

The rise of Islam in Bengal and how it has influenced the socio-economic and culture in Medieval Bengal.

There is no denying the fact that political Islam first set foot on the soil of Gaud, Pundra, and Lakshnawati with the victorious Turkish army led by Ikhtiyar al-Din Muhammad bin Bakhtiyar Khalji in 1204 AD. But that does not mean there was no communication or contact between the people of Arabia, Persia, and Afghanistan with the Bengal before the Ikhtiyar's conquest. Coins issued by Abbasi Caliphs have been discovered in Paharpur dated 788 AD when the great Harun-al-Rashid was the Caliph in Baghdad. The coin found in Mainamati was issued by the Abbasi Caliph Muntasir Billah who ruled the Muslim world in 861 AD. It should be noted that Arab general Muhammad Ibn Qasim conquered Sind in 714 AD nearly four centuries before Ikhtiyar Khalji marched practically unopposed to Nadia, the then temporary capital of Lakshmana Sena, the last ruler of the Sena dynasty.

It is beyond doubt that Arab Muslims traveled to the coastal regions of Bangladesh during the early days of Islam as part of their global commercial activities. It is also not unlikely that some of them might have settled in the long coastal belt from Noakhali to Cox's Bazar. There are popular stories in the Arakan region that Arab Muslims have been established on both sides of Myanmar and Bangladesh since ancient times.

According to tradition, the first such settlement resulted from the capsizing of Arabian ships due to a cyclonic storm along Chittagong-Cox's Bazar coastal belt. Probably, some Arab preachers and Sufis had also traveled to this part of the subcontinent long before the Turkish military expedition of the early 13th century. Touching on the issue, Dr. Nihar Ranjan Roy writes in his *Bangalir Itihas*: "Few examples can be given where people have arrived in Bangladesh from outside India. Some Arab Muslim families came to Bangladesh for commercial purposes and then settled here. People of such origin in small numbers can be found in Noakhali-Chittagong and other districts of Bengal. During a long cycle of centuries, they have merged with indigenous people through association and intercourse.

However, the conquest of Ikhtiyar Khalji definitely, paved the way for the Sufis to arrive in greater numbers from Arabia and Persia. We should bear in mind that at that time this part of the subcontinent was not very hospitable due to its deltaic geographical configuration, huge rivers, and dense forests. Before narrating the story of the further spread of Islam, a summary of the social conditions and cultural geography existing at the time is needed to assist the readers in understanding the extraordinary transformation of faith among the indigenous peoples of the delta.

Starting in the 9th century, Muslim merchants increased trade with Bengali seaports. Islam first appeared in Bengal during Pala rule, as a result of increased trade between Bengal and the Arab Abbasid Caliphate. Coins of the Abbasid Caliphate have been discovered in many parts of the region. Islam's golden age in science, technology, and intellectual culture spanned about 500 years, from the ninth until the 14th centuries. Muslim achievements in these areas greatly influenced the European Renaissance of the 15th and 16th centuries, as well as the birth of modern scientific methods in the 17th century. Here it is discussed the influence of the rise of the Muslim on the socio-economic and culture in Medieval Bengal.

Social Influence in Medieval Bengal

Religion has played a vital role in the social system of Bengal since ancient times, and religion was the central element in building the social system. As a result, religious influences were visible in every sphere of Bengali life. The Role of Muslims in the Socio-Cultural Formation of Bengal during the Sultanate Period. The Muslim rule of descent initiated a multi-faceted change in the social system of Bengal. Islam commands the protection of the rights of all people, which Muslims tried to protect the rights of all people. The Muslims adopted a liberal

social policy, showed respect for all the religions of Bengal, were sympathetic to the ordinary people, and did not discriminate in any way.

After establishing Muslim rule in Bengal, many rulers did not allow the practice of Satidah to continue. Although there were also rich and poor in the Muslim society, it was not a complex system like the caste system of Hindus. In the Muslim administration, there was an opportunity to get high rank and respect according to merit. Muslim rulers did not impose Islamic rule on non-Muslim subjects in Bengal. Muslims were also foreigners, but they settled permanently by considering Bengal as their motherland. There is no evidence of allegations of looting and smuggling Bengal resources against Muslims during the Sultanate period. The Muslims lived in Bengal for generations and made multifaceted contributions to the culture and civilization and the local ethnic groups, the benefits of which were enjoyed by all communities, and which still flow in modern Bangladesh.

The Muslim sultans did not interfere in the internal affairs of any religion and granted freedom to other religions. An actual example of the generosity of the Muslim rulers of the entire Indian subcontinent imposed jizya on non-Muslim subjects, but the Muslim rulers in Bengal omitted jizya on non-Muslims here. The Muslim rulers in Bengal followed the principle of co-existence between the followers of different religions, making establishing social order and security easier. Muslims participated in Hindu social events, and so did Hindus who participated in Muslim social events and exchanged gifts, thus maintaining social harmony. The Role of Muslims in the Socio-Cultural Formation of Bengal during the Sultanate Period.

The Muslim rulers and expeditions played an essential role in building a prosperous and robust society in Bengal. Sufi saints came to Bengal to propagate Islam even before the Muslim expedition. The Sufis, despite the patronage of the rulers, devoted themselves to simple living and service to humanity instead of living a luxurious life. The Sufis played an essential role in creating public awareness against injustice, including caste, social discrimination, and bigotry, and called for equality, generosity, brotherhood, morality, and many people of different religions became interested in Islam by witnessing their simple life. Fascinated by the generosity and politeness of the Sufi saints, and to escape the dreaded caste system, most of the Hindu lower classes converted to Islam.

Economical Influence in Medieval Bengal

During Muslim rule, the agricultural system of Bengal became self-sufficient, and agricultural production as well as the number of products multiplied. The development and growth of the textile industry met the local demand. During this time, the use of metal industries such as iron and copper increased, and the two-headed sword of Bengal became famous in the subcontinent. The government introduced a welfare control system in the market system. Economic dynamism came through gold and silver coins. The cottage industry was widespread in rural areas. During the Muslim rule, Bengal's trade relations with different parts of the subcontinent, along with the Arab world and Europe, were strengthened, which changed the economy of Bengal. At the beginning of the Muslim period, rulers of descent built long dams in Lakhnauti, the capital of Bengal, which benefited many of the local people. Inscriptions from the Sultanate period show that numerous bridges and inns were built for travelers and traders, with people from all religions involved.

The Muslim rulers built numerous mosques for the Muslim community and allowed the construction of religious shrines for other religions, built several hospitals, and built numerous roads throughout Bengal to strengthen the communication system. During the Sultanate period, various tax activities were carried out, including the establishment of the market control system for economic welfare, provision of loans to farmers, strengthening of the police department for public security, recruitment of village police, development of irrigation system, digging of canals, financial assistance, and rehabilitation of farmers affected by natural calamities.

Cultural Influence in Medieval Bengal

Muslims brought their famous culture and tradition to Bengal, and architecture was one of them. After the Muslim conquest, many architects came to Bengal from Central Asia and North India and designed their new style of traditional Islamic architecture. Architecture flourished here long before the arrival of Muslims in Bengal, but after their arrival, a unique local architectural style developed in tandem with the Persian-Arabian style. The main elements of architecture used as connecting materials were various high-quality materials, including lime, sand, and suki. They used beautiful pictures of nature, herbs, waterfalls, rivers, hills, etc., on the walls of the aesthetic buildings. Architects of the Muslim period used to introduce cornices in the construction of buildings and curved lines. The Role of Muslims in the Socio-Cultural Formation of Bengal during the Sultanate Period on the walls of forts. Mosques and tombs were the most notable in Muslim architecture. Muslim architects designed the buildings to suit the climate of the region. Bengal is a riverine region and receives a lot of rainfall every year, which makes the climate quite humid. Muslim architects applied various architectural techniques, keeping in mind the weather conditions. This period is also called the golden age of the glorious architecture of Bengal. The Muslim rulers played an essential role in the progress and development of the Bengali language and literature

Educational progress and development of Bengali language and literature

Bengali had an excellent experience in education, language, and literature during the Muslim rule. Inspired by Islam rulers took various steps to spread education in Bengal, like the Muslim rulers of Delhi. From the beginning of the establishment of Muslim rule in Bengal, Bakhtiyar Khalji and his successors built numerous madrasas and mosques. One of the characteristics of the Muslim rulers was that during their rule, they established famous mosques and popular madrasas and took care of them and paid for them. Like other educational institutions in other parts of the Muslim world, the education system of madrasas in Bengal was quite advanced. During the Sultanate period, considering the political and economic needs of the Muslims, large towns and cities sprang up in Bengal. Scholars used to teach in educational institutions, and students from different subcontinents came here for education. The scholars associated with the Department of Education did not accept the exchange of education, they provided free education to the students, and the scholars accepted teaching as human service and respect. The educational institutions established by the Muslim Sultans played a significant role in qualifying the ordinary locals to run the state and build an enlightened society. Muslim rulers, Sufis, and administrators were educated, and they played an essential role in spreading education. The Muslim administration encouraged the practice of culture. The rulers played a significant role in developing and developing the Bengali. They selected Bengali as the medium of communication between the aristocracy and the ordinary people because Bengali was predominant among the languages of all the local people.

Although Bengali culture, literature, administration, and overall education system were developed on a solid foundation during the Muslim rule, no significant contribution was found in practicing science, and no fundamental discovery was found yet.