in the Hogg Market between 1925 and 1947 belonged to Sindhis with the surnames Motibhai, Pannachand, Navalrai, Lalchand, Lekraj, Mehta Dayaram, Panswani, Motiram,<sup>146</sup> Uddhandas, Motumal,<sup>147</sup> Khemlani,<sup>148</sup> and Mahtani.<sup>149</sup> Some silk and jewellery stalls belonged to Marwari owners like Kothari,<sup>150</sup> and Shroff.<sup>151</sup> Besides Oriental Curios Company, Bombay Jewellery Mart,<sup>152</sup> and Great Eastern Jewellers also had jewellery stores in the Hogg Market.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926, 1935-1936, 1946-1947. The other shoe sellers were Abdul Latif, Anis Ahmed.*

<sup>144</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926.*

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1932-1933.*

<sup>148</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1934-1935.*

<sup>149</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1938-1939.*

<sup>150</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1930-1931.*

<sup>151</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1936-1937.*

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

<sup>153</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Committee, 1906-1907.*

In the Hogg market, Hindus and Muslims leased stalls for the following items. Cloth hosiery was sold by Biswanath and Bholanath De and B.H. Das,<sup>154</sup> Abdul Waheed and A. Rahman.<sup>155</sup> There were other sellers in the Hogg Market. Mohan Bera, Sk. Imamon Haji sold European Vegetables;<sup>156</sup> Amulya Rattan Sasmal, Aziz Mirza, Ashutosh Manna, and Gurudas Hudayat sold fresh fruits;<sup>157</sup> Abdur Rauf Khan, Gonesh Shyam Pani sold spices.<sup>158</sup> Besides, there were lower-class Hindu and Muslim sellers of fresh and country fruits in the Hogg Market, such as Sadhan Chandra Jana, Pulin Behari Das, Golam Rasul, and Nanda Bala Dassi.<sup>159</sup> The Hogg Market also had L.C. Saha's ice cream parlour and soda fountain,<sup>160</sup> Messrs.

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<sup>154</sup> See Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926 and 1937-1938* for Hindu and Muslim sellers of hosiery like J.K. Sen, R. Shaw, A.K. Pal, A. Razzak, and Nusker. *Calcutta Gazette*, 1912 mentions that cloth hosiery included imported piece goods such as lungies, cotton tweed, bedcovers, table cloths, quilts, towels, napkins, zephyr cloth, and fabrics such as drill, flannel, dobby in various colors and patterns such as checked, striped, warp, weft etc.

<sup>155</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926, 1937-1938*.

<sup>156</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1930-1931*.

<sup>157</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1933-1934, 1935-1936, 1939-1940*.

<sup>158</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1935-1936, 1939-1940*.

<sup>159</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1931-1932, 1935-1936, and 1937-1938*.

<sup>160</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1939-1940*.

Magnolia Dairy Products ice cream stalls,<sup>161</sup> flower, seed, and plant stalls of B.K. Pal, Hazarilal Mukherjee;<sup>162</sup> tobacco stalls of Kali Charan Sukul and Batukeshwar Dutt.<sup>163</sup>

There were Hindu Bengali, non-Bengali as well as Muslim sellers in the Lansdowne Market. The Lansdowne Market had wheat flour stall of Gulzuri Marwari and buffalo ghee stall of Kaluram Marwari;<sup>164</sup> godown of Brooke Bond; confectioners Aich Brothers; electric goods, paints, cement, hardware stall of Bhupendranath and Upendranath Bose;<sup>165</sup> motorcycle repairers Nagendra Nath Das; artist, photograph, painting and framing stall of Lalit Mohan Bhattacharjee;<sup>166</sup> watch, gramophone and musical instruments stall of Indu Bhusan Ganguli; bedding material and shirts stall of A. Hanaff; earthenware stall of Kali Charan Pal;<sup>167</sup> country vegetable stall of Sachindra Kumar Bose; tea stall of Tarini Nandi; milk stall of the Cooperative Milk Union;<sup>168</sup> dry fruit stall of Messrs. Enayatullah Khan. The Lansdowne Market also had three Mohamaddan Hotels,<sup>169</sup> and a post office.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1937-1938*.

<sup>162</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926, 1930-1931*.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1926-1927*.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1929-1930*.

<sup>168</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1926-1927*.

<sup>169</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1935-1936*.

<sup>170</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1926-1927, and 1929-1930*.

The Charles Allen Market had piece goods stall of Sitaram Gonesh Prosad; lace and ribbon stall of Abu Bukhar Sardar; Temperance Restaurant of Shamsuddin Abdul Rahim;<sup>171</sup> Md. Abdulla's Eating House;<sup>172</sup> Indian style Hotel of Nundo Lal Seal;<sup>173</sup> Ananda Chandra Dey's Eating House; Atul Chandra Kar's Eating House;<sup>174</sup> Allen Hotel of Jiban Krisha Shaha;<sup>175</sup> grocery/*mudi* stores of Raj Kumar Deb,<sup>176</sup> Sukumari Dass,<sup>177</sup> Manick Chandra Sadhukan,<sup>178</sup> Monimoha, Sudhakar and Rashbehari;<sup>179</sup> sweetmeat store of Bhuraram Marwari;<sup>180</sup> R.B. Gupta's stationery stall;<sup>181</sup> and Jitendranath Dutt's jewellery store.<sup>182</sup>

The many Hindu sellers and few Muslim sellers of the College Street Market made its culture very different from the Hogg Market. The College Street Market had Ram Gopal Biswas's tea and light refreshments shop,<sup>183</sup> Sk. Zafruddin's Hotel,<sup>184</sup> and

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<sup>171</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Committee, 1912-1913*.

<sup>172</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Committee, 1921-1922*.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1932-1933*.

<sup>176</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1935-1936*.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

<sup>178</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Committee, 1921-1922*.

<sup>179</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926*.

<sup>180</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1927-1928*.

<sup>181</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926*.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

<sup>183</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1930-1931*.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid.

Hindu hotel of Kristo Thakur.<sup>185</sup> Also in the College Street Market there were Hindu cloth and tailoring shopkeepers like Shamald as Bholanath Khettry,<sup>186</sup> Renupodo Saha;<sup>187</sup> shoe stall owners like Panchu Gopal Gupta and Mohd. Hayat (partners in Modern Shoe Depot), Serajuddin Ahmad and Abdul Majid, and A.M. Blackman;<sup>188</sup> potato sellers Dinesh Chandra Bose,<sup>189</sup> Goffur, and Bhonda;<sup>190</sup> egg sellers like Noor Mohd.;<sup>191</sup> bread, confectionery and loose tea sellers like Bhupendra Nath Mitra;<sup>192</sup> fresh fruits sellers Mati Lal Manna, Ragupati Manna;<sup>193</sup> milk stall keepers Jibon Chandra Neogy;<sup>194</sup> fancy goods (gold leaf and perfumery) stall keepers Reza, Khan, Khelaluddin Ahmed, and Shaik Nama Mia;<sup>195</sup> stationery and fancy goods stall

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<sup>185</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Committee, 1921-1922*. Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1930-1931*.

<sup>186</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1927-1928*.

<sup>187</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1927-1928*. Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926*.

<sup>188</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926, 1927-1928 and 1930-1931*. In 1931, other shoe stall sellers were Uzir Mohd. and Abdul Karim. In, 1925-1926, other shoe stall sellers were Mohd. Mean, Omar Hayat, Dost Mohd., Shamsuddin Mowla Bux, Nazir Hossain Hayat, and Suresh Chandra Das.

<sup>189</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1927-1928*.

<sup>190</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1930-1931*.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

<sup>194</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1934-1935*.

<sup>195</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926*.

keepers R.K. Adhikari, S.K. Sircar, and Gopinath Burdhan;<sup>196</sup> spice stall owner Sasadhar Pal;<sup>197</sup> trunk and leather goods stallholder Aswini Kumar De (proprietor of Meher Kali Bhandar);<sup>198</sup> betel nut stallholder Pratap Chandra Nandy, Ram Ranjan Roy and Chaitanya Prosad Roy;<sup>199</sup> *pan* shops owner Jogendra Nath Hazra;<sup>200</sup> *dal* (pulses that were widely consumed in India) stall of Ghaghru and Rambilash Shaw;<sup>201</sup> sweetmeats stall of Aghore Nath Pal;<sup>202</sup> and some godowns used as workshops by Jaharlal Pannalal.<sup>203</sup> The Entally Market had a mixed composition of Hindu, Muslim and European sellers. In the Entally Market, there were ready-made clothes stalls of Kalisahai Nandi Prosad;<sup>204</sup> cloth stall of Messrs Sundar Lal and Sardar Lal; cut piece cloth stall (with a sewing machine for stitching) of Bhola Sahai and Ram Shankar.<sup>205</sup> In the Entally market there were the following - tobacco and glassware stall of Peary Lal, hardware stall of Chinta Haran Das,<sup>206</sup> oilman store of Aubinash Chandra

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<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

<sup>197</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1930-1931*.

<sup>198</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926*.

<sup>199</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1930-1931*.

<sup>200</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1935-1936*.

<sup>201</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1930-1931*.

<sup>202</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Committee, 1921-1922*.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid.

<sup>204</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1935-1936*.

<sup>205</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1930-1931*.

<sup>206</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926*.

Ganguly,<sup>207</sup> *mudi* stall of Bankubehari Das,<sup>208</sup> *ata* (flour) stall of Rammohan Banwarilal,<sup>209</sup> earthenware stall of Radha Nath Kundu,<sup>210</sup> baskets, palm leaf bags and grass brooms stall of P. Kutali;<sup>211</sup> bread and biscuits stall of Mr. Fernandez, butter stall of J. Palatin,<sup>212</sup> beef stall of Latafat Hossain,<sup>213</sup> tea dust stall of K.M. Moosa,<sup>214</sup> egg stall of Munnie Sultan,<sup>215</sup> restaurant of Syed Zianuddin Hussain,<sup>216</sup> dry fruit stall of Secundar Shah,<sup>217</sup> shoe stalls of Moseb Ali and Shafiur Ali;<sup>218</sup> pork stall of S.D.

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<sup>207</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1930-1931.*

<sup>208</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1932-1933.*

<sup>209</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1929-1930.*

<sup>210</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1927-1928.*

<sup>211</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1930-1931.*

<sup>212</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1931-1932.*

<sup>213</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1926-1927.*

<sup>214</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1929-1930.*

<sup>215</sup> Ibid

<sup>216</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926.*

<sup>217</sup> Ibid.

<sup>218</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1940-1941.*

Rozario,<sup>219</sup> ready-made clothes stalls of Abdur Rahman and Wali Md.;<sup>220</sup> and Cooperative Milk Society Union milk stall.<sup>221</sup>

The predominantly Hindu Bengali sellers of the Gariahat Market made its culture different from the Hogg Market and the College Street Market. These sellers included - spice stall holders Anath Bandhu Sircar, Kshitish Chandra Bose; bread stall holder Bhupesh Chandra;<sup>222</sup> grocery storekeeper Bhupendra Nath Banerjee, Birendra Krishna Nandy and Haripodo Samanta; hardware and paints storekeeper Sachindra Kumar Dey; stationery and tinned provision shopkeepers Sunil Chandra Mitra, S. Ghosh and Phanindra Nath Dutta.; loose tea and confectionery storeowner Indra Mohan Chakravarty; books, newspapers, bookbinding and magazines stall holder Anil Behari Datta;<sup>223</sup> jewellery and money exchange stall holder Hriday Krishna Chandra; betel leaves stall holder Suresh Chandra Kar, Nakul Chandra Sett,<sup>224</sup> Narain Chandra Naskar, and Panchanan Pal;<sup>225</sup> egg and poultry stall holder Kshitish Chandra Ghosh and Benoy Bhusan Bakshi; onion stall holder Ganpat Lal, Hiralal, Peari Shaw, and Hemanta Kumar Das; ghee and butter stall holder J. Lal Ram Raghubir, Parna Lal

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<sup>219</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1939-1940*.

<sup>220</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1940-1941*.

<sup>221</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1930-1931*.

<sup>222</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1936-1937*.

<sup>223</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1936-1937*.

<sup>224</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1938-1939*.

<sup>225</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1941-1942*.

Ganguly and Provash Kumar Banerjee; potato stall keeper Satish Jana, Gajendra Nath Das,<sup>226</sup> Sk. Abdul Razzak,<sup>227</sup> and Mokbuli Ali.<sup>228</sup> Besides, there were lower-class Muslim sellers of fruits like Lal Mohammad, Noor Hossain, Baraton, and Osman Gunj in the Gariahat Market.<sup>229</sup>

In the Lake Road Market, the predominantly Hindu Bengali composition of its sellers also made it different from the other municipal markets. In the Lake Road Market, there were fish stall owners like Dulal Chandra Kundo; eggs sellers Wahed Ali Mondal; bread seller Satyabrata Sen;<sup>230</sup> potato seller Md. Manik;<sup>231</sup> hardware and paints, baskets, tobacco sellers like Krsna Dhon Nath; fruits sellers like S.K. Abdul and Sk. Jana; betel sellers like Ranjan Kusum Mitra; grocery sellers Sunar Chand Vyor, and Ramani Mohan Banerjee. Most of the sellers in the Park Circus Market were Muslim immigrants from Bihar and U.P. who lived around the Park Circus area. But there were Hindu sellers too. In the Park Circus Market, tea was sold by Mohd. Ali Khan; onion, garlic, and ginger by Mir Anwar Ali and Mir Shamsheer Ali; potatoes by Asgar Ali;<sup>232</sup> and hosiery by Sk. Mallick.<sup>233</sup>

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<sup>226</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1938-1939*.

<sup>227</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1939-1940*.

<sup>228</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1938-1939*.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid.

<sup>230</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1937-1938*.

<sup>231</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1935-1936*.

<sup>232</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1940-1941*.

Sometimes the stall holders in the municipal markets of Calcutta drew the attention of the Calcutta Corporation to the frequent ‘encroachments’ by other sellers in the municipal market. According to the Calcutta Corporation, these ‘encroachments’ were deviations from the metropolitan model of market spatial organisation as they jeopardised the revenue and policing functions of the Calcutta Corporation. The Calcutta Corporation dealt with such issues of encroachments by warning and fining the sellers. Baboorali Sirdar, an oilman storekeeper in the Hogg Market, was accused of selling dates and nuts without a license. He justified his actions by stating that many of the Hogg Market eating houses had encroached on verandahs and footpaths.<sup>234</sup> They raised platforms and racks to sell *pan* (fresh betel leaves wrapped around pieces of betel nut, slaked lime, spices, and other ingredients and traditionally chewed), *biri* (a type of cigarette), *chutney* (a type of sauce in Indian cuisine), jelly, and preserved fruits, for which they held no license. The question of encroachments by sellers had become a problem for Corporation in England.<sup>235</sup> The various newspapers in England were educating the public in the metropole that the encroachments were illegal obstructions as they impinged on public property.<sup>236</sup> The tenants in the Leadenhall Market, London were booked by the market officials for encroaching on market passages with their tables, tricycles and weighing machines.<sup>237</sup> Similarly, even in Calcutta, according to the Calcutta Corporation, the sellers were encroaching with their chairs, tables, benches, patty boxes, and almirahs on the

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<sup>233</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926*.

<sup>234</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1930-1931*.

<sup>235</sup> Encroachments on public footpaths by tradesmen in Tornbridge. They encroached on the footpaths outside their shops with trestles, iron boxes. See *The Daily Free Press* (30<sup>th</sup> July 1888).

<sup>236</sup> See the *Bath Chronicle* (20<sup>th</sup> November 1856) and *South Wales Daily News* (11<sup>th</sup> October 1886).

<sup>237</sup> *Leadenhall Market Clerk Book, 1874-1896*.

passages of the Hogg Market.<sup>238</sup> These possibly reminded the European administrators of the nineteenth-century 'native' bazars, where 'native' sellers squatted cross-legged next to their multifarious wares, displayed on mats.<sup>239</sup> As a result of encroachments by 'native' sellers, showcases were introduced in Calcutta's municipal markets.<sup>240</sup> Showcases had already become popular in Britain. By 1922, show cases of good appearance were seen as silent salesmen, attracting customers.<sup>241</sup> The adoption of showcases in Calcutta demonstrated that the English model had come to administratively bear on the municipal markets in Calcutta. Unlike other Europeans who were against encroachments, C.F. Hooper (Traders Association) remarked that it was hardly possible for the Hogg Market stall holders to carry on business without encroachments.<sup>242</sup> Just like in England,<sup>243</sup> even the market tenants in the municipal markets were allowed to encroach on passages for the purpose of displaying their products during Christmas.<sup>244</sup>

Words like 'capital', 'capitalist partner', and 'insolvent' were used by the Europeans and 'natives' in the municipal market meetings, reflecting the influence of the metropolitan model. In 1926, Meher Ali, a tenant of the Hogg Market took Hafiz

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<sup>238</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926*.

<sup>239</sup> The European perspective on the state of bazars, see P.T. Nair, *Calcutta in the 19<sup>th</sup> century* (Calcutta: FIRM KLM Pvt. 1989).

<sup>240</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926*.

<sup>241</sup> *The Citizen*, January 21<sup>st</sup>, 1922.

<sup>242</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926*

<sup>243</sup> *Leadenhall Market Clerk Letter Book, 1874-1896*.

<sup>244</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1930-1931*.

Mowla Bux as his capitalist partner.<sup>245</sup> In 1939, Lakhi Debi, owner of a Hogg Market stall on behalf of her minor sons, wanted a capitalist partner who could invest money. She stated that she was a poor *purdanashin* (the women who follow the social practice of seclusion, and their affairs, legal and others, are handled by the male members of her family) woman who was finding it difficult to manage her business without money.<sup>246</sup> Most of the tenants in the Hogg Market were sellers of imported goods, paying substantial rents to the Calcutta Corporation. Hence, they required partners who could invest money to keep the trade going. Advertising that had become an important component of the metropolitan markets, left its mark on Calcutta's municipal markets too. In 1914, the Corporation allowed advertisements in the Hogg Market when the shopkeepers began pasting the advertisements of Lipton Tea and Brooke Bond Tea on the railings, and walls of the Hogg Market.<sup>247</sup> In 1913, some sellers complained that some dealers (received goods from the sub-agents of the manufacturing companies at a fixed wholesale rates) were pressuring the oilman storekeepers to sell only particular branded products.<sup>248</sup> These dealers forcibly prevented the stallholders from receiving consignments of any other branded products except the ones they were supplying. They encouraged the sale of specific brands of tinned provisions by giving a bonus to the stallholders who purchased particular quantities of certain brands within a certain fixed period. C. Banks, the European

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<sup>245</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee*, 1926. In 1926, Jadu, a beef stall holder took capital from his mother-in-law to manage his beef stall in the Hogg Market.

<sup>246</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee*, 1939-1940.

<sup>247</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee*, 1931-1932.

<sup>248</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee*, 1913-1914.

Chairman of the Calcutta Corporation took action as it adversely affected the dealers of other branded products in the Hogg Market.

The 'native' stall holders reshaped the derived model of municipal markets in particular ways. They negotiated the capitalist principles of grouping, anti-monopoly, fixed prices, demand and supply and profit enshrined in the model. The 'native' stall holders complained about their problems in conducting trade in the municipal market. The Calcutta Corporation had to pay attention to these complaints. To handle such situations, the Calcutta Corporation had to often deviate from its plan of arranging the stalls by rigidly sticking to the principles of uniformity, anti-monopoly and grouping. For the sake of the stall holders, the Corporation often took a flexible rather than a rigid approach to the question of monopoly. With rivalry amongst themselves, the butchers in the Hogg Market found that they were raising the price of good animals obtained from the *goalas* (milkman). The cost of cattle would reduce if one agency of the Hogg Market butchers purchased cattle instead of many agencies competing against each other. The Calcutta Corporation allowed the butchers to undertake this 'monopolistic' measure to reduce the price of cattle. In another instance, in 1914, the milk vendors of the Hogg Market applied to the PUMSC for raising the cost of milk in keeping with the rise in prices of almost every article. They stated that in 1904, the milk price had been fixed at four *annas* per *seer* (measurement unit) when milk was available in large quantities. By 1914, owing to the stringent regulations of the health department, many cowsheds had been abolished or were very expensive to maintain. Hence the milk vendors couldn't supply milk at the fixed rate as before.<sup>249</sup> The price of milk, rather than being left to be governed by the law of demand and supply was

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<sup>249</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1913-1914*.

deliberately increased by the Calcutta Corporation on receiving such a complaint by the milk stall holders of the Hogg Market. In the interest of the 'native' stall holders, sometimes, a flexible approach was taken towards the principle of grouping in the municipal markets of Calcutta. In 1926, Messrs Aich Brothers complained that they were suffering heavy losses because the *mudis* (grocers) were selling loose tea. To solve this problem, the Corporation allowed Messrs. Aich Brothers to deal in confectionery and loose tea in the Lansdowne Market on payment of extra rent.

In the Leadenhall Market, the stalls were rented out or transferred, when the London Corporation received applications from the public. In case of Calcutta too, this system was followed. However, in many cases, transference of stalls took place without permission from the Calcutta Corporation. The Calcutta Corporation saw this as subletting. However, the Calcutta Corporation had to modify its idea of subletting (i.e., the unlawful sale of the stall by a tenant) to take into account the 'native' stall holders' ways of managing stalls. This was especially so when the Hogg Market was populated by many migrant sellers who constantly moved to and from their native place and Calcutta. A Hogg Market stallholder Sarat Sashi Dey was allegedly reported to have sublet his picture-postcard stall to P. Ghosh. The Corporation accepted Mr. Dey's explanation that he had only allowed his employee P. Ghosh to carry on the business as an act of compassion, during his absence from Calcutta. In another case, the College Street Market stall holder Kailash Chunder Samaddar explained that the PUMSC had misunderstood the situation as he had not sublet his stall. He clarified that he had allowed his *gomastah* (commercial agent) Bhaba Taran Dutt to take care of his stall till he fully recovered from his continued illness. The Hogg Market stallholder John Seth also proved that he had been falsely accused of subletting his stall to Shamdas. He clarified that Shamdas was a legal partner of the

stall. Hence, he maintained the account books of the stall in his native Gujrathi (language of Gujarat) language. These tenants were not ejected but reallocated the stall on payment of a penalty.<sup>250</sup>

Sometimes deviations from the principle of standardisation occurred due to the extraordinary nature of the stall holder's trade. All stalls were meant to receive a fixed amount of current from the Calcutta Municipal Corporation. However, different stalls had different needs requiring modification in this idea of uniformity. The big stallholders like the Clinical Research Association Ltd. and the Calcutta Research Association Ltd. were allowed separate meters on account of their special nature of works. The big cloth dealers like Messrs Jaharlal Pannalal and Company, Kamalalaya, Katyayani Stores, and Baikunthanath Guin were allowed separate meters using seventy-two points each.<sup>251</sup> Dr. S.K. Kar was allowed separate meters at his own cost as his was a medical institution.<sup>252</sup> In 1914, the sellers complained that the European soldiers were taking away articles from the shops without payment. The Corporation requested the Calcutta Port authorities to keep the Hogg Market out of bounds for troops. The complaint from the sellers compelled the Corporation to keep the Hogg Market out of bounds for a section of the very same race for whom the Hogg Market was established in the first place. The stallholders of Block D in the Hogg Market complained of the small size of stalls in their block. The small size of the stalls and passages in the block could not accommodate enough customers, they complained.

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<sup>250</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926*.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid.

<sup>252</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1936-1937*.

They submitted a sketch of the new design of their block.<sup>253</sup> Due to a lack of funds, the PUMSC allowed them to modify the structure of the block on their own.

The 'native' stall holders applied to sell articles prepared by the 'natives' in the municipal markets. This was certainly not the plan as the municipal markets were established as a channel to popularise British manufactured goods in Calcutta. The model intended the municipal markets to be different from the world of the culturally diverse bazars of nineteenth century Calcutta, where articles prepared by 'natives' were sold. However, the items that the 'natives' had been used to since the pre-colonial period, did find a place in the municipal markets. The sellers applied to sell the 'native' products, for which there was a demand from the 'native' buyers in the locality. The municipal markets in Calcutta took on a hybrid character. The 'native' stall holders did not just sell imported but also indigenous products, some of which were sold in precolonial and pre-existing bazars. Along with the confectionery (cakes, biscuits, bread, crackers, lozenges, patty, chocolates) stalls of Atab Mullick, Shamsher Ali, Ekramulla, Rouf, Sayeed, there were country sweets stalls of Fakir Mohammad in the Hogg Market. In the Hogg Market, Chandi Charan Das was allotted a shop for *dasakarma* (articles needed to worship the various Hindu Gods and Goddesses during festivals of Durga puja, Saraswati Puja, Ganesh Puja, etc. These articles include vermillion, betel leaf, mango leaf, five types of gems such as pearl, sapphire, gold as well as turmeric, rice, flower garland, pot, mirror, etc). Pandit Rohini Kanta Vidyabhusan had a stall for ceremonial articles in the College Street Market.<sup>254</sup>

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<sup>253</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1927-1928*.

<sup>254</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926*. Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1931-1932*.

Upendra Nath Ghose had a *dasakarma* stall in the Gariahat Market.<sup>255</sup> In 1927, *rabri* (thickened and sweetened milk), *dahi* (curd), sweetmeats, *kochuri* (a round flattened ball made of fine flour filled with pulped pulses), *jilapi* (deep-fried all-purpose flour batter in circular shapes, soaked in sugar syrup) were sold by Upendranath and Guiram Bose in the Lansdowne Market. Banuary and Arjun Shah sold *jalpan* (refreshment), and things fried in oil, in the Lansdowne Market. *Urya* (from Orissa) sweetmeats, *gaja* (a kind of sweetmeat made in flour) fried in ghee were also sold in the Lansdowne Market.<sup>256</sup> Aminuddin carried on *monihari* (glass bangles) business.<sup>257</sup> In 1937, there were sixty *monihari* stalls in the Hogg Market.<sup>258</sup> Sachipati Chakravarty sold *sherboth* (a cooling drink of sweet, diluted fruit juices) and Kesari Lal and Messri Lal sold *sherboth* and *jardah* (a kind of tobacco) in the Hogg Market.<sup>259</sup> In the College Street Market, Messrs Purna Chandra China and Sona Kampta Prasad and Narayan Shaw carried on the business of *mudis* (grocery store-keeper).<sup>260</sup> Kali Charan Deo sold grocery, *papad* (thin Indian wafer of dried lentils either eaten fried or roasted), *achar* (pickle) in his College Street Market stall.<sup>261</sup> Ali

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<sup>255</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1940-1941*.

<sup>256</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1927-1928*.

<sup>257</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1935-1936*.

<sup>258</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1935-1937*.

<sup>259</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1937-1938*.

<sup>260</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926*. Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1930-1931*.

<sup>261</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1935-1936*.

Hossain sold *semai* (sweet dessert form of vermicelli) in the Hogg Market during *Bakri Id* (annual festival of Muslims ).<sup>262</sup> There were *poddars* such as Radha Shyam Shaw and Tarini Mohan Saha in the Hogg Market.<sup>263</sup> *Poddars*, who were money changers in precolonial bazars of Bengal also found their way into the municipal markets.<sup>264</sup> In the Hogg Market, the oilman store denoted a shop for imported consumer goods products like imported Lipton Tea and Britannia Biscuits. In the College Street Market, the word oilman store was not in use. The word *mudi* and not oilman storekeeper was in prevalence in the College Street Market, since only ‘native’ produced food items and not imported or branded consumer goods were available in the grocery stores of College Street Market. The *moodies* or grocers were active in the nineteenth-century bazars of Calcutta.<sup>265</sup> They trickled into the College Street Market and other municipal markets too. In England the Market Hall had introduced a more regularised relation between the professional market retailer and the consumer. The Market Hall aimed to eliminate the sales practices like hawking goods within the market.<sup>266</sup> The model when applied to Calcutta aimed to do the same. But sometimes the stall holders in the Hogg Market, keen to sell their wares, were found advertising

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<sup>262</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1937-1938*.

<sup>263</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926*. Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1940-1941*.

<sup>264</sup> Sudipta Sen, *Conquest of Marketplaces: Exchange, Authority and Conflict in Early Colonial North India*, PhD Dissertation (The University of Chicago, 1994).

<sup>265</sup> Nitin Sinha, “‘Servant Problem’ and the ‘Social-Subaltern’ of Early Colonial Calcutta,” in *Servants Past: Sixteenth to Eighteenth Century, Vol 1 (New Perspectives on South Asia)* ed. Nitin Sinha, Nitin Verma and Pankaj Jha (Orient Blackswan, July 2019).

<sup>266</sup> James Schmiechen and Kenneth Carls, *The British Market Hall: A Social and Architectural History* (Yale University Press, 1999).

their goods in loud voices, just like the bazars of nineteenth century Calcutta.<sup>267</sup> Even though the municipal markets changed the ways of retailing in the enclosed spaces of municipal markets in Calcutta, the pre-colonial ways of buying and selling somehow found a way of lingering and trickling into the space.

In 1877, to understand why the ‘natives’ preferred the Dhurumtollah over the Hogg Market, the European officers like Superintendent G.W. Bartlett, Health Officer Dr. A.J. Payne, Assistant Health Officer Gilbert Wright and the License Inspector W.M. Jones held a meeting with the ‘native’ sellers.<sup>268</sup> Their demands regarding changes in the marketplace could not be fulfilled as they were embedded within a pre-existing milieu. However, as the municipal market system gradually developed, it became clear to the authorities that it was all very well to draft a municipal market plan where the ‘native’ sellers were expected to forgo their socio-cultural identities and become cut and dry retailers, concerned only with commerce. However, in actual practice, to enable the success of the municipal market, the European and later the ‘native’ elites had to give concessions to the religious, caste, ethnic, and class sensibilities of the

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<sup>267</sup> The Lady Correspondent. “Round Calcutta’s Market, The New Arrival’s First Place of Visit, Bargaining with Native Shopmen, The Sir Stuart Hogg Market of Calcutta.” *The Dundee Courier* (December 28, 1921).

<sup>268</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Report of the Municipal Administration of Calcutta, 1877-1878* (Calcutta: Corporation Press, 1878). These ‘native’ sellers included the Muslim vendors of meat and beef, the Hindu Bengali vendors of vegetables and fruits, the carvers, the guilders, the squatters, and the petty dealers. Some of these petty dealers were the palm leaf *punkah* (fan) sellers, the Hindu Bengali *poddars* (money changers), the *gomastah* (commercial agent) of a shopkeeper, the *amdani wallahs* (middle men buying wholesale from the wholesale merchants and selling to the retailers in small lots) of the fowl market, and the oilman storekeepers. It mentions, Golami, Johuroodeen, Shaik Mytoo, Ahmed Ali Ulla (meat stall holders), Channoo (butcher) and Nusseeroodeen and Ramjan (beef sellers), Dwarkanath Pal, Koojo Mohan Dass, Bepin Behary Nundun, Nagarbashi Shaha, and Sreenath Mukherjee (potato sellers). Besides Soleem (market sircar), Anundo Chunder Biswas (writer of the market office), Gholam Ghouse (Superintendent of meat market), Dnendro Nath Bhudder (head clerk) comprised the ‘native’ staff in the Hogg Market in 1877.

‘native’ stall holders. These concessions modified the econocentric model of municipal markets. It incorporated features of the pre-existing socio-cultural practices of the ‘native’ stall holders into the municipal markets.

There were differences of religion, ethnicity, class and caste amongst the ‘native’ sellers of the municipal markets, which had to be taken into account. These were specific to each municipal market. In 1901, betel seller Surmun Bukut complained that he was being oppressed by the adjoining tenant, Ismail. The latter was removed from the Hogg market.<sup>269</sup> The issue of ‘encroachments’ on public passages and verandahs in the Hogg Market opened up new problems related to ethnic and religious differences of the ‘native’ stall holders. The ethnic differences amongst the stall holders created misunderstandings and confusion in the municipal markets. In 1932, Baboorali Sirdar, a Hogg Market stallholder, complained that he was being accused of ‘subletting’ his stall by the neighbouring stall holders of dates and monkey nuts because of ethnic rivalries. Baboorali felt he was targeted because he was a Bengali Muslim while the dates and monkey nuts sellers were Behari Muslims.<sup>270</sup>

There were more instances of rivalries between stall holders based on their ethnic and caste differences. In 1931, the Hindustani fish vendors of the College Street Market complained to the PUMSC. They stated that they had been paying the same rate of rent as the Bengali fish vendors. Yet the Hindustani fish vendors were not allowed to sell cut pieces of *pona* and *hilsa* fish like Bengali fish vendors.<sup>271</sup> The Bengali fish vendors submitted an application explaining their objection to the above demand of

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<sup>269</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Committee, 1901-1902*.

<sup>270</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1932-1933*.

<sup>271</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1930-1931*.

the Hindustani fish vendors. The Bengali fish vendors stated that when the College Street Market was started, Calcutta Municipal Corporation had attracted them with benefits so that they would sell at the College Street Market instead of at a private market nearby. They had all along carried their trade with reputation. They also stated that since they were related to the *pona* fish importers in Calcutta and were fishermen by caste. They argued that all these qualified them to be the only sellers of cut pieces of *pona* and *hilsa* fish. The PUMSC solved the problem by referring to the practice in the nearby private market.

Even with in the municipal markets, the ‘native’ stall holders could not have forsaken their historically rooted socio-cultural identities. The large ‘native’ presence constantly kept the colonial state’s controlling apparatus in the municipal markets on tenterhooks, especially after the nationalist movements began to engulf the city from the 1920s. The presence of ‘native’ sellers and stall holders, embedded within a pre-existing cultural milieu, imprinted the municipal markets with the socio-cultural plurality that had historically evolved in the city of Calcutta.

The photographs below pictorially depict the metropolitan model of markets and its adaptations and translations in colonial Calcutta.



*Figure 2.2* The plan of the Borough Market, late nineteenth century (Source: The London Metropolitan Archives, UK)



*Figure 2.3* Interior of the Leadenhall Market, London (Source: Stephen Halliday, *London's Markets: From Smithfield to Portobello Road*, The History Press: Great Britain, 2014)

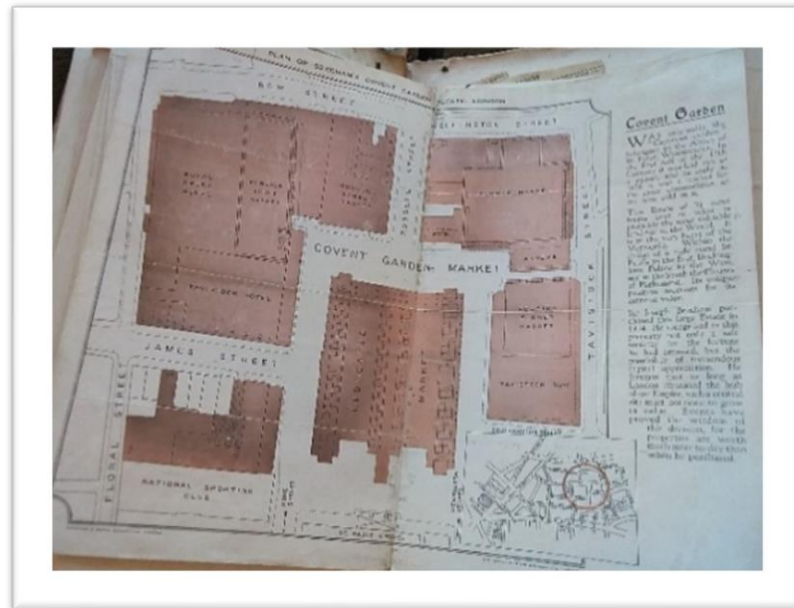


Figure 2.4 The plan of the Covent Garden Market, late nineteenth century (The London Metropolitan Archives, UK)



Figure 2.5 Architecture of the Covent Garden Market (1884) (Source: James Schmiechen and Kenneth Carls, *The British Market Hall: A Social and Architectural History*, Yale University Press, 1999)



Figure 2.6 Architecture of the Hogg Market, 1910 (Source: British Library, UK)

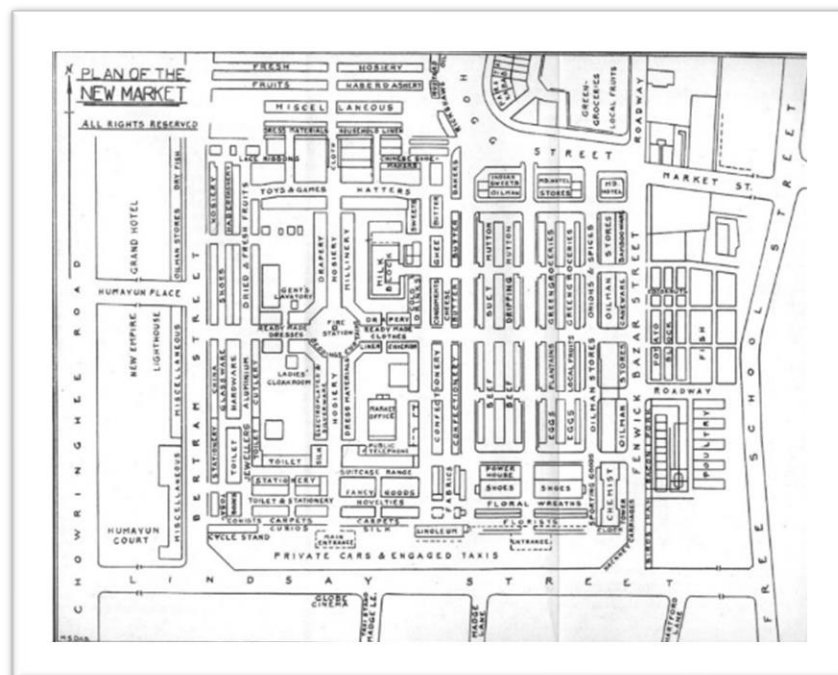
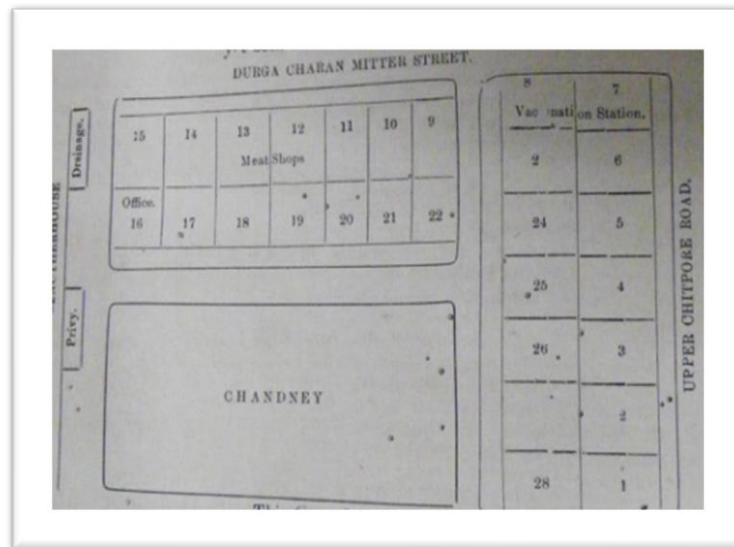
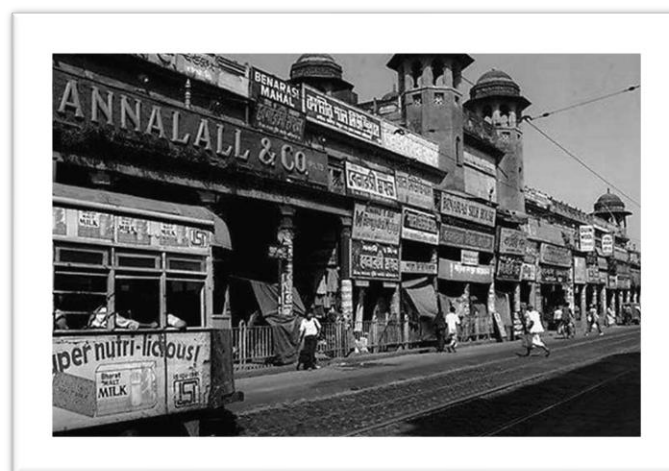


Figure 2.7 A Plan of Hogg Market, mid- twentieth century



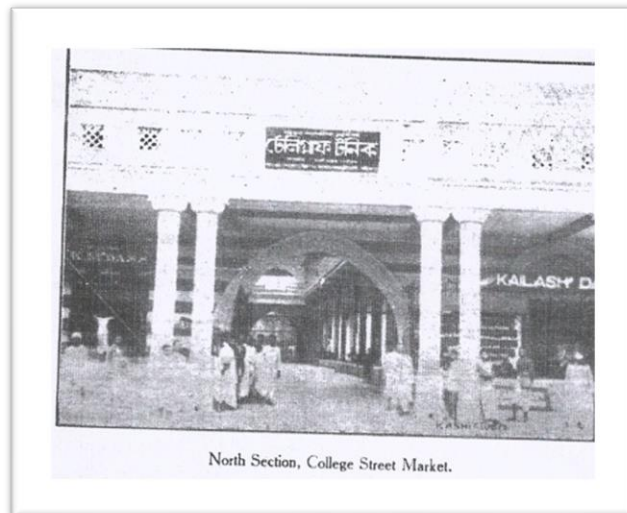
*Figure 2.8* A plan of the Charles Allen Market, Calcutta. Taken from the Annual Report of Calcutta Municipal Corporation, 1910-1911



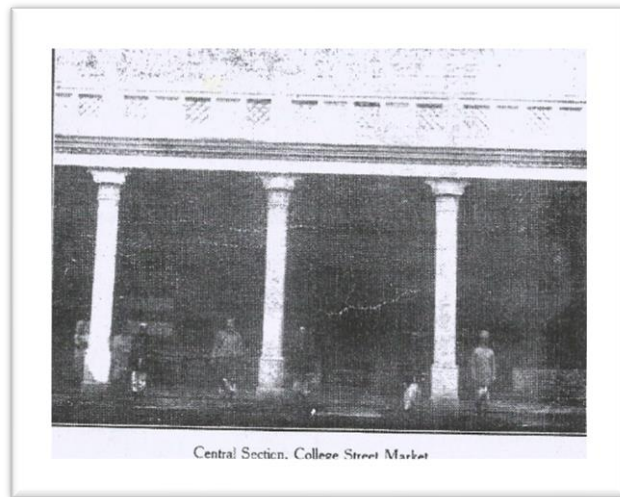
*Figure 2.9* A mid-twentieth century picture of the College Street Market. One can notice its Indo Saracenic turrets and cupolas along the outer façade.



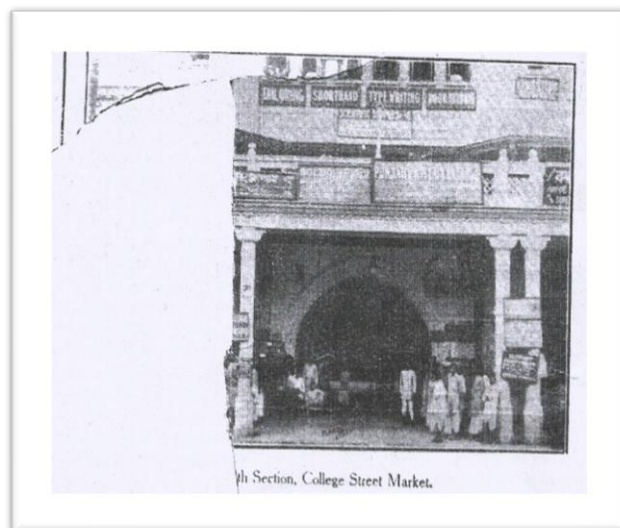
*Figure 2.10* Remnants of the turrets and cupolas and British ionic columns of the College Street Market Indo Saracenic façade.



*Figure 2.11* North Section of the College Street Market, 1924 (Source: The Calcutta Municipal Gazette, 1924)



*Figure 2.12* Central Section of the College Street Market,1924 (Source: The Calcutta Municipal Gazette, 1924)



*Figure 2.13* South Section of the College Street Market, 1924 (Source: The Calcutta Municipal Gazette, 1924)



*Figure 2.14* The Gariahat Market Fish Stalls in the courtyard of the market building

### **The Colony Inscribes the Metropole**

Interestingly, the change in the market scenario in Calcutta through market municipalisation came to affect the metropole itself, revealing the deeply connected histories of the metropole and the colony. The Europeans carried back experiences and accounts of the experiments in the Calcutta market scenario; such narratives surfaced in British newspapers. Newspapers like *Homeward Mail* and the *Dundee Courier*, published in England, played important roles in disseminating political, military and economic news from the East, predominantly India. In 1860, the *Homeward Mail* described the bazars as ‘useless’ and ‘corrupt’.<sup>272</sup> The reportage clearly advocated that the bazars should be replaced by the municipal markets of the kind already established in the metropole. In 1866, the *Homeward Mail* expressed satisfaction over the fact that the Justices of Peace in Calcutta were envisaging the establishment of a municipal market in Calcutta. According to the newspaper, this would transform Calcutta’s market-scape for the better; the paper claimed that

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<sup>272</sup> *The Homeward Mail*, 16<sup>th</sup> October 1860.

markets under the Calcutta Corporation would be ‘clean’, ‘profitable’, and far superior than the Dhurumtollah Bazar and the other bazars in the city.<sup>273</sup> In 1871, the *Homeward Mail* lauded the efforts of Sir Stuart Hogg and Dr. Tonnerre, both of whom were at that time working hard towards the establishment of the municipal market. Amidst the euphoria in the Victorian metropole about the much-celebrated ‘Age of Improvement’, *The Mail* represented the changes projected by the Hogg Market scheme as a spectacular improvement on a chaotic oriental bazar scenario.<sup>274</sup> The *Homeward Mail*, thus, projected the municipal market experiment in Calcutta as a feather in the cap of the supposedly enlightened British metropole. Thus the emergence of the municipal markets in Calcutta became an matter of the celebration of British imperial nationhood.<sup>275</sup> Such reports, indeed, consolidated British national identity by nurturing racial pride in the British Empire.

In 1894, the *Dundee Courier* carried an article by Bessie Maxwell. Her perspective was tinged with her racial and class sensibilities. She described Calcutta’s China Bazar as a ‘narrow lane, with tiny shops, unsatisfactory stock and infrastructure’. On the other hand, she was very appreciative of the S.S. Hogg Market. She called it a general store for providing all the wants of Calcutta. According to her, food generally went stale very quickly in India. She was confident that the inspectors in the Hogg Market ensured the health of the buyers by thoroughly examining the meat, fish, fruits and vegetables.<sup>276</sup> Similarly, a lady correspondent of the *Dundee Courier* in 1921 was

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<sup>273</sup> Anonymous, “A Municipal Market for Calcutta,” *The Homeward Mail* (11<sup>th</sup> June, 1866).

<sup>274</sup> Anonymous, “Sanitary Improvements in Calcutta,” *The Homeward Mail* (14<sup>th</sup> August 1871).

<sup>275</sup> To understand how the deeply connected histories of the metropole and colony read Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose ed., *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World* (Cambridge University Press, 2006): 1-31.

<sup>276</sup> Anonymous, “The Ladies Tour Round the World- Summer in India: Calcutta in the Hot Weather,” *The Dundee Courier* (12<sup>th</sup> July 1894).

very proud of the European-led Calcutta Corporation's efforts at establishing the Hogg Market and keeping it 'scrupulously clean and very organised'. Her racial bias was evident when she characterised the smell in the Hogg Market as quite 'pleasant'. She was very impressed with the stock of silk, dresses, jewels and flowers in the Hogg Market. Arrogating the Hogg Market for an essential Britishness, she characterised it as the greatest asset bestowed on the town of Calcutta by British rule. She made no effort to conceal her racist sensibilities when she expressed her approval of the way in which Europeans got preference over the other customers in the Hogg Market.<sup>277</sup>

The British had made changes to their marketplaces in the metropole in the Age of Improvement. According to them, the metropolitan Market Hall reflected the 'superior' European civilisation. On the other hand, for them Calcutta's bazars represented elements of an 'inferior' Indian civilisation. Through the municipal markets, the colonizers wished to supposedly civilise the everyday spaces of buying and selling in colonial Calcutta. The British newspapers represented the municipal markets, modelled on the 'superior' metropolitan Market Hall as an 'improvement' over the pre-existing markets in colonial Calcutta. It magnified the sense of pride among the British elite about what the British nation could achieve by intervening in the racially and culturally inferior social environment in the colony. This sense of pride in the Empire's 'improvement' efforts in colonial Calcutta's market scenario formed an important element in the formation of British identity and their sense of self. This pride in the imperial mission and its success consolidated British selfhood and nationhood since the connections between British state formation and empire

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<sup>277</sup> The Lady Correspondent. "Round Calcutta's Market, The New Arrival's First Place of Visit, Bargaining with Native Shopmen, The Sir Stuart Hogg Market of Calcutta." *The Dundee Courier* (December 28, 1921).

building stretched long way from the metropole over the high seas. The reportage in British newspapers like the Homeward Mail and the Dundee Courier illustrates the ways in which the Empire also made the metropole.

Quite some time after the Market Halls had been established in the metropole, Michael Marks started penny bazars in the Market Halls at Leeds, Wakefield, Birkenhead, and Warrington.<sup>278</sup> The penny bazars had a subtle sub-text – the metropole occasionally pandering to the romantic orientalism by playfully creating a space of oriental decadence. They revelled in the exoticism of the East to quench their thirst for greater variety and fun in shopping. However, the British newspapers like the Homeward Mail and Dundee Courier silenced this romantic co-option of the decadent bazar and exclusively highlighted the metropolitan model's supposedly civilizing and rationalizing influence on the colony. Their articles glossed over the reverse flow of influence, by giving the impression that it was always the Calcutta markets that were learning from and 'improving' through their association with the metropole.

## **Conclusion**

The colonizers planned Calcutta's municipal markets on the Metropolitan Market Model called the Market Hall. The colonizers perceived the bazars as the 'disordered', 'uncivilized'. They planned the municipal markets on the supposedly 'superior' metropolitan model of market space organization so as to make the market space ordered, rational, sanitary, hygienic, controlled, architecturally bounded, well-

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<sup>278</sup> James Schmiechen and Kenneth Carls, *The British Market Hall: A Social and Architectural History* (Yale University Press, 1999).

illuminated, standardized, impersonal and solely commerce-driven to fulfil their expectations of control and discipline in a colonial market situation. However, the plan, as this chapter argued, was translated in the light of what would be possible in a contingent situation of Calcutta. This chapter has brought out the roles of European and ‘native’ members of Council of Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, European and ‘native’ councillors of the Calcutta Corporation, the *memsahibs*, the European and ‘native’ architects, the administrators of the Calcutta Corporation Market Department, and the ‘native’ permanent stall holders of the municipal markets in determining their adaptations and negotiations with the municipal markets, derived from the metropolitan model of markets. The authorities realised that the differentiated social composition in each neighbourhood, surrounding the municipal markets, had to be taken into account. The municipal markets could not be standardised and homogenised. Instead, each municipal market had to accommodate the specific interests of the neighbourhood. In the process, each municipal market took on a different shape. The specific interplay of race, caste, class, ethnic, gender and religion, of a historically contingent kind, determined the different nature of each municipal market. Furthermore, this chapter has also demonstrated that even the municipal market experiments in colonial Calcutta impacted the metropolitan culture. The next chapter focuses on the changing politics of the Calcutta Corporation as another essential factor that shook the certainty of the municipal market plan.

## **Chapter 3**

### **The Middle Class and the Municipal Market**

#### **Introduction**

The previous chapter showed how a market model derived from the metropole could not be administratively implemented in Calcutta without important modifications that the colonial administrators and the Europeans in the city themselves considered imperative in response to the contingent situation. This chapter brings out the role of the 'native' middle-class in the city - overwhelmingly Bengali - in giving distinctive contours to the municipal markets. The Bengali middle-class welcomed the municipal market experiment as 'modern'. However, there was no invariable convergence between the colonizers' intentions and the Bengali middle-class's imagining of the 'modern' in this regard. This chapter, thus, highlights the Bengali middle-class and its politics as another distinctive determinant that went to make the municipal markets in Calcutta different. The nationalist self-perception of the Bengali middle-class made them assert their difference in the space of municipal markets, too. The nationalist middle-class started contesting the European domination of the municipal markets and sought to stamp the market space with markers of their nationalist selfhood. Through the municipalisation of the marketplace, the colonizers had intended to order Calcutta's market scenario in the interests of British economic imperialism, on the one hand, and the convenience of the Europeans in the city, on the other. However, as this chapter argues, the nationalist takeover of the Calcutta Corporation

promoted a different order in the city's municipal markets. But the chapter also takes care to show that with the pale of nationalism not remaining unitary and communalism raising its head, the communal politics, too, came to pervade the space of municipal market.

### **Embracing the Experiment as Modern**

The middle class enthusiastically took to the new municipal market experiment. The Bengali middle-class welcomed the new experiment of municipal markets as 'modern'. New enclaves of the middle-class started springing up in the southern fringes of the then Calcutta that were being developed by the Calcutta Improvement Trust (CIT). Here the middle-class formed their *paras* (neighbourhood). Their *paras* came up in many areas including in College Street, Lake Road, Park Circus Road and Gariahat Road. The middle-class pushed for new municipal markets in their neighbourhoods or *paras* in these areas. Gradually the middle-class residents in Calcutta took to the municipal markets so much so that they sent letters and petitions to the PUMSC for establishing municipal markets in their neighborhoods. Such petitions to the PUMSC by the middle class for municipal markets in their neighbourhoods led to the establishment of the four other municipal markets in the city, namely the College Street Market, the Lake Market, the Gariahat Market and the Park Circus Market.

The petitions by the Bengali middle-class for a market in their neighbourhood led to the establishment of the Lake Market. However, there were debates among the middle class about the location and naming of the municipal market at Lake Road.<sup>1</sup> In 1930,

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<sup>1</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1930-1931*.

one section of the Bengali middle-class living in the Lake Market neighbourhood wanted the market to be named Radhanath Maity Market. They wanted his contribution towards the development of the municipal markets to be recognised.<sup>2</sup> He had given up these cultivable lands to CIT for ‘improving’ the Lake Road. They felt his sacrifices should be commemorated by erecting his statue in the Lake Road Market. However, another section of the Bengali middle-class felt otherwise. On the recommendation of the Superintendent P.C. Bhattacharjee, the Corporation finally decided to conform to the formal ideals of public markets and have no personal names for the municipal markets. The British were also reacting to the middle class’s management of the municipal markets. In the newspaper ‘Northern Daily’ published in the metropole, the British reacted to the proposed statue of Radhanath Maity in the newly established Lake Road Market.<sup>3</sup> The British newspapers, with their racist frame of mind, characterised the proposed statue of Radha Nath Maity in a ‘cross-legged’ posture with cabbages or the ‘foundations of his wealth’ rising in tiers around him, as an ‘unusual one’.

The middle-class residents of the locality of Ballygunge sent petitions to the PUMSC for a market in their neighborhood. This area had been developed by the activities of CIT. It had a tram line close by, to which the vendors could quickly bring vegetables from the station. However, the middle class did not speak in one voice. There were differences over the location of the Gariahat Market. One section of the middle class

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<sup>2</sup> They felt that Maity’s contribution, as the only cultivator of English vegetables (cabbage) in the city, using the Mudialy dumping ground for the cultivation of cabbage widely sold through his stall in the Hogg Market and enabled the growth of the Hogg Market since its inception, should be given due credit.

<sup>3</sup> *The Northern Daily*, 19 November 1929 and *The Manchester Guardian*, 19 November 1929.

wanted the municipal market at the Ekdalia site.<sup>4</sup> The dominant social groups of the ward did not prefer the Ekdalia site as it was not in a central location, but at the end, near the Ballygunge railway station and the boundary with the Tollygunge municipality. On their request, the CIT was approached by Calcutta Corporation for the lease of land at the junction of Rash Behari Avenue and the Gariahat Road,<sup>5</sup> where the Gariahat Market was established on 16<sup>th</sup> February 1938.<sup>6</sup> In the 1930s, the middle-class residents of Park Circus wrote letters to the editor of the Calcutta Municipal Gazette (CMG) about the establishment of a municipal market in their neighbourhood. For instance, in 1934, R. Biswas, residing on Park Circus Road, wrote to the editor of CMG that ‘respectable’ residents of Park Circus were looking intently to the ‘city fathers’ for a ‘good’ market in the fast-developing area.<sup>7</sup> Moreover they had shifted to Park Circus area after being promised a market by CIT.<sup>8</sup>

The Calcutta Municipal Gazette (CMG) of the Calcutta Municipal Corporation had a role in generating the middle class’s acceptance of the municipal market scheme. The articles in the CMG appreciated the urban planning schemes in America and Europe. These informed the middle class of the ‘improvements’ in the spatial organisation of cities in the West. The CMG published weekly price current lists, advertisements regarding market stall allotments and also provided a forum where the middle class could ventilate their grievances about the marketplaces in the city. This way the CMG

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<sup>4</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1930-1931*.

<sup>5</sup> CIT had improved the area from Chetla to Ballygunge in 3 sections. Section 1 consisted of Tolly Nullah to Russa Road. Section 2 from Russa Road to Gariahat and section 3 from Gariahat to Ballygunge station. See, *Annual Report of Calcutta Improvement Trust, 1929-1930*.

<sup>6</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Report of the Municipal Administration of Calcutta, 1937-1938* (Calcutta: Corporation Press, 1938).

<sup>7</sup> “Letters to the Editor: Park Circus Market,” *The Calcutta Municipal Gazette* (12 May 1934).

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

involved the middle class in the day to day functioning of the municipal markets. In 1925, the CMG carried an article by the Councillor Santosh Kumar Basu requesting the public's cooperation in the smooth administration of the Hogg Market. According to him, the 'benefits' from the milk laboratory, meat inspectors, standard weights and measures, fixed prices and the strict control over the beggars and dogs in the Hogg Market could bear fruit, only when the Calcutta Corporation received cooperation from customers and the tenants of the Hogg Market.<sup>9</sup> In 1926, a Bengali resident of Calcutta wrote a letter to the Editor of the Calcutta Municipal Gazette. He requested the Calcutta Municipal Corporation to install lights in the College Street Market. For the Bengali middle-class, a well-lit College Street Market signified 'order', while darkness made them anxious about possible attacks by hooligans.<sup>10</sup> A dark municipal market also meant difficulties in keeping the place clean, ventilated and sanitary. This demonstrates the extent to which the Bengali middle-class with its own imagining of the modern,<sup>11</sup> was resonating to many of the benchmarks of modernity, underpinning the municipal market system.

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<sup>9</sup> Santosh Kumar Basu, "Municipal Markets," *The Calcutta Municipal Gazette* (October 10, 1925): 801, 803.

<sup>10</sup> Upendra Chandra Raha, "Letters to the Editor: 2 Complaints," *The Calcutta Municipal Gazette* (June 1926).

<sup>11</sup>For a critical understanding of the world of consciousness of the Bengali middle class and its imagining of modernity read for example Sumit Sarkar, *Writing Social History* (Oxford University Press, 1997). Dipesh Chakravarty, *Habitations of Modernity: Essays in the Wake of Subaltern Studies* (The University of Chicago Press, 2002) Tithi Bhattacharya, *The Sentinels of Culture: Class, Education and the Colonial Intellectual in Bengal (1848-1885)* (Oxford University Press: 2005). John McGuire, *Making of a Colonial Mind; A Quantitative Study of the Bhadrolok in Calcutta (1857-1858)* (Australian National University, 1983). Prof. Rai Bahadur Gupta (Professor of Economics, DAV College, Cawnpore), "Municipal Sanitation - II," *The Calcutta Municipal Gazette* (1926). Bipin Chandra Pal, "Calcutta Sixty-Years Ago: Some Personal Reminiscences," *The Calcutta Municipal Gazette* (6<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Issue, 1932).

In 1927, the Bengali playwright and stage actor Amritlal Bose wrote an article for the Calcutta Municipal Gazette. The title of the article ‘A stroll through the Hogg Market’ itself reflects the idea that for the middle class, the municipal market became a space where they could leisurely spend time or saunter around. Amritlal Bose described the Hogg Market as well-illuminated, ‘clean’, ‘tidy’, ‘beautiful’ and ‘pleasant’. The ‘pleasant smell, and cleanliness’ in the fish ranges impressed him.<sup>12</sup> He developed camaraderie with Gostobehary Biswas, the fish king of the Hogg Market, and his son Jyotish, who managed his father’s business. It was not just the clean and aesthetically beautiful space that attracted him to the Hogg Market; what also drew him to the Hogg Market was the charm and beauty of the socially diverse nature of the market. He also enjoyed the eclectic mix of various ethnicities in the Hogg Market. He was very pleased to see European, Anglo-Indian, Madras (from Madras), Parsi, and Bengali men and women shopping together in the Hogg Market. In another article, M. Rafique (the Chairman of PUMSC and elected representative of Muslim constituency called Muchipara) felt a sense of pride in the spirit of unity in diversity of the Hogg Market. In the Hogg Market, he found, the sellers from Afghanistan, Sindh, Bombay, Bengal, Orissa comingling with the Anglo Indian, Punjabi, Madras and Bengali buyers.<sup>13</sup> This kind of social life of ‘native’ communities in the municipal markets was not something that the Europeans were expecting, when implementing the West-derived municipal market plan in Calcutta. This kind of cosmopolitanism was a part of Bengali middle-class modernity. There was no complete convergence between the colonizers and the middle class’s idea of the modern. The middle class, even while accepting the municipal market experiment,

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<sup>12</sup> Amritlal Bose, “A Stroll in the Hogg Market,” *The Calcutta Municipal Gazette* (18 November 1927): 96-98.

<sup>13</sup> M. Rafique, “The Corporation Markets,” *Calcutta Municipal Gazette* (1932): 87-88.

stamped the municipal market scheme with their own perceptions, aspirations and sensibilities. Besides, the middle class in the city were not homogeneous. For some among the middle class, the Hogg Market was a premier market in the East and a distinct attraction because it did not just satisfy demands but also created them.<sup>14</sup> The middle-class in the city indulged in photography, canvas painting and various activities related to music and sports. For pursuing such hobbies, they purchased cameras, canvasses, gramophone record players and sports gears from the Hogg Market. At the same time, other middle-class individuals were critical of the imported foot-gear, sock-suspenders, potato peelers, lampshades and electric torches in the Hogg Market.<sup>15</sup> They described them as ‘fiddle-faddle’, ‘fingle-fangle’ and ‘catch-penny things’.

The colonial middle class began to speak the language of the colonizers on the question of encroachments. From the standpoint of maintaining middle-class control over the municipal markets, the middle class had a stake in maintaining the geometric and perpendicular architecture of the municipal markets. The encroachments became a problem for the upper class and middle class as they posed obstacles to their leisurely walks and unhindered movements in the ordered spaces of the municipal marketplaces.<sup>16</sup> They complained about encroachments in the municipal markets through the Calcutta Municipal Gazette. In 1928, the class-bias of the middle class was revealed when a well-off Bengali resident of the College Street area wrote a letter to the editor of the Calcutta Municipal Gazette. He complained that *chasis* (cultivators and sellers of fruits and vegetables) encroached on the roads and passages of the

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> R.C Bonnerjee, “Reflections in the Hogg Market,” *The Calcutta Municipal Gazette* (17<sup>th</sup> November 1928).

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

College Street Market. This hindered the free movements of the middle class.<sup>17</sup> In 1934-1935, the police arrested the *chasis* after the residents, namely Tarakbandhu Roy and H.L. Murarka complained of encroachments by the *chasis* on Sambhunath Chatterjee Street between two sections of the College Street Market.<sup>18</sup>

In 1936, the middle-class customers complained of the misbehaviour of the fruit stallholders in the Lake Road Market due to trade rivalry and jealousy amongst them.<sup>19</sup> In 1936, the complaint register of the Lake Road Market carried the complaint of a customer, D.K. Chakraborty, about the 'filthy' language used at him by Barkatali, a meat vendor of the Lake Road Market. In 1927, P.C. Bose, a customer, witnessed a man attempting to pickpocket another man in the Entally Market. He accused the collecting sircar of the Entally Market, Lalit Mohan Ganguli, of being hand in glove with the pick pocket.<sup>20</sup> The 'native' middle-class was voicing their class concerns through the complaint registers. This happened every time the ordered, rational, quiet, civil, clean and sanitary atmosphere of the municipal markets was perceived by them to be in jeopardy. The middle-class expectation and management of the municipal markets were at several moments converging with the Western values inscribed in the metropolitan model of markets, even while they were also trying to make the municipal markets their version of ideal markets.

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<sup>17</sup> Upendra Chandra Raha, "Letters to Editor: Along Harison Road and Clive Street," *The Calcutta Municipal Gazette* (25 February 1928).

<sup>18</sup> In 1934, the Police Commissioner received a letter from H.L. Murarka in 1934 about congestion on Sambhunath Chatterjee Street.

<sup>19</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee*, 1936. In 1936 fruit stall holders Noor Mohammad and Sk. Abdul quarrelled over a customer in Lake Road market.

<sup>20</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee*, 1927-1928.

The middle class did not speak in one voice, but was a heterogeneous group. The middle class preferred the municipal market in their neighbourhood over any private market nearby. But there were still some sections of the middle-class who wanted the Lake Road Market as well as a private market in their neighbourhood. In 1935, residents like Laskminarayan Chatterjee, Tinkari Roy, S.C. Chakravarti and Prokash Chandra Nag living in the neighbourhood of Lake Road could not find anything in the Lake Road Market after 11 am. The other private markets in the neighbourhood like the Shahanagore Market and Kalighat Market were not enough. They asked for a new private market at Russa Road. Other residents of Russa Road, like T.N. Chatterjee, thought that another market at Russa Road would be a nuisance. C.C. Chatterjee, a resident of Lake Road, wanted the Calcutta Corporation to develop the Lake Road Market into a good market. Amritlal Mukherjee of the Ratepayers Association remarked that because of the considerable pains the Association had taken in establishing the Lake Road Market, the latter should be appropriately developed to meet the requirements of people. Even Councillors Solomon and D.J. Cohen (Collinga ward) were not in favour of establishing a new market at Russa Road. They felt it would adversely affect the Lake Road Market. The petitions of a section of the middle-class residents for a private Russa Road Market was considered reasonable by Councillors S.M. Yakub, N.C. Paul, B.C. Mallik, B.M. Banerjee and D.N. Ghose. The private market or bazar at Russa Road was allowed, even though it was in the same ward in which the Lake Road Market was situated.<sup>21</sup>

The middle class were displeased with the racial bias in the establishment of the Hogg Market. The Bengali magazine *Basantak* had a role in making its readers aware of the

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<sup>21</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1935-1936*.

racial bias of the Hogg Market. They forged a critical ‘native’ public opinion on the new venture. The establishment of a municipal market was criticised by the *Basantak*, a Bengali magazine in the late nineteenth century.<sup>22</sup> Pran Nath Datta and Girindranath Dutta were the editor and illustrator of the *Basantak* magazine respectively. This magazine printed articles that argued for more ‘native’ involvement in the civic affairs of Calcutta. In 1876, the *Basantak* published a cartoon, titled ‘Six Lakhs Municipal *Bhojbaji*.’ It was a satire on the unnecessary and large expenditure on the municipal market project. In the cartoon, Stuart Hogg (a magician in the cartoon) is depicted as standing with a lid in his hand, around a model of the Hogg Market, on a one-legged round table. In the cartoon, after performing his trick, Hogg tells his audience, ‘Look, a municipal bazar has come up in place of the money. And once you put the lid back, just like the money vanished, the bazar will also vanish in a jiffy’. The audience comprising of Kristodas Pal, a ‘native’ municipal commissioner, asked, ‘the money will not be returned?’ The magician replied, ‘If the money comes back, then why would I be the magician, and why would this be a magic show? Again, six lakhs would be spent, and another bazar would be formed’.<sup>23</sup> The *Basantak* represented the entire project of establishing the Hogg Market as a *bhojbaji* - a glutton-filled project involving the consumption of a vast amount of money by Stuart Hogg and the European commissioners. In the cartoon, the scheme for the municipal bazar was projected as a magic show with Stuart Hogg as a magician and the native commissioners of the Calcutta Corporation as the audience/spectators. It was a critical take on entire venture. According to the *Basantak*, the ‘natives’ would keep

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<sup>22</sup> Sunil Das, “Basantak Patrika o Kolkata Coporation,” *Purasree* (April 1976): 397-399. See also Haripodo Bhowmick, “Hogg Saheber Bajar,” *Purasree* (November 1980): 329-337.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

contributing money for municipal bazars. But the ‘natives’ themselves would not be allowed to visit, see or use them.



Figure 3.1 Cartoon in *Basantak* (Source: Purasree, April 1976)

Another cartoon in the *Basantak* came up against the background of the decision of the Justices of Peace of Calcutta Corporation to buy the Dhurumtollah Bazar for seven lakh rupees. The cartoon was captioned ‘*Bahe sath lak, sath lakh, nebo bajar, korbo byabar, hobe shobe taak, moder berring benche thaak*’. It was a critical take on the unnecessary expenditure of seven lakhs to buy up the Dhurumtollah Market. According to the article, it was almost as if the purchase of the Dhurumtollah Bazar was a business venture through which Stuart Hogg wished to make the Hogg Market

profitable. The article contended that, in the pointless fight between the municipal commissioners and the proprietor of the Dhurrumtollah Bazar, *phoron* (petty retailers receiving their supplies from the wholesale traders and brokers) like butchers made lots of money and unintentionally came out as the real winners.<sup>24</sup>

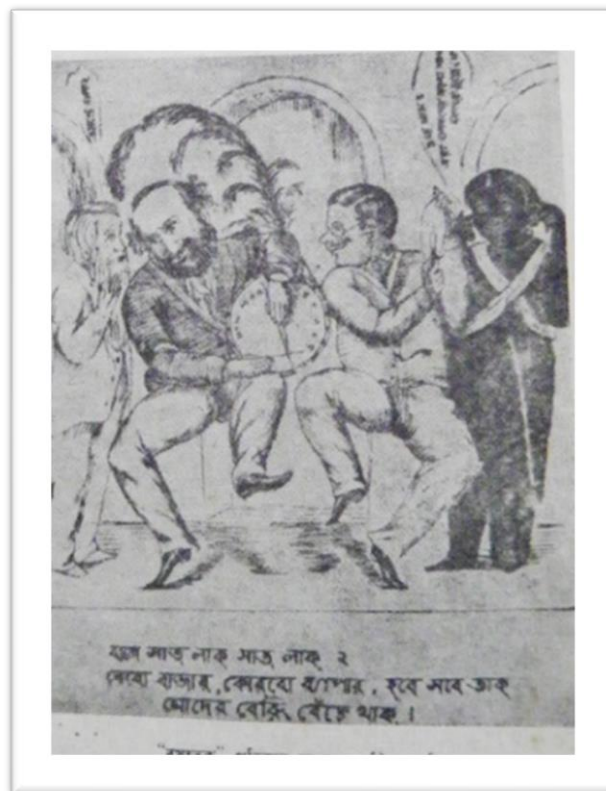


Figure 3.2 Cartoon in *Basantak* (Source: *Purasree*, April 1976)

In 1877, Shishir Kumar Ghosh, a noted journalist and founder of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, wrote the play titled *Bajarer Ladai*. In this play he projected the tussle between Stuart Hogg (Chairman of the Justices of Peace and the Police Commissioner

<sup>24</sup> *Purasree*, 21 April 1976 See Sunil Das, “Basantak Patrika o Kolkata Coporation,” *Purasree*, April 1976. See Haripodo Bhowmick, “Hogg Saheber Bajar,” *Purasree*, November 1980. Butcher type *phorons* made lots of money, putting to reality the proverb ‘*porer dhone dhobar naat*’.

of Calcutta) and Heeralal Seal (the Dhurumtollah Bazar proprietor).<sup>25</sup> In the first scene of the play, the playwright projects the racial prejudices of Stuart Hogg. He was ready to spend a lot of money for services in the Hogg Market, only if these catered to the comforts of the Europeans. On the other hand, he was not ready to spend even a tiny amount for providing any facilities for the Bengali buyers. In the second scene of the play, the playwright depicts that straight after its establishment, the Hogg Market's profits did not match up to the expectations of the Calcutta Corporation. Hence, Heeralal Seal was asked to share the profits from the Dhurumtollah Bazar with the Calcutta Corporation, to which Heeralal refused. Stuart Hogg hired Hindustani Muslim *paharawalas* (guards) to physically coerce the 'native' sellers of sweetmeat, and brinjals into selling at 'Naya Bazar' or Hogg Market instead of the Dhurumtollah Bazar. In the third and final scene, Stuart Hogg asked the Calcutta Corporation commissioners to sanction Rs. 20,000 to demolish the Dhurumtollah Bazar. In the play, the wish of the 'natives' of Calcutta was expressed by the Indian members of the Imperial Legislative Council like Romesh Chandra Mitra and the Council of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal like Durga Churn Law. They remarked that Stuart Hogg could establish the Hogg Market with his own money as the 'natives' did not want any part. At the end of the play, the English Justices, on whom Hogg had so much faith, fail him. The Justices decided that it would be unlawful to establish a municipal market just because Stuart Hogg was saying so; the right thing to do would be to discuss and debate and then decide on the question.<sup>26</sup> The play ended with Stuart Hogg leaving the meeting and the municipality. The 'natives' hoped and wished that the Dhurumtollah Bazar would not be dismantled. In the play, their wish was

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<sup>25</sup> Mahatma Shishir Kumar Ghosh, 'Bajarer Ladai', *Purasree* (22 November 1980).

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

fulfilled, but not in actuality as the bazar was bought by Stuart Hogg and amalgamated with the Hogg Market. As has already been noted, the 'native' elites were initially against the establishment of the Hogg Market. In the play, Shishir Kumar Ghosh expressed his dissatisfaction over the creation of the racially segregated Hogg Market. The 'native' control of the Hogg Market was a wish fulfilment. The play also articulated the expectation of the 'native' elites. It was the expectation of control over the Hogg Market through the municipal corporation, which was fulfilled in 1924. The play was the anticipation of the coming to the fore of the nationalists in the Calcutta Corporation.

### **The Inscriptions of the Nationalist Calcutta Corporation**

In the early twentieth century, the middle class of colonial Calcutta accepted the municipal markets as a 'modern'. They also stamped it with their own class sensibilities. Even though the middle class appreciated the municipal market as 'modern', their growing nationalist self-perception made them assert their difference with the colonizers in the space of municipal markets too. Moreover, it was the middle class's participation that inscribed the nationalistic spirit on the space of municipal markets. One of the ways in which the nationalists contested the European domination of the space of the municipal market was in terms of transforming the nature of merchandise distributed through the municipal markets. The municipal market, derived from the metropolitan model was intimately tied to the propagation of the western manufactured products, and the sustenance of economic interests which were integral to an imperialist order. On the other hand, the municipal markets especially the College Street Market was transformed by the nationalist Corporation of Calcutta into a nucleus to encourage the sale of *swadeshi* (literally means

belonging to or made in one's own 'native' land; specifically, it was a part of the Indian national movement, promoting the boycott of foreign goods and favouring Indian industries) goods and facilitate the development of Indian industries. The nationalist Calcutta Corporation sought to convert the buyers into 'moral consumers'. The concept of moral consumption denoted a cultural shift in the logic of unlimited consumption of Western goods, underpinning the West-derived model of municipal markets. According to the nationalist Calcutta Corporation, the indigenous or *swadeshi* goods in the municipal markets should be preferred by Indians even if they were more expensive and inferior in quality compared to their imported substitutes. The consumption of goods in the municipal markets was tinged with ideas of patriotism, moral and national duty. These ideas were meant to guide the middle class's decision regarding which goods to buy and where to buy them.

The nationalists were already aware of the difficulties of encouraging the sale of Indian cloth through municipal markets under the European-dominated Calcutta Corporation. During the First World War, the nationalists like Rai Mahendra Chandra Mitra Bahadur, Amulyadhane Addy and A.C. Banerjee proposed the sale of Indian industrial and handloom cloth through the municipal markets to solve the issues of supply shortage and price rise of imported *dhuties* (garment for the lower body) and *saris* (traditional Indian dress for women).<sup>27</sup> However, this was not allowed by the European members of the Calcutta Corporation. According to the European members like Wyness, and Ley, the Calcutta Corporation Markets could only restrict itself to distribute and publicise *saris* and *dhuties* (produced by Rallis Brothers) once imported. They clearly spelt out that the supply of these imported products was imperial issue and not a local one. In hindsight one realises what they meant by this

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<sup>27</sup> *The Calcutta Gazette*, 31<sup>st</sup> July 1918.

statement. Britain was the leader of the global capitalist economy between 1830 and 1925.<sup>28</sup> These imported goods were part of the export trade through which Britain earned export surplus and was part of the trade circuit that had made for its world domination.<sup>29</sup> This trade balance and Britain's position in the world economy seemed to be at risk if the Calcutta municipal markets would start selling Indian handloom cloth instead of imported British *saris*, *dhutis*, shirts, and jaconets.

As soon as the Swaraj Party took over the Calcutta Corporation in 1924, the nationalists like Dr. B.C. Ghosh and Rai Lalit Kumar Mitra wished to promote Indian industry by a twenty per cent reduction of stall rents in Calcutta's municipal markets. This way they wished to reduce prices of the *swadeshi* goods in order to popularise the Indian made goods over the cheaply priced imported goods from Britain.<sup>30</sup> Dr. B.C. Ghosh remarked that though there was a demand for indigenous goods, the restrictions imposed by the colonial government forbade their sale. He cited the example of the stalls in the railway stations of Bengal. The stall keepers of the railway stations were allowed to only stock Virginia cigarettes and no other brand of cigarettes. However, stall keepers stocked *biris* (cigarettes) secretly for their East Bengali customers.<sup>31</sup> This secrecy could be done away with by openly selling *swadeshi* goods in the municipal markets to benefit the buyers, sellers and in the interest of the nation. Councillor Upendra Chandra Das Gupta (Ward Garden Reach) remarked that while countries like Germany and Canada were protecting their home industries, the British Government in India gave no such protection to the Indian

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<sup>28</sup> Utsa Patnaik, "India in the World Economy 1900-1935: The Inter War Depression and Britain's Demise as World Capitalist Leader," *Proceedings of Indian History Congress*, Vol. 74 (2013): 682-702.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Committee*, 1924.

industries. The suggestion that the municipal markets could form a nucleus to encourage the sale of *swadeshi* goods reflects the way in the municipal market was getting tied to the nationalist project. The 'native' middle-class felt any loss of revenue would be more than amply compensated by the benefit that might accrue to their country.

Not all the 'native' elites were in favour of encouraging *swadeshi* goods through the municipal markets. Even when Commissioner Bepin Chandra Mallik favoured reserving stalls in the municipal markets for *swadeshi* goods, he did not think reducing stall rents would reduce the prices of *swadeshi* goods since the price in the municipal markets was regulated by the prices prevailing in the other markets. Professor J. Banerjee was in favor of encouraging *swadeshi* or indigenous industries but did not think that this was a proper method of encouraging them. Since the Calcutta Corporation did not stand for any particular party, he felt that preferential treatment on these lines would breed ill-feelings among the stallholders and cause revenue loss. The influence of nationalistic politics on the administration of the municipal markets got the European members anxious. The European members like Stewart Smith expressed their displeasure by accusing the nationalist Calcutta Corporation of favouring one section of sellers and buyers over another section. The European members wanted to stick to the plan of a municipal corporation with a duty to protect all in the city 'equally'.<sup>32</sup> In 1925, the CEO of Calcutta Corporation and Campbell Forrester (Bengal Chamber of Commerce) questioned the definition of *swadeshi* itself. According to some European councillors, in the cloth industry, the terminology 'swadeshi' was somewhat misleading as the yarn was foreign, but weaving was done in this country. The anxiety of the European councillors clearly

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

reflects how far the nationalists had deviated from the intention of the metropolitan model. In 1926, the PUMSC under the nationalist Calcutta Corporation, promised to provide the tenants of the College Street Market every sort of encouragement and trade facilities they were always expecting in order to promote *swadeshi*. While the Hogg Market served British industrial interests by encouraging the sale of imported British goods like silk clothes, cloth hosiery (piece goods such as *lungies*, cotton tweed, bedcovers, table cloths, quilts, towels, napkins, and zephyr cloth, etc.) manufactured in the metropole; the nationalists on coming to power in the Calcutta Corporation promoted *khadi* (Indian homespun cotton cloth) and *swadeshi* goods very vigorously through the municipal markets especially the College Street Market. The nationalist Calcutta Corporation granted reduced rents to stalls that were purely Indian concerns in the College Street Market.

Even under the nationalists, the space of municipal markets was gendered. From the 1920s the Calcutta Corporation Market Committee was dominated by middle-class men. The middle-class dominated nationalist Calcutta Corporation administered the marketplace in such a way that women's access to municipal marketplaces was governed by the various rules and regulations of patriarchy. They were egged on by the other Bengali middle-class, even those who were not part of the Calcutta Corporation. Trailokyanath, a member of the Bengali upper-middle-class, wanted the *bhadramahila*'s (middle-class women) shopping expeditions to be within the rubric of responsible household management just like those of the Victorian women he had seen in England.<sup>33</sup> The middle-class women were restricted in their roles as shopkeepers and sellers in the municipal markets. The stall property instead of

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<sup>33</sup> Simonti Sen, *Travels to Europe: Self and the Other in Bengali Travel Narratives, 1870-1910* (Orient Longman: Delhi. 2005).

following rules of individual ownership was owned by the male members - husband, son, brother, or brother-in-law.<sup>34</sup> According to the Dayabhaga school of thought prevalent in Bengal, on the death of the husband, the property passed on to the son.<sup>35</sup> The Dayabhaga system allowed the son to inherit property only on the death of father. Under this system, after death of the husband, the wife acted as guardian of the market stall till their son(s) attained maturity. The dictates of *Faraizi* or Muslim law of inheritance guided the property rights of Muslim women.<sup>36</sup> In some cases, the middle and upper-class Hindu and Muslim women, as wives, daughter, mothers, did inherit stalls from their fathers, father in laws, brothers or husbands. Even then, they refused to actually carry out the role of shopkeepers in the stalls. Instead, they appointed a male agent on their behalf. Their actions reveal their adherence to social norms of *purdah* (the practice of seclusion practiced by some women in accordance with the custom of the particular community to which she belongs).

The introduction of the concept of charity inside the municipal market space was another way in which the nationalists deviated from the municipal markets, based on the metropolitan model. Under Chittaranjan Das's mayorship, the concept of *daridra*

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<sup>34</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee 1934-1935*. Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee 1927-1928*. In 1928, after death of husband, Smt. Peomani Devi's name was recorded as the owner of Hogg Market stall till their minor son Sudhanna Kumar Chakravati attained maturity. In 1934, Hogg Market widowed stall owner Smt. Saila Bala Devi was represented by her agent B. Samanta. In 1927 in the College Street Market, when Narayan Chandra Dutt died, his widow Nani Bala Devi was left as the proprietor of spice stall, but managed by her brother Nitai Chandra Mullick as agent. In 1927, Smt. Radhabala Kundu wanted to register the College Street Market stall in the name of her son-in-law Kartick Chandra Khatick, after the death of her husband Anukul Chandra Kundu.

<sup>35</sup> Amiya Bagchi, *Merchants and Colonialism* (Oxford University Press 2019).

<sup>36</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1932-1933*. After the death of Nawabjan Molla, his wife Khairanessa Bibi and sister Subjan Bibi, inherited his stalls in the Hogg Market which was managed by Shaik Romjan.

*narayan* (service to the poor is equivalent to service to God),<sup>37</sup> percolated to every level of the Calcutta Municipal Corporation, including the municipal markets in the city.<sup>38</sup> Two of his projects - free medical relief and pure and cheap milk supply found a place the municipal markets in Calcutta. The Cooperative Milk Society, providing subsidised milk to different parts of the town, was encouraged to lease stalls in the municipal markets. The Ayurvedic (traditional system of medicine with historical roots in the Indian subcontinent) and Homeopathic Charitable Dispensaries were provided stalls in the municipal markets at reduced rents. These charitable dispensaries provided free medicines and first aid to the public, staff and poor stallholders. Kaviraj Chandra Mallick's Ayurvedic Charitable Dispensary in the College Street Market, Dr. Kumar Krishna Bhattacharya's Homeopathic Dispensary and Captain S.K. Bose's Laxmi Pharmacy in the Entally Market and Dr S.K. Kar's Dispensary in the Lansdowne Market catered to the medical emergencies and accidents that were not uncommon in the municipal markets where people stayed day and night.<sup>39</sup> Such notions of charity transformed the colonizer's intention to allow the impersonal forces of capital to play themselves out in Calcutta municipal marketplaces. The municipal market had been modelled upon capitalist rationality. But was the principle of charity quite compatible with that? This is being suggested because with the emergence of capitalism in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries in Europe, notions of charity had been marginalized from the places of buying and selling. It was concentrated in the common chest, bureaucratically and directly controlled by the Church. All kinds of non-profitable activities had been removed from the

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<sup>37</sup> "Deshbandhu Chitranjan Das," *Purasree* (6 September 1986)

<sup>38</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1927-1928*.

<sup>39</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1927-1928, 1934-1935, and 1936-1937*.

marketplaces in Europe. The opening of charitable dispensaries inside Calcutta's municipal markets by the Calcutta Corporation under Mayor C.R. Das transformed the profit-oriented template of the municipal markets.

C.R. Das's concept of service to the *daridra narayan* (service to the poor is equivalent to service to God) was linked to his concept of nationalism that located the role of the people at the heart of *swaraj* (independence). He had an inclusive vision of the nation, even while recognising socio-cultural differences.<sup>40</sup> He believed in a self-reliant Bengali nationalism and regionally defined nation of Bengal that would not blindly imitate Indian nationalism. This ideology left its traces on the municipal markets too. Since his nationalism wished to give full expression to the ideal of the particular culture that Bengal had been used to for hundreds of years, he brought in changes to the municipal markets that were very different from the metropolitan model of markets, derived from the West. The way in which nationalists like C.R. Das were opening charitable dispensaries inside the municipal market, shaped the market in ways very different from what the original planners had intended. C.R. Das left a legacy because, after him, other charitable organisations also found a place within the municipal markets. In 1934, Khadi Mandal, a charitable organisation registered under the Charitable Institutions Act of 1920, was granted a stall in the College Street Market.<sup>41</sup> In 1937, Ramakrishna Institute of Culture, a humanitarian organisation, was given a stall in the College Street Market.

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<sup>40</sup> Semanti Ghosh, *Different Nationalisms: Bengal, 1905-1947* (Oxford Unity Press, 2017).

<sup>41</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1934-1935*.

### **The Distinctive College Street Market**

This section highlights how the middle-class and the nationalist Calcutta Corporation reconstituted the College Street Market in such a way that it became different from the Hogg Market. The two markets, Hogg Market and College Street Market were two distinctive and different kind of cultural enclaves which became very different from each other. The different nature of the neighbourhoods also had a role to play in determining the nature of the difference. The Hogg Market was in the European quarter of city, where apart from the Europeans, the affluent Bengalis, Marwaris and Parsees gravitated towards it. The cultural taste that was inculcated in the Hogg Market in terms of merchandise, the display was oriented towards western/westernised preferences. On the other hand, the College Street Market was the haunt of the 'native' upper-class and middle-class in the city. The College Street Market was established in 1914 at the behest of the middle-class.<sup>42</sup> Dr. Haridhan Dutt (elected from Muchipara) recommended that a municipal market should be established at College Street.<sup>43</sup> The cultural taste that was nurtured in the College Street Market was geared towards encouraging the buying and selling of Indian goods, and towards encouraging moral and patriotic consumption. The middle-class were consumers of the British manufactured goods available in the Hogg Market. However, their growing sense of moral and patriotic consumption, especially from the 1920s, led to their fashioning of the College Street Market in a different way. This also reflected in the market committee meetings of the Calcutta Corporation. The use of the Gregorian calendar in the market committee meetings were tied to the British Empire's belief that conversion of subjects into modern consumers depended on

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<sup>42</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1914-1915*.

<sup>43</sup> S.W Goode, *Municipal Calcutta: Its Institutions in their Origin and Growth* (Macmillan, 2005).

instilling a formal and disciplined temporal structure. Under the nationalist Calcutta Corporation, the municipal markets (especially the College Street Market) followed a Bengali calendar,<sup>44</sup> to create a temporal experience for forging a national community.

The upper and middle-class Bengalis had roles in nationalising the space of the College Street Market. Ranjit Kumar Banerji of Katyayani Stores, Sukumar Ranjan Das of the Khaddar Association and Radha Kanta Dey of Lakshmialay,<sup>45</sup> applied for *swadeshi* cloth, *khaddar* and hand-spun cloth stalls in College Street Market.<sup>46</sup> Khaddar Association was granted an office and exhibit room for all patterns of *khadi*.<sup>47</sup> In 1925, Hem Chandra Rakshit, the officer-in-charge of the Khadi Department of the Prabartak Sangha applied for a stall to sell *khaddar* in the College Street Market.<sup>48</sup> In 1925, Kiran Bose, Secretary of the Nari Sakti Samavaya Mandali applied for a *khaddar* stall in the College Street Market.<sup>49</sup>

Besides *khadi*, the nationalist Calcutta Corporation also encouraged other Indian products in the College Street Market. Murshidabad Silk Stores and Bengal Silk

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<sup>44</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1931-1932*. In August 1931, in College Street Market, Purna Chandra Ghosh and Jatindra Nath Ghosh wanted a sweetmeat shop in E block. The Committee fixed their allotments from Bengali Samvad 1338 corresponding to 1<sup>st</sup> September 1931 of the Gregorian calendar.

<sup>45</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1927-1928*.

<sup>46</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926*.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Prabartak Sangha on Bow Bazar Street was founded by Motilal Roy, a revolutionary nationalist, to harmonise the spiritual and material values of life.

<sup>49</sup> Nari Sakti Samavaya Mandali had its office on Vidyasagar Street. It was started by Lady Abala Bose, wife of scientist Jagdish Chandra Bose in 1919, as a non-profit voluntary society for education and training of widows, girls, and women.

Weavers Association,<sup>50</sup> Messrs. Paul and Company<sup>51</sup> and Mohini Mohan Kanjilal and Brothers,<sup>52</sup> were granted stalls in the College Street Market for Bengal silk, silk *khaddar* and Benarasi silk sarees respectively. To promote village industry, the Bengal Silk Weavers Association was given a stall at concessional rent.<sup>53</sup> The Bengal Cooperative Home Crafters Association was granted a stall in the College Street Market. It sold agricultural products and vegetables produced by the Cooperative Marketing Society.<sup>54</sup> In 1937, the Commercial Museum and Health Publicity Department of the Calcutta Corporation were given stalls in the College Street Market to exhibit the manufactures of small and large-scale industries (paper, rubber, porcelain) and raw materials (like vegetables, minerals, and animals).<sup>55</sup> Their intention was to popularise products of all classes of indigenous industries and keep people informed about the industrial position of the country in terms of its raw material resources, possibilities of new sectors, chances of overproduction and unhealthy competition.

In the Hogg Market, the stalls specializing in consumer goods manufactured in Britain were called oilman stores. On the other hand, the *mudir doka*n (grocer's shop) was

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<sup>50</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926*.

<sup>51</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1931-1932*.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> For an account of the Indian handloom stalls in the municipal markets refer to Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926 and 1931-1932*.

<sup>54</sup> For an account of the voluntary associations in the Calcutta's municipal markets, refer to Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1931*.

<sup>55</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Report of the Municipal Administration of Calcutta, 1943-1944* (Calcutta: Corporation Press, 1944).

preferred over the ‘oilman stores’ in the College Street Market. This is because the Bengali upper-class and middle-class preferred the term *mudir doka*n over the oil man stores. Rwitendranath Tagore, for instance, argued that the oilman stores signified glamour and were unsatisfying and violence-ridden since they sold the truckloads of manufactures from all over the world.<sup>56</sup> He preferred the indigenous word *mudir doka*n as it denoted a sacred place where Indians could procure the ingredients (ghee, rice, oil) to nourish the Indian body and soul. Besides, only the *mudir doka*n was popular in the College Street Market because none of the British- manufactured consumer durable goods were sold in the College Street Market.

Delmonte (canned fruits and vegetables) apples, flour, currants, sausages, almonds, grapes, figs, grapefruit and *kesur* (saffron) from America, Japan, South Africa, Kabul, Java, China respectively could be found in Hogg Market.<sup>57</sup> The College Street Market, on the other hand, promoted a large variety of fruits and vegetables produced and imported from various parts of India. These included - butter from Aligarh and Dimapur, Shillong, Darjeeling, Bombay, Jessore, Pabna, Darbangha, and Muzzafarpur; oranges from Nagpur, Bombay, and Darjeeling; rice in the following varieties - Dinajpur, Patni, Nagra, Jhingasal, Gourasamanta, Hilly, Kalma, Kamini, and Peshawari. The Hogg Market promoted British manufactured consumer products. On the other hand, the College Street Market encouraged Indian consumer products. The British brands like Lipton Tea, Brooke Bond Tea, Peak Freans Biscuits, Huntley and Palmer Biscuits, Britannia Biscuits and Carr's Biscuits in various flavors (cheese, *nimki*,<sup>58</sup> cream cracker, ginger nut, nice, mixed, charm, petit beurre, guava, cheddar

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<sup>56</sup> Rwitendranath Tagore, *Mudir Doka*n, ed. Ranjit Sen (Aruna Publications, 2008), pp.1-8.

<sup>57</sup> See “Municipal Market Price Current,” *The Calcutta Municipal Gazette*, (January 1936).

<sup>58</sup> Nimki is made of flour doughs, a savoury that gets its name from ‘namkeen’ or salty taste.

cream and thin arrowroot) could be purchased from the Hogg Market. On the other hand, the College Street Market, stocked only Indian made consumer goods like Ispahani Tea, Tosh's Tea, Lily Biscuits and K.C. Basu and Company's corn flour and barley powder.<sup>59</sup> Their low-priced crisp, fresh and nourishing biscuits in a variety of flavours were popular amongst the middle class in the city. These flavours included - lily plain, cream, filled, sweet, spicy, salty, marie, mixed, nice, thin arrowroot, petit beurre, charm, tea, milk, cabin, school, cheese, gem and zoological. There were also some flavours to suit the Indian religious beliefs (i.e., without egg and animal fat, along with corn flour and barley powder),

The middle-class notions of moral and patriotic consumption came to be inscribed on the municipal markets. These concerns of the middle class framed the College Street Market in distinctive way. This can be gleaned in the following remark. In 1932, Councillor M. Rafique mentioned that 'the College Street Market, in the heart of the Bengali business quarter of the city, served the needs of those who lived far out in the city's northern parts, for whom the Hogg Market was not always a convenient shopping centre'. He added that the 'College Street Market specialised in fresh fruits, vegetables, clothes, dress materials, shoes and outfits almost exclusively of Indian origin and manufacture, with several stationary shops but very few dealing in imported luxury goods because Bengali patriotism would not have it otherwise'.<sup>60</sup>

There was another way in which, under the nationalist Calcutta Corporation, the College Street Market drifted away from the colonizer's intention to control and discipline the marketplace. According to the Calcutta Market Act of 1923, the

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<sup>59</sup> See "Municipal Market Price Current," *The Calcutta Municipal Gazette*, (January 1926). "Market Price Current," *The Calcutta Municipal Gazette*, (1931).

<sup>60</sup> M. Rafique (Chairman, Public Utilities Markets Committee), "The Corporation Markets," *The Calcutta Municipal Gazette*, (1932).

municipal markets were meant only for the sale and purchase of articles/goods/products.<sup>61</sup> However, the nationalist Calcutta Corporation allowed the various voluntary associations to setup their offices in the stalls of the College Street Market. After the Swaraj Party came to power in the Calcutta Corporation, the voluntary associations got a chance to rent stalls in the College Street Market to popularise and spread the nationalistic message. Sramajibi Siksha Parishad (Central Committee of Workingmen's Association) applied for a stall in the College Street Market to function as the office and library of the Parishad.<sup>62</sup> The Editor of Moazzin, an organ of Central Khadeem Ul Ensan Samity, applied for and was allotted a stall in the College Street Market to sell its magazine Moazzin.<sup>63</sup> The All Bengal Youngmen's Association was allotted a stall in the College Street Market.<sup>64</sup> Abhoy Asram applied for a stall in the College Street Market.<sup>65</sup> It was considered a helpful institution by the nationalist Calcutta Corporation. It was given a stall on concessional rent because of its program of encouraging rural self-sufficiency, employment and Indian entrepreneurship.<sup>66</sup> Jatindra Nath Moitra, Vice-President of Faridpur Seva Samity, applied for and was allotted a stall in the College Street Market.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Calcutta Markets Act 1923.

<sup>62</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926*.

<sup>63</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1930-1931*.

<sup>64</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1927-1928*.

<sup>65</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1928-1929*.

<sup>66</sup> Abhoy Asram was a social service organisation founded by Dr Prafulla Chandra Ghosh, Haripodo Chattopadhyay, in 1910 in Comilla. It was rechristened as Abhoy Asram by Gandhi in 1921.

<sup>67</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1928-1929*. Faridpur Samiti was the namesake of Brati Samiti, formed by Monoranjan Guha Thakurta, hawked swadeshi goods.

### **The Stamp of the Nationalist Movements**

The colonizers had expected that the municipal markets, modelled on the metropolitan markets would meticulously order the marketplace. The planning intended to plug all kinds of disorder, including any kind of political disorder. However, during the nationalist movements, the demonstrations and what the colonizers perceived as the unrest of the street made inroads into the municipal marketplace. The intention had been to politically discipline the place in such a way that the possibility of any unsettling of the colonial order of things would be preventable. This intention to be able to control everything in the marketplace was overturned during the nationalist movement. The anxiety to maintain political order, one of the constituent anxieties that had made for municipalization of markets, in the first place, was destabilised and shaken by the nationalist movement.

During the nationalist movement, the Hogg Market emerged even more starkly as the site that promoted British imperial and capitalist interests. In the face of the nationalist opposition, the English traders wanted more control to be exercised by the British government over the Calcutta markets.<sup>68</sup> During the nationalist movements, there were pressures from the manufacturers and traders in the metropole to tighten the control over the markets in Calcutta.<sup>69</sup> Even after such requests from the metropolitan capitalists, the wave of nationalist protests was so strong that business in the Hogg Market had to be completely halted during the countrywide *hartals* declared by the nationalist movements. For the few shops that did remain open, the colonial state had to station additional police sergeants inside the Hogg Market. The Hogg Market

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<sup>68</sup> "Manchester Trade," *The Manchester Courier*, (2 September 1915).

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

became a site of the opposing forces of colonialism and nationalism. On the day of the countrywide hartal on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1928, all the shops in the Hogg Market except for the meat stalls, were shut. Manindra Nath Ganguly, the Captain of Congress Volunteer questioned the meat vendors about why they had kept their stall open on the day of the countrywide hartal. M.N. Ganguly was taken to the police by a European buyer in the Hogg Market.<sup>70</sup> During the Civil Disobedience Movement, after the arrest of Mayor J.M. Sengupta, all shops in College Street and Cornwallis Street, including the College Street Market, were closed for the day.<sup>71</sup> Since the Hogg Market was the primary market where the European residents of Calcutta purchased their daily necessities, a few shops in the Hogg Market were allowed to remain open on the day of *hartal* in 1930. This was especially after the Governor-General had made special military and police arrangements on the request of the Europeans in Calcutta.<sup>72</sup>

The following instance of the severe losses faced by an advertising agency in the Hogg Market during and after the Non-Cooperation Movement reveals that this movement's aim to boycott foreign goods severely hit at the foreign interests in the Hogg Market.<sup>73</sup> Primarily foreign companies like Lipton Tea would advertise in the Messrs. Burman Advertising Agency's kiosk in the rotunda of the Hogg Market until the inauguration of the Non-Cooperation Movement in the 1920s. These British

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<sup>70</sup> Anonymous, "Corporation Interpellations: The Hartal and the New Market," *The Calcutta Municipal Gazette* (3 March 1928).

<sup>71</sup> Anonymous, "Calcutta's Tribute to its First Citizen: Markets, Shops, Schools and Colleges Closed," *The Calcutta Municipal Gazette* (March 1930).

<sup>72</sup> Rajat K Ray, *Urban Roots of Indian Nationalism: Pressure groups and Conflict of Interests in Calcutta City Politics 1875-1939* (Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd, 1979).

<sup>73</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1932-1933*.

companies stopped advertising in the Hogg Market because they suffered deplorable fluctuation in their profits as a result of the Non-Cooperation Movement's programme of boycott of foreign goods. Besides the British companies did not want to associate with Messrs. Burman Advertising Agency that was named after the nationalist Councillor Madan Mohan Burman. The British business groups in the Hogg Market suffered losses during the Non-Cooperation Movement. They had expected the municipal markets to be able to secure the marketplace from all kinds of political 'disorders'. However, the nationalist movements shot through this expectation.

The nationalist Calcutta Corporation, dodged the rules of the Calcutta Market Acts, during the Civil Disobedience Movement. This was especially so as the Civil Disobedience Movement was geared not just to non-cooperate with the colonial government but also to violate its laws to achieve complete independence. In 1930, Birendra Chandra Ghose of India Tomorrow, a paper taken out by the All-Bengal Students Association, with a stall in the College Street Market, was suspended by a press ordinance of the government. The Commissioner of Police wrote a letter to the Calcutta Corporation Market Committee. He warned that if any room in the College Street Market were assigned to persons/associations engaged in the Civil Disobedience, the Calcutta Corporation would be held liable for harbouring offenders. Despite such a warning, the All-Bengal Students Association continued to sell publications of India Tomorrow, from its stall in the College Street market. The PUMSC, under the nationalists, believed that the arrest of some persons connected to the All-Bengal Students Association did not mean that the entire association had been

declared unlawful by the government.<sup>74</sup> After the Civil Disobedience Movement, the Calcutta Corporation was accused of conspiracy by the European groups in the Calcutta Corporation. The European groups in the Calcutta Corporation demanded a special officer to investigate if the resources of the education, contracts, building and the market department of the Calcutta Corporation were used to support the Civil Disobedience Movement's *hartal*, violence and picketing in the city.<sup>75</sup> As part of such investigation, in 1931, the law officer remarked that under section 394 of the Calcutta Municipal Act of 1923, the Calcutta Corporation was not authorised to let out rooms to persons for purposes other than those allowed by the Calcutta Markets Act of 1923. Many stalls that were granted for 'office' purposes in the College Street Market came under the radar of the colonial government. The nationalists in the Calcutta Corporation Market Committee asked if there was any definite provision in the Calcutta Markets Act directly debarring the Calcutta Corporation from letting out rooms in the municipal markets for purposes other than those mentioned in the Calcutta Market Act. The law officer replied that although the Calcutta Markets Act intended to define the municipal market as exclusively set apart for the sale and display of provisions, there was no express prohibition against stalls and rooms in the municipal markets being let out for other purposes.

### **The Imprints of Communal Sensibilities**

The nationalist Calcutta Corporation too had a stake in the guarantee of centralised surveillance built into the geometric layout of the municipal market in order to

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<sup>74</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1932-1933*.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

maintain the middle-class nature of the space. By the 1930s,<sup>76</sup> the constitutional legitimacy of difference and the receding vision of an inclusive nation also impacted the functioning of the municipal markets. The new political developments meant that there was no relaxation of the nationalist concern for order and control inside the municipal markets. During the riots of 1926, the colonial middle-class led Calcutta Corporation did not want the physical violence to spill into the municipal markets. The worst communal riots took place in the private markets or bazars,<sup>77</sup> while the municipal markets were left unscathed by any tangible destruction to property and life inside the municipal markets. The municipal markets during the 1920s were under the control of nationalists. For the predominantly middle-class nationalist Calcutta Corporation, the riots and the *goondas* were a threat to the class ambience of the municipal markets. Yet, the nationalist Calcutta Corporation could not protect the municipal markets from the indirect effects of the riots. In 1926, Sk. Deanuddin, a shoe stallholder in the College Street Market, complained about the difficulty in conducting business in the stalls facing Mechuabazar Street due to constant trouble

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<sup>76</sup> Suranjan Das, *Interrogating Politics and Society: Twentieth Century Indian Subcontinent* (Delhi: Primus Books, 2014). He has pointed out that during the riots of 1926 both the Hindus and Muslims put forward their opposing communal identities in religious and economic terms. By the 1940's the communal outbursts relatively lost their initial economic and class bias and became more organized and directly connected with developments in institutional politics, exclusively related to communal politics rather than class interests. Nariaki Nakazato, "The Role of Colonial Administration, Riot Systems and Local Networks during the Calcutta Disturbances of August 1946," in Tanika Sarkar and Sekhar Bandopadhyay ed., *Calcutta the Stormy Decades* (Orient Blackswan Pvt Ltd). 2015). According to historians, the three layers of social bonds i.e., the state, voluntary associations and neighbourhoods were communalised by 1946.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

and the posting of military contingent close to the shoe stalls and hence wanted rent reduction for the months business was temporarily closed.<sup>78</sup>

Even though there was no violence in the municipal markets during the riots of 1926, communal feelings penetrated the thoughts and actions of shopkeepers and customers in the municipal markets due to the actions of the councillors of Calcutta Corporation. In 1932, Councillor Sanat Kumar Roy Choudhury proposed to introduce separate Hindu fruit stalls and Hindu meat stalls in the municipal markets.<sup>79</sup> From 1932, there were twenty-seven Hindu fruits stalls in the Hogg Market, eleven in the College Street Market, sixteen in the Entally Market, none in the Lansdowne Market and one in the Lake Road Market. Only the College Street Market had separate Hindu meat stalls as the meat stall owners in other municipal markets did not desire to be segregated. In 1935, the chairman of the Calcutta Corporation warned that the higher-class customers and orthodox Hindus would not patronise the fruit stalls in the Hogg Market if the beef and fruit ranges were kept close to each other.<sup>80</sup> In the religiously tense atmosphere of the 1930s, even the stallholders in the municipal markets perceived the imposition of rules regarding encroachments through the lens of religious discrimination. In 1932, Abdul Karim (a Hogg Market eating-housekeeper) assumed that the Calcutta Corporation revoked his license while allowing Kali Shaw (Hogg Market eating-housekeeper) his eating house license because the market authorities were biased towards a particular religious community. According to the

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<sup>78</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926*.

<sup>79</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1932-1933*.

<sup>80</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1935-1936*.

Calcutta Corporation, on the other hand, it was only dealing with the situation as it would have dealt with any issue of encroachments in the market.

In the 1930s, the question of closing the passage in the G Range of the Hogg Market was hinged on its effects on the interest of a specific community. Councillor Ariff did not recommend closing the passage in the G range for the extension of the stall of Satish Chandra Das. He felt it would not be in the interest of public health. It would prevent the flow of fresh air from outside. It would also block the access of sellers and buyers to the latrines, baths, urinals, drinking water tap and fire escape passage inside the market. Jalaluddin Hashemy (member of the Bengal Government) felt the closing of passage would cause trouble for the Muslim stallholders and the Muslim customers by preventing their passage to the central open space within the Hogg Market for their daily prayers. According to Councillor Huque, there was a strong feeling against the closing of passage. Other commissioners like Nalin Chandra Paul (the elected representative of Sukea Ward), Field and Colley (of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce) decided against closing the passage as they did not want to do anything that might give rise to ill-feeling amongst the market tenants. In 1934, there was a delay in the construction of the Park Circus Market, to make it remunerative and attractive for the buyers and sellers. Councillor M.M. Huq (elected from the Muslim constituency of Bhowanipur, Alipore, Ekbalpore, Tollygunge) remarked that the Corporation should first concentrate on the construction of the municipal market at Park Circus and then on the Gariahat Market.<sup>81</sup> He was of the opinion that rather than the Gariahat area, it was the Park Circus area that was urgently looking forward to the establishment of a good municipal market. In the 1940s, to avoid any disturbance to

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<sup>81</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1934-1935*.

peace and tranquillity by the outbreak of communal conflict, the Calcutta Corporation decided that in the future, any new market would be sanctioned only if it had no mosque or temple nearby.<sup>82</sup>

The middle class was not homogeneous. Its heterogeneity again modified the colonizer's intention behind the establishment of the municipal markets in various ways. The emergence of a new European and Muslim coalition in power in the Government of Bengal and the Calcutta Corporation between 1937 and 1947 transformed the functioning of the municipal markets. It was the direct outcome of the political developments by which the provincial governments were formed. In 1941, the Bengal Markets Regulation Bill of 1941 was passed in the Bengal Legislative Assembly by the members of the Bengal Legislative Assembly, namely Tamizuddin Khan, Syed Jalaluddin Hashemy (member of the Krishak Praja Party and the Congress Municipal Association), Surendra Nath Biswas, Morgan, Sasankha Sekhar Sanyal, Debi Prosad Khaitan, Md. Abul Fazl and Mayor A.R. Siddiqui (member of the Muslim League and the Muslim Chamber of Commerce). With this bill, the markets including Calcutta's municipal markets came under the direct control of the Provincial Government of Bengal and was redefined as any place where persons assembled to purchase and sell agricultural produce.<sup>83</sup> This bill felt the need for government control to ensure that the peasants got a fair price for their produce. This Markets Bill of 1941 did not just want to provide lavatories for the comfort of the buyers and merely improve the body of the market as had been intended by the municipal markets, modelled on the metropolitan markets. This was another

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<sup>82</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1939-1940*.

<sup>83</sup> *Legislative Department of Bengal*, "Bengal Markets Regulation Bill 1941," in the Proceedings of the Meeting of the Bengal Legislative Assembly held on 13.8.1941, 19.8.1941 and 20.8.1941."

translation, as the focus now shifted to enhancing the life and spirit of the municipal markets and the other markets in Calcutta and Bengal.

The new parties in power in the Provincial Government of Bengal wanted the communal ratio to operate in the appointment of staff in the municipal markets. In August 1944, when appointing a sergeant in the Hogg Market, the councillors felt that while there were two Anglo Indians and two Hindu sergeants, there were no Muslim sergeants in the Hogg Market. The Calcutta Corporation Councillor S.A. Habib suggested that since most of the stall holders in the Hogg Market were Muslims, so a Mohammedan Sergeant should be appointed.<sup>84</sup> H.C. Naskar moved the name of Durga Mondal as sergeant after the death of A.C. Hill because there was not even one Schedule Caste sergeant in the Hogg Market. In 1941, the Calcutta Corporation Teachers Union applied for a stall in the College Street Market. The Calcutta Corporation Teachers Union was registered under the Trades Union Act of 1926. It was composed of male and female teachers of free primary schools. It engaged in teacher welfare, social service and the spread of educational ideas. They wanted a stall to preserve the exhibits from the Calcutta Corporation Teachers' educational exhibition. They wanted a stall just like other labour organisations who had been sanctioned stalls in the College Street Market by the nationalist Calcutta Corporation. In the new coalition, Mackertich John and Adam Osman did not allow this. This is because they felt the revenue from the market and law and order situation in crowded and potentially subversive municipal markets would be jeopardised.

The law and order that was expected out of the municipal markets had to be enforced by stationing army patrols in the Calcutta's municipal markets between 1946 and 1947. It also meant more government interference in the day-to-day management of

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<sup>84</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Service Standing Committee, 1944-1945*.

the municipal markets. The Government of Bengal (under H.S. Suhrawardy as the Chief Minister and Frederick Burrows as Governor of Bengal) drafted armed police in the College Street Market to protect and restore confidence among its staff, buyers and sellers.<sup>85</sup> The armed patrols provided in the municipal markets by the Government of Bengal protected the vendors and restored confidence during 1946-1947. Though the municipal markets experienced less violence than the bazars and *paras* (neighbourhoods) of the city, the municipal markets were not left untouched by the riots of 1946-1947. The Hogg Market was the only market to remain unscathed as the riots occurred everywhere except the European residential quarters. On the other hand, College Street Market was the worst victim of the riots of 1946 despite the presence of army patrols. The *goondas* (hooligans) burned down a part of the College Street Market on the first day of the riot, and huge stores were looted. Panic, looting, incendiarism and murder were common, so much so that the Calcutta Corporation had to close down a part of the College Street Market for a certain period. During the riots, a representative of the Statesman reported that he came across a gruesome spectacle at the junction of Syed Ameer Ali Avenue and the Park Circus Market. Here he saw a burnt two-storeyed house and vultures preying on two dead bodies and a dead dog. According to A. Sattar (the Deputy Executive Officer of the Calcutta Corporation), they had great difficulty maintaining the supply of food and preserving law and order within municipal markets when there was anything but chaos everywhere outside. Between 1946 and 1947, the revenue collection of the Calcutta Corporation naturally fell heavily.<sup>86</sup> By the time of the partition riots of 1947, the

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<sup>85</sup> Anonymous "Mayors Conference on the Riot Situation," *The Calcutta Municipal Gazette* (24<sup>th</sup> August 1946- 14<sup>th</sup> September 1946).

<sup>86</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Report of the Municipal Administration of Calcutta, 1946-1947* (Calcutta: Corporation Press, 1947).

situation was so tense that the vegetable and fish sections in the College Street Market had to be shut down from June to August 1947 under the orders of the Mayor of the Calcutta Corporation.<sup>87</sup>

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has highlighted the middle class and its politics as another distinctive turn, determining the different historical trajectory of the municipal markets in Calcutta. The European planners could not have factored in the possible emergence of nationalist and communal politics in the colony in the ensuing years. The changing politics of the middle class was a crucial factor in modifying the colonizers intentions with respect to the planning and administration of the municipal markets. The middle class welcomed the municipal market experiment as modern. However, the nationalist self-perception of the middle class made them assert their difference in the space of municipal markets. The nationalists gradually contested the European domination of the municipal markets and stamped the municipal market space with nationalistic inscriptions. This led to a nationalisation of the space of the municipal markets through the introduction of a set of new signs, symbols and ideological markers. At the same time, the nationalist inscription on the space was nuanced by communal sensibility informing the space of municipal markets. Class intersected with religion to determine why the nationalist middle-class had peculiar apprehensions regarding disorder in the municipal markets. The next chapter focuses on the municipal markets in Calcutta during the more eventful decades of the Great Depression and Second World War.

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Tumultuous Decades: Transformative Impact**

#### **Introduction**

The previous chapter brought out the role of emerging nationalist and/or communal politics in morphing the municipal market setup in Calcutta. This chapter concentrates on the events which struck the world between the 1930s and the 1940s, bringing about significant modifications in the market setup as originally intended by the municipal administration. Since the municipal markets of Calcutta were positioned at the intersection of the local and the global dynamics of an British imperialist world-system, the drastic transformation of that system from the 1930s was bound to have effects on Calcutta municipal markets, too. The Great Depression and the Second World War unleashed new global dynamics that churned not only the world of Indian enterprises or those of the retailers and wholesalers, but also penetrated European, Anglo-Indian and Bengali middle class homes in the city with implications for their municipal market experience, even as the influx of a new group of Westerners in the city generated new kinds of expectations from the municipal markets. The Calcutta Corporation had to revamp the administration of the municipal markets in order to deal with the new situation. This chapter demonstrates that under the pressure of the changing global conditions and their local impact, the municipal markets of colonial Calcutta got further reconstituted.

### **The Modifications by the Retailers and Wholesalers**

The expectation of the colonizers from the municipal markets was put to test during the depression in trade that hit the world from 1929. In late colonial India, the global Depression of the 1930s brought the failings of world food markets into sharper relief. Market fluctuations of another kind succeeded the deflationary spiral of the Great Depression in the world market. During the period of Depression, the agricultural prices in India declined due to the world-wide decline in the price of wheat and rice.<sup>1</sup> The reason for this was the worldwide credit contraction and the worldwide overproduction of grains. In India, the credit contraction was hastened by the deflationary policy of the British Indian Government.<sup>2</sup> By 1931, the agricultural depression and the fall in price of primary products disrupted the Indian colony's ability to support Britain's balance of payments and led to collapse of Britain's world power.<sup>3</sup> Moreover the deflationary policy of the Government of India kept the exchange rate so high that the high price of rupee and reduced paper currency ruined millions of Indian cultivators and caused a flow of gold from India. This cushioned Britain's BOP (Balance of Payments). Once the gold flow tapered off by 1938, and the world depression persisted, India could no longer cushion Britain's BOP like it had been doing between 1931 and 1937.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Dietmar Rothermund, "The Impact of the Great Depression on India in the 1930s," *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Vol. 1 (1980): 657-669.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Utsa Patnaik, "India in the World Economy 1900-1935: The Inter-war Depression and Britain's Demise as World Capitalist Leader," *Proceedings of Indian History Congress*, Vol. 74 (2013): 682-702.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

This depression in the world economy impacted Calcutta as it was tied to the global flows of capital and goods. The Great Depression in world trade affected the retailers and wholesalers in the municipal markets in various ways. There was a decrease in the revenue from the municipal market due to increased vacancies caused by the general trade depression and the unstable money market. It reflected that the municipal markets that were established as a channel for retailing British goods had been linked not only to the British economy but through the latter to the world economy as well. During the trade depression, the market authorities were compelled to factor in the issues of credit crunch, loss in business, competition and other market-related problems of the various kinds of sellers to prevent the loss of revenue from municipal markets. Right from 1929 till the end of the 1930s a deflationary spiral hit the municipal markets. The Calcutta Corporation had to focus on the grievances of sellers rather than on the earlier focus on increasing competition amongst the sellers to decrease prices for the buyers. No longer could the market function solely on the principles of competition between the sellers and the market-determined relation between demand and supply, rents and prices. In order to redress the grievances of the sellers, the municipal markets had to deviate from these principles. These capitalistic principles governed the architecture of the building, and was a way to control the spatial relations between the buyers and sellers of the market. So, a deviation from it also signified the loosening of the surveillance mechanism built into the architecture of the market building.

The stall holders in the municipal markets were aware of the situation in the world economy and how it impacted their trade. The sellers had become modern retailers to a certain extent. These retailers were after all buying and selling foreign goods. They

were aware of the impact of international price fluctuations, credit crunch and demand-supply imbalances in the wider economy on their trades. Now, the sellers or retailers demanded that their grievances be heard during the trade depression. The market committee meetings, between the periods 1930 and 1937, are replete with the term 'trade depression'. During this period of crisis, the 'native' sellers rather than rely on their social networks, were looking to the municipal corporation for rent reduction. Even though the revenue of the municipal markets was declining, the municipal market authorities had to pay heed to the demands of the sellers for rent reduction during this period of acute depression in trade. The revenue from College Street Market fell from Rs. 2,69,802 in 1929 to Rs. 2,26,869 in 1937. The revenue in Hogg Market decreased from Rs. 9,10,000 in 1929 to Rs. 8,71,955 in 1937. The revenue in Lansdowne Market declined from Rs. 36,116 in 1929 to Rs. 35,235 in 1935 and rose to Rs. 39,265 in 1937.<sup>5</sup>

For forty years, the permanent and temporary traders/vendors of the Hogg Market had been paying extra rent on Christmas day for additional facilities such as lights for longer hours and encroachments, etc. This tradition was questioned in 1928 and 1929 when the stall holders objected to the extra rent on Christmas Day in the Hogg Market and called it unjust and illegal when there was 'general trade depression, financial stringency and stiff competition'.<sup>6</sup> The Hogg Market Traders Association and the College Street Market Traders Association helped put forward the grievances of the sellers to the Calcutta Corporation market committee. The Hogg Market Traders

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<sup>5</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Report of the Municipal Administration of Calcutta, 1929-1930* (Calcutta: Corporation Press, 1930). Calcutta Corporation, *Report of the Municipal Administration of Calcutta, 1937-1938* (Calcutta: Corporation Press, 1938).

<sup>6</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1930-1931*.

Association and the College Street Market Traders Association petitioned the Calcutta Corporation for a reduction in rents when financial stringency and competition were hard-hitting. In 1931, Panchanan Bose, the Secretary of the College Street Market Traders Association, applied for general remission of stall rents, due to the general trade depression.<sup>7</sup>

In the College Street Market, on the motion of Councillor Satyabrata Sen, rent increase was postponed, regard being had to the trade depression that significantly affected the class of traders dealing in piece goods and cloth such as Messrs. Jaharlal Pannalal, Baikunthanath Guin, Paul and Company and Kamalalaya.<sup>8</sup> In 1940, the superintendent of the College Street Market was in favour of Salil Kumar Ballav's application for a shoe stall in the College Street Market at a reduced rent, given the general trade depression.<sup>9</sup> In 1933, Councillor Saadutullah commented that though the municipal markets were congested, the committee should decide whether, given financial stringency, they should acquire new land to extend the College Street Market or use the ones they had already.<sup>10</sup> In 1932, Md. Ali Khan, a tea stall owner in the Park Circus Market, applied for a rent reduction due to the declining condition of the Park Circus Market and the all-around trade depression.<sup>11</sup> In 1934, Ramdhari

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<sup>7</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1931-1932*.

<sup>8</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1930-1931*.

<sup>9</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1940-1941*.

<sup>10</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1933-1934*.

<sup>11</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1932-1933*.

Banwarilal, a flour seller in the Entally Market applied for rent reduction. It was sanctioned because of the acute depression since 1932.<sup>12</sup>

The grouping principle of the municipal markets was put to test during the Depression. In 1934, though licensed to sell only cloth, the Entally Market stallholders facing Lower Circular Road started selling guernseys, umbrellas and *lungies* (cloth passed between the thighs). This adversely affected the sellers of ready-made clothes and guernseys inside the Entally Market. To improve the revenue of the Calcutta Corporation during the time of acute financial distress and prevent the ‘morale of the market’ from being shaken by the ‘overbearing and insolent contraveners’, the latter was allowed to sell ready-made and hosiery.<sup>13</sup> In 1935, the stall in the West Block of Entally Market, which had been lying vacant for a long time, was granted to Gunandhar Das and Jugal Chandara Samanta on reduced daily rent.<sup>14</sup> The Calcutta Corporation did not want to antagonise the stall holders and hence agreed to their demands for rent reduction. This could also be due to two other reasons. In 1934, the Entally Market was losing its *chasis* and *fariahs* to two private markets nearby, namely the Nafar Babu Bazar and Debnarayan Babu Bazar. Besides many stall holders in the Entally Market were facing severe competition from the stalls that had sprung up on Circular and Police Hospital Roads, opposite to the South and West Blocks of the Entally Market.<sup>15</sup> Until 1936, some stalls in the Entally Market continued paying reduced rent as there was no improvement in trade

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<sup>12</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1934-1935*.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1935-1936*.

<sup>15</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1934-1935*.

conditions. The Calcutta Corporation felt there was hardly any chance of 'immediate boom' in the market. In 1936, Sakina Begum, a bread seller in the Hogg Market was allowed to sell bread and country sweets even though the confectionery stalls had a problem with bread sellers selling country sweets.<sup>16</sup> In January 1940, Jatindra Nath Marik and Mahadeb Marik were permitted to change their stall business from oilman stores to baskets in the Hogg Market.<sup>17</sup> In the 1930s, on account of the trade depression and the unpopularity of new Block C in the Hogg Market, Moslem Ali changed his business from stationery goods to spectacles and watches without paying any initial rent.<sup>18</sup>

The principle of anti-monopoly, on which the municipal market stalls were arranged, also underwent changes during the period of trade depression. One person received the lease of many stalls dealing in the same items during the trade depression. The administrators of the municipal markets were trying to prevent this all along. But it had to allow it, during this time of the depression in trade. In 1934, P.C. Dey and Sailendra Nath Banerjee, due to the trade depression, transferred their silk and jewellery stall in the Hogg Market to Tirthdas Khemlani.<sup>19</sup> Again in 1937, Moslem Miah transferred his silk and jewellery stall to the same Tirthdas Khemlani.<sup>20</sup> In 1934, Ram Prasad Brijmohan purchased the stock in trade of Baikunthanath Guin in the College Street Market. In 1934, S. Mans, suffering from financial difficulties,

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<sup>16</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1936-1937*.

<sup>17</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1940-1941*.

<sup>18</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1930-1931*.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1937-1938*.

transferred his silk and jewellery stall to Messrs. Lalchand Himandas Chelaram Hariram Mahtani. On 11<sup>th</sup> August 1941, Tahiram Aswani transferred his silk and jewellery stall to his partner Khemchand Asumai Bhagchandani.<sup>21</sup> During the trade depression, many Bengali and upcountry Muslims and Bengali Hindus stall holders transferred their jewellery and silk stalls to *Sindhis*. The aftermath of the Great Depression, i.e., from 1937-1941, saw the growth of new groups of traders belonging to new communities whose businesses had been strong enough to survive the jolting experience of the Great Depression.

Moreover, new groups of 'native' sellers, with new expectations, emerged after the Great Depression of 1929. After the Great Depression, the exports of the British companies fell, and cost reductions became necessary. Hence their practice of directly dealing with producers folded up. Instead, the *arhatdar* (wholesale merchant who receives goods and disposes them off on commission) again emerged as the broker/middleman in the trade between the port cities and the rural periodic markets,<sup>22</sup> reintroducing the practice stopped after the First World War. They again emerged not only as commission agents through whom Manchester and Bombay-based manufacturing centres sold the imported and other manufactured goods to the Indian retailers. But they also collected the primary produce from the market towns and carried them forward to the cities for further export. These *arhatdars* became the medium of circulating indigenous bazar practices like *hundis* (bills of exchange) in

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<sup>21</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1941-1942*.

<sup>22</sup> R.K. Ray, "The Bazaar: Changing Structural Characteristics of the Indigenous Section of the Indian economy Before and After the Great Depression," *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 25, 3, (Sage: New Delhi 1988).

the municipal markets.<sup>23</sup> The rich *arhatdars* stamped their presence and expectations on the municipal markets due to opportunities provided by the changing economic scenario.

The *arhatdars*, who were the indigenous wholesalers with a long tradition of being middlemen in the trade of Bengal, became an essential part of the municipal markets as importers of oranges, pineapples, mangoes, betel nuts and fowls. In 1900, Peer Mohammed, Khyrut Ali and Afms Huque were *arhatdars* in the Hogg Market.<sup>24</sup> In 1899, even when the importance of giving incentives to the wholesale traders was understood, the municipal market authorities had the upper hand in their dealings with the *arhatdars*. For instance, in 1899, the Superintendent Jones ordered the new *arhatdars* to bring fowls from the new *beparis*.<sup>25</sup> He could remove the *arhatdars* from the Hogg Market if they defied this rule by procuring goods from the old *beparis* (trading farmers) working under the old and well-established *arhatdars*. In the late colonial period, the situation reversed, wherein the *arhatdars* had the upper hand over the municipal market authorities.

The *arhatdars* in the interwar period attained an upper hand in the tussles between the *arhatdars* and the Calcutta municipal market authorities. One instance was the debate over the compulsory number of baskets that the *arhatdars* had to bring per year and the rents per basket. The Calcutta Corporation had to carefully manage the different

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<sup>23</sup> Hundi was an inland bill of exchange, an order signed by the drawer addressed to the drawee to pay to the person named in the hundi a sum of money either at sight or at a certain period after the presentation. Hundi was employed to raise loans, finance movement of goods and make remittances.

<sup>24</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Committee, 1899*. The new *arhatdar* Khyrut Ali, was asked to bring in supplies of fowl from new *beparis*, but he brought them from old *beparis* working under old and well established *arhatdars*. While Mr Busby wanted to remove Khyrut, on the plea of his attorney at law John Remfry, he was allowed to continue on the condition that he would get supplies of fowl from new *beparis* only.

<sup>25</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Committee, 1899*.

categories of sellers in the municipal markets by matching their rates of rents with the number of baskets brought into the municipal markets. However, while the municipal markets wanted to increase the rents and the number of baskets, the *arhatdars* wanted to reduce both. In 1931, Uzir Mohd Fakir Mohd, an *arhatdar*, in the College Street Market, imported only one thousand four hundred and forty-seven baskets of mangoes every season during 1930-1931, instead of the requisite number of seven thousand two hundred baskets. Some councillors like Mohd. Akbar did not want the number seven thousand two hundred to be compulsory due to the depressed trade conditions.<sup>26</sup> However, the low penalty charged for the failure to bring in the mandatory number of baskets gave rise to another practice in the market, which was not at all desirable according to the councillors in the Calcutta Corporation. This was the practice of three or four persons converting the *arhat* (warehouse or store of a wholesale dealer) into their residence, posing problems for the authorities in ascertaining the bona fide *arhatdars*.

Another instance where the *arhatdars* gained the upper hand was on the question of encroachments. The Europeans and the 'native' middle-class wanted the municipal market to be made into public spaces, where certain private activities like sleeping, eating and bathing were forbidden. Such notions of public and private were at odds with the worldview of the *arhatdars*. The cots and benches on the pavements and passages of the municipal markets that were seen as 'encroachments' by the authorities were only the *arhatdars* way to provide accommodation to their families who had to come to trade in Calcutta. Since the *arhatdars* did not segregate between public and private space, in their world view, a place to sell (like the municipal

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<sup>26</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1930-1931*.

markets) could also be used as a place to sleep. In 1935, the sleeping cots, planks, benches of *arhatdars* or the wholesale vendors of dry and fresh fruits and cut betel nuts of the College Street Market were found ‘encroaching’ on the pavements/passages of the south *chandney*. Despite fines and reprimands when the encroachments did not stop, the *arhatdars* and their relatives from mofussil were allotted a room in the municipal markets to sleep at night.<sup>27</sup>

During the mango and orange seasons, the imports were generally massive, and the *arhatdars* found it difficult to stack their baskets in the *chandney* (a covered area for the primary producers cum sellers of fruits and vegetables). Then the *arhatdar* made retail sales of fresh fruit and dry fruits from the middle passage in the south *chandney*. Even though such encroachments were a blow to the revenue of Calcutta Corporation and a blow to the Western notions of public and private space, the Calcutta Corporation had to negotiate with the *arhatdars* as they were rich and held a monopoly over imports of certain items. The *arhatdars* were also important as they increased the supply of the imported food items, catered to customers’ demands, increased revenue and made the municipal markets popular and attractive for a wide range of customers and sellers.

In the 1940s, the Finance Standing Committee of the Calcutta Corporation instituted an enquiry into the non-payment of rents by the *arhatdars*.<sup>28</sup> The Committee felt that the rent of the *arhatdars* should be revised. They could not continue paying the reduced rent of 1 pice per basket that was charged from them twenty years ago to induce them into the College Street Market from the Posta Bazar. The Committee

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<sup>27</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1935-1936*.

<sup>28</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1940-1941*.

compared its position to a private landlord. The Committee felt the Calcutta Corporation could bear such losses, while a private landlord would have ended in bankruptcy by this time. The Committee remarked that the tenants should be ejected if they did not pay rent for more than two months. The market department was asked to realise outstanding rents from the *arhatdars* and increase the rent per basket and per room. Despite such warnings, the Market Committee of the Calcutta Corporation bent to the demands of the *arhatdars*, in the face of competition from the nearby private markets. The Calcutta Corporation Finance Committee was fed up with the arrears of *arhatdars*. On the other hand, the *arhatdar* migrants considered it the Calcutta Corporation's duty to provide free-of-cost facilities for the convenience of the *arhatdars*. Hence, in 1939, the *arhatdars* refused to pay rents for the twenty *guddees* (office rooms) constructed in the *chandney* of the College Street Market, when they were already paying a levy per basket imported. The *arhatdars* felt it was the Calcutta Corporation's duty to protect them from theft of money and document. They accused the market department of *zulum* (torture) when some rent miscalculations were made.<sup>29</sup> The *arhatdars* had new expectations from the Calcutta Corporation, wherein the unfulfillment of the Calcutta Corporation duties was perceived as acts of injustice by the *arhatdars*.

### **The Expectations of the Indian Enterprises**

The municipal markets in Calcutta had been based on the metropolitan model of markets to create an organised market for the benefit of the British industries and their manufactured products as has been explained in the previous chapters. However,

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<sup>29</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1939-1940*.

during the inter-war period, the Calcutta municipal markets were modified by Indian industries, as they imprinted their expectations on the municipal markets. As has been argued in Chapter 1, the British manufacturers'/capitalists' pushed for the establishment of the municipal markets in Calcutta to promote British manufactured goods. However, during the inter-war years, i.e., between 1925 and 1939, due to falling output, unemployment and depressed trade conditions in the capitalist world,<sup>30</sup> Britain slid from its position of the capitalist leader of the world.<sup>31</sup> The Indian industrial and business class emerged as important stakeholders, expecting new favours from the government.<sup>32</sup> By 1939, apart from import substitution, the indigenous producers of consumer goods, who were earlier producing for export, were shifting towards the home market.<sup>33</sup> In the case of Calcutta, the indigenous producers turned towards retail and wholesale trade through the municipal markets. In the 1870s, when the municipal markets had been established in Calcutta, the European-dominated Calcutta Corporation was pressurised by the British consumer goods and textile industries to shape the municipal markets as a channel for the distribution of British goods. From the 1930s, the Indian companies looked to the municipal markets as a medium to distribute their manufactured products and services. As a result of these changing economic conditions, the Indian consumer

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<sup>30</sup> Utsa Patnaik, "India in the World Economy 1900-1935: The Inter-war Depression and Britain's Demise as World Capitalist Leader," *Proceedings of Indian History Congress*, Vol. 74 (2013): 682-702.

<sup>31</sup> Dietmar Rothmund, "The Impact of the Great Depression on India in the 1930s," *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Vol. 41 (1980): 657-669.

<sup>32</sup> Malini Chakrabarti, "Why Did Big Business Pursue a Policy of Economic Nationalism in Inter War Years? A New Window to an Old Debate," *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 43, No. 4 (July 2009).

<sup>33</sup> Aditya Mukherjee, "The Return of the Colonial in Indian Economic History: The Last Phase of Colonialism in India," *Social Scientist*, Vol. 36, No. 3/4 (Mar. - Apr., 2008).

goods industries began inscribing new expectations on the municipal markets in colonial Calcutta.

From the 1930s, the Indian enterprises, gradually emerging in the sectors of banking, textiles,<sup>34</sup> and tea spread their influence in the municipal markets of Calcutta. In 1930, the Central Bank of India, the first Indian bank, was granted a stall in the Hogg Market. The Central Bank of India was the first Indian bank. It was established in 1911 by Sorabji Pochkhanawala and Pherozezshah Mehta. By 1930, the Central Bank of India had become one of the biggest Indian joint stock banks. The banking and foreign trade interests of the Indian companies formed an all-India forum called the Indian Chamber of Commerce in 1926.<sup>35</sup> The Calcutta Corporation wrote to the Indian Chamber of Commerce for advice with respect to some aspects of the administration of Calcutta's municipal markets.<sup>36</sup> In 1926, the members of the Indian Chamber of Commerce included Anandji Haridas, A.C. Banerjee, M.M. Burman and others. With such a close connection between the Corporation and the Chamber, when in 1930 Anandji Haridas proposed that the Central Bank of India be established in the Hogg Market, the proposal was granted.<sup>37</sup> The Central Bank of India facilitated market transactions by providing loans, savings accounts and foreign exchange

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Rajat Kanta Ray, *Urban Roots of Indian Nationalism: Pressure groups and Conflict of Interests in Calcutta City Politics 1875-1939* (Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd, 1979).

<sup>36</sup> "Letter from the Calcutta Corporation to the Indian Chamber of Commerce, 1928 and Letter from the Indian Chamber of Commerce to the Calcutta Corporation, 1928," in the Annual Reports of the Committee of the Indian Chamber of Commerce, 1927-1928. In these letters, the Calcutta Corporation asked for the suggestion of the Indian Chamber of Commerce to solve the merchants' grievances relating to fire outbreaks in the markets. The Indian Chamber of Commerce latter advised that the Corporation and not the Chief Officer of the Fire Brigade should finally sanction all the plans for municipal markets and bazars.

<sup>37</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1930-1931*.

services to the buyers and sellers in the Hogg Market. Significant British banking interests seem to have been affected by the opening of the Indian bank in the Hogg Market since its presence in the Hogg Market was opposed by councillors representing the interests of British trade and commerce.<sup>38</sup> Several other Indian banks also found a place in the municipal markets in the interwar period. In 1937, Bengal Central Bank, under Manager R.C. Sett, was given a stall in the College Street Market.<sup>39</sup> In 1934, the Union Bank of Bengal was allotted a stall on the first floor of the Lake Market. In 1936, the Union Bank of Bengal leased a stall in the Gariahat Market.<sup>40</sup>

The Indian consumer goods industries were growing in importance from the 1930s. They were competing against the British companies like Britannia, Lipton Tea and Brooke Bond Tea. They looked to the municipal markets as a distribution platform for their goods.<sup>41</sup> From 1931, Lily and Company, an Indian biscuit manufacturing company, had stalls in the College Street Market.<sup>42</sup> From 1933, K.C. Basu and Company's corn flour, barley powder and pearl sago were sold in the College Street Market, the Entally Market and the Lake Market. From 1936, Tosh's Tea in Special Day, Red and Yellow Label and Orange Pekoe flavours were available in the Hogg Market. Tosh's Tea's advertised in the Calcutta Municipal Gazette. Its tagline was 'Begin your day with a cup of Tosh's Tea'. Ashutosh Ghosh established A. Tosh and

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1937-1938*.

<sup>40</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1936-1937*.

<sup>41</sup> "Market Price Current," *Calcutta Municipal Gazette* (1931). "Market Price Current," *Calcutta Municipal Gazette* (1933).

<sup>42</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1931-1932*.

Sons in 1897. Gradually as the purchasing agent of Harrison and Crossfield (largest tea houses of the late nineteenth century), he became the leading supplier of tea in Calcutta. He became one of the earliest Indian buyers at the Calcutta tea auctions in 1942. Between 1942 and 1946, Ispahani Tea in many flavours, was sold in the Hogg Market.<sup>43</sup> Ispahani Tea was a part of an indigenous company called M.M. Ispahani Ltd. The latter exported shellac, jute bags, tea, peanuts, leather, turmeric, tamarind, and other Indian products. It also had offices in Calcutta, London, Bombay, Madras, and Burma. Ispahani family were leading members of the Muslim League, Muslim Chamber of Commerce, the Calcutta Corporation and the Bengal Legislative Assembly between 1936 and 1947. From 1942, Indian enamel paints were available in the Hogg Market. In 1946, Indian oats were sold in the Hogg Market. From 1942, one could also find Amrutanjan Pain Balm in the Hogg Market. It was founded in 1893 by K.N Rao. Even though some of these Indian companies were established in the late nineteenth century and some in the 1911, their products became available in the municipal markets during and after the inter-war period. The Hogg Market, Lansdowne Market and Entally Market did not stop selling British products like Britannia, Lipton and Huntley and Palmer biscuits during this period. But the emerging Indian companies negotiated their presence in the municipal markets after the Great Depression. From 1937, College Street Market also leased stalls to exhibit the manufactures of small and large-scale Indian industries (paper, rubber and porcelain) with a view to popularise the products of these indigenous industries.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> "Market Price Current," *Calcutta Municipal Gazette* (1946).

<sup>44</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Report of the Municipal Administration of Calcutta, 1943-1944* (Calcutta: Corporation Press, 1944).

### **The Welfarist Expectations of the Middle Class**

The municipal markets transformed from the 1930s. It became part of the welfarist expectations of the middle class. The middle class purchased their daily needs from the municipal markets. Hence the rise in prices of the products in the municipal markets as a result of the Depression and the Second World War adversely effected the everyday consumption needs of the middle class. For the middle class, the price of fish rose six times, the milk consumption was halved, and the consumption of eggs fell to a quarter of the pre-war levels. Efforts were made to keep the prices stable and uniform for all the municipal markets. Yet the prices of all commodities increased by leaps and bounds. The weekly price currents published in the Calcutta Municipal Gazette reveal that prices gradually rose from 1935. They doubled between 1935 and 1946. Dimapur Butter was priced at Re. 1 between 1929 and 1935. It was sold at Rs. 3 in 1946. Lipton Tea was priced at 1 Re. in 1935. It shot to Rs. 2 in 1946. The price of Bombay Mango rose from Rs. 4 per dozen in 1935 to Rs. 8 per dozen in 1946. The price of Arab Pistachio rose from Rs. 4 in 1935 to Rs. 5 in 1946. The price of bread increased from 6 annas in 1935 to 10 annas in 1946.<sup>45</sup> The standard of living of the middle class in Calcutta deteriorated between 1939 and 1945.<sup>46</sup> Perturbed by black markets and the galloping hyperinflation during and after the Second World War, the middle class expected the state to initiate food rationing and fix fair prices in the municipal markets. The middle class were advocating rationing and other centralising tendencies to solve the crisis, including the enormous rise in prices of all food items. Thus, this section argues that from the mid-1930s, such welfarist notions, shaping the expectations of the middle class, transformed the functioning of the municipal

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<sup>45</sup> "Market Price Currents," *The Calcutta Municipal Gazette* (1935, 1946).

<sup>46</sup> S. Bhattacharya, "World War Two and the Consumption Pattern of the Calcutta Middle Class," *Sankhya: The Indian Journal of Statistics*, 8, 2<sup>nd</sup> march 1947.

markets. The public space of the municipal markets became a part of the welfarist expectations of the middle class.

The tendency to expect the municipal market to justly distribute scarce resources took on a sharper and anxious turn with the emergence of the alliances of the 'native' middle-class groups at the level of provincial governance after the Government of India Act of 1935. With the increasing role of markets in determining the availability and distribution of food, the middle-class groups in the Provincial Government of Bengal emphasised the need to govern food production and distribution. Some middle-class councillors of the Calcutta Corporation, even emphasised the need to reorganise the market. Their anxiety over the loss of middle-class control over the municipal markets in the inter-war period can be gauged from the following remarks. In 1935, Chairman Zakariah remarked that the Lake Road Market was in utter disorder, where there was no supervision and control exercised by the superintendent. He proposed the reorganisation of the market. Shamsul Huque stated that if the Lake Road Market was a private one then the owner would have been prosecuted for the condition of the market.<sup>47</sup> In 1935, the upper-class and middle-class biases of Chairman Zakariah can be noticed in his remark that the Entally Market too was in disorder and its sanitary arrangements had to be improved.

From the mid-1930s, the self-perception of the middle class in Calcutta began to change. The middle class saw the Calcutta Corporation as providing the wants of the 'people'. The municipal markets were expected to fulfil the wishes of the people,

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<sup>47</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1935-1936*.

without the interference from private and profit-oriented companies.<sup>48</sup> For the middle class, in 1936, municipal markets signified an institution, that should be managed by the state and be concerned about public welfare. The middle class was hoping to attain citizenship status in a soon-to-be-independent India. The municipal markets became entangled within the range of expectations of a body of people becoming citizens and rights-bearing individuals. They expected the municipal markets to promote equitable distribution of resources. They expected it to protect all the citizens unable to avail themselves of the minimum provisions for a good life. They saw the municipal markets as fulfilling the essential wants of the people, with a view to protect them from riots, invasion, epidemics and endemics. Through the municipal corporation, the middle class also aimed at increasing the amenities for the poor residents without raising rates. B.N Dey, Chief Engineer and Special Officer of Calcutta Corporation did not want the private companies like CESC (Calcutta Electric Supply Corporation) to control the supply of electricity to the city and its municipal markets. He expected that the rates imposed on the residents of Calcutta would reduce if the electric fans, lighting poles and machines parts were produced in the Calcutta Corporation workshops and ingenious techniques (like the use of waste heat) were devised to generate electricity.

However, the idea that the municipal markets should protect the people and be free of profiteering motives of the traders and companies, met with reversals. In 1939, B.K. Banerjee's remarks on the state of the Lansdowne Market also revealed his sense of anxiety over the loss of middle-class control over the municipal markets. He was 'scandalised' that rice sold in the government-controlled shops of the Lansdowne

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<sup>48</sup> B.N. Dey, Chief Engineer and Special Officer of Calcutta Corporation, "Municipalisation of Public Utilities," *The Calcutta Municipal Gazette* (4<sup>th</sup> April 1936): 703-704.

Market, was totally unfit for human consumption. He was shocked that the people were paying good money for such bad quality rice. According to him, the people then had no choice but to go to the black market.<sup>49</sup> Adulteration of flour with soapstone, rice mixed with gravel, adulterated ghee and adulterated mustard oil, raised concerns over nutrition deficiency of the civilian and labour population in Calcutta. The middle class was anxious that the survival of the people was at stake.

A deputation of the Calcutta Corporation comprising Mayor H.C. Nasker, B.C. Roy, A.R. Siddiqi, Hemendra Prosad Ghose, Kaviraj Satyabrata Sen, Debjiban Banerjee and Syed Badruddin waited on Khwaja Habitulla Bahadur of Dacca (Minister for Agriculture, Commerce and Labour), L.G. Pinnell (Director of Civil Supplies) and M.K. Kripalani (Chief Controller of Prices). They wished to convince the ministers and officials that the Bengal Government should not withdraw facilities from the Calcutta Corporation in the matter of the supply of essential foodstuffs for the public, corporation labour and corporation employees.<sup>50</sup> The Bengal Government declared that it would not be able to supply price-controlled items to the public through the Calcutta Corporation markets. Instead, shops would be opened under the direct control of the government in different parts of Calcutta. It was stated that in these shops, foodstuffs would be sold at controlled prices, and the quantity to be sold to each person would be restricted, and efficient supervision would be exercised by the government to see that these were carried out. The Calcutta Corporation would have to buy the supplies from these shops. According to the Calcutta Corporation, even if essential food was available in the market, they had to buy them at exorbitant prices.

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<sup>49</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1939-1940*.

<sup>50</sup> Anonymous, "Supply of Foodstuffs for Calcutta: Corporation Deputation Wait on the Nawab Bahadur of Dacca," *The Calcutta Municipal Gazette* (5<sup>th</sup> September 1942).

In India, rationing was a way of distribution tinged with welfarism.<sup>51</sup> The rationing documents played a critical role in welfare distribution from 1940. In the 1940s, to reclaim the legitimacy of its political power in India, the colonial government introduced the public distribution system through fair-price shops. The public distribution system signified the colonial government's intervention in the food market to save the economy from wrecking, prevent riots and disorder and prevent the armed forces' food supply from drying up. New centralising tendencies took control of distribution networks. It was meant to combat market fluctuations. But it had a devastating impact on consumption and distribution networks in the colony. In the late colonial period, the colonial state robustly intervened in the market sphere. The colonial state exercised wide powers to ration, prohibit or control the movement of commodities and market actors during the Second World War.<sup>52</sup> The colonial government took to supplying and rationing sugar, edible oil, coarse cloth, kerosene and food grains. In 1944, the Bengal Rationing Order and the Fuel and Kerosene Rationing Scheme were introduced in Calcutta. In Calcutta, the health officer of the Calcutta Corporation prohibited the use of milk for luxury food items like ice cream, *chana*, (cottage-cheese) sweetmeats, *rabri* (thickened and sweetened milk) and *khoa* (dried whole milk or milk thickened by heating in open air pan and the base of many Indian sweets). He promoted the use of milk only for preparing *dahi* (curd), cream and butter during the Second World War.<sup>53</sup> These impacted the municipal markets

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<sup>51</sup> Sunil Amrith, "Food and Welfare in India, 1900-1950," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, No. 4, Vol. 50 (Cambridge University Press, 2008): 1010-1035.

<sup>52</sup> Ajay Gandhi, Barbara- Harris White, Douglas Haynes, Sebastian Schwecke ed., *Rethinking Markets in Modern India: Embedded Exchange and Contested Jurisdiction* (CUP: 2020).

<sup>53</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1944-1945*.

too. Rationing was opposite to the original intention to encourage unlimited consumption in municipal markets. The municipal markets could not stick to the principles of encouraging unlimited consumption underlying the metropolitan model during the unforeseen and unfavourable conditions of the Second World War.

The middle class's sense of anxiety over the city and the municipal markets deepened when the city was ravaged by the famine of 1943. In 1943, the *Statesman* reported that 'rice in authorised shops was the kind that was never in Calcutta sold before'. It further added that 'if it was not for the black-market, people of all classes including the highest would have to subsist on the authorised shops'.<sup>54</sup> In 1944, poor quality *atta* (flour) was being sold in the government stores and ration shops of the College Street Market. In 1943, there was an acute food crisis in Calcutta. The serious shortage of rice in Calcutta was due to the stoppage of rice supplies from Burma after the fall of Rangoon. The shortage was also due to the natural disasters that caused damage to *khari* (autumn or monsoon crop) rice, British destruction of coastal agricultural belts as part of defence preparations and hoarding by the profiteers all over Bengal.<sup>55</sup> The imports had been dwindling due to the Second World War, but a very huge export was allowed in order to feed the people of other lands while famine struck India. In India, production was not expanded. Instead, food meant for civilian consumption was diverted for the military war effort. In India, war expenditure was financed by printing currency. It led to inflation.<sup>56</sup> Prices increased three-fold. Inflationary pressures, agitation of traders in Calcutta and warnings of Japanese

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<sup>54</sup> "Black and White," *The Statesman* (20<sup>th</sup> November, 1943).

<sup>55</sup> Hoarding as one of the reasons for the shortage of rice is mentioned in Calcutta Corporation, *Report of the Municipal Administration of Calcutta, 1943-1944* (Calcutta: Corporation Press, 1944).

<sup>56</sup> Indivar Kamtekar, "A Different War Dance: India 1939-1945," *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, Vol 61, Part 1 Millennium* (2000-2001): 648-659.

invasion pushed up the price of rice in 1943. In 1943, many people from the mofussil came to Calcutta in search of food.<sup>57</sup> The middle-class women too had a role to play in the reshaping of the municipal markets during the famine. Mahila Atma Raksha Samiti (MARS) was started by Communist women for women's self-protection. It also comprised of women from non-Communist backgrounds. One of its aims was to collect funds, food and cloth for the famine-displaced people. To fulfil this aim, in 1943, they pressurised the Calcutta Corporation to open subsidised rice, *atta*, wheat, kerosene oil and standard cloth shops in the Gariahat Market for the villagers. Even then the MARS volunteers had to fight every day with shopkeepers to secure rations for the villagers.<sup>58</sup>

In 1944, Councillor M.M. Rafique remarked that the income from the municipal markets was not the foremost outlook of the Calcutta Corporation. The municipal market provided amenities to the citizens and was not a business.<sup>59</sup> In the same year, Councillor P.K. Sett remarked that the Calcutta Corporation was a public utility body and catered to the health, safety, and convenience of the public.<sup>60</sup> Even then there was no respite from profiteering. Since there weren't any statutory controls to keep down prices by issuing licenses to specific dealers (like in the First World War) and controlling movement of commodities - the rules regarding prices and quantities of supply of essential goods (food, clothes, cloth, *dal*, sugar, *gur* or molasses) and the

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<sup>57</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Report of the Municipal Administration of Calcutta, 1944-1945* (Calcutta: Corporation Press, 1945).

<sup>58</sup> Sanjukta Ghosh, "Famine, Food and the Politics of Survival in Calcutta 1943-1950," in *Calcutta the Stormy Decades*, ed. Tanika Sarkar and Sekhar Bandopadhyay (Social Science Press, 2015), 204-230.

<sup>59</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1943-1944*.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

rules regarding the equal distribution of ration documents were flouted. In order to make huge profits by selling on the black market, exorbitant prices were demanded by the sellers. The *goondas* (hooligans) appropriated one-third of the grain sold in Calcutta shops, for the purpose of selling on the black market. According to the nationalists, state control over food intensified black market and artificial scarcity.<sup>61</sup> There was hoarding and black marketing due to price restrictions and separate access for the elite. In 1944, some in the Government of Bengal were guilty of creating a black market. Instead of producing consumer items, the government relied on the disgorging of hoarding.<sup>62</sup> In 1945, illicit trade was carried on the American-Chinese army controlled Stilwell Road (Lekhapani to Wanting in Burma-China border).<sup>63</sup> Though intended only for military use, the Chinese military personnel were smuggling huge quantities of essential war supplies for civilian purposes through this road. Amongst these, the products of two of the British companies were only meant for the Calcutta market. They were supplied in Calcutta through the Hogg Market. These were the products of the Imperial Tobacco Company, and Nestle and Anglo Swiss Condensed Milk. For instance, fifty tins of State Express 555 costing Rs. 1-8-0 in Calcutta was sold at Rs. 66-11-0 in Kunming.<sup>64</sup> This caused a shortage of goods in the Hogg Market and a rise in prices. For the middle class, the sense of vulnerability increased as black-markets, blackouts, curfews, bomb shelters, military trucks and growing panic about the basic provisions of life became an everyday reality in

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<sup>61</sup> Sunil Amrith, "Food and Welfare in India, 1900-1950," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, No. 4, Vol. 50 (Cambridge University Press, 2008): 1010-1035.

<sup>62</sup> Kali Charan Ghosh, *Famines in Bengal 1770-1943* (Indian Associated Publishing Company, Calcutta, June 1944).

<sup>63</sup> Commercial Attaché, US Intelligence Army Officer, and British Intelligence Officer, "Report: Illicit Trade on Stilwell Road," *IB, Government of Bengal, Office of the DIG of Police*, IB File, 187-46.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

Calcutta during the Second World War. The middle-class desire to maintain the municipal markets as reflective of their class sensibilities, was severely jolted during this period.

The middle class as spokesman of the people, justly distributing resources through the municipal markets, was not fully realised. No equality resulted among classes as a result of rationing in Calcutta (unlike in Britain, where rationing enforced equality of distribution and consumption of food).<sup>65</sup> As Amartya Sen pointed out, rationing was a palliative for the discontented civilians and a wartime necessity mainly for the priority sections. There were extremes of starvation and prosperity faced by the different segments of the Indian population. This created or opened new chasms between the classes over food consumption levels. In this scenario, the municipal market and its elaborate arrangements to secure food supplies and control prices directly benefitted the upper class and the middle class. In 1943, J.L. Nehru remarked that while the streets of Calcutta were filled with corpses, the elite continued dancing, flaunting luxuries and feasting. British could be expected to act in this way but not the elite Indians!<sup>66</sup> Rationing benefitted only certain administrators, educational institutions, war engineers, contractors, soldiers, police, labour on whom the colonial state's security was dependent.<sup>67</sup> Bengal Vagrancy Ordinance for the removal of vagrants from streets came into force on July 31, 1943. With all their racist assumptions, the English newspapers reported that Calcutta's market shop fronts were piled with

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<sup>65</sup> Tarangini Sriraman, "Revisiting Welfare: Ration Card Narrative in India," *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 46, No. 38 (2011).

<sup>66</sup> Sunil Amrith, "Food and Welfare in India, 1900-1950," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, No. 4, Vol. 50 (Cambridge University Press, 2008): 1010-1035.

<sup>67</sup> Indivar Kamtekar, "A Different War Dance: India 1939-1945," *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Vol 61, Part 1 Millennium (2000-2001): 648-659.

pyramids of food, sweetmeats, and delicacies, while there were several poor people who were too weak to move out of hunger. Tempted by the delicacies, the hungry children who moved towards these shops, were lightly beaten by shopkeepers.<sup>68</sup> The middle class themselves were deeply pained by the fissures in the society as a result of the consumer-oriented culture that had been disseminated in the city of Calcutta. Moreover, the consumer-oriented culture of Calcutta, heightened the sense of displacement felt by the urban poor. The Bengali novelists portrayed the urban poor in Calcutta as suffering a deep sense of identity crisis when they failed to attain the social status in Calcutta that was linked to the consumption of material objects like furniture, China cups, carpets, curtains etc.<sup>69</sup> I argue that the municipal markets especially the Hogg Market, disseminating the consumer-oriented culture in the city, played no less a role in the fostering of this identity crisis and in widening the chasms between the rich and poor during the famine of 1943.

In 1944, unlike before, the middle class described the municipal markets as ‘democratic’ institutions whose main concern was serving the public and contributing to citizens amenities by an adequate and accessible supply of daily necessities. The labour groups played an active role during the Quit India Movement.<sup>70</sup> The strike of the fowl dealers of the municipal markets was part of the program of militancy by the labour groups during the Quit India Movement that began in 1942. In 1944, a strike was organised by the fowl dealers of the Hogg Market. They protested against rent increase by the Calcutta Corporation. Fowl was one of the essential commodities in

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<sup>68</sup> Anonymous, “Famine and Plenty: Pyramids of Food in Calcutta,” *The Sunderland Echo and Shipping Gazette* (October 1943).

<sup>69</sup> Sanjukta Ghosh, “Famine, Food and the Politics of Survival in Calcutta 1943-1950,” in *Calcutta the Stormy Decades*, ed. Tanika Sarkar and Sekhar Bandopadhyay (Social Science Press, 2015), 204-230.

<sup>70</sup> Suranjan Das, *Interrogating Politics and Society: Twentieth Century Indian Subcontinent* (Delhi: Primus Books, 2014).

the Hogg Market. It was in great demand amongst the buyers of the Hogg Market. The Calcutta Corporation tried to sabotage the strike of the fowl dealers. The Calcutta Corporation struck a deal with fowl dealers outside the city. They were brought to the Hogg Market in lorries protected by the police. Councillor M.M. Burman remarked that the Calcutta Corporation was interfering with the ‘civil liberties’ of the fowl dealers.

Unlike in 1943, the Government of India in 1946, directly intervened to provide food for the people through the municipal markets. In 1946, Calcutta’s municipal markets became a part of the rationing system and the ‘Grow More Food Campaign’ of the Government of India, intending to keep up large quantities of supplies and prevent prices from rising. In 1946, the Director of Agriculture, Government of India, wanted depots in the municipal markets to sell seed and manure at subsidised rates as part of this campaign. The Chairman of the Calcutta Corporation assured that stalls in the municipal markets would be made available to the Director of Agriculture,<sup>71</sup> Government of India for the particular purpose at a nominal rent. Eleven stalls in the Hogg Market, two in the Entally Market, open spaces in the Lake and Park Circus Markets, and one stall in the Lansdowne Market at Re. 1/month for sale of seed and manure were given to the Director of Agriculture, Government of India. The vegetables and crops grown by the Department of Agriculture were sold to the ratepayers of Calcutta at reasonable rates through these depots in the municipal markets. However, by 1946, the leaders of the Indian National Congress attacked this attempt by the colonial state to control internal food distribution through rationing. They favoured dispersion rather than centralisation of the food distribution and

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<sup>71</sup> Anonymous, “3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of Grow More Food Committee,” *The Calcutta Municipal Gazette* (April 1946).

consumption networks, as the colonial government had already lost its right to feed the population after the famine of 1943.

### **The Changed Expectations of the *Memsahibs***

In the 1930s, most of the European women never visited the Hogg Market as they had been made to believe it was a ‘miniature inferno’, filled with ‘lepers, stray and sick dogs, importunate widows, rogues and cheats’. However, a young European lady ‘Binky’ belonging to a planter's family had a very different view.<sup>72</sup> She very emphatically refused to believe the ‘awful’ characterisation of the Hogg Market by the Europeans. In the 1930s, she often ventured into the Hogg Market. Here she found the shopkeepers very amusing, polite and kind. According to her, the ‘native’ sellers were not cheaters but were only following the ethics of buyers and sellers globally. In all marketplaces of the world, according to her, all sellers desired to sell goods at a high price. This desire of the sellers was complemented by the feature of the buyers all over the world, i.e., reduce prices as much as possible. She felt the shopkeepers, who offered her slices of mango and handful of grapes, were ‘gentlemen’. They referred to her as an ‘old customer’, which sounded like a ‘heavenly virtue’ to her. She described the flower man as sweet. He presented her with a buttonhole, even after being told she could not pay his prices. Another sixty-year-old shopkeeper, declared to the young European lady that she was his father and mother and invited her to inspect his stock of socks, suspenders and shirts. She described a shopkeeper from Kashmir as a gentleman and an indulgent parent who called her ‘*miss baba*’ (girl-child) and permitted her to sample his assorted array of nuts. She further went on to

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<sup>72</sup> The Planters Journal and Agriculturist, Calcutta, “The New Market: Through a Woman's Eyes,” *The Calcutta Municipal Gazette* (5<sup>th</sup> July 1930): 305.

define the China man selling balloons as 'merry' and 'too good to be missed'. She characterised the silk men as the most patient and courteous. They were as excited about selling silk fabrics for a full dress as about selling half a yard of georgette von for a handkerchief. Even the book men, permitted her to read for hours, and bowed her out with sweet and pleasant smiles. She felt that all the shopkeepers in the Hogg Market greeted the customers kindly, even if they purchased in the next shop. They also assisted her in dealing with 'greedy-minded' coolies and dogs.<sup>73</sup>

One cannot deny that 'age' could be a factor that made the youthful 'Binky' perceive the municipal markets in Calcutta as a pleasant and joyful experience, compared to the older generation of European women. She humorously mimicked the English accents of the 'native' sellers. According to her, the 'native' sellers pronounced stockings, shirts, orchids, pink roses as 'storking, sharts, archid, peenk' roses.<sup>74</sup> It displayed a bit of her racially tinged attitude. Her movement through the municipal market was akin to the figure of the European flaneuse. The changing conditions in the colony and metropole in the 1930s and 1940s have to be factored in. No longer were the British women travelling to India just as housewives. They were unmarried middle-class women who were hired as governesses and missionary school teachers during the inter-war years in India. All these impacted the changing and variegated perceptions of the European women, enabling them to assert their different gendered positionalities without losing racial hegemony in the space of the municipal marketplaces in colonial Calcutta. In the 1930s, even some Englishwomen were stall owners in the municipal markets. Mrs. Jones was the stall owner in Room No. 5 in the

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

South Block of the Entally Market.<sup>75</sup> Her ownership was short-lived and cancelled after she did not renew her monthly license.

During the Second World War, the Calcutta Corporation was trying its best to keep the Hogg Market secure, safe, comfortable and well stocked for the European and American residents in the city of Calcutta. During the 1940s, middle-class European women bought Indian handicrafts such as white *crepe de chine* made in Bengal and embroidered with Calcutta chicken work from the Hogg Market. They found that the cessation of imports had raised the wartime prices in the department stores like Hall and Anderson but not so much in the Hogg Market.<sup>76</sup> In 1941, the European women bought Christmas presents such as Mahjong (a tile based Chinese game), Collins Diary, petticoats, knickers, and nighties from the Hogg Market for their families in England. The Mahjong sets were especially for the missionaries on the front during the Second World War.

The Anglo-Indian women patronised the Hogg Market during the inter-war period. Between the 1930s and 1940s, many Anglo-Indian women bought cakes, turkey, patties, and cheese from the Hogg Market. Some Anglo-Indian women even shopped at the Park Circus and Entally Markets, close to their neighbourhoods. Councillor Rafique also noted that the stationery, drapery and perfumery stalls, owned mainly by Muslims of East Bengal's swampy districts, were a never-ending attraction for Anglo-Indian women.<sup>77</sup> Some Anglo-Indian women, namely Sahela Kate Latiff and Sylvia

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<sup>75</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1930*.

<sup>76</sup> *Letters Exchanged Between E.A. Storrs Fox, Senior Chaplain, IEE (RTD.) C/O Thos. Cook and Sons, Bombay and Mrs. Stanley, 4, Alipore Park Place, Calcutta*. MSS EUR E 343/38, British Library.

<sup>77</sup> M. Rafique, "The Corporation Markets," *The Calcutta Municipal Gazette*, (8<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Number): 87-88.

Agarwalla leased a book and shoe stall respectively in the Hogg Market between 1937 and 1941.<sup>78</sup> Their domesticity was influenced by both European and Indian ideas of home.<sup>79</sup> Their presence as buyers and sellers in the Hogg Market reflected this intermingling of European and Indian cultures. It also made them the target of suspicion of the colonial government as the source of the rumour in the Hogg Market during the Second World War. The Anglo-Indians were considered a marginal group, as they belonged to both the foreign and the 'native' races.<sup>80</sup> The British disowned them as 'half-breeds' and treated them with contempt. The ruling white race was especially conscious of keeping at a distance the Anglo-Indians and the Eurasians in the Calcutta. During the Second World War, the colonial state was suspicious that the Anglo- Indian women were always up to some mischief in the Hogg Market, which was a frequent haunt of theirs.

The panic situation in 1942 in the Hogg Market caused by the rumour of a Japanese air raid and looting of goods by *goondas* was brought to the attention of the Deputy Commissioner of Police (J.V.B. Janvrin) by Miss M. Clark, the deputy organiser of Women's Air Raid Precaution Section.<sup>81</sup> According to Miss M. Clark, the chicon shopkeeper of A. Barry Brothers (G-56) told her that an Anglo-Indian *memsahib* (European woman living in India) urged the shopkeepers to close their shops before

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<sup>78</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1937-1938, 1939-1940, 1940-1941*.

<sup>79</sup> Alison Blunt, *Domicile and Diaspora: Anglo-Indian Women and the Spatial Politics of Home* (Wiley, 2008).

<sup>80</sup> To critically examine the position of the Anglo-Indians in colonial India refer to Sarmistha De, *Marginal Europeans in Colonial India, 1860-1920*, Thema Kolkata 2008. Paul Frederick Cressey, "The Anglo-Indians: A Disorganized Marginal Group," *Social Forces*, Dec., 1935, Vol. 14, No. 2 (Dec., 1935): 263-268.

<sup>81</sup> *Government of Bengal, Office of the Deputy Commissioner of Police, Special Branch, K.P.M/SB/01566/05, File No. 757/42, part 2, 1942.*

*goondas* rushed in to loot everything and before the municipal market was bombed by a Japanese air raid. A European volunteer, Miss Clark, was represented in the government records to have declared such rumours to be nonsense. The government records represented the Anglo-Indian women to have sparked the rumours; while the English women played the part of true heroes by declaring such rumours to be nonsense and reopening the shops in the Hogg Market.<sup>82</sup> The administration of the Hogg Market was represented as successful in the handling of such rumours. The shopkeepers who ran to the market office to know the actual situation were informed by the superintendent about the baseless nature of such rumours after which they reopened their shops.<sup>83</sup>

In 1942, though the source of the rumour in the Hogg Market was shrouded in mystery, the colonial government cast its suspicions over the Anglo-Indian community, especially the Anglo-Indian ladies frequenting the Hogg Market in this period. During the Second World War, the colonial state-directed attention to the Anglo-Indian women such as the Anglo-Indian customers of the Hogg Market and the Anglo-Indian teachers of Loreto Day School (Dhurrumtollah) as possible sources of the rumour in the Hogg Market.<sup>84</sup> The daughter of the sergeant of the Hogg Market studied at the Loreto Day School (Dhurrumtollah).<sup>85</sup> The class bias of the municipal market authorities was also exposed. Even after the suspects were severely

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> *Government of Bengal, Office of the Deputy Commissioner of Police, Special Branch, K.P.M/SB/01566/05, File No. 757/42, part 2, 1942. Government of Bengal, Office of the Deputy Commissioner of Police, Special Branch, K.P.M/SB/01566/05, File No. 757/42, part 2, 1942).*

<sup>85</sup> *Government of Bengal, Office of the Deputy Commissioner of Police, Special Branch, K.P.M/SB/01566/05, File No. 757/42, part 2, 1942.*

questioned, it was a bearer or a domestic servant, who was held responsible for the rumour, with no further trial warranted.

In 1942, rumours of a Japanese attack on Calcutta and evacuation warnings caused panic amongst the buyers and sellers inside the Hogg Market in Calcutta. The colonizers had wanted the municipal markets to be spick and span and highly disciplined in terms of law and order. But the rumour in the Hogg Market during the Second World War disturbed this order, and the municipal market had to be kept under more vigilance. Rumours were identified with bazars in colonialist thinking.<sup>86</sup> It was precisely because the bazars were a threat to the ruling power as a special site of critique by the crowds of people, mostly the subaltern groups, that the ordered spaces of the municipal markets were established in the first place. However, disorder induced by the rumours of a Japanese attack on the municipal markets during the Second World War again stoked the fears of the colonizers that the Calcutta Corporation owned markets were becoming just like the ‘uncontrollable’ bazars of Calcutta. The biases of the records of the British Government and its characterisation of the rumour in the Hogg Market as a ‘bazar rumour’ has been brought out in the next paragraph.

There was a whole lot of confusion in the market as to how the rumour had spread in the Hogg Market. Messrs A. Banji and Company narrated that they had heard the rumour from some European lady customer of M.E. Naskar and Company. The latter denied this. Shahabut Ali (an employee of R.S. and Company, cloth and dress makers) said that Kartic Chandra Samanta, (an employee in oil cloth store adjacent to his shop) told him that the enemy wireless had announced the bombing of Calcutta

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<sup>86</sup> Hugh B. Urban, “The Marketplace and the Temple: Economic Metaphors and Religious Meanings in the Folk Songs of Colonial Bengal,” *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 60, No. 4, (Nov 2001).

between 4 pm and 7 pm on 18<sup>th</sup> march 1942. Shahabut Ali went to the Hogg Market office to know the truth and found the news to be false.<sup>87</sup> Mr Kundu, an employee in market office, said Shahabut Ali reported to him that Mr Wallis, a customer, had said so. Shahabut Ali later said he never said Wallis, what he meant was wireless. Kartic Chandra Samanta said he had only heard the rumour and had no personal knowledge. According to the government records, Kartic Chandra Samanta described the rumour as a bazar rumour in the Hogg Market.<sup>88</sup>

The documents of the colonial government on war rumours were biased. They either attributed the rumour in the Hogg Market to the Anglo-Indian women or the European women. On the other hand, the Calcutta Corporation records on the panic situation in the Hogg Market in 1942, revealed the views of the administrative officials in the Hogg Market. In the Calcutta Corporation records, the superintendent complained that the panic situation induced by rumours in the Hogg Market was due to the lack of sufficient security arrangements in the market. In 1942, the superintendent of the Hogg Market reported that a large number of peons and *chowkidars* (watchmen) had deserted the market owing to panic. In the Services Standing Committee of the Calcutta Corporation, the superintendent complained that there were a lesser number of sergeants as the vacancy in place of Sergeant E.G. Marshall was not filled in. The superintendent complained that the influx of military personnel had created complex problems that could not be coped without the full strength of sergeants.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Government of Bengal, Office of the Deputy Commissioner of Police, Special Branch, K.P.M/SB/01566/05, File No. 757/42, part 2, 1942.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Calcutta Corporation. *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Services Standing Committee, 1942.*

### **The Perceptions of the New Group of Westerners**

The municipal markets became entangled with the welfarist expectations of the middle class during the period of food shortage and price rise as a result of the Second World War. The colonial state was concerned over the rumour induced ‘disorder’ in the Hogg Market. These two developments had already loosened the colonial state’s control over the municipal markets that it had expected to rigorously maintain through the metropole derived market model. This controlling aspect of the derived model was further shaken when the municipal markets also became enmeshed within the attitudes and activities of a new crop of Westerners who had come to Calcutta as a part of the military contingent in the city during the Second World War. The city of Calcutta was a major military base during this time as it was drawn into the World War Two on behalf of Britain and its allies. The United States of America (U.S.A.) dough boys were in Calcutta as part of a huge internationally constituted army.<sup>90</sup> They visited the Hogg Market. The Hogg Market was officially recognised as a genuine market by the American Government. Even though the American soldiers were expected to perceive the municipal market in particular ways, they charted their own distinctive detours and overlaid the municipal markets in Calcutta with their own set of meanings and perceptions. The recent scholarship has highlighted that the carefully constructed binaries of whiteness and Indian-ness in the colonial public sphere were gradually eroded during the Second World War. The new dynamics of civilian-military life and the presence of more diverse and variegated Westerners had

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<sup>90</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Report of the Municipal Administration of Calcutta, 1944-1945* (Calcutta: Corporation Press, 1945).

repercussions for the ordered spaces of the colonial state.<sup>91</sup> I look at such an impact of the presence of a new group of Westerners on the municipal markets in Calcutta.

The American Red Cross Guide Book described the Hogg Market as the largest market in the East where anything under the sun could be purchased. It described the grouping of its stalls in sections as a remarkable feature.<sup>92</sup> The U.S.A military service members billeted to Calcutta received the Calcutta Key pamphlet as a guide to the city of Calcutta.<sup>93</sup> It too had a racially biased attitude towards the markets in Calcutta. It recommended the Hogg Market (called New Market in the guide books) over the bazars in Calcutta. According to the Calcutta Key, the American soldiers had to bargain, even in the Hogg Market. However, according to the Calcutta Key, unlike the bazars, the Hogg Market was formal. In the Hogg Market, the American soldiers could demand cash receipts and controlled price lists. This way the 'native' sellers could not cheat the soldiers, the pamphlet stated. In keeping with these prescriptions, Americans like the journalist John Barry considered Calcutta's municipal markets as 'splendid'. For him, the Hogg Market was unique because not just local and Indian but also manufactures from all over the world could be found in the market. These included Lancashire textures, Northampton footwear, Bokhara rugs and Chinese silks etc.<sup>94</sup> He was enamoured by its architecture and its grouping of stalls. Richard Leonard Beard, a clinical psychologist and Second Lieutenant in the American Army was stationed in the General Hospital in Calcutta. He sent letters to his wife in the

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<sup>91</sup> Yasmin Khan, 'Sex in an Imperial War Zone: Transnational Encounters in Second World War India,' *History Workshop Journal*, No. 73 (2012): 240-258.

<sup>92</sup> *A Guide Book to Calcutta, Agra, Delhi, Karachi and Bombay*, The American Red Cross and the China-Burma-India-Command (1943).

<sup>93</sup> *The Calcutta Key*, Services of Supply Base Section Two Division, Information and Education Branch, United States Army Forces in India-Burma (1945).

<sup>94</sup> John Barry, *Calcutta 1940* (Calcutta: The Central Press, 1940).

U.S.A. He had a racially biased attitude towards India. He recoiled from its supposed poverty, backwardness and ‘strange’ cultural practices. With such an attitude, he frequented, along with his colleagues, the Hogg Market and the shops and restaurants around it.<sup>95</sup> These included the Cathay Restaurant and the Lighthouse Movie Theatre. In 1946, he bought many ‘Indian’ things from the Hogg Market such as whole menagerie made of ivory. His folks in America had requested for them. These Indian made products sold in the Hogg Market were popular amongst the foreigners.

The photographs below reveal that American racism was of a different kind. The American racism in mid-twentieth century was different from the late nineteenth century British racism. The latter was underlined by the idea of the civilisational superiority of the British and their mission to civilise the supposedly uncivilised Orient. Comparing figures 4.1 and 4.2, one can make the following observations. Figure 4.1 is a late nineteenth century photograph of the Hogg Market. It is devoid of any human figure except one hackney carriage driver. The focus of the photograph is the Hogg Market and the rows of hackney carriages in front of it. One possible reading of the photograph could be that through the architecture of the Hogg Market, the photographer was trying to re-enforce the idea of the supposed civilisational superiority of the British, especially since the architecture of the Hogg Market was derived from the metropole. In contrast, in the figure 4.2, the photographer Clyde Waddell, captures the Hogg Market in the mid-twentieth century, in a different way. One can spot ‘native’ rickshaw pullers, ‘native’ middle-class in the rickshaws, ‘natives’ walking across the Hogg Market and standing under the portico of the market building. They are depicted along with American soldiers, military trucks and

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<sup>95</sup> Elaine Pinkerton ed., *From Calcutta with Love: The World War Two Letters of Richard and Reva Beard* (Texas Tech University Press, USA, 2002).

cars. The racial bias of the American photographs is highlighted by the caption of the photographs. In the caption, Clyde Waddell (U.S.A. military man, personal press photographer of Luis Mountbatten and news photographer on Phoenix Magazine) described the Hogg Market as a 'giant food department' where all kinds of goods can be found. He was very appreciative of the Hogg Market. His perception was aligned to the official take of the American Government on the Hogg Market, which was reflected in the Calcutta Key and American Red Cross guidebooks on Calcutta.

One has to notice the contrasting body politics in the figures 4.3 and 4.4 below. In the photograph by Clyde Waddell (Figure 4.4), the 'native' sellers and the American soldiers are depicted in close physical proximity in the Hogg Market during the Second World War. This was in sharp contrast to the photograph of the early twentieth century (figure 4.3) where a conscious physical distance was sought to be maintained between the British colonizers and the colonized. In the latter, the 'native' sellers are depicted in a state of alertness, as if an imaginary boundary line existed between the 'native' sellers and the European/British customers in a European driven ethos of buying and selling in the municipal markets (Figure 4.3).

On comparing figures 4.5 and 4.6 below, the following differences can be noted. In the photographs by Glenn Hensley (technician with the U.S.A. Army Airforce), the 'native' sellers and buyers in the 'native' cane or paper handicraft shops in the Hogg Market formed the centre point (Figure 4.6). He focused on the stalls and shops selling Indian handicrafts such as Indian sarees, paper crafts, cane crafts and cane mats in the Hogg Market. There were crowds of 'natives' huddled around these stalls in a carefree manner, some leaning on the wooden platforms of the stalls in the Hogg Market. In another photograph clicked by Glenn Hensley, a 'native' seller is captured while spending playful time with his child in his Hogg Market stall (Figure 4.7). This

photograph depicted the private and familial elements of the 'native' life in the municipal markets, which was never represented in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century photographs of the municipal markets. These two photographs compare very differently from the neat Hogg Markets in the photograph of the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, wherein the colonial state's security personnel were the centre point of the photograph (figure 4.5). The following photographs highlight the difference between the racist undertones in the American photographic representations and the British photographic representations of the Hogg Market. In these ways, the American photographers added another layer of meanings to the municipal markets during the Second World War.



*Figure 4.1* Architecture of the Hogg Market, late nineteenth century (Source: British Library, UK)



*Figure 4.2* Photograph of the Hogg Market, 1946 by Clyde Waddell.



*Figure 4.3* Goat Meat stall (Halal Meat) in the Hogg Market, 1910



*Figure 4.4* An American GI buying brassware and Gurkha knives souvenirs from the Hogg Market, photograph by Clyde Waddell, 1946. (Source: British Library, London)



*Figure 4.5* Interior of the Hogg Market, Calcutta, 1876 (Source: British Library, London)



*Figure 4.6 Activity at the Hogg Market during Christmas (Source: Glenn Hensley)*



*Figure 4.7 Merchant and Child in the Hogg Market (Source: Glenn Hensley, 1944)*

## Conclusion

This chapter argued that the municipal markets in Calcutta digressed from the metropolitan model of markets when the global order was in crisis from the 1930s to 1940s. The expectation of the colonial municipal administration to discipline the Calcutta municipal markets, in the interest of British capitalism and imperialism was jolted by the new situation created by the Great Depression and Second World War. From the mid-1930s, the demands of the retailers and wholesalers, the welfarist expectations of the educated middle-class, the expectations of the Indian enterprises, the changed expectations of the *memsahibs* and the new group of Westerners in the city, began to project new expectations on the municipal markets. This chapter argues that in the process of revamping its administration of the municipal markets, the Calcutta Municipal Corporation had to negotiate with the new demands of the above actors, which in turn modified the municipal markets. The next chapter concentrates on the reconstitution of the municipal markets by the subaltern groups, despite the attempts of the colonial state and the middle class, to circumscribe their roles in the municipal markets.

## Chapter 5

### Subaltern Signatures

#### Introduction

The previous chapter delineated the modifications to the municipal market system during the tumultuous decades of the 1930s and 1940s. This chapter focuses on the transmutation of the derived model by the mediation of *chasis* (peasants doubling up as sellers), *fariahs* (petty middlemen who mediate between the wholesale traders and brokers), coolies, beggars, lepers, *fakirs* (Sufi ascetics), *sadhus* (holy men of various Hindu sects), subaltern women sellers, women beggars and prostitutes. Chapter One had explained how the elite European men's anxiety to foreclose transgressions of racial, class and gender boundaries by such subalterns scripted the blueprint of the Calcutta municipal market based on the Market Hall model. However, this chapter argues that the application of the model in the specifics of the colonial situation and the peculiarities of the Calcutta's cultural environment, was inevitably porous, with the subalterns coming to permeate municipal markets and leaving their signature on the markets' every-day.

Both the Europeans and the 'native' upper classes wished to make the socio-spatial norms of municipal markets a predominantly upper-class. But markets, in any case, have a potential for destabilising social boundaries of gender, class and so on and creating a disarming atmosphere of familiarity.<sup>1</sup> They have also been characterised as

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<sup>1</sup> For a theoretical discussion on how markets represent a site of social connection and interaction and as a site where gender, race, and class differences are constituted in multiple ways, read, Sophie

centres of unofficial things in an official world.<sup>2</sup> Social theory, thus, emphasises the ambivalent status of the market - a centre of power, on the one hand, and a potential site of contestation and critique, on the other.<sup>3</sup> This chapter tries to analyze how the subaltern groups contested the dominant spatialisation of the municipal markets. They inscribed their culture-specific plurality and pre-existing ways of trading on the municipal markets and made them look and feel very different from what their founders had envisaged.

### **The *Chasis* and *Fariahs* Carve Out Their Niche**

The *chasis* (primary producer cum sellers of fruits and vegetables) asserted their presence as they shoot through the derived model of the municipal market. The *chasis* pierced through the upper- and middle-class biased municipal market plan. They imprinted the derived model with their own inscriptions. They shook the colonial state and the middle class's expectations out of the municipal markets. The Europeans characterised the *chasi* as a constant 'nuisance' because they deflected the municipal market from the modernist architectural principles, and its European and upper-class nature. The frequent encroachments of the *chasis* on the roads and passages of the Hogg Market was perceived by the Europeans as 'unbefitting' a European market. The European men felt the 'encroachments' by the *chasis* were an 'inconvenience' for

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Watson, "The Magic of the Marketplace in a Neglected Public Space," *Urban Studies*, July 2009, Vol. 46, No. 8.

<sup>2</sup> For a theoretical discussion on the nature of markets, read, Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, translated by Helene Iswolsky (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1968).

<sup>3</sup> Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India* (Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 257-259. Hugh B. Urban, "The Marketplace and the Temple: Economic Metaphors and Religious Meanings in the Folk Songs of Colonial Bengal," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 60, No. 4, (Nov 2001).

the European ladies. For the Europeans, the municipal market especially the Hogg Market was meant to be a comfortable and convenient place for shopping for the upper-class European men and women. The squatters apparently obstructed the movements of the European ladies while they were shopping. It was to solve this issue that in 1889, Councillor Deefolts remarked that the Hogg Market's European nature demanded that the squatters in the Hogg Market expose their goods for sale on platforms and be provided with 'proper' accommodation.<sup>4</sup>

However, every arrangement derived from the Western model failed to contain the *chasis*. Since the *chasis* always pushed at the boundaries of the West derived architecture of the municipal markets, the municipal market authorities had to negotiate with them. In actuality, the *chasis* translated the materiality of the West-derived plan of the municipal markets into porous spaces of negotiation. In 1905,<sup>5</sup> the *chandney* (a covered area for the *chasis*) adjoining the main municipal market building was established through such negotiations by the *chasis*. The *chandney* was not an architectural feature of the metropolitan model. The indigenous traditions were reflected even in the name *chandney*, an Arabic word meaning moonlight. The concept of the *chandney* was rooted in the 17<sup>th</sup> century architecture of the bazars of Mughal India. The buying and selling of articles took place in an open-air market square surrounded with pools. The pool reflected the silver light of the moon on the articles. The buying and selling activities in these spaces were close to nature and in an open atmosphere. It was unlike the enclosed and controlled spaces that the colonizers wanted the Calcutta municipal markets to be. Further, the word *chandney*

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<sup>4</sup> The word squatter denotes the *chasis*.

<sup>5</sup> S.W. Goode, *Municipal Calcutta: Its Institutions in Their Origin and Growth* (Kolkata Municipal Corporation, 2005). Calcutta Corporation, *Report of the Municipal Administration of Calcutta, 1911-1912* (Calcutta: Corporation Press, 1912).

is also rooted in the eighteenth-century concept of *chandnia* which was a toll, levied literally on the cover above each shop i.e., on every spot of ground used for buying and selling.<sup>6</sup> It was a toll collected from a cluster of shops for the privilege of covering the stalls. In the municipal market, these indigenous traditions percolated into the West derived architecture of municipal markets through the *chasi* or the cultivator cum seller of fresh vegetables and fruits. This chapter argues that this *chandney* symbolised a subaltern niche in the upper and middle-class-oriented municipal markets. Here, the producers brought in significant quantities of their produce from the suburbs. They sold wholesale to the stallholders of the municipal and the private markets or retailed them to the ‘native’ buyers.<sup>7</sup> The constant resistance by the *chasis* shot through the upper- and middle-class nature of the market. They imprinted their own class features on the municipal markets. At one level the municipal markets, were established by the Europeans and the ‘native’ middle-class in the Calcutta Corporation. They constructed the municipal market as a space which reproduced and maintained socio-spatial inequality. At the other level, the *chasis* constructed the space of the *chandney* through their daily exchanges, their usages, scenes and actions. For the purpose of revenue, these had to be taken into account by the Corporation. The space of the *chandney* arose out of the negotiated social interaction and lived experience in the municipal markets.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Sudipta Sen, *Conquest of Marketplaces: Exchange, Authority and Conflict in Early Colonial North India*, PhD Dissertation (The University of Chicago, 1994).

<sup>7</sup> In 1919, the *chasis* bought potatoes and vegetables from the mart at Baidyabati and other neighbouring suburban areas. In 1924 *chasis* from mofussil areas of Dhapa, Baruipur sat in the *chandney* of the College Street Market.

<sup>8</sup> For a theoretical discussion on the two kinds of socio-spatial formations read, Eda Unlu Yucesoy, “Constructing the Marketplace: A Socio-Spatial Analysis of Post Marketplace of Istanbul,” *Built Environment* (1978), Vol. 39, No. 2, 2013.

In the municipal markets, the professional and full-time retailers did not have to go to the higher order markets to get their supplies. The dealers of the manufacturing companies delivered the goods to the retailers in the municipal markets. However, through the *chasis* another kind of retailer cum wholesaler became a common feature in the municipal markets. They shot through the intention of the derived model to populate the municipal markets in Calcutta only with professional and full-time retailers. Who were the *chasis*? Between the late eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century, the *chasis* or cultivators of betel, oil, fruits and vegetables sold their articles to the *beparis* (trading farmer who brought his produce for sale in the *hats* and also sometimes carried them to the market towns in India) in the *hats* (periodic, small rural markets in the rural society) of Eastern India. The *beparis* then carried them to the higher order markets in market towns. However, by the early twentieth century, more and more of the *chasis* or cultivators were bypassing the petty traders or *beparis* and striking their own deals. These *chasis* or cultivators carried their agricultural produce from the villages to the wholesale *mandis* (markets in towns surrounding the main cities) in market towns.<sup>9</sup> There were many market towns that surrounded the city of Calcutta. The *chasis* further carried their produce from the market towns into the municipal markets of Calcutta.

With changes in the colonial economy, the *chasis* could not depend on the local economy to sell vegetables and had to migrate to Calcutta. Owing to their importance in attracting all classes of ‘native’ buyers, and increasing the revenue of the market, the *chasis* could negotiate for the separate place or the *chandney* in the municipal

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<sup>9</sup> For an in-depth study of the *chasis* from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries in Eastern India, especially Gangetic Bihar, read, Anand Yang, *Bazaar India: Markets, Society and Colonial State in Gangetic Bihar* (Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 2000).

markets. The mediations by the lower-class shot through the bourgeois atmosphere of the municipal markets as desired by the Europeans and the 'native' middle-class. The *chasis* were so crucial that without their presence, even the well-lit and well-ventilated municipal markets, inspired from the West, was not enough to make the municipal market a success in the city. The *chasis* were indispensable because they were the only suppliers of fresh fruits and vegetable for the residents of the neighbourhood in which the municipal markets were located. They were even wholesalers to the other retail sellers in the municipal market. The *chasis* kept the prices of vegetables and fruits in the municipal markets low due to their influx in large numbers from the suburbs. This was especially after better tram services connected the city with the suburbs. The 'native' buyers had a propensity to buy potatoes, spices, fish, and betel and other articles from the same market where they purchased fruits and vegetables.

The authorities negotiated with the *chasis* because of their vital role in the municipal markets. The *chasis* were the backbone of the municipal markets for several reasons. They earned large revenues for the municipal markets. Between 1907 and 1908, there was a rise of about Rs. 20,000 in total collections due to the squatters in the Hogg market. In 1912, there was an increase in the amount realised as rents from the Hogg Market's squatters and the wholesale vendors, exceeding the previous year's collection by Rs. 10,849-14-6 and the estimated budget by Rs 11,440. Though the *chasis* paid very little rents per head, the revenues increased due to their large numbers. Between 1911 and 1912, the Lansdowne Market daily purveyors included seventeen vegetable vendors, twelve fish vendors, two fruit vendors, one mutton butcher and one poultry seller. In the Charles Allen Market, there were twenty-seven

permanent shops, along with twenty stalls in the *chandney* occupied by the fresh vegetable and fruit vendors and eighteen by the fish vendors. Between 1919 and 1920, the Lansdowne Market had fifty-six permanent tenants, twenty-six season tenants and fifty-five squatters.

As the *chasis* or temporary vendors increased in number, they positioned themselves wherever they found a place in the extended portions of the municipal markets. The Calcutta Corporation constantly tried to concentrate them within newly constructed *chandneys*. Every time the *chasis* overflowed out of the already built *chandney*,<sup>10</sup> there were complaints from the customers or the other stallholders. As a result, new *chandneys* had to be built for the *chasis*. It was a vicious cycle of spilling over and efforts at containment, because the *chasis* invariably encroached onto the passages of the municipal markets. This is brought out by the following instances. In 1906, the *chandney* was built in an extended portion of the Hogg Market.<sup>11</sup> In 1915, the market committee was asked to consider the engineer's estimate for the extension of the *chandney* in the Hogg Market to accommodate the squatters who squatted on the open space between the market and the *chandney*.<sup>12</sup> In 1929, a new *chandney* was constructed in the Dutt Lane of the Hogg Market.<sup>13</sup> In 1917, a *chandney* was built in the south section of the College Street Market. In 1922, the fish and vegetable vendors increased in number. They were brought in to the College Street Market from the

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<sup>10</sup> The *chandney* was called squatters shed by the British. Though the *chandney* was unlike a shed in the conventional sense, the British defined it through their own notions of spatial organisation. The *chasis* were referred to as squatters by the British.

<sup>11</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Report of the Municipal Administration of Calcutta, 1906-1907* (Calcutta: Corporation Press, 1907).

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Report of the Municipal Administration of Calcutta, 1928-1929* (Calcutta: Corporation Press, 1929).

Madhab Babu Bazar. They ‘encroached’ onto the passages of the *chandney* in the College Street Market, from where it was difficult to persuade them to shift elsewhere. In 1938, the public complained of the ‘blocking’ of the Sambhu Nath Pandit Street by the *chasis*.<sup>14</sup> A *chandney* was built between the central and north sections of the College Street Market to accommodate and maintain vigilance over the *chasis*. In 1936, a shed had to be erected by the Calcutta Corporation when the open space (next to the restrooms) in front of the *chandney* in the Lansdowne Market was becoming congested with squatting vegetable vendors, causing great inconvenience to the buyers. In 1940, a triangular *chandney* was constructed in the Gariahat Market for accommodating the fish vendors.<sup>15</sup>

The *chasis* compelled the municipal authorities to modify the municipal markets for the sake of its revenue and popularity. Through the *chasis*, the precolonial and pre-existing marketplace culture seeped into the Calcutta municipal market space. Their trade at the rural level was embedded in local society and culture.<sup>16</sup> So even the municipal market had to incorporate the features of the local culture to make the market attractive for the *chasis*. Between 1912 and 1913 the Charles Allen Market spent Rs.1392 on *jalpani* (snacks), medical aid, presents on the 1st day of Bengali new year, and *rathayatra* festival (the festival of the procession of Krishna as

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<sup>14</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1938*.

<sup>15</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Report of the Municipal Administration of Calcutta, 1939-1940* (Calcutta: Corporation Press, 1940).

<sup>16</sup> Anand Yang, *Bazaar India: Markets, Society and Colonial State in Gangetic Bihar* (Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 2000).

Jagannatha held in Ashárh from July to August) to attract the lower-class vendors.<sup>17</sup> In the 1930s, *nahabat* (a band of musicians playing an assortment of instruments) as well as religious festivals were organised to attract ‘native’ buyers and sellers (including the *chasis*) to the Park Circus Market.<sup>18</sup> In 1925, bathing platforms were constructed in the Hogg Market. The bathing platform was built to attract the *chasis* to the new *chandney* in the Korbardar Lane of the Hogg Market.<sup>19</sup> The *chandney* reflected the overlap of the pre-colonial and colonial in the municipal markets as the official planned building of the municipal markets co-existed with the makeshift environment of the *chandneys*.

The Calcutta Corporation thought that the concentration in the *chandneys* would finally enable smooth revenue collection from the temporary vendors. However, even after the establishment of the *chandneys*, the squatters managed to evade rent payments. The municipal market authorities had to negotiate with the practices of the *chasis* by managing the *chandney* differently from the stalls. Their trade was embedded in local power relations at the rural level.<sup>20</sup> The *chandney* too had to be governed by the pre-colonial and pre-existing spatial traditions of the *chasis*. It came to be undergirded by social networks embedded in the rural society and governed by norms of trust/reciprocity in a local cultural ethos. The *chasis* sold fruits and

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<sup>17</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Report of the Municipal Administration of Calcutta, 1911-1912* (Calcutta: Corporation Press, 1912). Calcutta Corporation, *Report of the Municipal Administration of Calcutta, 1912-1913* (Calcutta: Corporation Press, 1913).

<sup>18</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1930-1931*.

<sup>19</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926*.

<sup>20</sup> Anand Yang, *Bazaar India: Markets, Society and Colonial State in Gangetic Bihar* (Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 2000).

vegetables in the *chandney*. The prices of these perishable items were uncertain due to the uncertainty and fluctuations in supply. The nature of the goods in the *chandney* was different from the standardised imported packaged products sold in the stalls of the municipal markets. The price bargaining, uncertainty about quality and quantity in the *chandney* stemmed from the nature of the perishable articles.<sup>21</sup> The rationality of the transactions in the *chandney* differed from the rationality of the transactions within the stalls of the municipal market because of the different nature of commodities bought and sold in the *chandney* and the stalls. Rather than being governed by the Gregorian Calendar like the tenants in the stalls, the *chasis* in the *chandney* were governed by the periods of crop cycles and the harvest festivals. The colonizers and the 'native' middle-class had to consider the seasonal nature of crop cycles. The products of the *chasis* were not manufactured in factories but grown in the farms. Hence the seasonal variations had to be taken into account. In the 1930s, the average rate of rents of the squatters in the Kalighat and the Jagoo bazar was the yardstick for the new rent structure in the Lansdowne Market.<sup>22</sup> The squatters and vegetable sellers in the former bazars were not taxed separately by owners. Instead, the owners paid a compound fee to the Calcutta Corporation on behalf of the squatters. Following this practice, the squatters in the *chandney* of the Lake and the Lansdowne Markets were also not levied taxes apart from rents. This way the Corporation tried to make the municipal markets as popular for the squatters as the private markets.

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<sup>21</sup> For a theoretical discussion on how the transactional structure of a markets depends on the type of commodities, read Frank Franselow, "The Bazar Economy or How Bizarre is the Bazaar Really?" *Man - Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 25 (2), 1990.

<sup>22</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1936-1937*.

In this new space of the *chandney*, the *chasis* could avail of the diverse range of suppliers, financiers, and customers without uneasiness. In the *chandney*, they did not feel the burden of competition from the richer vendors of fruits and vegetables. The authorities knew that if the sense of certainty and security was compromised, the *chasis* would escape from the municipal markets. The tendency of the *chasis* to stay loyal sellers of a market was their way of maintaining predictability and reliability in a situation fraught with rampant uncertainty, insecurity, and price rise. However, during the Second World War this sense of security was compromised. In 1942, supplies of food were inadequate for a short period when the *chasis* and the other temporary vendors were scared away due to an enemy raid in December 1942.<sup>23</sup>

It was especially during acute periods of crisis that the market authorities were compelled to adopt the precolonial marketplace norms of the *chasis* inside the municipal markets to overcome the supply crunch and revenue decline. *Hats* were organised in the Hogg Market during the First World War. In 1918, in the College Street Market, *hats* were organised to sell various commodities, suitable to the requirements of people of the northern area, such as betel leaves, fresh fruits and country-made slippers on a wholesale scale at low prices.<sup>24</sup> In 1919, D. Sengupta, a middle-class Bengali, was allowed to hold a *pan bazar* (betel market) of the *chasis* in the College Street Market. This was allowed so as to induce him into the College Street Market from the Mechuabazar. This became essential as the revenues of the College Street Market were dwindling during the uncertain conditions of the First

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<sup>23</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Report of the Municipal Administration of Calcutta, 1942-1943* (Calcutta: Corporation Press, 1943).

<sup>24</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Report of the Municipal Administration of Calcutta, 1918-1919* (Calcutta: Corporation Press, 1919).

World War.<sup>25</sup> Since the *pan bazar* became very popular amongst all classes of buyers in the College Street Market, the *chasis* of D. Sengupta were allowed to sell betel leaves on *hat* days (i.e., Mondays and Fridays) while retailing at the wholesale rate on all other days on payment of a little extra monthly rent. This was a violation of the rule that wholesale vendors could not retail in the municipal markets. Complaints were received from the other retail sellers of *pan* and even the councillors like N.C. Paul. As a result of these complaints, in 1930, D. Sengupta's *pan chasis* (cultivator cum sellers of betel leaf) were not permitted to retail *pan* but only sell wholesale on the *hat* days. It affected D. Sengupta very adversely. He had advanced vast sums of money to the *chasis*. The *chasis* would leave, if they were not allowed to sell in retail. It also affected D. Sengupta's huge profits. He garnered considerable profits by charging the *chasis* 2 or 3 *annas* per basket sold at the wholesale rate, while paying only Rs 50 per month to the Calcutta Corporation. To solve this problem, the municipal market authorities took a cue from the private markets. The Western model of markets had intended to shape the municipal markets very differently from the private markets/bazars. However, these very bazars were the reference points for the reconstruction of the municipal markets, in times of crisis. The second deputy executive officer observed the practice in betel marts at the Rajakatra (Barrabazar) and the Bowbazar. He then recommended that the retail sale of *pan* by the *chasis* in the College Street Market may be allowed on *hat* days.<sup>26</sup> However, this did not solve all problems. The permanent vendors had complaints against the *chasis* or wholesale dealers also selling their goods on retail. The *chasis* disposed of as much of their

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<sup>25</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926*.

<sup>26</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1935-1936*.

articles as possible on a wholesale basis. They then sold the remainder of their articles in retail along with the permanent vendors. The permanent vendors complained that they had permanent stalls for which they were paying higher rent. In contrast, the *chasis* were allowed to sell their articles in the morning and evening, with lower rents.

The capitalist economy principles of grouping and the discourse of property rights and duties attached to the derived model of the municipal markets were at stake when the *chasis* ‘encroached’ on the passages and stalls in the municipal markets. The question of encroachments by the *chasis* came up very often in the administrative meetings of the Calcutta municipal markets. In 1930, Councillor N.C. Paul complained that encroachments by *chasis* made it difficult for people to pass through the municipal markets. In 1941, the link between rights and encroachment was established when Mackertich John commented that ‘encroachments’ should not be allowed. He remarked that no stallholder could trample on the rights of another stall holder. In 1935, the market committee of the Calcutta Corporation accommodated the squatters on Sambhu Nath Chatterjee Street (S.N.C. Street), a public road between two sections of the College Street Market buildings.<sup>27</sup> In 1935, the stallholders on either side of S.N.C Street complained of ‘encroachments’ on passages by the *chasis* of fruits and vegetables. They caused ‘inconvenience’ to business and the customers frequently complained. The encroachments became a problem for the authorities, precisely because the municipal marketplace was planned to privilege the middle-class. It was planned in consonance with the metropolitan market organisation where the private was segregated from the public space. This was at odds with the idea of the customary usage of the space in the markets by the *chasis*. In 1935, eleven vendors on S.N.C

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<sup>27</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1935-1936*.

Street were arrested for obstructing/encroaching on the public road after the influential locality members complained to the police.<sup>28</sup> As a result, most of the *chasis* ran off to the nearby Nafar Babu Bazar. The Calcutta Corporation suffered a fall in revenue and apprehended a further fall during the *durga puja* (autumn festival) season. The deputy executive officer remarked that the College Street Market accommodated the largest number of *chasis* amongst all the markets in Calcutta, including the Hogg Market. They kept the supply of vegetables high and the prices cheaper than in the other markets. The deputy executive officer further stated that, if the *chasis* ran off to other private markets permanently, then the purchasing public would have no other alternative but to go to some private market in the vicinity. These customers would not come back to the municipal markets for fish, betel, potato, spices, and other requirements if they got their supply of vegetables from elsewhere. According to Councillor D.J. Cohen, the ‘encroachments’ were not even suitable for the private markets. Then it was even more problematic if the municipal markets allowed such practices. The Calcutta Corporation resolved the issue by negotiating with the *chasis* and constructing an additional *chandney* in the College Street Market to accommodate the growing number of the *chasis*.

The middle-class supposedly tried to ‘discipline’ the lower-class vendors by imposing fines and auctioning off their goods. Yet the lower-class asserted its presence and its culture penetrated the municipal markets. Sometimes, the lower-class vendors were compelled to use violence to fight the injustices done to them. In 1922, the peon Bejoy Singh did not understand the requirements of the vegetable *chasis* in the Korabardar Shed of the Hogg Market. He ordered them to remove their vegetable

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

baskets that were supposedly encroaching on the passages.<sup>29</sup> The *chasis* tried to protect themselves. The records represented the *chasis* as rowdy by citing that the *chasis* supposedly assaulted the peon. From the 1930s, Superintendent G.C. Woodward reported many cases of 'crime' in the *chandney* of the Hogg Market. His class and race biases were very evident in his statement that 'crimes' such as gambling, theft, pickpocketing, trespassing and fighting were rampant in the *chandney* of the Hogg Market.<sup>30</sup>

There were several categories of temporary vendors with roots in the precolonial, who constantly shot through the categorisations of the municipal market authorities. The *fariahs* were petty retailers or shopkeepers in primary and higher order markets who sold small quantities of grain, salt, sugar, tobacco, cotton and firewood in the nineteenth century and the twentieth century in Eastern India.<sup>31</sup> Since they received their supplies from wholesale merchants and were shopkeepers in the higher order markets as well, it was natural that they would look to the Calcutta municipal markets to receive their supplies from the wholesalers. Their presence confused the authorities and the other retailers and buyers. The presence of the *fariahs* further shook the concepts on which the West-derived municipal markets were based. The authorities distinguished between the *chasis* and *fariahs* by labelling them as real *chasis* and fake *chasis* respectively.<sup>32</sup> The real *chasis* were categorised as the wholesale or retail traders of fresh fruits and vegetables who came from the suburbs in the morning and

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<sup>29</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Committee, 1921-1922*.

<sup>30</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1934- 1935*.

<sup>31</sup> Anand Yang, *Bazaar India: Markets, Society and Colonial State in Gangetic Bihar* (Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 2000).

<sup>32</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1932-1933*.

left by noon. All the rest who stayed in the market the entire day, selling either imported goods/fruits and vegetables bought from the Hogg Market or the Sealdah Market or goods purchased from the local markets, were treated as *fariahs* and not as *chasis*.

This signified that the *fariahs* were categorised as stall holders in the municipal markets. But the *fariahs* were not used to the stalls. They felt more comfortable in the *chandney*. This deviated the market from its grouping principle and shot through the derived model of municipal markets. In 1930, the permanent stallholders of European vegetables complained that the *fariahs* selling European vegetables outside the range of European vegetable stalls, were going against the principle of grouping. The stall holders complained of loss in profits.<sup>33</sup> Again in 1932, the Market Committee was asked to consider a petition of the permanent fresh fruit stallholders of Block K of the Hogg Market. They stated in their petition that they were permanent tenants and had paid substantial salami (a sum of money given to the Calcutta Corporation for garnering preferential treatment in the lease of market stalls or settling of market stall rents) for their stalls. Still, their business was running at a loss. They blamed the temporary tenants in the new *chandney*. *Fariahs* were labelled as temporary tenants by the authorities of the municipal markets. These temporary tenants or *fariahs* located themselves outside the Block K of the Hogg Market instead of selling from the stalls. The *fariahs* expressed their voice by sending petitions to the market committee. The temporary male fresh fruit vendors or *fariahs* stated that they had been selling fresh fruits in the market along with the *chasis* for the last twenty-five years. They further stated, that they being poor men of small means, could not stand

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<sup>33</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1930-1931*.

competition with the stallholders of Block K. Hence if they were shifted, they would be put in an awkward position.

Even in 1937, the permanent stallholders in the coconut range of the Hogg Market complained that though coconuts were meant to be sold only from one range (in keeping with grouping), the *fariahs* were selling coconuts in the *chandney*.<sup>34</sup> The Calcutta Corporation negotiated the situation and tried to appease the permanent vendors by restricting the number of goods sold by the *fariahs* and the *chasis*. Despite categorisations, the *fariahs* and the *chasis*, were constantly spilling out of these categories, making it difficult to fix their identities. It resulted in revenue decrease and ‘irked’ the other sellers in the market. The *fariahs* created another space in the market called the *amdani wallah* (middle men buying wholesale from the wholesale merchants and selling to the retailers in small lots) range. The Calcutta Corporation again began to ‘discipline’ these actors to the middle-class ways of buying and selling in the municipal market. In 1936, Councillor Ariff moved that the *amdani wallah* range, where the *fariahs* carried out fresh fruit and vegetable business, should be ‘appropriately’ organised as there was no clear distinction of space in the *amdani wallah* range. These actors, rooted in the precolonial, constantly negotiated such rules and regulations and imprinted the markets with their different kind of socio-economic rationality.

### **The Imprint of the Coolies**

In the bazars of nineteenth century Calcutta, the Europeans were suspicious of the coolies being in cohorts with the *khansamah* (a male servant in charge of buying food

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<sup>34</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1937-1938*.

and other supplies from the market for the English household in colonial India) in ‘duping’ their European masters. They wished to strictly regulate the coolies in the municipal markets. However, the coolies continued to be a source of anxiety for the Europeans and the middle-class members of the Calcutta Corporation Market Committee. The Calcutta Corporation authorities had to constantly revamp their mechanisms of control. These constant revisions reveal that the coolies managed to negotiate the rules and regulations.

According to the European councillors of the Calcutta Corporation, the ‘Europeanness’ of the municipal market depended on the neat dressing and ‘civilised’ behaviour of the coolies. The market bylaws of 1889 allowed only licensed coolies in the municipal markets. This byelaw also ruled that the coolies had to wear numbered badges and uniform coats. In 1890, coolie sirdars like Aminal Haque were hired to maintain ‘discipline’ among coolies. They also ensured the ‘civil’ behaviour of coolies towards all persons hiring them. The Europeans with their racist bent of mind, perceived the coolies as the repositories of diseases. In 1890, a coolie boy was taken ill with cholera in the Hogg Market. The police could not take the coolie boy to the hospital due to lack of transport facilities for the purpose. It was then decided by the market committee that a *doolie* (a simple stretcher on poles to carry the wounded or ill) should be arranged for such emergencies in the market.<sup>35</sup>

In 1890, the shape of the coolie baskets came under the scrutiny of the European-led Calcutta Corporation. It brought to the fore, the class and race bias of the European councillors in the municipal markets. The European Councillor Doucett suggested that the market coolies be required to carry two baskets, a large and small one, so that

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<sup>35</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Committee, 1889-1890*.

purchases of fish, poultry and meat could be separated from fruits.<sup>36</sup> The superintendent submitted that the remedy lay in altering the shape of coolie basket as it would be rather inconvenient for a coolie to carry two baskets along with him. He suggested that because the coolie baskets were shaped like a cone, everything went to the bottom. It should be replaced with baskets of broad bases. However, the chairman of the Calcutta Corporation felt that the reform system could be successful if the European purchasers insisted on a particular form of coolie basket. In 1903, a European male reporter's race and class biases were projected on the coolies in the Hogg Market. He represented them as 'emaciated', who 'forced their services on all and sundry'.<sup>37</sup> According to him, the European buyer felt as though he had 'committed a crime', if he did not use the coolie's big baskets, even for a very small purchased item, such as a toothbrush.<sup>38</sup>

In 1914, the coolies who were given the charge of a bicycle stand in the Hogg Market became a 'nuisance' for the European customers of the Hogg Market. The European buyers and sellers in the Hogg Market did not like that the coolies rushed towards the bicycle stand as soon as they dismounted their cycles.<sup>39</sup> It irked their class and race bound susceptibilities. The European women in the Hogg Market had different opinions on the coolies. Their sympathetic or their harsh attitude to the coolies was enmeshed with their racial biases. In 1921, a female correspondent of the *Courier* took a sympathetic view of the coolies in the Hogg Market. She called them 'never-tiring as the coolies ran with their baskets to all the new arrivals to the Hogg Market with

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> *Toronto Saturday Night*, "A Visit to Calcutta: Hugli Pilots, Oriental Types of Head Gear, Types in the Market," 21<sup>st</sup> March 1903.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1913-1914*.

the hope of securing a patron'.<sup>40</sup> On the other hand, in 1930, a young European lady belonging to a planter's family described the coolies in the Hogg Market as 'greedy minded', to deal with whom she had to be assisted by the 'native' stallholders.<sup>41</sup> The European perceived them through their racist and class lens. The coolies made the Europeans nervous about the possibility that the racial and class hierarchies in the market might go haywire, if the coolies were not strictly and continuously regulated.

### **The Lepers and Beggars Shoot Through the Plan**

According to the Europeans, the beggars in the bazars of Calcutta were persistent and incorrigible.<sup>42</sup> Even in the corporation markets, the European and the upper and middle-class councillors of the Calcutta Corporation were wary of beggars in the market.<sup>43</sup> Despite bylaws, fines, and police intervention, the European men and women shoppers and middle-class 'natives' were constantly exasperated with the beggars in the municipal markets. The fear of the beggar's alliance with stall owners and *khansamah* in the nineteenth century was one among the many reasons why the Europeans preferred a separate and enclosed space of the municipal markets. However, this suspicion persisted even in the municipal markets. The Europeans still

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<sup>40</sup> From the Lady Correspondent, "Round Calcutta's Market, The New Arrival's First Place of Visit, Bargaining with Native Shopmen, The Stuart Hogg Market of Calcutta," *Courier* (28 December 1921).

<sup>41</sup> From the Planters Journal and Agriculturist, Calcutta, "New Market: Through a Woman's Eyes," *The Calcutta Municipal Gazette* (5<sup>th</sup> September 1930): 305.

<sup>42</sup> Anonymous, "The Briton Abroad: The Commercial in an Indian Bazar," *Sheffield Weekly Telegraph* (1914).

<sup>43</sup> Anonymous, "The Beggar Problem," *Calcutta Municipal Gazette* (18<sup>th</sup> January 1936).

assumed that the stallholders in the municipal markets allied with the *khansamah* and the beggars in ‘cheating’ the *sahibs* (European men living in colonial India).<sup>44</sup>

The bylaws of 1889 stated that no person with large and open pores or afflicted with leprosy or other loathsome or contagious disease was allowed to enter the Hogg Market or touch any article for sale in the market. This was after questions were raised in 1880 by Commissioner Bolst and Commissioner Priyananth Mullick, in the market committee, about the presence of a European leper pipelayer Phillipe in the Hogg Market. Priyananth Mullick remarked that the feeling of the ‘native’ community was against the admission of lepers in the Hogg Market. He suggested the drafting of bylaws for expelling lepers and others suffering from contagious diseases outside the market.<sup>45</sup> The European lepers were subalterns at the cross-section of race, class and religion bound susceptibilities of both the colonizers and the ‘native’ elite community. They were lower-class, suffering from contagious diseases, and not considered a part of the supposedly superior white race. The Europeans were gripped with the biblical fear of lepers. The European lepers ignited the ‘native’ community’s anxiety about purity and pollution issues around food in the municipal markets.

The activities of the leper beggars have to be historically contextualised. The medical discoveries in the 1920s showed the possibility of recovery of leprosy patients. However, the colonial state and the nationalists did not pay heed to these

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<sup>44</sup> Anonymous, “Fortunes in Begging: Calcutta as Beggar’s Paradise. A Lakh after 30 years,” *The Englishman* (7 July 1927). Anonymous, “Auction Stalls and Prices,” *The Homeward Mail* (15<sup>th</sup> September 1913).

<sup>45</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Committee, 1889-1890*.

developments. They continued to stress confinement and segregation.<sup>46</sup> The lepers were aware of the negligence of the authorities. Their disgruntled attitude towards the authorities extended into the municipal markets as well. The upper-class European and the upper and middle-class 'native' shoppers of Hogg Market were exasperated with their actions between the 1930s and 1940s.

In 1923, a European journalist of the *Statesman* remarked that the beggars on Chowringhee Road were among the most 'cunning pests' and 'nuisances' in the world.<sup>47</sup> The European anxieties about the destabilisation of class, race and gender hierarchies in the market can be gleaned from the following biased comment of this European journalist. He remarked, 'the beggars tried every means possible to extort money from passers-by, not so much from the burly sea captain or *chota sahib*, as much as the benevolent-looking, newly arrived European lady. They tried to gain sympathy by twisting their bodies into the most hideous shapes. This pretension was exposed after the beggars resumed a normal attitude after the passer-by was out of reach'. The European journalist further represented the beggars as persons who took 'advantage' of the generosity of the Muslim shopkeepers in the Hogg Market. According to him, 'since Fridays had religious significance for Muslims, it was on such days the Hogg Market was crowded with beggars, who knew exactly when the religious beliefs of the shopkeeper disposed them to be charitable'.<sup>48</sup> The native shopkeepers charitable acts towards the less fortunate has to be contextualised. The 'native' traders and shopkeepers believed in the deep connection between commercial

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<sup>46</sup> Sanjiv Kakar, "Medical Developments and Patient Unrest in the Leprosy Asylum, 1860 to 1940," *Social Scientist*, Vol. 24, No. 4/6 (Apr. - Jun., 1996): 62-81.

<sup>47</sup> "A Hindoo Beggar's Cunning," *The Cornubian* (1923).

<sup>48</sup> "A Hindoo Beggar's Cunning," *The Cornubian* (1923).

and religious merit. This connection was being misunderstood by the Europeans and distorted into deliberate acts of ‘cunning’ on the part of the beggars.

In 1930, the editor of the *Statesman* represented the beggars, occupying the most crowded corners like the marketplaces of the white town, as a ‘social evil’.<sup>49</sup> In 1930, Dickebery’s race and class bound susceptibilities comes to the fore in his following biased observations. He was ‘shocked’ to see a couple of ‘maimed beggars’ on a rickshaw, moving towards the Madan Theatre from the New Market.<sup>50</sup> In 1930, Dickebery described his every day’s morning experience on Free School Street. He found fifteen leper beggars on the footpath, along both sides of the road, stretching from Marquis Street to Lindsay Street.<sup>51</sup> At the same time, he observed, servants from different families, out for regular morning shopping to and from the Hogg Market, distributing alms to the leper beggars ‘from the little money they could extract from their daily marketing allowance’. It alarmed the European onlooker to notice ‘flies on the leprous sores of beggars flow onto the basket full of vegetables, meat, and fish dangling from the hands of the native servants’. He was astonished that such ‘unhealthy exhibition of diseases’ could evoke any ‘sense of charity’ among the people on the streets.<sup>52</sup> Some Europeans had the same kind of racist and class-driven reservations even in the nineteenth-century bazars of Calcutta, as explained in chapter 1. In 1921, a European female correspondent of the *Courier*, strolled like a flâneuse through the Hogg Market. Her racial and class biases are revealed in her remark that

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<sup>49</sup> Anonymous, “Beggars as Choosers,” *The Statesman* (17 February, 1930).

<sup>50</sup> Anonymous, “Street Scandal,” *The Statesman*, (11 February 1930).

<sup>51</sup> “Beggar Danger,” *The Statesman* (22 February 1930).

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

the beggars outside the Hogg Market ‘displayed’ their deformities, and asked for alms in the middle of the busy street in front of the Hogg Market.<sup>53</sup>

On receiving these complaints, the municipal market administration increased vigilance to maintain the upper-class and middle-class nature of the municipal markets. In 1932, Superintendent G.C. Woodward found a number of beggars inside all the ranges of the Hogg Market. They were sent to the *thana* (police). They were warned and discharged. Despite the vigilance, beggars continued to be a problem for the municipal market authorities. In September 1934, one hundred and eighteen beggars were ‘evicted’ out of the market by the superintendent. In October 1934, three hundred and seventy beggars were found in the poultry range and the *chandney* of the Hogg Market. In September 1937, around hundred beggars were found, warned, and evicted from the municipal market. Between 1937 and 1947, the beggar ‘nuisance’ was tackled very strictly in the municipal markets. A special Calcutta Corporation Committee was set-up to solve the beggar ‘issue.’<sup>54</sup>

Even the middle-class Bengali members of the Calcutta Corporation were exasperated with the beggars in the municipal markets of Calcutta. On the question of the beggars in the municipal markets, their class bound susceptibilities combined with the race and class biases of the Europeans. Between 1936 and 1937, the Health Department of the Calcutta Municipal Corporation identified the beggars as the most important source for the spread of various epidemic and non-epidemic diseases. After that, the

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<sup>53</sup> From the Lady Correspondent, “Round Calcutta’s Market, The New Arrival’s First Place of Visit, Bargaining with Native Shopmen, The Stuart Hogg Market of Calcutta,” *Courier* (28 December 1921).

<sup>54</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Report of the Municipal Administration of Calcutta, 1937-1938* (Calcutta: Corporation Press, 1938). Calcutta Corporation, *Report of the Municipal Administration of Calcutta, 1946-1947* (Calcutta: Corporation Press, 1947). See all the Reports of the Municipal Administration of Calcutta between the years 1937-1947.

upper caste Bengali middle-class and the European population of the city harboured deep discomfort in sharing street space with the beggars. In 1925, some middle-class Bengali members of the Calcutta Corporation blamed the customers. According to them, the customers encouraged the beggars by distributing alms to them. They proposed that the best way to tackle the beggar ‘problem’ in the Hogg Market was by appointing special guards who would ‘eject’ the loitering beggars.<sup>55</sup> In January 1936, Councillor Zakariah, the Chairman of the Calcutta Corporation, found many lepers and beggars in the passages and round about the mutton stalls in the Hogg Market.<sup>56</sup> He requested the Calcutta Corporation to see that lepers and others afflicted with loathsome diseases were kept away from all parts of the municipal markets by the market sergeants. The upper- and middle-class anxieties regarding the presence of beggars in the municipal market were part of their anxiety over the increasing beggar presence in the city of Calcutta. In 1936, the Rotary Club of Calcutta, an upper-class oriented extra-governmental body, led a delegation to John Anderson and Bijay Prasad Singh Roy (the Minister of Local Self Government, Bengal) proposing that laws be passed to solve the ‘beggar problem’ in Calcutta.<sup>57</sup> In 1939, the Councillors Mackertich John, D.J. Cohen, M.M. Huque, and Netai Chandra Paul were perturbed by the increasing presence of beggars in the Hogg Market and urged that the police’s help should be taken to disallow the beggars from entering the municipal markets.<sup>58</sup> In 1941, Atul Chandra Banerjea, was the Assistant Editor of *The Orient Illustrated*

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<sup>55</sup> Santosh Kumar Basu, Chairman PUMSC, “Municipal Markets,” *The Calcutta Municipal Gazette*, (10<sup>th</sup> October 1925).

<sup>56</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1936-1937*.

<sup>57</sup> See all the Reports of the Municipal Administration of Calcutta between the years 1937-1947.

<sup>58</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1939-1940*.

Weekly published in Calcutta. He remarked ‘leper beggars roaming about freely and clamouring for food near the eating houses, and the sweat meat stalls of the markets’ was one of the consistent scenes in Calcutta.<sup>59</sup> The ‘native’ middle-class completely overlooked the connection between the peculiar nature of the colonial economy and the increase in vagrancy in the city. They also ignored the fact that the beggars seeking for alms in the markets, was not something new. It was in continuation of the custom of the bazars in precolonial Calcutta and Bengal. The bazars in pre-colonial Bengal were attached to mosques or temples. The buyers and sellers in the marketplace-religious shrine complex believed they could earn commercial and religious merit by donating to the less fortunate. The bazars were the fulcrum of the economic-social-cultural lives of the people in the precolonial and colonial Bengal. So, the markets, as a socio-cultural and economic refuge would naturally attract the beggars and vagrants. The ‘native’ middle-class had turned a blind eye to these historical realities. The upper-middle-class uneasiness with respect to the presence of the leper beggars in the municipal markets and the city increased when Calcutta faced the threat of air raids during the Second World War.

### **The Figure of the *Fakir***

As had been explained in Chapter 1, the religious mendicants like *fakirs* (ascetic) were a source of great discomfort for the Europeans in the bazars of nineteenth-century Calcutta. The Europeans had hoped that the enclosed and surveilled municipal market spaces would be able to restrict the entry of *fakirs* into the markets. The Calcutta Corporation managed to regulate the entry of the *fakirs* into the municipal

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<sup>59</sup> Atul Chandra Banerjea, “Calcutta’s Beggar Problem,” *The Calcutta Municipal Gazette* (7<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Issue, December 1941).

markets to a large extent. Yet despite restrictions, the religious mendicants like *fakirs*, found their way into the Hogg Market in the 1920s. This was possible because they exercised socio-cultural influence over the 'native' buyers and sellers. A *fakir's* presence in the Hogg market bred anxiety amongst the Europeans. It possibly reminded them of the figure of the dust-covered *fakir* with unwashed matted hair reaching the loins, receiving alms in the name of religion from the 'native' sellers in the bazars.<sup>60</sup> As venerated idlers and sanctified drug users, the British and the 'native' middle-class saw the *fakirs* as standing at the centre of an immoral nexus. According to the British, the *fakir* was the lynchpin of mass popular culture of disorderliness and an agent of medical and moral 'indiscipline' in the Empire. By the 1920s, the nationalists had taken a critical approach to the drug use and the 'anti-capitalist' ethic of idleness of the *fakirs*. For the nationalists, the *fakirs* weakened the nation's physical, moral, and economic strength.<sup>61</sup> Hence even the 'native' councillors of the Calcutta Corporation wanted to forbid the entry of the *fakirs* into the municipal markets.

The Hogg Market was like a covered and comfortable niche for the Europeans. They expected that in the Hogg Market they could experience the 'native' culture like a spectacle without any significant risk of intimacy. The travel writers like Colonel H.A. Newell, with their Orientalist frame of mind, described the charm of the Hogg Market in its 'human spectacle of the motley crowd, which was more exciting and

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<sup>60</sup> Anonymous, "The Briton Abroad: The Commercial in an Indian Bazaar," *Sheffield Weekly Telegraph* (1914). The European writer of the article had an extremely racist attitude towards the *fakirs* and the beggars in the Indian bazars.

<sup>61</sup> Nile Green, "Breaking the Begging Bowl: Morals, Drugs and Madness in the Fate of the Muslim Faqir," *South Asian History and Culture*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (2014): 226-245.

characteristic than the wares on display'.<sup>62</sup> The *fakir* in the Hogg Market in the mid-1920s reversed this gaze by making the Europeans the objects of the 'native' gaze rather than the other way around. This diminished the joys of shopping for the Europeans. The European authorities already feared racial intermixing in the Hogg Market, where most sellers were 'natives' and most buyers were Europeans. Their fear of racial intermixing increased with the presence of the *fakir* in the Hogg Market. The European men did not like the patronage given to the *fakir* by some of the European and Anglo-Indian female customers. The European men thought that the European women were influenced by the cultural practices of the Muslim women who resided in the same Fenwick Bazar neighbourhood of Hogg Market.

Contrary to the European perception, the presence of *fakir* in the Hogg Market was a source of positivity for the migrant sellers in the Hogg Market. The *fakir's* followers belonged to socially disadvantaged but economically powerful groups like the Muslim butchers and the Peshawari fruit sellers in the Hogg Market. The migrant sellers felt uneasy in the racially conflicted atmosphere of the Hogg Market, with uncertainties of international price fluctuations. These migrant sellers got some relief through social bonds, forged around the open stalls of the Hogg Market between the customers and the sellers who were also followers of the *fakir*.<sup>63</sup> Besides, these 'native' sellers related to the plight of the *fakir*. They believed that the *fakir's* eviction from the Hogg Market resembled the Muslim butchers' eviction from their homes in Karaya Road around the Hogg Market in 1924. The 'native' sellers were in awe of the *fakir* as he was brave enough to ignore the white men. He also had the courage to throw their

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<sup>62</sup> Lt. Colonel H.A Newell, Calcutta: *The First Capital of British India: An Illustrated Guide to Places of Interest With Map* (Calcutta: Caledonian Printing Company, 1922).

<sup>63</sup> Pradip Kumar Datta, *Carving Blocs: Communal Ideology in Early Twentieth century Bengal* (Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1999).

gifts at the Europeans. While the ‘native’ followers of the *fakir* who were also stall holders, could not express their anger against the British, the *fakir* gained popularity as he was brave enough to do so. As has been explained in Chapter 1, the Europeans feared that the religious discourse could convert into a discourse of militancy and that is why they were uneasy about the presence of *fakirs* and *sadhus* in the bazars. As has already been mentioned in chapter 1, the *fakirs* and *sadhus* belonging to *Kartabhajas* (a sect in Eastern India, tracing its roots to *fakir* Aulchand, considered a reincarnation of the Vaisnava ascetic Chaitanya), *Sahebghanas*, (a sect founded by a *fakir* known as Sahebghani in the eighteenth-century Bengal) and *Bauls* (mystic minstrels constituting a syncretic religious sect and musical traditions of Eastern India) roamed the bazars in Bengal between the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries. They overturned the economic and worldly meaning of the market and superimposed it with spiritual meanings.<sup>64</sup> Through these metaphors they attempted to subvert kingly and commercial rule over the bazars. They advocated that the passages of the market had to be renounced to attain spiritual bliss. The presence of *fakirs* in the municipal markets raised the fear of such subversion of authority in the colonial mind. It was to avert such fears that the enclosed space of municipal markets, derived from the West, was established. However, the colonizers continued to be suspicious of clandestine activities even in the municipal markets. The *sadhus* and *fakirs* could easily enter the Hogg Market through the temple that was present on the site of Market Street, adjoining the Hogg Market,<sup>65</sup> and a mosque that existed right next to the Korabardar

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<sup>64</sup> Hugh B. Urban, “The Marketplace and the Temple: Economic Metaphors and Religious Meanings in the Folk Songs of Colonial Bengal,” *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 60, No. 4, (Nov 2001).

<sup>65</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926*.

Fish Range of the Hogg Market.<sup>66</sup> This proximity of the Hogg Market to these religious sites, multiplied the fear of subversion in the colonizers mind. This suspicion of subversion increased with the presence of the *fakir* in the Hogg Market. The atmosphere of anti-colonial movements added to the suspicion that religion could be used as a means to subvert colonial rule.

These fears of the Europeans escalated when the death of the *fakir* raised the proposition that he would be buried in the Hogg Market. The economically powerful but socially deprived groups of sellers in the Hogg Market were the backbone of the *pir* (a Muslim saint or holy man) burial campaign. They buried the *fakir* next to one of the main gates of the Hogg Market, where he had sat for fifteen years. The Muslim butchers believed that the burial in the Hogg Market was the dead *fakir's* wish, dissent from which would bring incalculable injury upon the city and the occupants of the market stalls.<sup>67</sup> In a market that was supposedly driven by capitalist rationality, the Muslim butchers and Kabulis knit their own culture specific rationality around the economic aspects of their lives in the Hogg Market. For them, the eviction of the *fakir* from the market led to a fire in the market in 1914. For the Muslim butchers and the Kabulis, the fire in the market in 1914 was emblematic of the *fakir's keramat* (refers to supernatural wonders performed by Muslim saints). They believed that the body of the *fakir* was too heavy to be moved from the place of its burial in the Hogg Market because it was the *fakir's* wish to be buried on that very spot.

The Europeans, who were the primary patrons of the Hogg Market, objected to this and wanted the exhumation of the body of *fakir*. The *fakir's* grave, next to the food

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<sup>66</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1932-1933*.

<sup>67</sup> Anonymous, "Calcutta Letter: Saints and Sinners," *The Times of India* (24 October 1924).

stalls in the Hogg Market, raised anxieties of contamination of the physical constitution of Europeans. According to the Europeans, such kind of 'native' proximity could not be shut out by doors of cars, houses, and offices. The issue of the *fakir* burial reflected that the hierarchical, racial and formal nature of interactions in the Hogg Market was gradually loosening. The Europeans feared that the proximity between the 'native' sellers and the European customers in the Hogg Market was increasing. They also feared that their spatial enclaves like the Hogg Market were beginning to look like 'native' parts of Calcutta. The Times of India, in one of their articles was sarcastic about the whole affair. The reporter remarked that the *fakir* should be buried in a suitable spot because, though he sat in the Hogg Market for fifteen years, he had not spoken a word.<sup>68</sup> The *fakir* did not belong to any religious community and had followers from different backgrounds. After his death, the question of whether or not the body of the *fakir* should continue to be buried in the Hogg Market or should be exhumed, created a rift between the councillors in the Calcutta Corporation. The Europeans and the Hindus favoured exhumation on medical grounds. The Muslims were opposed to it. No action was taken, and the *fakir* was allowed to remain buried in the Hogg Market, in order to avoid communal trouble in the city.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> The Times of India Correspondent, "Calcutta Letter: Saints and Sinners," *Times of India* (23<sup>rd</sup> October, 1924).

<sup>69</sup> "The Market Grave," *The Calcutta Municipal Gazette* (7<sup>th</sup> August 1926). "Notes and News," *The Calcutta Municipal Gazette* (September, 1926).

## The Agency of Subaltern Women

The lower-class women were bound by the upper and middle-class nature of the municipal markets and also the gender norms of the class to which they belonged.<sup>70</sup> In 1935, Soleman Bibi transferred her *chandney* stall in the Hogg Market to her nephew Abdur Razzak. Soyabala Dass, a potato stall owner in the Hogg Market, was represented by her husband, Jiban Krishna Adak.<sup>71</sup> Despite these restrictions, the lower-class and lower-caste female sellers did manage to express their voice in the municipal markets. They were different from the 'native' upper- and middle-class women because they were physically present as sellers in their stalls in the municipal marketplaces. In 1932, Musammat Sayeedan, a lower-class Muslim woman, sold fruits in the new *chandney* of the Hogg Market, in the absence of her husband and son.

In 1932, five female temporary fresh fruit vendors in the Hogg Market namely Khatoon, Bibee, Bibeejan, Saheeron, Mamudan, Haji Basiron protested on being asked by the Calcutta Corporation market administrators to shift from the *chandney* to K Block in the Hogg Market. They voiced their grievances in front of the market committee. They cited that the shifting would be the discontinuation of their forty-year-old practice of trading in the *chandney*. They also cited that they could not transact business in the K Block where the permanent male vendors would provide

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<sup>70</sup> For understanding the lower caste and lower-class gender relations in colonial India refer to the following. Sekhar Bandopadhyay, "Caste, Class and Census: Aspects of Social Mobility in Bengal Under the Raj, 1872-1931," *The Calcutta Historical Journal*, V (2), Jan- June 198. Sumanta Banerjee, *Parlour and the Streets: Elite and Popular Culture in Nineteenth Century Calcutta* (Seagull Books, 1989). Samita Sen, "Histories of Betrayal: Patriarchy, Class and Nation" in Sekhar Bandopadhyay ed. *Bengal: Rethinking History, Essays in Historiography* (Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 2001).

<sup>71</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1938-1939*.

stiff competition. The possible losses would make their already bad situation worse, especially as they were widows, fighting for survival single-handedly during the time of depression in trade. In 1939, Councillor Begum Sakina Farukh Sultan Muayidzada spoke on behalf of these female fruit sellers and requested that they remain in the *chandney*, as it was more convenient and profitable for these lower-class Muslim women. The superintendent of the Hogg Market believed brisker business for all dealers and improved revenue for the Calcutta Corporation would be in jeopardy if the grouping arrangement was flouted. The market committee could not allow these women fresh fruits vendors to sit in the *chandney* meant for daily squatters and *chasis*. Some male members of the market committee remarked that if unlike the permanent women vendors in the north range, these temporary fruit female vendors were having problems in sitting with men in Hogg Market ranges, they could transfer their stalls and business to male representatives (son or husband) just like the other permanent women vendors in K Block. While there were other male members of the Calcutta Corporation market committee who understood this problem of the lower-class women vendors in the Hogg Market. The lower-class women expressed their voice in the municipal marketplaces in other ways too. In 1925, Nanibala, a female vegetable seller, was fined Re. 1 for hurling filthy and abusive language at Syed Rehaman, son of another vegetable seller in the College Street Market. She was fined because her language was perceived as spoiling the supposedly civilised and middle-class values and decorum of the municipal markets.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Public Utilities and Markets Standing Committee, 1925-1926*.

In the colony, Europeanness was class-specific and also gender coded.<sup>73</sup> As explained in chapter 1, the municipal markets came up because the European elites wanted to distance themselves from the low-class European sailors and lower-class European prostitutes in the bazars. In sharp contrast to the bazars, the colonial state and Indian middle-class wanted the municipal markets to be free of prostitutes. They characterised the prostitutes as disease-ridden and morally corrupt. Yet, despite restrictions, the prostitutes did venture into the municipal markets. The gender bound susceptibilities of the Europeans can be noticed in the following remark. In 1889, Councillor Doucett expressed concern over the presence of ‘women of ill fame’ in the municipal markets. He called them a public ‘nuisance and annoyance’ for the Hogg Market.<sup>74</sup> He wanted them to be ejected with the aid of the police, but no concrete solution was found.

According to the recent scholarship, the military presence in the city of Calcutta during the Second World War had profound transformative effects on the relations between men and women.<sup>75</sup> The presence of the internationally constituted army in Calcutta during the Second World War brought problems of increasing prostitution and venereal diseases. In 1943, Dr. D.N. Roy, opened a free treatment centre for women at the Charles Allen Market to deal with these problems. The rooms in the Charles Allen Market were let out at cheaper rates by the market committee. The publicity vans delivered lectures on sex-related diseases and sex education during the

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<sup>73</sup> Sarmistha De, *Marginal Europeans in Colonial India, 1860-1920* (Thema Kolkata 2008).

<sup>74</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Committee, 1889-1890*.

<sup>75</sup> Yasmin Khan, ‘Sex in an Imperial War Zone: Transnational Encounters in Second World War India,’ *History Workshop Journal*, No. 73 (2012): 240-258.

morning and afternoon in the Charles Allen Market.<sup>76</sup> This ‘native’ middle-class initiative added another layer of meanings to the municipal markets.

In Calcutta, the number of male beggars reduced from 3,522 in 1921 to 2,169 in 1931. On the other hand, the number of female beggars increased from 6,264 in 1921 to 10,924 in 1931. However, this increasing number of female beggars, forbidden from entering the municipal markets, did venture into it, as seen from the photograph below. The class bias of the photographer Clyde Waddell is revealed by the way he labelled the photograph below. The female beggars are depicted as addressing the American soldiers as *sahib* and American *rajah* (king). He represented the female beggar as ‘harassing’ the soldiers while they purchased trinkets for their girlfriends. They supposedly harassed the soldiers with the ‘ever-present plea’ for *baksheesh* (a small amount of money given as tip), food and money.



*Figure 5.1: A Photograph of New Market by Clyde Waddell, 1946 (Source: British Library, London)*

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<sup>76</sup> Calcutta Corporation, *Report of the Municipal Administration of Calcutta, 1943-1944* (Calcutta: Corporation Press, 1944).

## Conclusion

This chapter argued that the subaltern groups pierced through the continuous efforts of the colonial state and 'native' middle-class to marginalise them within the municipal market space. This chapter has argued that the subaltern groups such as the *chasis*, the *fariahs* the coolies, the lepers, the beggars, the *fakirs*, the lower-class women sellers, prostitutes and the women beggars asserted their agencies and inexorably permeated even the controlled spaces of the municipal markets. They inscribed the municipal markets with their precolonial and pre-existing marketplace related practices. The very subaltern agencies who were marginal to the municipal markets, planned on the metropolitan model of markets, shot through the arrangement of the municipal markets in Calcutta. Their agency contested the dominant spatialisation of the municipal markets.

## Conclusion

The first municipal market was inaugurated in Calcutta in 1876. This thesis has argued that, in its inception, the municipal market bore the clear imprint of British imperialistic economy that had transitioned to mass-produced consumer goods industries in the 1870s. The municipal market also came up at the juncture when the late nineteenth-century ideology of civilising mission came to be underpinned by pronounced racism. These two developments rubbed off on the Orientalist attitude towards the bazars or the pre-existing marketplaces in the city. At this juncture of the new turn in capitalism and the new ideology of British imperialism, the colonial municipal government turned to the dominant spatial ideals of architectural modernism in the West as a model for the reformation of the markets in Calcutta. The Market Hall of Britain was chosen as the model for the municipal markets in Calcutta. The transformative role of the importation of the model in colonial Calcutta has been brought out in the thesis. However, at the same time, this thesis argues that this metropolitan model of markets could not be applied verbatim in colonial Calcutta. The municipal market based on the metropolitan model was translated by various agencies in colonial Calcutta. In order to make the plan work, the European-led Calcutta Corporation realised that the model had to be modified in order to address the specific problems of controlling the markets in the contingent situation of colonial Calcutta. They also realised that concessions had to be given to the crucial ‘native’ interests in colonial Calcutta, to make the model work in Calcutta. The thesis has argued that it was not only the colonial agenda but the agencies of the ‘native’ population who transmuted the derived model of the municipal markets. The ‘native’ economic actors often tweaked the derived model of the municipal markets and

accommodated their own economic world on the municipal markets of colonial Calcutta. However, the markets are so inextricably linked to the social. In Calcutta, class, gender, caste and religious difference of a historically contingent kind had their own roles in cumulatively translating the model in colonial Calcutta. Hence each municipal market took on a different shape depending on the specific interplay of caste, class, race, gender, religion and ethnicity in the municipal market and its neighbourhood. The 'native' middle-class welcomed the new experiment as modern. The Bengali middle-class and its politics was another distinctive determinant that went to make the municipal markets in Calcutta different. Their nationalist self-perception, nuanced by communal sensibility, led them to inscribe the municipal markets with their own imprints. The agency of the subaltern groups also had roles in the colonial translation of the metropolitan model. Their own narratives of spatial claims infused the municipal marketplace with immense plurality, specific to the immediate colonial situation of Calcutta.

Another very crucial aspect of the thesis has been the argument that the municipal market in Calcutta was devised as a mechanism of order and control by the colonial municipal government. The control was in the interest of British capital, British industry, the European residents in colonial Calcutta and the permanence of British rule. This kind of control necessitated a separate space of municipal markets because the bazars, with their strong lingering traces of the pre-colonial socio-economic culture were constantly acting as obstacles to the imperial project of economic, social and political control over the markets in colonial Calcutta. The European-led Calcutta Corporation inaugurated the municipal markets with the intention to control the space, the transactions and the human participation in the markets. However, the fear of 'disorder' always lurked even in the municipal markets, given the peculiar open

nature of the market and the remarkable subaltern presence. The nationalists intended and expected a nationalistic ‘order’ over the municipal market system. They had their own peculiar apprehensions of ‘disorder’ in the municipal markets because of their intertwined class and religion susceptibilities. The lack of control over the municipal markets became especially pronounced during the tumultuous decades of the Great Depression and the Second World War. Thus, the instruments of control over the municipal markets had to be frequently revamped.

The question of control relates the argument to the question of the politics of space. No form of control can be understood in isolation from space. The space of Calcutta’s municipal markets was ordered, imagined, and represented in a particular way, by the colonial municipal government, in order to maintain control over the markets. The space of the municipal market was geometricized to create an organised retail scenario in colonial Calcutta in the interest of British capital and industry. The metropolitan model of markets was supposed to ‘modernise’ the space of municipal markets, and be an ‘improvement’ over the so called ‘pre-modern’, ‘uncivilised’ and ‘irrational’ bazars. The colonial municipal government chose the Market Hall as the model not only because it represented the ‘modern’ architectural features sweeping the West at that time, but primarily because it seemed to satisfied their quest for economic and political order and control over the space of the markets in colonial Calcutta. One cannot ignore that the ‘native’ middle-class on coming to power in the Calcutta Corporation nationalised the space of the markets by introducing a new set of signs, activities and ideological markers. The nationalists, had their own nationalistic agenda of exercising control through the geometric layout of the municipal markets. But the dominant spatialisation of the municipal markets by the colonizers and the ‘native’ elite was contested by the subaltern agencies. Moreover, this thesis argues

that it was not just the metropolitan Market Hall informing the marketplace reorganisation in colonial Calcutta; even the metropole was scripted by the municipal market experiments in colonial Calcutta. The British newspapers carrying news of the ‘rational’, ‘civilised’ and ‘organized’ Calcutta’s municipal markets to the metropole, generated pride in Britain’s ‘civilising’ mission, playing a part in the constitution of Englishness.

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