

The 'Untouchable' Castes and the Muslims in the Craft of 'Authentic' Classical Indian Musical Instruments in Kolkata Metropolis: An Inter-textual Case Study

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Abstract

The central question of our present study was how caste, class, gender, religion and also the local-regional (post)colonial cultural politics produced the scenario of manufacture of classical Indian music and its material culture in Kolkata, erstwhile Calcutta. Our research following Stakian case study method presents an inter-textual analysis of historical findings of past researches and present fieldwork among the families of two previously 'untouchable' castes, who are known for their most 'authentic' craft of Indian stringed musical instruments in Kolkata since pre-colonial period. The earlier researches made room for assuming the connections of the craft of Kolkata to the last Nawab of Oudh, Wajid Ali Shah who was banished to Kolkata in 1856. The study reveals—despite being marginalized due to their low caste, class, non-literate identity by the hegemonic cultural elitism of bhadra samaj (genteel society), represented by colonially mediated patriarchic bhadraloks (genteel men) pertaining to the upper castes, middle and upper classes—the families of the two castes Poundra and Namasudra could excel in their craft and business to the extent of developing local-regional-national-global networks of culture industry. Their memories, perceptions and other lived experiences establish that contrary to the espousal of Hindu nationalist approach to the a-historic musical culture of India, as only contributed by the Vedic upper castes, the craft culture of musical instruments in Kolkata was conspicuously carried forward by the reproductive connections between Muslim mastery and lower castes' zeal to acquire and flourish, though not out of patriarchic gendered rules of the tradition.

Keywords: Case Study; Marginalization; Caste; Indian Minority; Capital; Chhotolok; Bhadrlok; Baiji; Indian Classical Music; Calcutta/Kolkata

Introduction: Contextualizing Certain Findings First

Kolkata (erstwhile Calcutta), once the capital of British colony of undivided India-Pakistan-Bangladesh, is now the (post)colonial metropolis where we, the authors are natives. In and around this city the authors engaged themselves in ethnographic field interactions with some of the few 'caste' lineages of crafts people of classical Indian musical instruments (Shastriya Badyo Jantra). But we would introduce our study with certain salient findings of the same in order to put forward the significance of the study and to contextualize it cultural-historically. There is an added reason to put certain results of the exploration first. Out of the entire study, we would only focus on lower caste association with the Shia Muslims, who came with the last Nawab of Oudh exiled to Metiabruz situated outside the southern periphery of Kolkata. Thus, at the centre of the account would be the representation of religious, caste and women minorities. The article is an inter-textual analysis contextualizing both previous publications and present first-hand field data in the form of lived experience and perceptions of the crafts people.

Initially, we had all about to know the past and present of the few acclaimed instrument makers in their shops situated beside Kolkata police head quarter, their skills, technology and classification of the instruments and also their required sensibilities of Indian classical music. The scenario of the past started unfolding a few other issues not definitely assumed before.

- i. The craft needs adequate grasp over musical sound and material components of any musical instrument based on the parts and whole of it.
- ii. The musical senses, sensibilities and also network for the business did not grow linearly across generations of the lineages. They vary due to personal aptitude, initiative and contacts of the craftsman in each generation. Absence or presence of suitable 'male' heirs of any family practicing the craft has also been the reason of rise and fall of their engagements with the craft.
- iii. During colonial period, the demand of the instruments was almost polarized between colonially and / or western educated middle-elite class prestigious musical practices dominantly of men and the earlier court performing artists (of the elites, like king/Nawab and landlords and independent entertainers) and performing courtesans mostly involving women dancers and singers.

- iv. The earliest successful craftspeople of the musical instruments were not from the any traditional instrument-making artisan Indian caste, but mostly from the bottom layers of earlier caste hierarchy (i.e. 'Scheduled Castes' or 'Other Backward Caste' identified by Indian constitution) and class conditions.
- v. A significant section of instrument-makers might have acquired the expertise of the craft from Muslim artisans. They were the Shia Muslims who came to Kolkata with the last king of Oudh Nawab Wajid Ali Shah, whose contributions to literary and performing arts and commitments to the inter-community (i.e. Islamic-Hindu) syncretism are historical, but hardly voiced.
- vi. This earliest monopoly of the Muslims and socially low and poor caste families over the craft started to be shared with other upper caste (principally Brahmins, Subarna Banik, Gandha banik, Kastha Banik, Kayastha) families who engaged themselves to earn living or to earn more from the escalating demand of the market since few decades before Indian independence at 1947. They learnt the craft from these few low (scheduled) caste families or from individual performing artists, who were also apt in understanding the nuanced structural qualities of the craft or particular instruments.
- vii. Social identities (e.g. caste, class, gender, religion) matter a lot for the sustenance of the craft and business among the families.

The mastery and monopoly over manufacturing Indian classical instruments of the Muslims and a few lineages of lower caste and of poorer economic positions—later shared with some few other upper caste lineages joining mostly for business-survived and flourished through colonial time in an eastern Indian metropolis Kolkata. The Muslim makers and performers of musical instruments came with the last king of Oudh (i.e. epitomized by the city of Lucknow), Nawab Wajid Ali Shah, who was banished from Lucknow to Metiaburj, a locality beside the river Ganga outside the southern periphery of British capital Calcutta at 1856. The cultural agency of Nawab pulled a lot of performers of classical music, both men and women, from other cultural centres of Northern and Eastern India to the then colonial capital Calcutta that went on enriching the dance and musical cultures of Eastern India even long after the death of Nawab.

Thus, the whole domain of the musical craft and culture is not only entangled with agencies of caste, class, gender, religion, but also the local-regional cultural

politics of nationalism: (a) Hindu majoritarian stance marginalized the significant contributions of the Muslims in many spheres of culture including musical one in the region and (b) upper caste and colonially educated patriarchal elite men thoroughly started effacing the invaluable contributions of court and courtesan performances of women and visibility of lower caste engagement with the musical arena of fame. It was done by the hegemony of men and caste-class elitism of colonial-western educated strata over musical culture. The said strata later spearheaded the nationalist struggle and dominantly came to be known by the tag 'Bhadralok' (genteel people, especially men). In fact, the 'Other' of the strata was variedly termed as itarjan or itar (itar literally means 'other', but connotatively subversive Other or uncivilized), chhotlok (people of lower status in terms of class, caste, taste and so on, almost the antonymous to 'Bhadralok'), jaban/yaban (subversive term for the Muslims) mlecha (literally meaning "non-Vedic", but connotatively meaning , barbarian), achhut or asprisyā (the untouchables), nasto and nongra (spoiled and dirty respectively, mostly applicable to women performer of dance and music before masculine public, also the courtesan women) and so on. Thus, this 'local' cultural hegemony over public sphere could easily make the identities of all the 'Others' less or not visible.

Objectives, Motivations and Question

The objectives of the study are two-pronged which are apparently separable, but deeply connected:

- I. To culminate in an inter-textual format for the history of the present of the musical culture that intended to replace the musical culture of 'Other' religion (Muslims), 'Other' castes (lower castes) and 'Other' gender (female artists publicly performing in the royal courts, i.e., of Nawab and landlords) with the colonially mediated cultural nationalist Bhadrals (genteel man) with their own musical sensibilities.
- II. To interpret the craft of the lower caste families in tandem with its past connections to Muslim craftsmen in and around Kolkata. In other words, we intend to reach an understanding that the Muslims and lower castes are no less authentic than other castes who might identify and boast of themselves as the representatives of classical Indian/'Hindu' musical culture.

These two motivations produced our central research question: How caste, class, gender, religion and also the local-regional (post)colonial cultural politics produced

the scenario of manufacture of classical Indian music and its material culture in Kolkata, erstwhile Calcutta.

Methodology

As the study is centered on a few families (i.e. of Poundra and Namasudra castes), the craft and the business, it acquired certain methodological objective. Despite the similarity with the ethnographic approach, it could not be ethnographic in terms of its coverage of such similar crafts people (of other castes and communities) working and doing business in Kolkata. How we started and obtained the scenario was ethnographic as it has been already put forward in the introduction, but we restricted our focus to the lower caste families with lived experiences of learning the craft, producing the instruments and doing the business. But narrowing the focus on a few does not imply we worked completely in isolation from craftsmen of other castes. Rather our interpretation is fully corroborated by our exploration of other castes. Thus, in order to reach an understanding that the Muslims and lower castes as no less authentic than other castes who might boast of themselves having identified with the 'essence' of Indian/Hindu classical music and its instruments we decided to opt for 'case study method' of Robert Stake that gave us the liberty of delimiting our study, data and analysis.

Qualitative case study research, as described by Stake (1995) [1], draws together "naturalistic, holistic, ethnographic, phenomenological, and biographic research methods" in a bricoleur design, or in his words, "a palette of methods". Stake (1995) [1] proposed three types of cases and study design frameworks. These include the intrinsic case, the instrumental case, and the collective instrumental case. An instrumental case study provides insight on an issue or is used to refine understanding of or theorizing the issue. Thus, our objectives followed the principles of the 'instrumental' type of case study based on our object of interest which was the manufacture of 'authentic' Indian classical musical instrument by the discriminated section [scheduled caste] of Indians. More than one case can be simultaneously studied; however, each case study is a concentrated, single inquiry, studied holistically in its own entirety [1,2]. Our fieldwork included the main trading stores at the central business and office hub of the city at Binay Badal Dinesh Bag, beside the police headquarter of Kolkata at Laalbazar and their present residence-cum-workshop at Violinpara in the northern fringe of Kolkata metropolis. Our objective issues of data collection included.

- i. How the classical Indian music was recognized by the agencies of power during colonial period. In other words, how colonial and upper caste Hindu nationalism formed their 'Others' in musical practices. It is mostly available in literature.
- ii. The imagery of self and Other [i.e. neighboring higher caste people and among each other], nature of their social connections or 'social capital' and social prestige in terms of intra-familial, inter-familial and among different circles of social interactions [i.e. symbolic capital].
- iii. Their memories of mobility in terms of family, business connections, space, craft, relationship with music.
- iv. The lived experience and perceptions of the decisive family members about their present craft and business.

Despite the need of rigorous confidentiality, it is hardly possible to hide completely the real identity of the research participants. In order to guard the study against our ethical ambivalence we shared the problems of full confidentiality with them. They gave us full consent for publication after the outline of the findings was shared with them.

Music, Colonial Imageries, Bengali Bhadrakok or Bengali Cultural Elites and the 'Others'

This discussion of the research literature contextualizes the study in the backdrop of Kolkata and its musical culture since colonial period. The discussion would principally address the following sections.

Tangible Instruments and Intangible Emergence of Culture

The authors of the Handbook of Material Culture (2006) introduce materiality as being the study which centers on the idea that materiality is an integral dimension of social existence that cannot be understood without it. Hence materiality has become a subject of extended debate on whether things or objects are active agents impacting on human lives [3]. Literature on material culture has focused on how things or objects make and give identity to people in various social contexts, and how people give meaning to objects in different contexts. Literature on materiality suggests that objects have social agency impacting on people [4]. Musical instruments have very different meanings in their cultures of provenance from those that are invested in

them in museums. In other words, such an object has culture-specific meanings, those meanings attached to it through entanglement in a web of local cultural relations that position it within a local musical world. Building on analyses of the exchange of material goods in both colonial and postcolonial periods throughout the Pacific region, Nicholas Thomas notes that in that context "objects are not what they were made to be but what they have become" [5]. In general, we consume objects and give them meaning, and in doing so, to produce them, so to speak, in our own image.

Ethnographic Portrayals of 'Hindu Music' and its 'Others' in Post-colonial Critiques

Englishwomen were the primary enthusiasts in the collection and performance of 'Hindostannie' arts, not to mention quotidian music-making. As pointed out by both Richard Leppert and Woodfield, women were the primary music-makers on a quotidian basis, both in the aristocracy, as well as the new middle classes emerging in Georgian England [6,7]. On the other hand, the civil servants, as is well known, were central to the systematic study of indigenous arts, sciences, and civilizational 'histories'. Indeed this was the social class to which most renowned Orientalists belonged. But, even with ethnographic observations made by Europeans in India that viewed the region of Bengal to be especially indigent in musical terms. Horatio Smith in the 1851 issue of the Calcutta Review, for instance, remarks of the 'popular music' of the subaltern.

There is certainly music in [the Bengali] of whatever sort. The husbandman in the fields, the pedlar with his pack, the grinder at the mill, the waggoner on his cart-all whistle and sing. Of instrumental music, there is not any lack. While we write, our ears are regaled with the choral symphonies of the tom-toms of a marriage procession; and the sounds of musical instruments may be heard at any time in any part of Bengal. ... But whatever may have been the musical attainments of the ancient Hindus and of the modern amateur performers of Delhi, who are said to be exquisite musicians, the music of the Hindus of Lower Bengal at the present day is wretched to the last degree. We never could relish that pumpkin of a musical instrument, dignified with the appellation, par excellence, of Tanpura, as if it was a harmonicon of the sweetest notes in existence [8].

William Ward, another notable colonial analyst of music in India, in his 1811 Account of the Writings, Religion, and Manners of the Hindoos, illustrated that

music was an ancillary caste-occupation of the twenty-seventh class of the Shudra varna—the “Churmukurus [What the Indians call as charmakar], or shoe-makers ... “are...employed as musicians at the weddings, feasts, and religious ceremonies of the Hindoos, and the horrid din of this music reminds a European, that the musicians have been used to no sounds except those of the hammer on the lap-stone”[9]. More so, the Memorandum on the Census of British India 1871-1872, published in 1875, identified “Dancer, Musician, Beggar, and Vagabond” as single caste-category for Lower Bengal and Assam—one of the lowest in the list of “69 castes specified”—putting their number at 72,247 in a total of 29, 772, 621 population [10].

The association of music with people at the bottom of social hierarchy obtained more negative fixture when the musico-cultural agenda of the scholars/performers like Sourindramohan Tagore, Kaliprasanna Bandopadhyaya, and Krishnadhan Bandopadhyay—representing mostly upper/middle class and upper-caste Hindu Bhadrakalok and babus—followed the same attitudes of colonizer’s ideological framework as professed by the cultural elite, like Rammohan Roy. Indeed, the Bhadrakalok of the 1870s had little interest in reclaiming Bengal’s existent, and thriving, musical culture from the ethnocentric distortions of colonial representation. Rather, their energies were invested in bringing Bengal, in a self-consciously modern fashion, within the Hindu India’s ancient civilizational achievement. The Bhadrakaloks, symptomatically, were quite in agreement with the general tenor of European opinion regarding music in Bengal: that much of its making/production was a lower caste/class concern; that this music was of poor quality according to their formalized grammar and by implication. However, curiously the Bhadrakaloks were primarily consumers of (this low-brow) music. In terms of vouching for ‘shastrically’ (i.e. formalized grammar of music) commanded raga-based music the Bhadrakaloks proclaimed to have isolated musical forms as the kernel of its (Hindu) musical identity, which also overlapped with caste, class, and spatial-urban-privilege. Thus, the folk-music cannot be seen as the Hindu Bhadrakalok’s intended ‘Other’ (i.e. the folk might be devalued Other); this eminence, they would bequeath on a community that had been pivotal in keeping alive raga (or classical) music culture in northern India—the Muslim Ustad, who, despite possessing high musical competence, bothered little about formalization, coding frameworks and ethico-moral minutes; indeed, the Muslim Ustads were the absolute ‘Other’ of the new musical subject being forged in late-nineteenth century Bengal. In 1896,

Sourindramohan Tagore offered the following definition of ‘national music’: it is “the faithful [musical] expression of national feelings...best manifested under circumstances that are not controlled by extraneous influences” [11]. In order to access ‘authentic’ Indian music, one had to effect a return to the pre-Muslim, ‘Hindu’ India and delve into its high-Sanskritic, Vedic tradition of music theory and pedagogy. According to them, the successive Muslim ‘invasions’ and the permeation of Islamic-Persian culture in the subcontinent had unfathomably distorted Indian music as it had ‘originally’ existed. When writing in Bengali, the direct translation of this term, ‘Hindu sangit’ (meaning Hindu music) is used interchangeably with ‘Arya sangit.’ Sourindramohan out rightly put it in 1886.

In the course of the general change which followed the transfer of Hindusthan [sic] from the hands of the Hindus to those of the Mahomedans, the Sastras of the Hindus, including that of Music, sank into oblivion. The Mahomedan rulers encouraged the practice of Hindu music and converted it into an instrument of sensual enjoyment. They did not at all care for the essential principles of Music which, to them, appeared uninviting and inaccessible [12].

One does not need to look beyond prior European scholarship for the source of the argument Sourindramohan makes above. Some fifty-odd years before, in 1834, N. Augustus Willard had similarly written: “During the earlier ages of Hindoostan, music was cultivated by philosophers and men eminent for polite literature.” However, with the conquest of Indians by “illiberal Mahomedan princes in the theory of music, a defection took place of its practice” [13].

Partha Chatterjee has argued, the colonial Bhadrakalok occupied certain “middle” between the colonial state and its colonized subjects, performing a crucial mediating role between the European ruling class and the natives. This location positioned the Bhadrakalok advantageously in terms of its will to hegemonic power, particularly after the retreat of colonialism. Thus, in Chatterjee’s formulation, the Bhadrakalok is also a “middle-class” [14]. The Bhadrakalok spirit of critique of erasing the contribution of the Ustads in classical music (shastric or shasthiya) and their self-establishment by surgery of the history of Indian music was mounted entirely on cultural nationalistic ideology and in no way anti-colonial yet. Thus the whole musical scenario of the colonial city with Muslim allegiance, especially its grand expansion at the arrival of exiled Nawab of Oudh, Wajid Ali Shah in Calcutta was a subject to isolation rather than

assimilation by the Bhadrakol cultural elites of Bengal. 'Socially', as Tamijuddin Kan remarks in his Memoirs (available by courtesy of Mrs. M. N. Huda of Dhaka University), "Muslims were in most respects untouchables to the Hindus and if therefore a Muslim somehow happened to enter the cook-shed of a Hindu, even if he did not touch food or utensils, all cooked food stored in the house along with the earthen pots were considered polluted and thrown away" [15,16].

Exclusionary Bhadrakol and the Lost Lucknow of the last Nawab in the City

Before 1858, the mainstream activities of classical music in Calcutta were inappreciable [17]. During this specific mid nineteenth century, Wajid Ali Shah (1822-1887) Oudh's last Nawab who was deposed by the British, was exiled in Metiabruz (outside south west border of Calcutta) in 1856 and his arrival marked a point of departure for the Muslim community in Calcutta. Another set of writers and poets had followed Nawab Wajid Ali Shah to Calcutta from Lucknow to stay with him during his internment. This gave impetus to literary and artistic activities. Wajid Ali Shah alone published 45 books from Mochikhola (the present Garden Reach Road) at Metiabruz during his internment. The Nawab is credited with the revival of interest in Kathak as a major Indian classical dance form. From an early age, Wajid Ali Shah was initiated into vocal training under great 'Ustads' (masters) like Basit Khan, Pyar Khan and Jaffar Khan. With his knowledge of Urdu, Persian and Hindi, Wajid Ali, under his pseudonym 'Akhtarpiya', wrote those books including poems, a generous amount of prose and a massive collection of Thumris (a light classical composition). Works like the 'Diwan-i-Akhtar' and 'Husni-Akhtar' contain his Ghazals. Rare ragas like 'Jogi', 'Juhi' and 'Shah-Pasand' are said to have been composed by him. As a dancer, he trained under Thakur Prasad, a Kathak exponent of the Jaipur Gharana (i.e. tradition or school). Consequently, a wider awareness in classical music was engendered and musicians gathered to learn from the masters at the Metiabruz court [16]. It was conceivable for them to cultivate their music in a wider perspective than was previously possible. Singers like Aghor Namasudra Chakrabarti (1852-1915), Pramatha Namasudra Banerjee (1868-1956), Bamacharan Banerjee and Kaliprasanna Banerjee (1842-1900) received the Nawab's patronage. Jadu Namasudra Bhattacharya, popularly known as 'Jadu Bhatta' (1840-83), a disciple of the renowned Dhrupad exponent, regularly performed in the court of the Nawab. However, it could not be traced out by the authors whether the performers irrespective of

their original caste status (including the Brahmins) coming in contact with the Muslims had been annexed with the Namasudra (stigmatized) status. It was at this crucial moment that local singers began associating themselves with different schools or gharanas of music in accordance with the training they had received from their respective Ustads [18]. Such a scenario clearly indicates the acceptance of Nawabi musical culture and sharing own talents with it by several Hindu renowned performers, but they were hardly identified with Hinduisation wave prevalent that time. Nawab's darbar (or court) was one of the biggest centers of patronage for the Baijis (principally dancers). When he came to Calcutta, many of his paris (he called his court singer and dancer pari meaning angel) came with him. Most of them remain anonymous without any document except some like Omrahojan. Baijis traditionally sang Dhrupads, Dhamars, Gazals. Later they incorporated Thumris, Kheyals etc. into their choice. In colonial time, when they strengthened their base in Calcutta, they started to sing different kinds of Bengali songs like folk forms of Kirtan, Tappa, Baul and the like. They had their own style of dancing which was called 'mujrah' by Islamic rulers and "nautch" by colonial rulers. It was a semi-classical form of dance but carried an immense influence of Kathak. They were not allowed to perform still their gurus (teachers) did not give them permission to. They were not even allowed to meet any man when going through the training period. During Nawab regime in Calcutta many Baijis from other towns also came down to this city to be a part of his darbar in Metiabruz. Among them names like Munsarimwali Gauhar, Zohar bai, Mustari Bai were well known. With the Lucknow Nabab and his paris the real culture of Thumris began in Calcutta [19]. Around late 19th century Calcutta is also remembered the talented Baijis. For instance, Malkajan besides being a singer and dancer, she was also an expert poet and song writer. Her book named Makhjan-ulfat-I Malika was well appreciated. She knew many languages like Urdu, Parsi, Hindi, English, Bengali and a few. Her daughter Gauharjan was considered as the "queen" among all Baijis of that time in terms of talent and beauty. She learnt Kheyal and Thumri and then took talim (training) in Dhrupad. She was taught English songs by some Anglo Indian singers of Calcutta. She even took training in Kirtan from Shri Ramesh Chandra Das Babaji [20]. Gauharjan became so popular in those days that she was invited in the jalsas (meaning musical event) arranged in the palace of Governor where many royal family members, Government officials of high rankings waited in baited breath to catch the performance of her. She got invitation from London to perform there. She was called the "Nightingale of Bengal". Gauharjan left

her mark in the era of koler gan (gramophone song) also. Within 1913 she sang in 40 records [20]. In her house, she trained many small children in singing. She herself organized many events like kobi sommelon (gatherings of poets) in her house where many distinguished poets, political leaders came. Besides Gauhar, Nurjahan Begum, Shrijan Bai, Jaddan Bai, Ranisundari, Aschorjomoyi, Rajbala, Radharani, Indubala, Shwetagini, Kiranmayi, Surama and others were some names who also amazed their listeners with their singing prowess in the late 19th and early 20th century.

But at the hegemony of the colonially educated middle class Bengali patriarchic Bhadrals, the institution of Baiji was replaced with theatre, Gramophone culture and Bhadrals imagery of Bhadramahila. "There was no dearth of people in Tagore family who were theatre fanatic. It was heard that theatre was arranged in their house frequently. It seems that arranging theatre was taken up in the place of Bai dance" [21]. Thus, the theatre became a replacement of Bai performances. Talented Baijis like Gangamani, Jadumani, Ranisundari, Rajbala and the like have to compromise with their Baiji career to become popular theatre actresses. The process led to the full erosion of those performing arts in Kolkata as Bandopadhyaya marked that a trend of deterioration could be traced in the performance of these girls and in the name people attributed to them- 'Half-Baiji'. Bandopadhyaya says, "Gradually the difference between the dance of mujrawali Baijis and Khemtawalis was erased" [20]. Veena Oldenburg has pointed out ways in which the colonial British treatment of courtesans also contributed to their diminishing status and their increasing conflation with prostitutes (1990: 260-261) Vidya Rao (1996: 288-296) discusses the effect this had on thumri singers, noting their marked loss of status in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as they were increasingly associated with debauchery and became subject to legal sanctions, including, eventually, the abolition of courtesans' salons. Thus, the craft of all the musical instruments in and around Kolkata was supposedly started much before twentieth century. According to the accounts of our research participants, their lineage came in productive contact with the craft and trade is more than 150 years dating it back Nawab's arrival and Hindu nationalist musicology around the middle of nineteenth century. As we did our fieldwork mostly at the residences and workshops from where the trade in central Kolkata was initiated, let us explore to the least extent to the social-cultural ambience of the locality since colonial period.

The Location of Baranagar and Local History in Documents and Earlier Research

The study area named as 'Violinpara' is situated at the end of the lane named Violinpara connecting Barrackpore Trunk Road eastward Gopal Lal Tagore Road at the southern margin of the Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata. It is the southernmost point of greater Kolkata Metropolitan Area. The locality belongs to Baranagar Municipality, whose office is located more eastward to Violinpara. It falls under the Baranagar municipality of Barrackpore subdivision in North 24 Parganas district of West Bengal (Figure 1). Baranagar is one of the densely populated and one of the oldest urban areas of West Bengal. Situated beside the bank of river Hooghly on the east, at the northern fringe Kolkata metropolis proper, Baranagar has a long history of its establishment older than that of Kolkata.

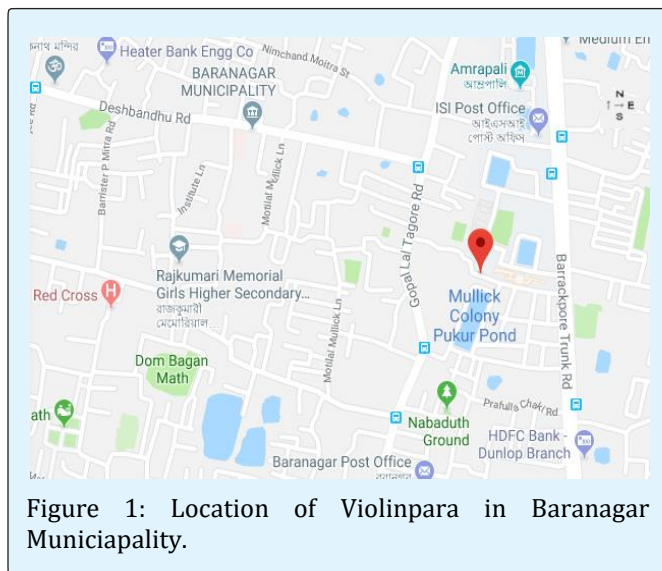


Figure 1: Location of Violinpara in Baranagar Municipality.

Long History of Colonisation and Industrialisation of Baranagar

Bhagabata that mentions the name of 'Barahanagar' which had the fortune of having been visited by Lord Chaitanya [22]. More than four centuries ago, in the year 1550, the name of the place Baranagar was marked as 'Bernager' on the map of the famous Portuguese historian Jao De Barros. According to WW Hunter [1893] [23]. The village of Baranagar is said to have been originally a Portuguese settlement and to have been a seat of considerable trade when Calcutta was as yet the abode of

the tiger. The dawn of the seventeenth century saw the decline of the Portuguese power in the East [23]. In the hostility that broke out between the Portuguese and the Dutch, the latter succeeded in establishing their supremacy in the field of trade and commerce and Baranagar was one of the important places in India where the Dutch had their factories. In the second half of the seventeenth century Baranagar became a major storm-centre of bitter Anglo-Dutch rivalry. Baranagar was ultimately ceded to the British by the Dutch Government. It was during the British reign that Baranagar underwent a radical socio-economic transformation due to the impact of the forces of Westernization. Thus, during the British reign, Baranagar came to be known as a great centre of the jute industry of Bengal and this industrial development was quickly followed by rapid urbanization of the area where the establishment of large mills and factories attracted a huge number of working hands from the villages. In order to understand how the locality grew out of local colonial mediation that we found to have been intervened by the Bhadrlok reforms in musical culture, we need to introspect the elite history available.

Pre-Independence [Colonially Mediated] Bhadrlok Social Reforms in connection to Baranagar

Baranagar was the birth place of one reputed social reformer of nineteenth century Bengal, Sasipada Banerjee, whose hold and earnest endeavors in the fields of promoting female education and improving the conditions of working classes drew warm admiration and respect from different corners not only in our own country but also from abroad. Far in advance of his times, "Sasipada Banerjee combined a crusade for the education of women with efforts to improve the conditions of factory workers". For the first attempt to enlighten the workers, of espousing their cause and of publication of the first workers' journal, "the credit of being the pioneer in philanthropic service to Indian workers within the historical limitations of that period may fairly go to Mr. Sasipada Banerjee"[24]. However, the same historian Sumit Sarkar in another writing [1983] identifies the problem with such popular movements of 'middle class' leadership as not going beyond the realm of philanthropy with the constraints of uplifting the people of the 'depressed class' or later scheduled caste and scheduled tribe to the Bhadrlok standard [25]. Not like the pre-industrial, colonial milieu, but even with the rapid industrialization and urbanization, the most progressive hegemonic intervention of Bhadrlok reforms was to reinforce and build into a replica of colonially mediated

standards that the women, poor and the 'depressed' class of Baranagar could not meet, but could only imitate 'for their special benefits'. The deployment of a system of explicit status-markers divided people into hierarchical categories of status and power that had always been an important function of the culture to which they, the bhadrlok, and the workers belonged. However, it is not only colonially permeated Bhadra samaj (genteel society) that seemed to be a hegemonic order prevailing over its 'Others', the 'Other' [chhotolok] as well unwittingly repressed itself (forgetting and burying their ownness)[26].

Before Coming to the Violinpara

Violinpara,(para means socially close neighborhood) the location of present study at the periphery of urban Kolkata metropolis is named after the stringed musical instrument violin that had been manufactured by the Pundr lineage for generations making the locality known by their job. According to the Calcutta Gazette (1915), Violinpara was "formerly called Chandalapara". The term Chandala means the people whose traditional occupation was dealing with the corpse and regarded as outside 'Varna system' and untouchables (later constitutionally coded as 'scheduled caste') by the higher castes. Thus the naming of locality had a separative intension to assign stigma of untouchability to the neighborhood supposedly till the early part of the twentieth century. This might be the likely reason why the Pundr and Nama families of scheduled caste identity residentially settled there much before independence. In that sense, the acclaim of the violin-making of the Pundr (also a scheduled caste/SC) families imparted a positive image to the locality, though the discrimination of the SC people did not die out regarding what we would focus later. Regarding their past residence and occupation what Pulak M. recalled.

In fact, our family was not into this particular craft or business. Originally, we came from Udanarayanpur of Hooghly district, might be we had land here at Baranagar also. Though we were actually not directly involved in craftsmanship but indirectly we were attached with the same business. That is, my great grandfather used to sell 'lau' [dried scooped out gourd] for making the resonating chambers of certain instruments. So since he was selling gourd for the craftsmen, it was from the very beginning we had certain connections with these craftsmen, mostly Muslims, as well. Later on, I heard my great grandfather was not much interested in this business of selling gourd. He was rather very fond of playing musical instruments but my great grandfather was too poor to enable my

grandfather to do so. In our vicinity, there were number of Muslim people and most of them used to work as paid helpers in artisan's workshop in Kolkata. These Muslim people mostly from Shia sect, were excellent in craftsmanship, as I heard from my father. My great grandfather then approached one of his beloved grand-'chachas' (Hindi term of uncle) in our neighborhood who was into this craftsmanship. My great grandfather insisted the chacha to teach him the craft. Then my great grandfather came with this chacha to Kolkata to learn it. In fact, learning was both for manufacture and playing musical instruments. One day my great grandfather joined a workshop in Laalbazar [Kolkata Police headquarter, the centre of trade in Kolkata]. From there, he learnt such tedious craft ... Much later, but I cannot tell you the exact date, we opened this shop in Laalbazar. Since my childhood, I used to work with my father in this shop and presently I am in charge of the shop. Independently running the business with very few workers and that too, on contractual basis.

The 63 year old Pulak M. of Pundr lineage

Another middle-aged Swapan M. has been presently in charge of their family business. He told that the Pundrs in Baranagar are involved for more than four generations (more than 150 years) in this work of making the musical instruments. They have been residing in this very locality from a time much before independence. The business this Pundr participant informs to have started probably by his great-grandfather almost 150 years ago, though the actual time period when this family started this business still remains a matter of assumption only with no material records. Apart from this very Pundr family, as told by this middle-aged Swapan M, the entire lane of Violinpara was occupied by several other Scheduled castes families, most of them were then involved in this same craftsmanship. However with the passage of time, most of these families, either shifted away from this locality (but where he does not know) or started new business or went to service. Apart from the existing Pundrs, the Namasudra (hereafter abbreviated as Pundr and Nama) families are said to be involved in this crafts for many generations, but their story is somewhat different. We met the 27 years smart, educated young Nama boy, who is the current generation of that family.

Initially, we lived in Murshidabad [A centrally located district of West Bengal, where as Kolkata is more southern]. In Murshidabad, we were mainly into agriculture, but I think we had some other works as well ... But I can't say that properly. Then later on, at the time

of my great grandfather, we moved towards Khidirpur [a locality near to Metiabruz], that I can recall my father's repeating description. During the initial stay of my great grandfather in Khidirpur, he got the chance of interacting with many excellent Muslim artisans in the vicinity, yes, that is of musical instruments. What I heard that at that time, there were no formal shops selling instruments as most middle class Bengali bhadroloks of city Kolkata was not used to buy instruments, mostly stringed instruments. The demand was low; the known performers started to place 'order' of the specific instruments to the 'apt' manufacturers. The fame of skill, thus the mastery over the knowledge about the instruments would matter. ... At that time, these makers were involved in making variety of instruments for the Nawabs and landlords, not only of different parts of Bengal, but distant outside also. My great grandfather joined in hands with these Muslim craftsmen and finally came to the business [pausing for a while]. But we were then extremely poor, hardly able to make both ends meet. Though I can't tell you with absolute certainty, why my great grandfather moved away from Khidirpur...But I feel perhaps with changing time, the place was not conducive for continuing with the business and so he moved to Gopal Lal Thakur road [the main road going across Violinpara]. There in this place, which is now in North Kolkata, there are number of craft-making [Poundra] families who were much into the task of making violins... At the initial phase, my grandfather used to work in one of the Poundra's workshop before he opened his workshop ...My great grandfather learnt the art of making the stringed instruments from the Muslim craftsmen only during in early stay in Khidirpur. These Muslims who used to supply instruments, mostly stringed instruments to the Nawabs of Bengal and even those beyond the Bengal frontiers, had connections with Arabian cultures as well ... You might say Oud, Lyre or Lute from Arab to be the origin of all these stringed instruments, but I think, all these variants of stringed instruments you are seeing today are basically modified version of a special type of Arabian instruments called Simsimiyya. However, later on after the death of my great grandfather and subsequent shift of my grandfather to north Kolkata [Baranagar], our business further expanded when my grandfather decided to open his own factory in Gopal Laal Tagore Road of Baranagar. My grandfather, later on, rented this very room for opening up the shop...It is a long time around 1890, our showroom opened. This is perhaps the first shop in Kolkata, in fact, in West Bengal selling stringed instruments...then finally in 1909, our shop got registered."

Asijit S., the 27 Year Old Man from Nama Family Told the Story at his Main Store at Prime Spot of Laalbazar Area

During the Khidipur years, they lost their wealth due to non-availability of work that they had during Nawabs' time as the zamindari system was legally abolished. They were much in a miserable state of utmost poverty and therefore chose to move to Violinpara in search of earning prospects, as they found the uses and demands of musical instruments were bit higher in the northern and central Calcutta than their previous settlement in extreme south-west. Further, as speculated by the present male member of Nama family, that this Khidipur area was then a hub of Muslim inhabitants who were growingly involved in sewing and trading garments; many left for other side of the river Ganga to Hooghly. It is, nonetheless, reported that Hooghly and Howrah to be the residence of the Shia Muslims who migrated from Metiabruz. Thus, the localities near Metiabruz were not found to be suitable for craftsmanship. Coming to Baranagar, they initially used to work as mere paid helpers in the Pundr's workshop. It was later they opened their own workshop and carried out business independently in this locality. Nama families presently are found to make stringed instruments which include Tanpura (both for women and men performers), sitar, Sarod, Esraj, Dilruba, Surbahar and a few others. Pundr families, however, sell only Sitar, Sarod and Tanpura.

Bhadralok-Chhotolok (Elite-Subaltern) in Baranagar and/ or Urban Bengal Context

The attitudes of higher castes towards these Scheduled Caste makers were revealed from certain interactions with few Brahmin families residing in the neighborhood. These makers were thus looked down upon by these higher caste families and marginalized especially during pre-independence primarily for being labeled as "uncivil" (asobhya), "crude" (sthula), "uncultured" (asikkhito), "manner less" (beyadap), "dirty" (nongra), "with distasteful habits and behaviors" (kuruchhikar). Coupled with this local 'stereotyping' aligned to their caste identity, the makers were further socially secluded owing to their lack of formal institutionalized education. They were writhing under extreme poverty, hardly able to make their both ends meet. Their ways of living, many of their behavioral and gestural repertoires were, however, considered to be 'weird' by the members of higher castes. These makers were stigmatized by 'illicit' sexual practices even by the other Pundr families. All their social interactions and everyday living were considered to be unacceptable by

these higher castes; thus were less integrated with their immediate neighbors. Nama family was even more marginalized especially due to their extreme poverty, much less formal education, undesirable social interactions, and relatively less assimilation to or emulation of the practices associated with higher castes. There was an additional issue of regular connections to the female art performers [i.e. singing and dancing] and similar sex workers of Kolkata and its outskirts. They were explicitly denigrated by the higher caste bhadroloks who were into other forms of business or service. The present independently manufacturing and trading middle-aged Nama brothers earlier were used to work as mere paid worker in Pundr workshop and later started their independent workshops in this particular locality of Baranagar. But certain bitter intra-familial disputes led to the fragmentation of the family into families of two sons, Sarit S and Tarit S. This intra-familial and later inter-familial trouble was taken advantage by Pundr family in order to socially corner this Nama family that worsened their situation even more. One of our upper castes, educated, recently retired elderly informant of 60s of age, living in Violinpara for three generations, a resident close to the Nama family, concluded about them.

The other family [Poundra] became rich since a long time. They had big contacts, had parties, wore costly dresses as I can remember my adolescence, but short of hands later; you know... but this [Namasudra] lineage soared high recently, [silence] though very secretive, was otherwise scandalous often by the lineage [bansa] as a whole. It is better not to discuss it elaborately you understand what I mean they are, in a word, chhotolok [Ek kathai ora chhotolok bolte ja bojhai taai].

The 'chhotolok' status of both the Pundr and Nama families, by the statements of other higher caste and more educated neighbors appeared repeatedly: They did not interact with us... lived isolated... maybe they were ashamed as they had scheduled status, no education [a middle-aged resident, a govt employee who claims to have grown up with their children, especially of Poundra family, who later acquired 'some' education].

They were dirty like anything they had no tastes nobody bothered about them. What sort of dirtiness? Please don't ask .. ehh... Eating bare hand, they cleaned it on their dress by rubbing their palm and fingers. I have seen this ... [an elderly gentleman, known to be a knowledgeable neighbour of Violinpara]

Their major festival worship was done by a separate priest, who was not for us; he is not from this locality. ... And they were very slow ... they had no regularity, discipline, no routine as they did not go to school. This family started changing and was integrated with us slowly [an old Brahmin resident of Violinpara, a friend of one Poundra family].

Broomfield (1968) [27] conclusively states that the Bengalis, even of 1960s, would like to divide it into two classes- bhadarlok (elite) and chhotolok (subaltern) Moreover, In her book, Bengal Divided: Hindu Communalism and Partition, 1932-1947, Joya Chatterji discusses how the period under consideration is characterized by a bourgeois discourse constructing Muslims as chhotolok (literally small people, referring here to caste, class, and educational differences from the Bhadraklok) while upper caste Hindus were urged to become Bhadraklok [28]. The emphasis was on purging the theater and the cinema of their "low-bred" personnel, including the baijee actresses from the Nawabi courtesan tradition: "I hope that the educated, civilized society would try for the upliftment of this art form [cinema] with their taste and restrained and beautiful manners and behavior" [29]. Bengali society till the end of last millennium has been dominated by the values of the Bhadrak Samaj (which literally means respectable or genteel society), mostly of the upper castes. They place a high value on men of letters, 'high' culture, and the intellect. Bhadraklok are opposed to either chhotolok or gariblok, who are poor or not "civilized". Perhaps, Sinha and Bhattacharya, were more nuanced and specific "Thus, in reality, class stratification is embedded, to a great extent, within the hierarchy of castes". Even the Calcutta-based Bengali nationalists largely despised the chhotolok-low-caste and 'tribal' communities [24].

The 'Capitals' in Use

This Namas, who have been carrying out the business for over four generations, claim that their shops are the oldest in Kolkata, besides what earlier the Pundrs and Muslims manufactured in their workshops and supplied the instruments to individual artists and performers on demand. It is their initial connection with the Muslim craftsmen in Khidirpur and later on with the Pundrs of Violinpara together enabled the early forefathers of Nama lineage to kick start own business. It is subsequently their excellent skills coupled with the ability to cater to growing and changing demands of all good performers, that these families ultimately succeeded in spearheading with the business forward and expanding the same. Most

of such makers of other or upper were initially and solely driven by their desire to earn money. It provided them with much required impulse to get going this new venture. However, to understand their journey of the most reckonable and skilful makers of Eastern India, sculpting the bodies of variedly performing sound is important.

I am basically involved in this business since I was 7 years old. [pausing for a while] Making of the musical instruments is thus a very painstaking task where each and every step of manufacturing needs to be done meticulously to get the excellence. At the onset, the makers exhibit their skills in choosing the appropriate raw materials. First and foremost, it is necessary to select the raw material very carefully, lest the final product won't be suitable for sale. As you can see many instruments lying here, all these are not constructed with similar principle....They are all different from each other; different in the sense, the choice and subsequent use of raw material differ substantially....for instance, if you want to make a sitar, you need an altogether different gourd. For constructing the resonating chamber, selection of lau/dried scooped gourd has to be done very perfectly. The size, colour, texture and quality of skin of the gourds matters a lot... It has actually taken years for us to master the entire process of manufacturing right from the proper selection of raw materials..."

The 27 years of Namashudhra maker from Laalbazar who have engaged in craftsmanship since 7 years of age.

It was identically confirmed by the 63 year old Pundr participant Pulak M along with their secretive knowledge of the trade-cum-craft and social capitals: Difference lies in skill... foremost when it comes to the question of selecting the proper material to be used for making ... Yes, these are not ordinary gourds, for the purpose of getting the gourds suitable to be used for instruments, the farmers deliberately keep these gourds on plants and do not pluck them till they become dry enough and hard like a wood. After that, we the makers go to those places where these gourds are farmed and see which one is suitable to suit to which kind of instrument. Then we secretly put our respective signatures there and accordingly these gourds are supplied in the workshop for further use.. if you go to Hooghly district, there are many villages where these gourds are cultivated. Sarit S, Asijit's younger uncle (kaka) with whom Asijit's family has broken relation gives instances of changing situations they adapt their cultural capital to social connections (i.e. social capitals).

Earlier there was a time when wood was mainly imported from Burma, that is teak were used. Now following certain governmental regulation, import of teak from Burma has been restricted and now we have to resort on 'tun'. Tun is a special kind of wood which is obtained from Assam, but now we don't have to go to Assam for that wood....We can now easily avail the wood from warehouse in and around Kolkata.

It is Sarit S. who could give many examples how mastery over the craft begins not only in selecting the raw materials but at the very inception of processing them and continues throughout for an 'authentic production':

Seasoning of wood is the most vital step. The extent of seasoning for specific type of instrument wood is to then cut into varying dimensions whose small deviations might spoil the production. All these so called makers simply hire some contractual labours who take pain to assemble those parts, polish and burnish them and ultimately selling them. Only a few craftsmen are involved in meticulous selection of materials, carefully handling those materials prior constructing the instruments and imparting intricate skill at every stage of manufacture.

He differentiates between authentically monitored and inaptly coordinated manufacture. His narration also includes how 'listening' be programmed into 'sight' of the musical 'things': These days, you find some so-called makers who are attaching the strings by using tuner. Such technique is basically not correct...To have the strings accorded to proper notes and to get the right juwari, you need to prepare your ears in such a manner that you won't need those tuner...similar expertise is needed when one needs to select the raw materials, in all such cases the eyes need to be prepared in such a manner so that you won't fail to identify the right one for right sound of each different instrument. He added another key to authentic cultural capital for manufacture of musical instruments.

Many of the makers who are mostly known for their skill, they basically possess the authentic ability to play some instruments or the other; otherwise one can hardly produce one instrument and transfer the senses and sensibilities to others.

While we asked Asijit how far it applies commonly, his response was Truly so my father (Tarit S.) plays sitar and sarod. Not only my father, my uncle (Sarit S) too is an excellent sitar player my grandfather used to say that those makers who are basically into the craftsmanship have to know how to play instrument, if you don't know how to play instrument, then making is of no use.

Mourning for the Masters and Following Patriarchy in the Business

It was Namas to have recognized their debt more to the Muslim master craftsmen than the Pundrs. The Pundrs could trace out a mixed ancestry of their craft that has been blurred because of the decline of their business for the current generation's different interest for profession. The Pundrs, however, emphasises their old glory of having connections with all the master performers of the past, not only from Bengal, but several cities of North, Eastern India and even Western India as well. They nostalgically lament for the days when too many acclaimed performers, patrons, traders and even elites were in regular contact, Muslims, Hindus and even Christian together. Among the Namas Sarit was explicit about the Muslim legacies: All those legendary, master craftsmen of the time, most of them were Muslims...all those are dead today, even their sons did not take up these profession, and thus they are lost almost with very little ...if you don't have money you have no choice expect earning, in that case, people don't think of respectable caste, class, religion or whatever... that you are talking about. The only taboo in terms of making business do we follow since we are from lower castes, is that, we don't make Veena, especially Rudra Veena. If we make Veena, we will be cursed [abhisap]...we don't even allow any Veena to enter our space.

However, to talk about the trajectories of trades of the makers from Namo and Pundr lineage it needs to mention that the inheritance of the craft among the Nama and Pundr families is in the male line. Only the male heirs of the families are allowed to take up the profession, even as labourers. Asijit's grandfather or Sarit's father continued working in the Pundr's workshop till the year 1962 following which, Nama family no longer worked under Pundr family and started their independent workshop in this Violinpara locality . The business till the year 1965 was jointly managed his father and his uncle who later after 1965, get separated and started their independent workshops. Following the opening of shop, the business network began to proliferate and ultimately reached its peak around 2000. The business network following the year 2000 however remained steady for a considerable period of time till the year 2014. After this year of 2014, the business network saw a slight fall due to increased effect of westernized music among the people; thereby customers are found to incline recently more towards western musical instruments. Furthermore, many of the paid workers were found to leave the job and opting different jobs. Moreover, due to certain online shopping

sites, many of the customers are found to buy instruments from those sites and also because of increased use of electronic instruments like electronic Tanpura, electronic Tabla and Karaoke which are substituting the classical instruments of Indian music. Even though, the use and sale of classical instruments showed a slight fall in recent decades, however there has been significant increase in export items over these years. The plight of the Pundr family can also be attributed to gendered pattern of business. The business network follows the male line, that is, the practice of crafting the instruments is passed down from father to son who later takes charge of the business. Pundr family because of lack of male heirs to pass the baton got reluctant over spreading the business further. Pundr family, is however not engaged in exporting their items and thus providing instruments only to local customers. Asijit explains the state of the craft and the trade elaborately:

Talking about the present situation of business, then I must say it is bad in Bengal. People especially from Kolkata, these days are hardly caring and respecting classical music. Classical music is losing all its charm. But it is not the case, if you go to rural Bengal, that is, why factories are shutting down in Kolkata and shifting to rural Bengal. There many people are attached with this craftsmanship and many of them even come to Kolkata to serve as contractual workers for many such workshop. These makers in rural Bengal are also involved in agricultural and fishing activities apart from the craftsmanship. Mostly, here in Laalbazar, you will find shops that are basically bringing the instruments from these village makers and selling them here....but the scenario is also different in other states of India. We are getting huge orders every time usually from Maharashtra, South India, Uttar Pradesh and these days, demand for classical music has increased greatly in Gujarat...and if you ask about our export especially to U.S.A, it is going quite well there. Demands for classical instruments are also too high there and classical instruments makers are highly respected there.

The reason behind this decline of business network of Pundr families and rise of the Nama families can be attributed to gendered pattern of business network following male succession of the craft. The making of musical instruments is a long painstaking process which involves manifestation of deep seated inherent skills or 'cultural capital' of the makers. Skills are not only seen in this actual hand-on approach of making the instruments but in choice, selection and use of proper raw materials too for carving the body of the instruments. The process

of making stringed instruments is also sensorial at the same time. It involves attaching the strings with appropriate notes, for which selection of proper materials and strings of appropriate circumferences are being used. We would like to designate this specific type of cultural capital with a new term 'sensorial capital', which is not only embodied in the sensorium of the performers but also able to appreciate and embody the capitals creatively.

Conclusion

The selection of case study was indeed successful, as it reveals the nature of canvas we need to situate only these two [previously] chhotolok artisan lineages comprises the huge spatio-temporal stretch and the cultural threads spread over the history of colonial urbanization and political economy of the urban culture, more particularly of Kolkata. Moreover, it needs to be a study from below, from the quotidian level of the collectivity.

Now at Violinpara in Baranagar, they happen to be closer to the option of going with the flow of Bhadrakolok life as increasing opportunities or compulsions of leaving artisan status and earlier lifestyle are absorbing them more to the Others' world, which they have already stepped in. All these families [Poundra and Nama] hail from scheduled castes [chhotolok in local parlance] and thus were subjected to a series of local marginalization from middle class and higher castes members of the neighborhood. Even signaling the 'Chhotolok-turning-Bhadrakolok' attitude, Nama family is socially slandered by Pundr family as well owing to certain inter-familial disputes and discomforts, leaving them isolable by the neighbors. Despite possessing extraordinary authentic skills for manufacturing the classical instruments, and now in a relatively advantageous financial state, Nama family has left to bother about local acceptance compared to Pundr family. Thus, economic condition is not the most determining factor for marginalization of these makers. With the spread of globalization and interconnectedness between global and national/regional/local markets, Nama families find place in global markets surpassing their local social context. It is because of their finer cultural capital together with patriarchal 'luck' guiding the business network in favour of the expansion.

The Nama man with his great merit of artisanship [i.e. cultural capital] and business networks [i.e. 'social capital' and 'symbolic capital' or prestigious artisanship and goodwill reproduced by his cultural capital added to the former capitals again convertible to 'economic capital'] do not face any impediments in his expanding business. His

regular attire is that common one [i.e. lungi and a vest in workshop and casually chosen old-styled shirt and unfashionable trouser for outside] found among the “if not chhotok not really or yet a Bhadrlok” [as told by an upper caste articulate neighbor of similar age] artisans, especially among the average carpenters of Kolkata. Sarit S. minds business, not local status.

“People in the streets have no time to look at you to measure ... they are running almost ... I am dutiful to my family, my son is going good in the English-medium school... I mind business only, cannot give him much time though for my regular tour ... I don't get time to think for me”. Making and growing business is his endless target. He does not bother for the essential membership of Bhadrasmaj. “The naked does not fear butler, ha ha”, said the man and added, “oh yes, I pray for a decent life for my little [four years] son. If he has merit and studies well, being a non-literate I won't have any problem to admit him to a costly English-medium school. If not, it would be the effect of his karma [deeds]. I have nothing to do with that.”

Maiti (2016) is, as if, concluding this writing with only difference at the end “These marginalized people, who belong neither to the bhadra samaj, nor to what are negatively referred to as chhotok, do not need any kind of institution; they continue to carry forward the knowledge of their past-lives to their after-lives through folk-memory.”

For our case, it is almost like a collective inventory of detailed skills that inhere in generations of practice, but they become the hallmarks of specific artisan families, not mediated through ‘folk’. It is individual family, a species of craft [manship]. The ‘capitals’ might constitute the craft in contexts, and might be seen as un gendered, but this specific craft is inherently gendered till date, hence the ‘manship’ is suffixed.

Thus, we suggest such class-indifferent, caste-loyal [in ritualistic spheres, kinship and marriage], artisan individuality would count so far as he reproduces the accumulating ‘dead labour’ of profit through ‘specific’ or ‘sub-specific’ biographies of ‘things’. The canvas of this case study connects the cultural-historical geography of Calcutta/Kolkata ranging from the farthest south of Metiabruz of mid-1890s to early 1900-whose essential historical role in developing the performing culture industries of Kolkata has been buried in denial and oblivion as it comes of the ‘Other’ [Muslim/Islamic] of the Bhadralks-to far northern fringe of the greater Kolkata

metropolis, a fringe flourished before Kolkata and has been dominated by the colonially mediated Hindu middle-class Bhadralks to accommodate many a marginal silences as of the labourers, the ‘depressed classes’, the women and their ‘objectionable’ associations including the supposed allegiance of these two families to Muslim and Baiji musical culture [29-34]. We might be tempted to add to Qureshi “Both instruments [even unwittingly their makers] and players have been stigmatized by the urban middle class that dominated the expansion of classical music” in Kolkata Qureshi (2000) as the classical music most closely was associated with Muslim teachers and accompanists of courtesan-singers and dancers in salons of the time.

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