

# **FINAL REPORT**

**A Project of  
Integrated Labour History Research Programme  
V.V.Giri National Labour Institute  
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**Title  
Present and Past of the Community-based Garment Industry  
in 24 Parganas (South) of West Bengal**

**By  
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and many others who interacted at length with us. Those informal conversations and exposures would have perhaps made invaluable live and oral testimony of the community life.

## **Abbreviations**

CIWTC	Central Inland Water Transportation Corporation
CT	Census Town
ELMI	Electrical Lamp Manufacturing India Ltd.
KMC	Kolkata Municipal Corporation
MM	Maheshtola Municipality
PS	Police Station
VAT	Value Added Tax
WBTU	West Bengal Tailors Union
24 PGS(S)	South Twenty-four Parganas
24 PGS(N)	North Twenty-four Parganas

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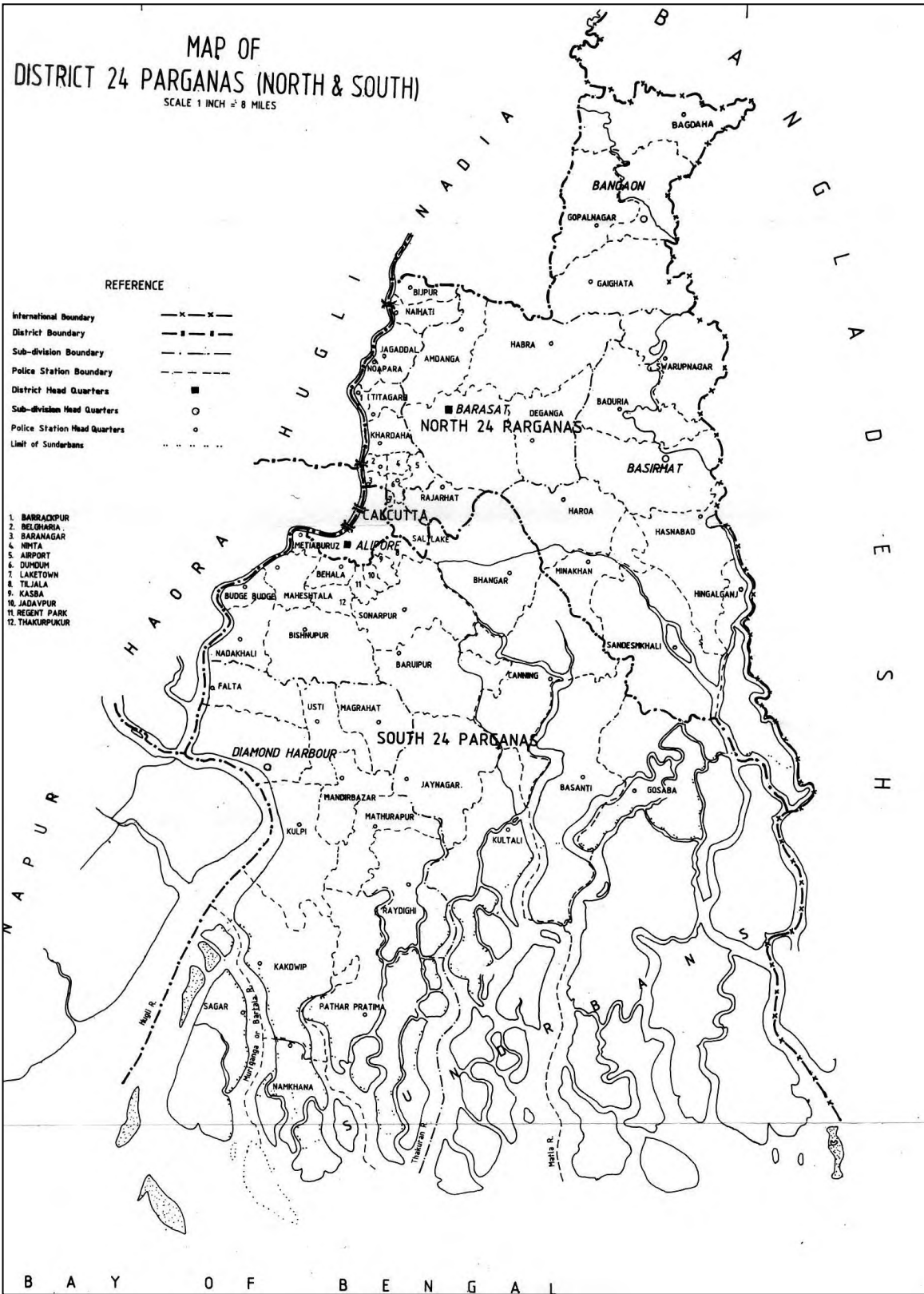
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## I. INTRODUCTION

A long time ago there was a custom of wearing non-stitched garments like *dhoti*, *chadar*, *sari* in Bengal and other parts of India. At the time of Emperor Ashoka, both men and women of India wore one piece of garment, a plain length of cloth. Though the stitched pieces of garments appeared as early as 11<sup>th</sup> century and sewn military uniform has been in vogue even earlier since the third century B.C., it is only since the 13<sup>th</sup> century A.D. that tailored garments became widespread enough to make tailoring to be pursued as one of the occupations in India. Charles Fabri observed in "Indian Dress, A Brief History"(1977) that "There is a true milestone with the arrival of the Iranian and Central Asian fashions. Not only do women now accept sewn garments, which they had never worn before, and not only do they henceforth cover their upper bodies, which they never did before, but the dress of the men is totally changed." The Muslims are in overwhelmingly large number engaged in tailoring occupation. They had an inclination in different artisanship by tradition.<sup>1</sup>

As an industry garment making developed in India in response to the war needs and of the late, it has emerged as one of the major export-oriented industries of our country.

Throughout the world, the garment industry is one that still heavily depends on manual labour. The apparel or garment is a fragmented and labour-intensive industry. With low capital and skill requirements, it is ideally suited to the early stages of industrialization of the countries like India. The reasons lie very much in the nature of the product itself. The frequently changing tastes of people for fashion garments and the consequent nature of the labour process involved, dampen the scope for further automation in this industry.

In this study we are concerned with a Muslim Bengalee *Dorji* community dwelling in a region Metiabruz-Maheshtala of West Bengal. While dealing with the subject in question, we would like to focus on a tailoring community, developed itself from within. This occupation, on the other hand, suited with its history, culture, tradition as well as socio-economic environment. For the sake of this study we have to deal with the historical background of the community, its culture linked with the evolution of labour processes involved in this garment industry and also the nature of its business. From the point of view of formal structures of industry and business, we may call it an informal sector. But we did not proceed strictly with that point of view because of the varied nature of this particular community-based industry.

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<sup>1</sup> See *Aspects of Society and Culture in Calcutta* edited by M.K.A.Siddique, Anthropological Survey of India, G.O.I., published in July 1982.

## II. METHODOLOGY

First of all a team was formed along with the project leader for performing the whole study. Among the team members, two were chosen from the tailoring community, one belonging to some other community but residing in the same area. As a team we started to collect the literary works of the community itself. There are a long number of short stories, articles, poems in local little magazines and also some fictions in the form of books. Most of the writers belong to the tailoring community.

This literature played a vast source of documents for our knowledge of history, culture and present state of affairs of this garment making community, popularly known as *Darjisamaj*. For verification of different kinds of information we also studied other official as well as historical documents.

This was the first phase of our study. Later on we started fieldwork among the people associated directly or indirectly with this industry and business. We chosen two forms: 1) Unrecorded interviews, and 2) Recorded interviews following oral history collection methods.

Besides, we made some informal talks with the people of different settlements of this *darjisamaj*. For this purpose, we visited Sonai, a place deserted by the community about a hundred years ago. We visited Khanberia, a village in Maheshtola, where people are prevalently engaged in the contract jobs of *ustagars* of Metiabruz. We visited Chingripota, a village under Budge-Budge P.S. adjoining Maheshtola, where villagers work mainly with used trousers. We also took a journey to a village Nandigaram in district Medinipur, from where the people come to Metiabruz since a long time and work as *Karigars* and helpers in the *dahlizs* of *ustagars*.

This tailoring job involves innumerable forms of work processes and patterns of business. It is really difficult to categorise the varied nature of this industry and business. However, within the limits of this pilot project, we tried to confine our study within the apparently recognised categories.

### III. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

From a fiction *Milan Kutir* by late Md. Belayet Hossain of Hajiratan Lane, we find the following story: About two hundred years ago, there was no brick-built house at Padmapur village in Twenty-four Parganas. The poor parents of one Amin Sekh settled there on a piece of land by paying *Khajna* (Rent) to the landlord. Amin Sekh worked hard and bought a good quantity of agricultural land. In eight to ten years he became a *Zamidar* (landlord) and villagers started to address him as *Sekhji* ... After the death of Amin Sekh, the villagers changed the name of Padmapur to Aminpur ... In the villages, the names of *Musalmaans* were Naran, Haran, Tinkare, Panchkare ...

These are some isolated excerpts from the pages of *Milan Kutir*. When we talked with some aged persons of *dorjisamaj*, they also confirmed that some two hundred years ago their ancestors of six to seven generations' back lived here as a village peasant community. Many of them told us that their ancestors had come from Sonai. The place was engulfed into the industrial belt of Hide Road, famous for the organized industries of ITC, MMC, Braithwaite, Lipton, Brookbond and Headquarters of SouthEastern Railway (previously known as Bengal-Nagpur Railway). Hide Road is also in the proximity of Kolkata Port Trust, which was established in the year 1870.

Somebody told us that they migrated initially from Govindopur Village. Probably they were deserted from the place when English East-India Company erected Fort William in 1710 in that place after shifting their Headquarter from Madras in the year 1690.

From official documents, it is found that this zone was traditionally a part of the large forestland of the Sundarbans on the Bay of Bengal. This portion of the Sundarban of South Twenty-Four Parganas was being slowly and steadily cleared of forests and brought under cultivation by immigrants from outside since 1770. Landless labourers and fishermen belonging to the untouchable Hindu castes like *Pods* or *Paundra Kshatriyas*, *Jalia* and *Halia Kaivarttas*, *Nama Sudras* and similarly placed Muslim *Azlafts*, *Jolahs* etc. were coming over and settling down in numbers from the neighboring areas of Jessore, Khulna and Nadiya.<sup>1</sup>

From the land deeds of a number of families of Metiabruz and Maheshtola, it was found that their villages were situated within Pargana Magura of Sadar Thana of undivided 24 Parganas. It is seen in the District Gazetteers of 24 Parganas that Magura was one of the Parganas<sup>2</sup> of the 24 Parganas, the rights of which were ceded by Nawab Mirjafar to the East India Company in 1757.

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<sup>1</sup> See *WBDG, 24-Parganas* edited by Dr. Barun De (1994).

<sup>2</sup> Pargana means a tract of country comprising many villages; several parganas constitute a zilla or district.

In this Southwest corner of Kolkata and in the Northwest corner of South Twenty-four Parganas in the proximity of Bhagirathi-Hoogly river the industrialization was begun in the later half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Bird & Co. erected South Union Jute Mill, the first jute mill in Metiabruz, in 1874. From the senior residents of Metiabruz, we heard how Clive Jute Mill, Kesoram Cotton Mill of Birlas, Ispahani Jute Mill, and factories of Hindustan Lever, GEC, Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineering Ltd. were established in the later period. They also narrated how a new industrial population was settled in the 1<sup>st</sup> half of 20<sup>th</sup> century in this area.

Muslim Bengalee population had an affinity for independent business. Hindu Bengalees were more literate than the Muslim Bengalees and they joined as *Babushramik* (skilled worker) in the factories. For hard labours of production jobs in the mills and factories a huge number of Hindi and Urdu speaking people came here from the districts of Bihar, U.P., Orissa.

Before the commencement of large-scale modern industrialisation, we see another landmark event of history of the arrival of the last Nawab of Oudh, Wajed Ali Shah from Lukhnow in 1856 with a sizeable number of Urdu-speaking followers and they settled here in Metiabruz. The traditional peasant culture of the older communities was largely influenced by the *Nawabi* culture of Lukhnow. Wajed Ali himself had many literary qualities. He had his own special singers, poets, *panwala*, *khansama*, palanquin-bearers, etc. Successively these people added a newer dimension to the future life style of Metiabruz people, especially the Muslim population.

Thus we can observe here the influence of Nawabi culture at one end and the culture of large-scale industrialisation at the other end upon a traditional peasant community of Metiabruz-Maheshtola.

In Chatta Kalikapara of Maheshtola we heard an oral description from an old *ustagar* 80 years old that 6 generations back the women in their families used to sew *Choupat* -- a cross-shaped piece of cloth for playing *cowries*. Later the male members started to stitch coats. It was before the 1<sup>st</sup> world war and probably in the later half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century some wholesalers used to give orders to these first generation tailors. They used to supply readymade coats made by these tailors to Jessore, Bagura, Kusthia, Rajshahi, and Bagirhat of undivided Bengal and also to Tinsukia, Kachar, and Silchar of Assam. This business was halted by the seperation of East Bengal from India in 1947. Later the tailoring of other items was started.<sup>1</sup>

In Metiabruz people used *nima*, *geje*, *dhuti*, *chadar*, and *fatua* as their own garments<sup>2</sup>. They used needles to stitch their own clothes by their hands. When the English people started to reside in Kolkata sewing machines were introduced. *Memsahabs* of English families used to give orders for stitching their gowns to Metiabruz *darjis*. They themselves supplied the cloth. The

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<sup>1</sup> See Summaries of Interviews of Shaokat Ali Molla in Annexure 2, pages 48-49.

<sup>2</sup> See *Kolkatar Chhoto Lukhnow* written by Anil Tapadar (2001).

remuneration that was offered for stitching a gown was more than what the tailor could expect and it was good enough to run a *dorji* family. The contract for bulk orders for stitching was started from the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century, especially in response to war needs. There were big British and other foreign garment merchant houses, viz., Hall & Anderson, Wardrobe and others in the aristocrat localities of Kolkata. A small section of Metiabruz *dorjis* managed to collect sub-contracts of bulk orders from those merchants. A few *dorji* families collected tender-job of war-contracts and other govt. orders. As a result, financial position of a section of *dorjis* looked up and they became influential in the community. Before independence in 1947, there were a handful of rich *Ustagar* families in different *para* (settlements) of *dorjisamaj*, viz., families of Hasem Molla of Mollapara, Nurul Haque Mali of Malipara, Qasem Thandar of Thandarpara, Wachel Molla of Santoshpur, Mujibur Rahman of Rajabagan, Subid Ali Molla of Chatta, etc.

This is how, tailoring, as an occupation, was introduced in a village peasant community of Metiabruz-Maheshtola. Thus, a *dorjisamaj* was shaped out of scattered and isolated *dorjis* since the later half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Starting from made-to-order tailoring business, the *dorjis* entered into an independent business of readymade garments for the market, in the later half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the meantime Metiabruz-Maheshtola became an important industrial belt with a large working class population.

Two parallel developments of history – viz. 1) Cession of zamindari rights of Twenty-four Parganas to East India Company by the treaty of 1757, and 2) arrival of Lukhnow people at Metiabruz in 1856 – had bearings upon the shaping of a tailoring community – *dorjisamaj* – in Metiabruz-Maheshtola. The English residents introduced not only the habit of wearing stitched garments, but they helped to build up the *dorjishilpa* – the new industry – by directly placing orders for garments for their family members and also supplying cloths and machines to the new-born tailoring community. On the other hand, Nawab Wajid Ali and his followers introduced fashions and stitching patterns of Lukhnow garments in these rural localities, which, in turn, influenced the local tailoring activities.



## IV. INDUSTRY

### 1. Size of the Industry

The zone of wholesale readymade garment industry may be identified as Garden Reach-Metiabruz-Maheshtola locality, covering an area of about 75 sq. km. with an approximate population of three lakh Muslim Bengalees. Muslim Bengalees constitute the major community of this zone in terms of population, followed by Hindu Bengalees and Urdu speaking Muslims. There are also Oriya and Hindi speaking people in this zone. Though a large part of this zone is now identified officially as urban agglomeration of Kolkata, yet it remained under the administrative and police jurisdiction of South Twenty-four Parganas district. The remaining part of the zone is situated within Alipore Sub-Division of South Twenty-four Parganas District. The total population of Maheshtola Municipal (Urban) is 3,89,214 covering an area of 44.18 sq.km. The total population of Garden Reach-Metiabruz under ward nos. 133 to 141 of Kolkata Municipal Corporation is 2,83,310 covering an area 20.9 sq.km. The main concentration of this Muslim Bengalee population is partly covered by wards 138 to 141 of KMC, among nine wards of Garden Reach-Metiabruz locality (see Table: 1), partly by its adjacent wards, viz., 4,5,6,8,9,10,11,15,16,18,19,21,23,25,28,30,33 of thirty-five wards of MM (see Table: 2) and also Chatta Kalikapur (Raipur) of South Twenty-four Parganas. The area of Chatta Kalikapur (CT) is 5.66 sq. km. and its population is 20,099.

Table: 1

Serial No.	Ward no.	Population
1	138	34724
2	139	45006
3	140	29636
4	141	31183

Table: 2

Serial No.	Ward No.	Total Population	Muslim population	Total No. of Families	Total No. of Households
1	4	8744	8554	1261	1254
2	5	11511	11262	1767	1778
3	6	12872	9042	1720	2136
4	8	17525	15495	2674	2313
5	9	10471	7262	1858	1874



6	10	13927	6622	2744	2671
7	11	13786	2794	3290	3273
8	15	10614	106	2417	2369
9	16	11457	6388	2396	2316
10	18	12542	6608	2589	2591
11	19	10483	7064	2029	1980
12	21	10505	9042	1988	1988
13	23	13962	5427	3036	2980
14	25	12576	7976	2344	2348
15	28	6465	284	1504	1498
16	30	11331	3776	2296	2314
17	33	9953	230	2256	2256
Total		198724	107932	38169	37939

From the above Tables, we can guess the vastness of the *darjisamaj* of Metiabruz-Maheshtola. Here more than 90% of Muslim Bengalee families are connected with *Dorjishilpa*. From a figure of Mursalin Mollah, Secretary of West Bengal Tailors Union it is found that out of six lakh *darjis* in West Bengal three lakh from Metiabruz-Maheshtola.<sup>1</sup>

To have a comprehensive idea of the size of this community-based industry, we should bear in mind that a substantial portion of the manufacturing of this industry is done by a large number of *darjis* coming mostly from the Muslim Bengalee inhabited villages of 24 PGS(S), Howrah, Hoogly, Murshidabad, Medinipur and 24 PGS(N). According to the Councilor of ward no. 140 of KMC, Mamtaz Begum, in the centre of this *darjisamaj*, out of seventy to seventy-five thousand residents of the ward about thirty thousand are outsiders, who come here to be associated with this *darjishilpa*.<sup>2</sup>

## 2. Labour Processes

Different interviewees told us that previously there were two categories of *darjis*: 1) *Hatwala*, 2) *Kolwala*. They added that an Englishman introduced the first sewing machine in Metiabruz. An aged teacher described: ... a Wilson *selaikol* was brought to Bartola, people rushed there to see the machine ... it was termed by the local people as *bokmachine*.<sup>3</sup> The running of the machine symbolizes the pecking of a *Bok*, the crane bird. This development occurred in the later half of 19<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>1</sup> See Summaries of Interviews of Mursalin Molla in Annexure 2, pages 42-43.

<sup>2</sup> See Summaries of Interviews of Mamtaz Begum in Annexure 2, pages 43-44.

<sup>3</sup> See Summaries of Interviews of Akhtar Hossain in Annexure 2, pages 37-38.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century we see here jute mills, cotton and textile mills, engineering and big factories. This modern industrialisation had effects upon *dorjisamaj*. New sources of demand for garment products were created with the growth of a new working class population and extension of market in newly built urban centres. These changes of 20<sup>th</sup> century, in turn, caused changes in the work patterns and work processes of *dorjishilpa*.

Until 1950s a *dorji* household acted generally as a production unit. Initially, the members of a *dorji* family worked together in the *dahliz*. Sometimes this portion of the house was extended with a tinned or tiled shed, facing the outer courtyard for tailoring activities. Sometimes the kinsmen of the *dorji* staying in the neighborhood also used to assist him along with his own family members. Later on, non-kin's from the neighborhood were also engaged in the work. They either came to the *dahliz*, or they collected the part-jobs from *dorjis* houses, especially this practice was applicable for womenfolk. Neighbouring women, who had free time after their daily family responsibilities, used to work as helping hands. Previously women were accustomed to different kinds of needlework and hand-embroideries. So, it was natural for them to help a *Kolwala* by stitching hooks, hemming, making buttonholes and doing other finishing jobs of frocks and shirts, called *chukai* in local dialect. Thereafter with the increase of the volume of jobs, children of *dorjis* also extended their helping hands. But, with the regularization of this occupation and emergence of a regular readymade business in the *haat*, a labour process was also established in the *dorjisamaj*. Generally 2 or 3 *hatwalas* worked with one *kolwala* to stitch a complete shirt or frock. This was the work pattern until 1950s.

Since 1960s, *hatwala* system was superseded by a new system, where, we find first of all a patternmaker, who used to make a pattern or a hardboard forma design of the garment item. He took a whole day or several hours to make the design. Then this board forma was given to a *matji*. He would cut dozens of clothes in the shape of the specific garment. Then the *kolwala dorji* stitched the garments. In the earlier system, *hatwala* stitched a part of the garment. But in the new system stitching was done completely by the *kolwala*. After stitching, some finishing jobs, called *chukai* were done by the helpers or the women members of the family. Thus, the jobs of *hatwalas* became subordinated to *kolwala's* jobs.

Thus, with the change in the labour process and with the labour more and more intensified an entrepreneur-worker relation was started to establish itself within the family-based *dorjishilpa*. In the meantime the number of non-kin workers was increased in the *dahlizs* owing to regularization of the business to some extent. This inherent dynamics of the industry expressed itself in the form of outburst of a strike by the *dorjis* in 1959 (from a different source the time was told as 1964). Islamuddin Kolwala (Laskar) of Dhowapara Panikal of Metiabruz led the strike, which continued for several

months. The impact of the strike in the *dahlizs* of different settlements was different. From some quarter it was heard that the grievances of the *dorjjs* were caused by the unilateral reduction of the rates of the *dorjjs* by the *ustagars*. However, the issues of wage rates and bonus came to the forefront in later period.

When the strike was over, the strikers tried to sustain the organization of the movement. But it fizzled out within a couple of years. Here is a specimen of the membership card of *Sadharantantri Dorji Sangha*.

কার্ড নং ৪২ সমগ্র দর্জির ঐক্য মেম্বর—

সাধারণ তন্ত্রী দর্জি সঙ্ঘ

স্থাপিত সন ১৯৬০ ইং

আকড়া বগা নগর পাড়া

মেম্বর নাম... উম্মাচ সান ...তাং... ..

ঠিকানা... .. টাকা... ১... ..

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দর্জি বন্ধুগণকে জ্ঞাত করা যাইতেছে যে প্রতি সপ্তাহে সোমবার সন্ধ্যার অফিসে আসিবেন এবং সপ্তাহিক চাঁদা ঠিকমত দিতে হইবে, সজ্জের আইন মানিতে হইবে, এই কার্ড না থাকিলে বাড়তি পয়সা পাইবেন না।

দর্জি সঙ্ঘ—

সেক্রেটারীর স্বাক্ষর

After strike period was over, the system of work in *darjisamaj* began to change. Formerly, there was no electricity in *dorji mahallas*, *dorjjs* used to run *selaikol* right from early morning upto the sunset. The electricity reached the houses since 1965. *Ustagars* learnt a lesson from the strike. They tried to avoid the hazzards of labour problem by introducing piece-rate system in a big way. And the *dorjjs* started to work from 6 A.M. to 10 P.M. for a sizable earning.

Another distinct feature was seen from this period, particularly since 1970s, outside labourers from Medinipur, Murshidabad and other districts rushed to Metiabruz for jobs in the garment industry. They joined in groups in different *dahlizs* in different settlements. Local *dorjjs* faced a competition.

In 1970s there was a new development of garment industry. Export oriented units were came into being in and around Kolkata. Businessmen from *Marwari* community mainly owned these units. Some of the units were Magnum Export, Stitch Art, Artwork, Siddhartha Apparels, Vinar, Raymond, etc. Some of the young businessmen from the established *ustagar* families joined with these export units. They took the stitching contracts. In this way, they gathered ideas of modernization from these industries.

In export jobs the erstwhile holistic labour had been split up into detailed labour, each small step involving a particular machine. In Metiabruz-Maheshtola, the *ustagars*, especially the bigger ones, started to

use newer machines for specific purpose, like interlocking, gazing, embroidery, pico-stitching, rib cutting since 1980s.

The skill involved in complete garment manufacture, especially the traditional artisan skill was partly killed by more detailed division of labour and partly by the machines, which had taken it on to itself. In the vast *dorjisamaj* of Metiabruz-Maheshtola there are separate segments of specific garment items in separate settlements (*para*) of the zone. It was developed by tradition. Ladies and children items are manufactured in Bartala, Rajabagan, and Badartola. Formerly blouses were stitched in this part. The shirts and punjabees are stitched in Santoshpur, Badamtola. The jean items and fading of jeans by acid-wash was started initially in Chatta. Later acid-cleaning units were erected in other parts of this garment-zone.

From 1980s, with the development of local *haats* in a big way and particularly after the establishment of *Jabbar Haat* in the heart of Metiabruz at Bartola, *dorjishilpa* was advanced in a big way. Thereafter, the centre of business was largely shifted from Howrah *Mangalhaat*, the largest wholesale readymade garment market in Asia, to the newly built *haats* of Metiabruz. Until sixties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century *dorjis* were generally poor artisans. There were a handful of rich *ustagar* families, who managed to get tender orders. From the seventies a class of petty *ustagars* evolved in this region. From a rough estimate given by the Secretary of WBTU and the MLA of Maheshtola, Mursalin Molla, it is found that, at present, out of the total garment-makers 10% are big *ustagars*, 70% middle or *petty ustagars*, 10% small *ustagars* and 10% local *dorjis*. But the manufacturing jobs are now done mostly by outside *dorjis*.

A typical small or *petty ustagar*, as the head of a household, conducts the manufacturing and business himself and/or by the members of the household at home within the village in the rural areas and only within the precincts of the home in case of urban areas. The concentration of the household workers in the localities of *dorjipara* can be estimated from the percentage of the household workers in Table: 3.

The involvement of women in the labour process of garment making could be understood from the percentage of female household workers in ward nos. 138, 139, 140, 141 of KMC and in Chatta Kalikapur of Maheshtola. The figures actually represent the women-workers of the garment making families. In Chatta Kalikapur Hindu women work in *kaam dholai* – acid-wash – and other jobs of jeans items. In many Muslim Bengalee families of Metiabruz and Maheshtola, women still do not run sewing machines. But they take part in finishing jobs. In most of the families housewives and girls cook the foods and manage other household affairs, not only for the male-members of the family, but also for the outside *karigars* of the *dahliz*.

Table: 3

Serial No.	District/Area/Ward	Percentage of household workers to the total (Main + Marginal) workers		
		Male	Female	Persons
1	Ward No. 138, KMC	17.05	21.79	17.35
2	Ward No. 139, KMC	50.03	58.82	50.55
3	Ward No. 140, KMC	59.40	42.76	58.28
4	Ward No. 141, KMC	30.13	46.88	32.26
5	Kolkata district	2.81	4.41	3.06
6	Maheshtola, MM	9.86	8.35	9.71
7	24 PGS (S) district	4.39	13.94	6.07
8	Chatta Kalikapur	32.31	50.44	34.46

Owing to the changes in labour processes and co-existence of parallel systems of manufacturing, we see various forms of production organization in this industry. In one of the systems, we see cutting, stitching, interlocking, machine-embroidery and finishing in the same *dahliz*. In this form, sometime *ustagars* employ *karigars* on daily or weekly basis. But another system is also typical among the *ustagars*, who distribute jobs of specific items after cutting, to small and *petty ustagars*. The later work upon the part-jobs in their own houses or *dahlizs*, using their own machines and tools. This system of contracting and sub-contracting is usually done on piece-rate basis. The *petty ustagars* of Metiabruz-Maheshtola and also from its adjacent parts collect dozens of cut-items and they themselves employ or contract *dorjis* for stitching and other jobs in their own *mahallah* and villages. With the development of local business centre, a layer of self-employed independent *ustagars* is also appeared in this zone. They act both as an entrepreneur and a *karigar*. So, these forms of production organization operate parallelly depending upon the suitability of specific garment-items and local convenience.

Thus we see a differentiation of work patterns and labour processes in this zone of garment industry. The categories vary from item to item, *para* to *para* and *dahliz* to *dahliz* – depending upon capital investment, number of able members within the families and other factors.

### **3. Accumulation of Capital**

The skilled *dorjis* developed their crafts mainly through British patronization in the early stage. Afterwards we find renowned *ustagar* families, who worked for tender jobs, bulk orders of war contracts and orders from European and Indian garment companies in contract.

From our oral history recording descriptions, we find one Md. Hasem Mollah, who had a contract of waterproof items of renowned Bengalee concern Duckback. In the post-independence period his sons also worked for Railway and Port Commissioners' tender-jobs in sub-contract. In this way there was a primary accumulation of capital and gathering of a traditional knowledge for doing the business independently.

Another feature was seen in the early period. Poor *dorjis* from Metiabruz used to go by ship to Burma, Singapore and Pinang (Malay), who earned both skill and money required for an independent business to start.

In a fiction '*Diner Kutir*' of Md. Belayet Hossain we find one Golam Rahman, a poor *dorji*. He fled from his home all of a sudden. His wife Rahima was pregnant at that time. Rahima had her two children Abdul Gani and Sakhina and also the old mother-in-law Sayeeda in her family. They all starved due to the sudden absence of the only earning member Golam Rahman. The cruel landlord Rayhan Ali forced them to leave the rooms, as Rahima became defaulter of rents for the rooms. After several months, Golam Rahman returned to the village. He was in Singapore and came back with lot of money, sewing machine, many articles and two chests. He bought a piece of land and started to work as a *dorji* in his native village.

From the fiction's narrative, we can guess the feature of this kind of primary accumulation of capital for independent garment business.

Subsequently some of these craftsmen turned to readymade garment making. The latter trade developed due to the ever-expanding market in the line and was sustained by financial interest of *Marwari* community.

#### **4. Raw Materials**

The *Marwari* financiers as well as cloth-trades usually supply *dorjisamaj* with cloths and other requisite materials for sewing readymade garments. The traders of *Marwari* community purchase the cloths mainly from the mills of Mumbai and Surat. The *dorjis* purchase the materials from them in both cash and credit. The rate of price is, for instance, 50 paise more for credit purchase. *Dorjis* maintain good relationship with the *Marwari* traders by taking them as friends in emergency. Both the communities are found to invite each other in their social ceremonies and religious festivals.

Initially *dorjis* and *ustagars* used to go to Burrabazar of Kolkata for purchasing cloths and other raw materials. Later, since the later half of 1970s, owing to increase of demands of cloths and other raw materials in Metiabruz-Mahehtola *Marwari* cloth traders opened a large number of shops in Metiabruz. Local *dorjisamaj* helped them to do business in Metiabruz. It was also advantageous for *dorjis* and *ustagars* to collect *Kancha kapad* and other materials from their own locality.

It is also worth mentioning that the *Marwari* wholesalers often indulge in forward trading and advance money to the tailors for the supply of readymade garments on some future date.

There are also some Marwari garment enterprises, which operate in export as well as domestic markets. The small and petty *ustagars* and independent *dorjis* also work for them in sub-contract. They supply the *thaans* for the orders. *Ustagars* and *dorjis* work in their own machines with the threads to purchase at their own cost.

## 5. Ancillaries

Besides the main raw material of cloths, there are numerous ancillary materials and productions required for the manufacturing of garments. Several thousands of people of different communities of Metiabruz engaged themselves in the businesses and jobs of ancillary items. A list of ancillary products and jobs:

Table: 4

Serial No.	Product /Job	Manufacturing center	Price range	Market
1.	Sewing machine	Ludhiana and Delhi	Rs. 1500- Rs.2000	Metiabruz and Kolkata
2.	Embroidery machine	Ludhiana and Delhi	Rs.2000- Rs.2500	Metiabruz and Kolkata
3.	Interlock machine	Ludhiana and Delhi	Rs.2000- Rs.3000	Metiabruz and Kolkata
4.	Pico machine	Delhi	Rs.15,000- Rs.20,000	Metiabruz and Kolkata
5.	Button hole machine	Delhi	Rs.25,000- Rs.30,000	Metiabruz and Kolkata
6.	Gazing machine	Delhi	Rs.15,000- Rs.20,000	Metiabruz and Kolkata
7.	Scissors	Metiabruz	Rs.250- Rs.500	Metiabruz
8.	Threads (stitching)	—	Rs.2-Rs.8 per reel	Metiabruz and Burrabazar
9.	Threads (embroidary and interlock)	—	Rs.18- Rs.36 per reel	Metiabruz and Burrabazar
10.	Elastic	Howrah	Rs.25- Rs.50	Metiabruz and

				Burrabazar
11.	Polythene packets	Metiabruz	Rs.60- Rs.80 per kg	Metiabruz
12.	Button,Hook, zipper,pocket clothes,lining clothes etc.	—	—	Metiabruz
13.	Wooden table and bench	Metiabruz	—	Metiabruz
14.	Silk screen printing	Metiabruz	—	Metiabruz
15.	Box and cartoons	Rajabajar	Rs.3-Rs.12 per piece	Metiabruz

## 6. Business

From an official record it was found that some Puline Dan and Bankim Dan established *Manglahaat* of Howrah in 1939 on a land of 8.5 bighas. Wholesale garment traders from all over India (initially from all the states of eastern India) used to assemble there on every Tuesday for buying garments, specially the cheaper varieties used by village and suburb population. In the last seven decades it was expanded tremendously.

In 1970s, some information of *Manglahaat* was gathered from a marketing officer of that period. It was found<sup>1</sup>:

Table: 5

Sl. No.	SELLERS	Percentage
1.	Bengalee Muslims from Metiabruz	80%
2.	Bengalee Hindus (who are mainly from East Bengal, now Bangladesh)	15%
3.	From Bihar and Uttar Pradesh	5%
PURCHASERS		
1.	From West Bengal (Mainly the shop-keepers from Kolkata and its suburbs)	35%
2.	From Assam (Mainly <i>Marwari</i> merchants)	25%

<sup>1</sup> See *Aspects of Society and Culture in Calcutta* edited by M.K.A.Siddique, Antropological Survey of India, G.O.I., published in July 1982.



3.	From Bihar (Mainly from Katihar)	20%
4.	From Orissa (Oriyas and <i>Marwaris</i> )	15%
5.	From Uttar Pradesh	5%

The figures presented in this Table speak of the continued predominance of the Metiabruz *ustagars* and *dorjis* in the readymade garment trade and also of the importance of the craft as a source of supplying its products to the whole of eastern India and beyond up to 1970s.

In *Manglahaat*, there are a number of big sheds very close to each other. The oldest shed had 2200 stalls for selling garments and it was the biggest one. In 1984, there was an accident in *Manglahaat* and a portion was burnt. Later there were new erections of the *haat*. Many *ustagars* of Metiabruz hold permanent stalls in the *haat*. But the total no. (roughly 10,000 in 1970s) of permanent stalls was not sufficient to accommodate the huge number of readymade garment sellers attending the *haat* regularly. The *dorjis* and *ustagars* who could not have a permanent stall within the *haat* are found to sell their products by occupying spaces in footpaths close to the court premises, hospital, District Magistrate's Banglow, Districts main post-office and the Howrah overbridge towards Howrah Railway Station.

In the 1970s, Metiabruz-Maheshtola garment traders occupied 80% of the rented stalls of *Manglahaat*. They also used to go to other *haats* of kolkata, viz., the *Harishahaat* of North Kolkata on Saturdays, *Chetlahaat* of South Kolkata on Wednesdays.

But since 1970s a new effort was seen to establish market of readymade garments in Metiabruz. With the expansion of the business and due to hazards faced by the garment-makers to go a long way to *Howrahhaat* for selling their products, they tried to attract the customers in their own place. It was succeeded in 1984 with the establishment of *Jabbarhaat* in the heart of *Dorjisamaj* in Bartola. Finally they succeeded in attracting all India customers to *Jabbarhaat* in Sundays. Later on, other *haats*, viz., *VIP haat*, *ABM haat*, and in total about 20 new *haats*, comprising about twelve thousand stalls, have been established in Metiabruz for a full-scale business of readymade garments.

Nowadays, about 75% of the total business of Metiabruz-Maheshtola is done from Metiabruz and 25% is done from *Howrahhaat*.<sup>1</sup>

Recently during a business strike by traders in Kolkata, the garment traders gave a statement in the newspaper (*Anandabazar*, dated 25<sup>th</sup> April, 2005), that due to closing the shops of Metiabruz *haats* for a day, the business of minimum Rs. 15 crores is lost. This is an approximate figure.

<sup>1</sup> Statement of Md. Zakiruddin Fakir, see Summaries of Interviews, page 39.

The business varies from slack to peak seasons. But from this we can guess the size of this business operated from Metiabruz.

## **7. Rates and Remuneration**

The pattern of earning of a *dorji* changed with the evolution *dorjishilpa* and the related changes in the labour processes.

From an oral description of a traditional *dorji* Moinuddin Purokait, age 85, it is known that he started to work in *dahliz* from his childhood. Due to sudden death of his father, he had to earn for the family. He used to stitch blouses for 6 days in the week. On Tuesday he used to walk a long way upto 28 no. Police station with *gantri* of dozens of blouses upon his shoulder and then he took bus for Howrah *haat*. The *hapta* was Rs. 50 to Rs.100 and sometimes there was no sale, especially during the slack seasons.

Upto 1960s, the *dorjis* were poor in general, except a handful of rich *ustagars*. The *ustagari* with a regular employment of 2, 3 or more *dorjis* was started generally from 1970s.

Before introduction of piece-rate system, a machine man was paid Rs. 3 to 4 for a daily work from 7 A.M. to 6 P.M. with an interval of 1 hour at noon. He was given foods three times a day from *ustagars* kitchen. *Ustagar* himself was a cutter. He also paid 4 to 8 annas (16 annas = 1 rupee) to hatwalas for fixing hooks, buttons and finishing jobs of a dozen garments. They were paid weekly on Wednesday after the selling of the items in *Manglahaat* on Tuesday.

Later in 1970s, in piece-rate system, a machine man had to work from 8 A.M. until 10 P.M. or more, especially in peak season. In contract service a machine man always tried to work fast to increase his daily income for which he would work also extra hours according to his ability and availability of work. In contract service a machine man usually earned Rs.5 to Rs. 8 per dozen in normal seasons. In case of readymade garment sewers the contract was in the form of a fixed rate for sewing per dozen of garments. The rate of which again varied according to the type of garments to be prepared by him:

1. For sewing one dozen of half pants ... Rs. 1.50 to Rs. 2.  
A machine man had a capacity of stitching 6 to 4 dozens a day.
2. For sewing one dozen of full pants ... Rs. 3 to Rs. 4.  
A machine man had a capacity of making 4 to 2.5 dozens a day.
3. For sewing one dozen of baby frocks ... Rs. 1.25 to Rs. 3.  
A machine man had a capacity of making 6 to 2.5 dozens a day.

A *hathwala* would make:

1. 6 to 4 dozens of half pants per day for a remuneration of Re. 1 to Rs. 1.50 a dozen.
2. 4 to 2.5 dozens of full pants per day for a remuneration of Rs. 1.50 to Rs. 2.50 a dozen.
3. 6 to 2.5 dozens of baby frock per day for a remuneration of 0.75 p to Rs. 2 a dozen.

Usual ratio of income between a *kolwala* and a *hathwala* was 10:6. There would be one or more *matjis* who played the most vital role in the industry, because it was they who kept themselves abreast of changing fashions. The *matjis* were in most of the cases the designers of the garments, which were to be done on the basis of some ideas. *Matjis* could earn Rs. 6 to Rs. 20 per day according to his efficiency in cutting and designing of garments.

In some cases, especially for ladies and children items the designs are made by the pattern makers in hardboard formats. Nowadays, for a normal twelve hours work in a day, the pattern makers, cutters and highly skilled *dorjis* earn Rs. 12.50 per hour on average. Whereas the *dorjis* with average skill earn Rs. 10 per hour; the *novish* earn Rs. 5 per hour; *chutle* and the helpers earn Rs. 100 to 400 per month. This is an approximate figure of the earnings whether the *dorjis* work in piece-rate, daily, weekly or monthly-rated systems.

The earnings still vary from settlement to settlement, item to item and also from slack season to peak season. From January to the middle of August is dull season for garment industry. Rainy season from June to middle of August is dullest. The season is revived and reached a peak before Durga puja, Kali puja and Id-ul-fitr. The all India customers also rush to Metiabruz during the regional festivals, like Onam, Diwali, Chhatpuja. Still today the outside *dorjis* from adjacent villages and other districts work here for 8 to 9 months and stayed in their homeplace as unemployed or in cultivation for 3 to 4 months of the year.

But from 1980s, owing to the gathering of all Indian customers in Metiabruz, the fluctuations and irregularities in the jobs and earning-rates are minimised to a large extent, at least for some of the items.

In average, nowadays, a *dorji* of Metiabruz-Maheshtola zone earns Rs. 100 per day for all kind of jobs. The earning reduces from Rs. 20 to Rs. 40 in the distant and remote villages outside Metiabruz and Maheshtola (MM), where a huge sub-contracting of job from Metiabruz-Maheshtola has been developed in the last two decades.

The *hapta* or weekly payment of the *karigars* is done usually on Wednesdays. This practice is going on since last sixty years. The business

was started from *Manglahaat* of Howrah. *Ustagars* of the whole region worked in their *dahliz* for *five* days a week from Thursday to Monday. They went to *Manglahaat* on Tuesday for selling their products. The next day, Wednesday was the payday as well as the weekly off day. Later on, a lion-share of the business was shifted to the *haats* of Metiabruz. Sunday is the day of business there. But, till now, Wednesday remained the day of payment and rest for the garment makers.

## **8. Trade union**

Generally, the industry was grown out of household labour. The role of the families is still important today for flourishing of the business of small-scale manufacturers, who are the majority among garment-makers. But the employment of *karigars* from the neighbourhood was also started before 1950s. At that time *dorjis* were very poor. There was a handful of rich *ustagars*. An entrepreneur-worker relation was also evolved in the 1950s. The communists organized the tailors in a union West Bengal Tailors Union in 1955. We found from a narrative of the Secretary of WBTU, that, in a day of that period about fifteen thousand *dorjis* walked in a rally and realized a hundred rupees artisan loan from the state government.

The contradiction of *dorjis* with *ustagars* reached a peak in the 1960s, when the *ustagars* slashed down the rate of payment of the *dorjis* unilaterally. The *karigars* from all the pockets responded unanimously in a strike call by one Islamuddin Kolwala. The strikers formulated the demands for wage-rates, bonus and tried to negotiate with the *ustagars*. They formed a union *Sadharantantri Dorji Sangha*. But both the strike and its organization fizzled out within a short time.

Later on, owing to the introduction of piece-rate system by the *ustagars* and influx of outsiders in large number to work as *karigars*, the collective representation of the local *dorjis* became weak. They mostly tried to develop themselves as independent manufacturers using their family-labour and small assets, like, ornaments, land at their disposal. Marwari traders, who opened shops in Metiabruz in the later period, also helped to establish the business of this section of new small and *petty ustagars* by supplying cloths in credit.

At present, WBTU is the only trade union of the garment-makers, who represent both the *dorjis* and *ustagars*. But the activity of this trade union is nominally felt in this industry. There is class exploitation, but it remains hidden and blunt under the cover of community and family relations.

## V. COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

The origin of the community was a village community based on agricultural occupations. The remnants of agricultural activities are still visible in some parts of this zone. The stitching occupation was originated as a supplementary occupation. With the development of capitalism and due to the development of the urge of the people within the community to earn money, the stitching occupation took the shape of a *shilpa* (industry) in the last one hundred years. The extension of market economy, in the villages and remote places, was acted as a boost, for the readymade garment business of this Metiabruz-Maheshtola locality.

Islam is the *dharma* of the community at large. In an oral narrative a schoolteacher Sekh Jahangir Ahmed a Hadis was referred, in which the prophet told that out of all livelihoods, 90% is in business and 10% in service. In Middle East many great religious personalities engaged themselves in garment and cloth trades. It is therefore termed as an occupation *Habibullah*. *Habibullah* means a friend of god. So this occupation is god's friendly occupation.

However, the occupation of garment making earned a prestige among the community and outside.

In academic education the Muslim Bengalee community is lagging behind Hindus and other communities of Metiabruz. Civil society and its values are still weak within the community. By tradition they have a bondage and tie of the community. They have a practice of marriage within the community, sometimes within closed relatives. From the point of view of civil society it is criticised as a narrow confinement. But such characteristics of the community helped the families to develop their businesses. Since a long period the business generally flourished in bigger families with the presence of a good number of young able persons in the same family.

In one of the oral descriptions we find a family of six brothers. In the early stage, the eldest brother worked hard in a *selaikal*. He saved substantial amount of money and then started a business of laces purchased in a lot from Burrabazar. The business yielded good result. Thereafter the joint garment manufacturing of six brothers became a reputed brand of Metiabruz. Later the brothers became separate with separate businesses.<sup>1</sup>

In another instance, as we find in an article written by Sarfuddin Mallick, the story of Subid Ali Mollah, the great businessman of Chatta, has been told. Subid Ali was an ordinary *dorji* in his early life in a *dahliz* of an ustagar Rahman Mondal of Chalkipara. The appearance and ability of Subid pleased Rahman Mondal. Rahman Mondal proposed Subid's father Ezahar Ali to marry Subid with his daughter Asia. The next part of the story is a

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<sup>1</sup> See the original text of the Interview of Sekh Jahangir Ahmed.

success story of Subid Ali in garment business by virtue of hard work and family assistance. In 1942 Subid Ali established a big school in Chatta by the inspiration he got from Aligarh University.

The first generation of renowned *ustagars*, like Subid Ali Mollah, had a concern for the literacy and character building of Muslim Bengalees. It was reflected in local literatures. In the fiction *Milan Kutir* we read a dialogue between two friends Rostam and Iskander. Iskander asked Rostam: Do you say why the names of the Musalmaans in these villages are like Naran, Haran, Tinkare, and Shyam? They should have Islamic names. How one could understand that Naran is coming from Sayeed family; Haran is the son of a Sekh; Shyam is a Mollah? This is simply the instance of ignorance, illiteracy.

Actually we heard from some of the interviewees that the Muslim Bengalees had been converted from the lower castes of Hindus about six to seven generations ago. They had seen the facts in their family land deeds<sup>1</sup>. However, two aspects are noticed from the facts: an urge for character building within the community and also an urge to work for the common good of the community.

From 1940s the leaders of the community started to take interest in national politics. We found from a description that Md. Hasem Mollah of famous Mollah family had a personal contact with Mahatma Gandhi. His nephew Fajle Azim Mollah became a MLA of Congress from the Garden Reach constituency.

The left politics also gained a ground among the poor *dorjis* of Maheshtola and Metiabruz. From a short description of Kali Bhandari, the present Chairman of MM, it is found that the famous Communist leader Muzaffar Ahmed personally took an endeavour to build up trade union among the *dorjis*. The outcome was the establishment of the WBTU in 1955. The union remained more or less active in the first two decades.

From 1980s, due to the emergence of a large number of petty and small *ustagars* among the *dorjisamaj*, a typical middle class urban culture is evolving within the community. This phenomenon moulded the traditional values and cultural practices. Among the rich *ustagars*, we see a trend of going to Mecca for *Haj*. In the marriage ceremonies, we see feasts and other costly affairs replacing the traditional simplistic rituals and practices.

For instance, we find in one of the oral narratives, a story of *Panchini*. Previously it was a simple occasion of final settlement of marriage between would be bride and bridegroom's parents. Later it took the shape of an expensive gift sharing and feast of hundreds of the relatives. These changed practices became a burden upon the lower strata of the community.

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<sup>1</sup> See Summaries of Interviews of Md. Moktar Hossain Molla in Annexure 2, page 47.

The confinement of Muslim Bengalees through generations in the ghettos compelled them to grasp such an occupation and inspired them to develop the industry in their own style. This feature is seen in other parts of the world also. From a report of ILO, “The clothing Industry in the world Economy”, we see the garment business of the immigrants and the minorities in Paris, London and New York. In Chinatown of New York, we see a rise of the Chinese immigrant garment entrepreneurs and workers. In Paris, we see the Turkish garment makers. In all these cases, the community transformed the hazards of confinement into strength of collective effort to build up an industry.

A community-consciousness and commitment towards the whole community is an inbuilt characteristic of the community members. But, due to the growing tendency of profit maximization among the successful manufacturers of the community, an aberration is also noticed among the community. We have noticed two isolated features in this context. Firstly, a number of dyeing and bleaching units of acid wash were developed initially in Chatta Kalikapura and in a later period in Metiabruz. West Bengal Pollution Control Board has issued shifting order to some of the entrepreneurs for creating environmental hazards in the surrounding areas. But the issue remained unresolved.

Another feature was brought to our notice by one interviewee, Md. Jakiruddin Fakir, a businessman, that some of the big *ustagars* are taking interest in real estate business and of investing in other industries. The concern, as we understood, for the community at large and also for the *dorjishilpa* is gradually shifting in the case of such rich strata of *ustagars*, who are more eager for their profit maximization.

## VI. CONCLUSION

From a brief outline history of tailoring occupation in Metiabruz-Maheshtola, a suburb of Kolkata, we see how an informal sector grew out of a community life as well as a process of industrialization of our country in general and an important industrial zone of West Bengal in particular.

No doubt that the global movement of capital has an influence upon every stage of development of this community-based garment industry. But, till now, the influence is mostly indirect.

The direct connection of global textile and garment industry and market is so far nominal in this zone of activities. The tension centering the global textile quotas and export market facilities is so far nominally felt among this garment-making community. We learnt about a few big merchants of this zone, who have some indirect connection with the export garment businesses. From the report of Apparel Export Promotion Council, it is found, though the garment industry contributes over 16% of the national foreign exchange earnings, the other cities, like, Mumbai, Delhi, Noida and Chennai are the major centres of garment industry for the export and global market. Kolkata is among the less important centres for exports and global garment business till now. In 1984, the then Chief Minister Jyoti Basu erected the foundation stone of a future readymade garment complex in Santoshpur. But no further progress is noticed in this respect.

Actually, inspite of the substantial growth of Indian apparel export over the last 15 years, the growth is still much slower than China and even it is behind Thailand and Indonesia. From a figure of 1997, it is seen that only one-fourth of India's total apparel output was exported, while three-fourth was consumed domestically.<sup>1</sup> It is a weakness of Indian apparel and garment production in terms of global business. But it created a space for the vast layer of domestic producers and also for the large strata of poor customers.

The *dorjisamaj* and the garment manufacturers of Metiabruz-Maheshtala are striving mostly for the huge domestic market of this country. Traditionally they have developed themselves for manufacturing cheaper varieties with mediocre finishing. When they faced competition from Mumbai and other cities, for quality products and newer designs, for an all-Indian market, they reached the markets of Bandra, Dadar of Mubai in search of latest design samples. The pattern makers of Metiabruz made duplicates of those samples and the *ustagars* manufactured similar products<sup>2</sup>. They started to sale the same in cheaper prices to the customers of other states. The customers also started to take advantage of such competitive market. They issue *rukka* in white papers for deferring payments of the sold

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<sup>1</sup> See Apparel Sector in *India – From emerging to surging*, a study of Mckinsey Global Institute (2001).



products. They also introduced in the *haats* of Metiabruz a custom of a *baaj* upto 10%, i.e., a reduction of payment upto 10% upon every purchase from the stalls of the *haats*. These things became a real burden for the existence of small and petty *ustagars*. They usually run the business using their own labour and with marginal rates of profit. In this condition, at every moment about 25% of the *ustagars* in the lower strata, are losing their trader status and thus slipped into the status of an ordinary *karigar*<sup>1</sup>. But the uppermost strata are overcoming the burden by lowering the costs of production and expanding the total volume of production by various newer means.

On the other hand, owing to the increase in number of the workers losing their jobs by lockouts and closures of some important units of this industrial zone, the garment industry is attracting people from other communities of the region. A large number of Muslim Urdu speaking families of the region involved themselves in embroidery and other jobs connected with this industry in the last two decades. The Hindu Bengalee families in small numbers also involved in job works of this industry. Another feature is the coming of Muslim Bengalee women in running *selaikols*, though it is still absent in many urban settlements of the *dorjisamaj*.

Garden Reach-Metiabruz is an important industrial belt of West Bengal. But here the rights and benefits enjoyed by the workers vary largely, not only from sector to sector – i.e. formal-informal or organized-unorganized, but disparities are seen even within organized sector industries. Nowadays, the income of a *dorji* is somehow better than a contract or *badli* worker of a modern factory or a contract security guard. The working condition is not up to the mark for a *dorji* in a *dahliz*. But it should be judged in isolation from the overall living condition of Metiabruz-Maheshtola. The actual condition could not be fully assessed from the official or census data. The whole region is thickly populated with a lack of adequate sewage system leading to environmental pollution and unhygienic condition in the streets, lanes and the dwelling places. Thousands of *dorjis* and garment makers work in this environment. Roads and traffic system is also largely inadequate for the smooth operation of this huge business.

In the last two decades, we saw a tremendous expansion of the business centering Metiabruz. Thousands of unemployed youth and jobless workers came and joined in different levels of this business. Owing to the increase in competition, there is a fall in the profitability of the business,

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<sup>1</sup> A poorer section of *dorjipara* collect *tukra* – the waste pieces of clothes -- from the *dahlizs* and sell those pieces in the *Tukrapatti* in every Sunday and Wednesday morning. Another section of people buys those *tukras* and stitches the babies' items like *penyfrock*, *tapefrock* and *ijer* in their own machines. They themselves sell those items door to door in the localities of Kolkata. Still smaller pieces of scraps of the cloths are collected and sent in large jute bags to the Bandhghat of Salkia, Howrah. These scraps are used for making asbestos, boards, threads, cheaper variety of blankets, etc.

especially for the small entrepreneurs. So, the present generation of ustagars is not so hopeful about the future of this traditional business.

In this way in 21<sup>st</sup> century the Metiabruz-Maheshtola is changing itself from within and is preparing the objective ground for fulfilling the conditions of Capital and present day globalization in a roundabout way. However, in spite of its community-based traditional character, Metiabruz-Maheshtola's garment industry is serving as a source of livelihood for the unemployed strata of different communities of people and is also fulfilling the demand of ordinary quality garments for the poor and low-income group population of West Bengal and other states.

## ANNEXURE 1

### Visit to Nandigram

We started for Nandigram at 1.35 P.M. on 25 February 2005 by a bus *Pirbaba* of the regular bus service introduced recently from Akra Fatak of Metiabruz. Nandigram is situated in Tamluk sub-division of Medinipur district, at a distance of about 140 KM from Metiabruz. Most of the passengers were the teenager boys of different villages of Nandigram working as *karigars* in the *darjishilpa* of Metiabruz.

It was a three hour journey and we reached Nandigram bus stand at 5.20 P.M. From there we arrived at the village Nainan in 45 minutes by a rickshaw van. We stayed one night in the house of Sekh Abdus Samad in Nainan. He is a dorji working in Metiabruz. His elder brother is working in the garment industry in Mumbai. His next younger brother is a *phuler karigar* in Metiabruz. The youngest brother is the first member in their family, who is appearing for the final examination of the *madarasa*. His grandfather had about 6-7 *bighas* of farming land. But he also worked in Metiabruz as a *dorji*.

About 99% of the able men of Nainan work in Metiabruz's *darjishilpa*. Most of them came to the village in this time specially for attending a religious gathering *waaz* in the last night. Like Nainan most of the men from the Muslim-inhabited villages, viz., Samsabad, Daudpur, Kendamari, Chowringhee of Nandigram thana used to go to Metiabruz for generations. In Nainan the quantity of land in the hand of Muslim families is not more than one-acre. There are landless families in the village. But Muslims do not usually engage themselves in agricultural activities. The agricultural labours and small traders are usually from Hindu-inhabited villages of Nandigram.

From the master of a Junior High School it was known that most of the boys leave the school from classes V to VIII. But the girls continue their study. Boys generally have to earn for the family and they used to go to the *dahlizs* of Metiabruz in their childhood and started to train themselves as future *karigars* by joining as small errands, locally called *Chutle*.

### Visit to Sonai

We went to Sonai on 2 April 2005. Actually it is a place, which was engulfed into the industrial belt of Hide Road long ago. We started our visit from the junction of Circular Garden Reach Road and Hide Road. We discovered Sonai Post Office by the side of the closed unit of MMC, a

famous engineering factory of once upon a time. On the other side of the main road we found Sonai Kalibari. We met Raneshacharya in the temple. He narrated us the brief history of the temple. It was a forestland in the proximity of Bhagirathi Ganganadi (river) where the brother of famous Raghu dacoit, Golaknath erected a temple of goddess Kali in *Bangabda* 1140.

By a rough calculation we can guess the establishment of a village settlement here, named Sonai, about 270 years ago. We also found a scattered slum area recognized by local shopkeepers as Sonai bustee. There we noticed a small *mazar*. But at present the slum dwellers around the *mazar* are all non-Muslim Hindi-speaking people.

In Metiabruz we found a number of Muslim Bengalee-speaking families, who told us that their forefathers migrated from Sonai.

### Visit to Khanberia

We went to Khanberia on 10 April 2005. It was a trip of one and a half-hour from Metiabruz. Uttar Khanberia is a Muslim-majority village within Ashuti, Panchayet no.1. The northern, central and southern settlements cover about 3 KM area. There are about 1600 families in Uttar Khanberia. 90% of the families are *dorjis* by occupation. The peasant families are not more than five in number with the maximum land holding of 20 to 25 bighas. But generally most of the families hold 10 to 12 katthas. Some of the families have just the homestead. The cultivation became problematic due to lack of adequate water since last 25 to 30 years. The villagers started to engage themselves in readymade garment making. In earlier time a number of men from Khanberia used to work in the tailoring shops in different parts of Kolkata. Kalam Dresses of Metiabruz started the present pattern of piece-rate job contracts, about 28 years ago. Then came *Tutul Dresses, Dynax*. Now about 50 big *ustagars* of Metiabruz are sending jobs to the petty *ustagars* of Khanberia, numbering about 150. Khanberia has a specialty of making readymade pants.

The poor *dorjis* usually work for 10 to 12 hours daily and engage the whole family for earning Rs. 600 to 700 per week. Petty *ustagars* earn a little more, about Rs. 1000 per week on an average. But they have to bear the cost of threads and the machines with its maintenance expenses.

Big manufacturers of Metiabruz-Maheshtola operate this system of contracts also in Mahisgoat, Amtola, Usti upto Basirhat. The thaans of clothes are sent to the villages by cycles, rickshaws and vans and for further distant places by matador vans.

### Visit to Tukrapatti

Tukrapatti is a *haat* of scrap pieces of clothes of different sizes situated in front of Bangalibazar of Metiabruz. The vendors arranged their collection on the footpath and on the closed permanent stalls of the regular market from 5 A.M. in the morning on every Wednesday and Sunday. The sale of *tukras* continues upto 8 to 9 A.M. and from 9 A.M. the regular market activities are started. *Tukra* sellers collect *tukras* from the *dahlizs* round the week. The customers are mainly poor self-employed *darjis*, who stitch the baby's items like tapefrock, penifrock, ijer (pair of loose trousers) in their own machine and sale as hawkers door to door in the localities.

We reached the spot at about 7.30 A.M. and talked with several vendors and customers. There are also some female customers, collecting *tukras* for their own stitching purposes. We found an information written at the top of the entrance: Tukrapatty, Established in 1886, B73 Tukrapatty, Garden Reach Road.

### Visit to Chingripota

We visited to Chingripota on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2005. It was a Sunday morning. Chingripota is a village of Budge-Budge in the proximity of Maheshtola P.S. People know Chingripota for its fireworks. But the main occupation of 90% villagers is the re-making of half and full pants from abandoned terycotton pants. We entered the village from Balarampur side of MM, where the *haat* of the old pants (used trousers) is situated. *Gants* (bales) of old pants from Krishnanagar of Nadia and other places of 24 PGS(N) are brought to this *haat* on every Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday. Small *ustagars* with a few hundred rupees capital usually come here from villages of Chingripota, Balarampur, Santoshpur, Atmarampur and Nandarampur of Budge-Budge and Maheshtola to purchase *gants* of old pants.

In the village, the *ustagars* distribute the old pants to the women of their families and the neighbours for cutting the stitches. Women and children of several families engage themselves in this job. After unstitching the pants into pieces, they wash the pieces with detergent and arrowroot. Then after drying the pieces in the sun, they iron those pieces. The rate for the whole operation is Rs. 1.30 per pant. The pieces became ready for the next operation, i.e. cutting of the pieces for new full and half pants of different sizes. Then the pieces are stitched. These jobs are done by the *ustagar* himself, his family members or neighbours. The small broken parts or holes in the pieces are mended by embroidery stitching. A bird, flower or any other design is stitched in the pants, which looks like a logo.

The cutter is paid Rs. 1.00 to 1.10 for a full pant and the rate is half for the half pants. The machineman is paid Rs. 2.00 to 2.50 for a pant. He himself purchases the threads used and pays the *chukuiwala* for the finishing jobs. The earning of the men and women workers vary from Rs. 50 to 70 for a day's labour, if they get the jobs. In the process a whole family – from children to the parents – labour for bare subsistence.

This job with the old pants was started about thirty to thirty-five years ago. In earlier days there was workers of Bata Shoe Company of Batanagar and Budge-Budge Jute Mill in Chingripota and adjacent villages. But due to downsizing of the mills and factories and absence of new recruitment, villagers are compelled more and more to engage them in the job of old pant.

## ANNEXURE 2

### Summaries of Interviews

**NAME : Moinuddin Purokait**

**AGE : 85 SEX: Male**

**PLACE : Hajiratan, Akra Road**

**Date : 14.8.2004 & 9.8.2004**

My father died when I was just 6 years old. I was a student of class three standard at Bartala Madrasa. Due to extreme poverty I had to start working to maintain our family comprising my mother, two younger brothers and two sisters. My mother used to perform hand embroidery on clothes by collecting orders from our neighbours. I also engaged myself in stitching garments since more than 70 years from now. Initially tailors used to stitch half-gown, petticoat, after some time they started to make baba suit, blouse and blouse with hand-embroidery designs upon the sleeves etc.

During 1960s, there were paddy fields in Kankhuli, Badartola localities. A few brick-built *puccabaris* were seen in our area, use of electricity started around 1965.

The first shop of *Marwari* cloth-merchant in Bartola was in 1965-66. A merchant, Omraomal Bachowat came here from the *Pachagali*, Nurmal Lohia Lane, of Burrabazar. First I met him in *Howrahhaat* when they sold *thaan* (the entire pieces) clothes to us. Later I had a friendship with Bachowat. He used to supply *thaans* to me in credits out of faith.

Before 1960, we used to carry *gantri* (bale of stitched clothes) on our shoulders and went upto 28 no's Police Phari of Metiabruz by foot. From 28 No. Phari we used to take buses to reach *Howrahhaat*. In *Howrahhaat* we had no permanent stalls. We sat on footpath for the customers. The average income after selling of those clothes was Rs. 50 per week, if the luck favoured we earned Rs. 100 and in some weeks we had no income at all.

Later I engaged 10 to 12 men in our job, most of them family members. From around 1972 outsiders used to come for stitching work. Initially they came from Uluberia, Bagnan of Howrah District and villages of South 24 Parganas. Later people came also from Murshidabad. For blouse stitching a group came from Basirhat (North 24 Parganas). They used to collect the *kaam* (jobs after cutting) from us and engaged their wives and daughters for stitching in their own residences.

In the childhood we saw some rich *ustagars*, who managed to collect tender-jobs from British persons and government. Among them were Hasem Mollah of Mollapara, Nurul Haque Mali of Malipara, Qusem Thandar of Thandarpara, Wachel Molla of Santoshpur and Mujibar Rahman of

Rajabagan. Rest of the people was poor *darjis*. Items of daily-use were cheap. But the people starved during war and famine.

We used machines of Wilson brand, locally called *Bokmachine*. Later came Singer brand. The big *ustagars* were offered with big machines for tender-jobs from the parties.

**NAME : Samsunneher Bibi**  
**AGE : 84 SEX : Female**  
**PLACE : Magura Doctorpara, Akra**  
**Date: 5.8.2004 & 5.3.2005**

My father was a rich and renowned person of Metiabruz. His name was Md. Hasem Mollah. Everybody respected him as *Satgramer Mollah* (juryman of seven villages). Hasem Mollah lost his father when he was a school student. He had to maintain his family of four younger brothers and two younger sisters. Initially he had to sell vegetables in the neighbourhood. Afterwards he obtained the tender-jobs of coat-pants from his father-in-law Moharaddin Mollah. Later he obtained the tender-jobs of Bengal Waterproof Company. In this way Hasem Mollah accumulated his capital. He became owner of two shops at Chandni Chawk, Kolkata.

He was a Congress politician and had relation with Mahatma Gandhi. His brother Qasem Mollah was a Congress activist. Fajle Ajim Mollah, eldest son of Qasem Molla became an M.L.A. of this locality.

My father Hasem Mollah married thrice. I heard that my father built a big workshop of garment stitching and related activities at the time of my birth. Formerly it was a clay-built house erected by my grandfather Joinuddin Sarkar. Joinuddin was the son of a farmer, Sekh Ahmed Molla.

Hasem Mollah used to manage the whole garment business. My second uncle was a cutter. About two hundred men were involved in different jobs of this business. Presently, a grandson of Hasem Mollah, Aftabuddin, maintained the tradition of this garment business. We had family relation with the great garment business family of Wachel Mollah of Santoshpur.

I have a relation with the family of Dr. Abu Motalib. His third brother Abu Qasim Molla married me after the death of his first wife. Abu Motalib's father Asgar Ali Molla was a traditional tailor. He went to Singapore for the job of stitching garments.



**NAME : Sekh Rafiq Ahmed**  
**AGE : 64 SEX : Male**  
**PLACE : Jelepara, Akra road**  
**DATE: 17.8.2004**

I am a worker of ELMI. My uncle Sekh Shamsul Haque, father of Sekh Jahangir Ahmed, who was a foreman in ELMI at that time, introduced me there. At that time most of our male family members were in services. There were a number of factories in this locality. Now the factory jobs are not available, so our sons of the present generation are involving themselves in *darjishilpa* (garment industry).

In 1940s we saw that the local Bengalee Muslims dislike engaging themselves in the jobs of the factories. Local Hindus used to go to factories as *babu* (clerical jobs). Outsiders from Bihar, U.P., M.P., came here as workers of the factories for hard labour. The trend in our family was an exception.

In Metiabruz High School, there were 80% Hindu students, in spite of the fact that the school was situated in a Muslim populated area.

**NAME : Kowsar Ali**  
**AGE : 75 SEX : Male**  
**PLACE : Ramdashati, Metiabruz**  
**DATE : 20.8.2004**

My grandfather was a *dorji* and used to go to Singapore. My father, Abdul Rahaman, was a *dorji*. He died when I was a child of 8 years. We were two brothers and two sisters. I along with my brother went to my *mama's* (maternal uncle's) *dahliz* of Thutorkal. He was attached with Harlalka, a big garment merchant of Burrabazar. After sometime around 1947 I was appointed there as a daily worker for 1 rupee a day. I took training of *kandhselai* (shoulder stitching), *hathselai* (sleeve-stitching) there. Later I was married with the daughter of my *mama* Mayalam Mollah and purchased a Wilson stitching machine for just Rs. 60 from Akra. Then I started my independent business.

Later I went to *Purba* Pakistan for 3 months and afterwards engaged myself with a business of school uniform in Shyambazar (North Kolkata). I continued my work there for 25 years. Now I am a retired *dorji*. My four sons are doing business on local *Jabbarhaat*. They have eight machines in total. Each of the sons works personally in one machine and run the other with an outside *karigar*. They collect orders from Belal Ustagar of Rajabagan and also from some other small *ustagars*.

**NAME : Mustafizur Rahaman**  
**AGE : 40 SEX : Male**  
**PLACE : Kachisarak, Metiabruz**  
**DATE : 22.2.2005**

I have a business of machine embroidery upon Guernsey, jeans item and saris. I have a Japanese computerized machine, purchased with a price of 32 lakh, in which designs of 44 different combinations can be done. It is called Multi head embroidery machine, maker JAILUN. In Metiabruz there are about 20 such machines. We collect orders mainly from *Marwari* concerns, which export the items to Dubai. From Dubai the garments were supplied to the Arab countries, South Africa and elsewhere.

The businessmen supply the *thaan* (the entire piece of cloth) to the cutters and tailors. For export items, the designs were imitated from the costly items of famous companies like Disney. Usually we perform the embroidery work on the cut-pieces before stitching. The entire process of production takes one month to complete. The businessmen clear their stock during pujas and festivals in the domestic market.

In Metiabruz, the whole businesses of local *ustagar* were done verbally without any paper work. They have no business documents, licenses or insurance-papers. Credit exchanges are also done without written documents.

My turnover is 60,000 per month approximately. 15% of the turnover is needed for buying threads.

**NAME : Sekh Akbar Hossain**  
**AGE : 70 SEX : Male**  
**PLACE : Jelepara, Akra Road**  
**DATE: 17.8.2004**

I retired from my service at ITC (*Cigaretkal*) in 1992. I started my service there as a casual worker and after 4 years became permanent. Before joining ITC I worked in several factories. My father was a *dorji* and worked in Burma and Singapore. But he never became an *ustagar*. Jahangir Ahamed is my cousin and remained in the same premises from the time of my grandfather.

**NAME : Sajid Ahmed**  
**AGE : 32 SEX : Male**  
**PLACE : Mudially Jelepar, Metiabruz**  
**DATE : 10.2.2005**

I have completed my graduation in 1993 and then started to make *churidar panjabee* for ladies. My father, a retired teacher, supplied the initial capital.

First of all I collect cloths from Burrabazar or Bartola through cash-purchase. Usually I myself do the cutting-job. If I go outside for cutting, I pay Rs. 2 per piece. Then I send the cut-pieces for embroidery work at the rate of Rs. 30-35 per piece. They bear expenses for threads. The cost of *paka suto* is Rs. 32-35 per cone (bundle) and *kacha suto* Rs. 15-16 per cone. *Paka* means the color is permanent. After embroidery I also do stitch-work personally. Occasionally I go outside for stitching of the jobs; the rate is Rs. 10-12 per piece. Then we pack the garments in paper-boxes. For quality products, we pack *churidars* with pant and *orna* (scarf) in a single box. Ordinary items are packed in half a dozen in a single box. Quality products are sold for Rs. 200 per piece. Ordinary 6 pieces are sold for Rs. 900. The *churidars* are made in different sizes, numbered viz., 32, 34 and 36. Usually in a week we prepare 10 dozens of *churidars*.

*Thaan Kapad* was supplied from mills of Ahmedabad, Gujarat and Surat. We sell the *churidars* in *Jabbarhaat* in Sundays. Usually customers come from Delhi, Chennai, and Bihar for village markets.

**NAME : Akhtar Hossain**  
**AGE : 67 SEX : Male**  
**PLACE : Hajiratan, Akra Road**  
**DATE : 3.4.2005**

At the age of 4-5 I started staying to my maternal uncle's house at Thandarpara. In 1940s I saw them in farming activity. Formerly we were at Santoshpur for the last seven generations. It was a peasant community. They started tailoring activity besides agriculture for the last 250 years. Clothes were sewn by hand. Later the sahebs brought Wilson machine in Bartola. It was an American brand and was introduced here something before 1900. Many people gathered in Bartala to see the machine. Agricultural lands were in Panchur, Fatak and Khaldhari. Tailoring was a good occupation for earning money, so people inclined to this occupation.

My grandfather was a tailor of ordered items. He used to collect orders from aristocrat families of Kolkata, like Tagore family. Later my father started readymade ladies items by taking bulk orders from *Marwari* traders. We got a tender order in 1947. In 2<sup>nd</sup> World War also we managed to get war contracts from ordnance factory at Hide Road. After independence we got railway orders.

I became a teacher of Bartola High School in 1976. We took the initiative to establish a girl's school in our locality after the riot of 1964. The initiative was succeeded after some initial resistance from local Muslim community in 1966.

**NAME : Sultan Ahmed**

**AGE : 68 SEX : Male**

**PLACE : Mudially Jelepara, Metiabruz**

**DATE : 13.1.2005**

My forefathers stayed at Govindapur. When Fort William was built the place was vacated and they came to Sonai. My grandfather was Helaluddin Saudagar. He used to travel Somalia, Java, Tibet, and Africa and supplied feathers of peacock and other birds from here. My father was a student of a renowned madrasa at Rayberrily. He used to educate students from Jessore, Khulna, Maimansingh, and Chitagang free of cost. My uncle was a student of Presidency College of Kolkata. Later he went to *Purba* Pakistan after partition and became a food minister during Tikka Khan regime. I was a teacher of Mudially School.

**NAME : Md. Zakiruddin Fakir**

**AGE : 40 SEX: Male**

**PLACE : Bartala, Akra Road**

**DATE : 13.3.2005**

Our forefather lived in Badartala Fakirpara. Traditionally they used to look after, as *Sebayet*, the *mazar* of Badarpir. Seven generations ago there was a conflict between Sayum Fakir & Kayum Fakir, two brothers. Kayum Fakir came to Padirhatty. He was a tailor of gowns. His son was Abdul Latif Fakir. Abdul Latif had three sons Jainul Abedin, Qasem Ali and Mohiuddin. Jainul Abedin had three sons Alauddin Fakir, Alamgir Fakir and Jahangir Fakir. They are among the topmost *ustagars* of this locality. In 1968 during my father's era, his family business was broken apart. My father had a shop Ajanta Tailors in Burrabazar. He himself was a designer and cutter.

I have a business of cloth trading along with the *Ustagari*. I purchase export quality Korean and Chinese clothes from *Marwari* traders. I manufacture jean items and shorts (*barmuda*) partly in my own house and partly by contract to other *dahlizs*. Hindu women from poor families work in my *dahaliz* for wages of Rs. fifty-sixty per day.

In Padirhatty there was cultivation of paddy and jute upto 1965-68. Later CMDA acquired the lands. A new business can be started with 4 to 5 machines with Rs. 5 lakh capital. The business is done 25% from *Howrahhaat* and 75% from Metiabruz.

**NAME : Pradip Jana**  
**AGE : 35 SEX : Male**  
**PLACE : Alampore, Ramdashati**  
**DATE : 14.2.2005**

I was failed in class seven and came to Barasat from our native village in Midnapore. First of all I worked in a brickfield as a cook of its manager. Later I joined textile units Poddar Projects in this locality by offering bribe to an agent. The mill was locked out frequently. So I engaged myself in tailoring work side by side with the mill's job. I married in 1986 and purchased a small Merit machine with Rs. 700. Later I purchased a big machine. My wife also learnt the stitching jobs. I stitch children pants and Guernsey sets of 0 to 20-34 sizes. I was paid Rs. 22 to 24 per dozens of these sets. The cost of threads is mine. My two children also help us in after-stitching light-jobs. If anybody hires a *Chutley* (boy) for these light-jobs, he is paid usually Rs. 100 per week.

My *ustagar* Sekh Enaet Ali lives in Biswaspara adjacent to our residence. He is doing this business for last 20 years. Formerly he kept outside *dorjis* in his own *dahliz*. Now he has engaged 5 to 6 independent *dorjis* like us, who worked in piece-rate system. Enaet himself is also a cutter. He has a special relation with me. We both help money to one another if it is needed.

**NAME : Akina Mondal, Fatema Mondal**  
**AGE: 28, 25 SEX : Female**  
**PLACE : Ramdashati**  
**DATE : 10.3.2005**

Our father died in our childhood. My mother took the work of maidservant in our neighbourhood. We, two daughters started to work in sewing machines 10 years ago. Our elder brother works in Poddar Mill, now under lockout from 1997.

We stitch pants for *ustagar* Sekh Enaet Ali. He pays Rs. 20 per dozen. We stitch 9 dozens in 3 days. We buy threads of Rs. 75 for a month's work. For maintaining two machines we pay Rs. 400 every year. We together earn Rs. 1000 per month. For this work we have to work for seven days without any rest day in a week.

**NAME : Anup Majumdar**  
**AGE : 50 SEX : Male**  
**PLACE : KMC Office, Garden Reach**  
**DATE : 16.11.2004**

In 1993-94 an *ustagar* required Rs.10 for getting a license. But later the fees increased. The trend among Bengalee *ustagars* for licensing was decreased. The rate of license-holders is more among Urdu-speaking kite-makers. In the year 2002 pressures were built up from KMC's License Department. But the Municipal staff faced awkward position for canvassing in *dorjipara*. In total there are 3000 license-holders among the *ustagars*. It is 30 to 40% of the total *ustagars*.

**NAME : Abdul Khabir Gaji**  
**AGE : 56 SEX : Male**  
**PLACE : Satghara, Bartola**  
**DATE : 3.9.2004**

In 1975 I started my job as a tax advocate in this locality. Before 1975 there was some twenty to twenty-five tax files for the business of this locality. Now there are about three to four thousand tax files of local *ustagars*. Most of those files are just to keep a record. Many *ustagars* pay income tax for taking advantages for getting bank-loans etc. There are ups and downs in this business all the time. IT file-holders are about one thousand families of Maheshtala-Metiabruz. One business holds sometimes more than one file. Some business are family enterprise, some are of individuals. Big *ustagars* have an average annual turnover of 5 crores rupees. Sometimes a family of three to five brothers made a turnover of three to four crores. Average turnover of IT payers is Rs. ten to twenty lakh over the year. In South Twenty-four Parganas, among Kolkata 18, 24, 44, 66 Postal Areas, including two Municipal wards, there are about twelve to fourteen thousand IT files. It includes three to four thousand garment industries.

**NAME : Rajib Das**  
**AGE : 30 SEX : Male**  
**PLACE : Ramdashati**  
**DATE : 18.2.2005**

I am a newcomer in this business of threads. We have 5 to 6 kinds of threads, viz., embroidery, interlock, stitching, nylon, etc. There are also two types such as, ordinary (*kachha*) and fast colour (*pacca*) threads. Threads are supplied from outside and there are also local-makers in Metiabruz. We buy from the wholesalers. In this locality there are some *jogare karbar* (business of materials other *thaan* clothes) of threads, buttons, chains and clothes for

pockets. It requires 2 to 2.5 lakhs rupees to start a *jogare karbar*. But business of threads can be started with 5 to 10 thousand capitals.

**NAME : Tapan Deb**  
**AGE : 40 SEX : Male**  
**PLACE : Ramdashati**  
**DATE : 30.12.2004**

I started the business of old pants from 1985. The full pants are supplied from America and European countries. The users there left those pants after using for a short period, because ironing cost is much in those countries. Those pants are loaded in ships and sent to Bombay. From Bombay pants are sent to Kolkata.

We cut those pants for children's use. After cutting in our houses, printing is done in silk-screen units of Padirhatty, Santoshpur and other places. After printing, the jobs of stitching and packing of 6 pieces in a bundle are done by *dorjis*. Cutting is Rs.4 per dozen, printing Rs.5 and stitching Rs.8 per dozen. If *dorjis* stitch in *ustagars* house the rate becomes Rs.5 per dozen.

I sell the pants in Howrah *Samabayikahaat* in Tuesday. The cost is Rs.36 to 120 per dozen for sizes vary from 10 to 17 inches. Customers from Samastipur, Patna, Hajipur, Gaya, Bihar, Assam, Madras, Nagpur and Delhi used to come here for purchasing these pants.

I avoid *Jabbarhaat* in Metiabruz, because customers deduct a *baaj* of 10% from the manufacturers. The business was better in the past. But the new pants also become cheaper than before. So the business of old pants is declining.

**NAME : Shamim Anawar**  
**AGE : 56 SEX : Male**  
**PLACE : Chandni Chawk, Kolkata**  
**DATE : 8.3.2005**

In 1856 Nawab Wazed Ali Shah came to Metiabruz from Lukhnow. He was a secular person and had many literary qualities. In Metibruz he established Shahimahal, Begummahal, Imambaras, Masjids, Cemeteries, Zoo and a number of buildings. A large number of followers came with the Nawab. It was heard that he married 365 women. He introduced a new cultural life in Metiabruz.

Later during the period of industrialization since the later half of 19th century many Urdu-speaking people came for the jobs in factories. There was Ispahani Jute Mill, Clive Jute Mill, CIWTC, Keshoram Cotton Mill and other factories in Metiabruz.

Nawab had his own *panwala*, *Khansama*, Palanquin-bearers etc, which also influenced the traditional culture of Metiabruz.

**NAME : Kali Bhandari, Chairman of Maheshtola Municipality**

**AGE : 55 SEX : Male**

**PLACE : Maheshtola**

**DATE : 21.2.2005**

My father Sudhir Bhandari was elected as MLA from Maheshtola in the year 1952 by defeating the so long winning candidate from Congress. In 1952 Mujaffar Ahmed of Communist Party came here for election work. He was the first man who raised the issue for organizing *dorjis*. In 1953 he personally started working amongst the *dorji* community with Abul Bashar. In 1955 West Bengal Tailors Union was formed. In 1957 there was a big rally from Maheshtola Dakghar Post Office. I also joined the rally. I was 9-10 years old at that time.

Initially organization was built up in Chatta, Maheshtola, Kankhuly regions, not so much in Bartola. There was a role of *ustagars* like Akbar Ali Thandar and others. At that time *dorjis* were very poor like peasants, who used to work for three months only and for nine months of the year they had no work. Later the class position of *dorjis* was changed. After Left Front came to power *dorjis* became *petty ustagars*.

In the past *dorji* union demanded for tender-jobs. Usually *Marwari* community captured the govt. orders of Railway and Police.

**NAME : Mursalin Molla, MLA of Maheshtola**

**AGE : 56 SEX : Male**

**PLACE: Akra**

**DATE : 29.9.2004**

I was involved with WBTU in 1967. The union was established in 1955. During the period of undivided Communist Party Md. Ilyas was its President and Abul Bashar was its Secretary. Abul Bashar later became the President and Md. Ismail the Secretary. Abul Bashar held the presidentship upto his death on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2002. Now I am the Secretary.

The first conference of the union was held at Bankra of Howrah in 1955. At that time *dorjis* were poor. They made a big rally of 15 thousands to the Govt. of Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy. They achieved a demand of Rs. 100 as artisan loan.

In 1991, this *dorjishilpa* became an open sector like all other sectors of industries. In this industry as well as in the union there remained the *Udyogkarta* (entrepreneur) and *Karigar* (craftsman) both. Both of them have



a traditional knowledge. Without this knowledge they can never be an *ustagar*, in spite of their capital.

In West Bengal today *dorjis* are six lakh in number, out of which three lakh in Metiabruz-Maheshtola. In Maheshtola among 3.5 lakh population 40% is associated with *dorjishilpa*. In Metiabruz the Bengalees (Musalmaan) are 100% with this industry.

In 1955 there was mere 20% *ustagars*, the rest 80% were *dorji-shramik*, who had their labour power. But they had no means of production, like machine, scissors etc. Upto 1970s these *ustagars* were mostly small, comprising about 80% of the total *ustagars*. After land reform in West Bengal, the demands for cheap garments were enhanced in the village markets. Nowadays 70% became middle or *petty ustagars*, 10% big, 10% small and rest 10% local *dorji-shramik*. But there are a huge number of outsiders joined in this business.

Before independence people came from Burma, Singapore to purchase garments from here. There was a market of Eastern India of Assam, Bihar etc. after 1947. But later the skilled *karigars* were hired to Bombay, Gaziabad and Karnataka with good payments for garment making and competition was started.

The industry is divided into segments of items, like pant, coat in Chatta, Maheshtola, Akra; shirts, punjabee in Magura, Santoshpur; ladies frocks in Metiabruz Bartola. Actually the work performed here in a *parampara* (tradition).

**NAME : Mamtaz Begum (Councillor, Ward no.140) with Rajab Ali**

**Molla and others of Ward no. 140**

**SEX : Female PLACE : Satghara, Bartola**

**DATE : 29.3.2005**

In ward no.140, there are 70 to 75 thousand residents. Among this population about 40 thousand are local people and the rest are an outsider associated mainly with garment industry. About three thousand are Urdu-speaking, who are *Kasai* (slaughter) by occupation and the rest of the people are engaged mainly with garment making.

In the past people used to go to Howrah and Burrabazar for raw materials and other business purpose. Now after establishment of *JabbarHaat* in our locality, many common people started independent business with 3 to 4 thousand rupees capital and usually earn 4 to 5 hundred rupees per week. The number of such *petty ustagars* is about 5000 in this ward. They are not truly *ustagars*, but work for stitching contract collected from real *ustagars* numbering about 500 in this ward. They also employ outsiders. Big *ustagars* are about 10 in this ward.

Due to competition from new comers, who make duplicates of items of big *ustagars* and start business with small capital. The common people became poorer due to stiff competitions. Small businessmen suffer most due to hazards of Trade License, taxes. Customer also started to defer current payments for the purchase of garments. They give a *rukka*, a kind of note for deferred payment, to the *ustagars* in *haats*. During cash payment they also deduct some percentage from the cost of purchase called *baaj*.

West Bengal Minority Development & Financial Corporation give big loans against guarantors from Govt. servants. Without guarantor WBMDFC grant small cluster loan of about Rs. 25000, which is not enough for starting a business.

Urdu-speaking neighbours also started embroidery work. Bengalee *karigar* are lagging behind. We are lagging in garment business due to breaking of family bondage. We are losing for competition among ourselves within our families.

**NAME : Aftab Ahmed**  
**AGE : 50 SEX : Male**  
**PLACE : Behalpara, Haji Ratan**  
**DATE : 8.4.2005**

Traditionally I engaged myself with this business from my school days. My grandfather Hasem Mollah had a contract with the Bengalee concern Duckback. Everyday we used to send 3 to 4 cutters to the Panihatty (North 24 PGS) factory of Duckback and returned with the cut-pieces, which we stitched in the next day. It was a job of waterproof items. At that time Nurul Haque Mali and some other *ustagars* were engaged with Duckback. My father got sub-contract of Railways, Port Commissioners and other office orders by tender. It continued upto 1970s.

In 1975 I personally started stitching work of the export orders of Magnum Enterprise. They had 20 to 25 sub-contractors in Kolkata for the stitching work. Magnum did the ironing and packaging jobs in their own factory and sent their products by ship or by air to various European countries. They had their local office in Camac Street, Kolkata and the head office in London. They supplied raw materials and diagrams to us. They used 100% cotton cloths of South Indian Mills. In 1984, 40 ironmen of their factory started a movement and the factory became lockout.

They shifted to Madras and offered me to go with them. I, along with 25 *karigars* went to Madras and worked there for one and a half-year. Afterwards they also returned to New Alipore and open Kiran Export. Its new factory was built in Gopalpur of Maheshtola. I worked with them upto 1997.

Now I am doing business independently. I purchase raw materials from Burrabazar and do the designing and finishing in my new workshop in Behalpara.

Presently Delhi, Bombay, Bangalore, Chennai are much advanced in export garment business. In West Bengal, we have no exclusive zones of this export business like Okhla, Gandhinagar of Delhi. We have no expertise in the technical matters for exporting. State Govt. in other provinces, like Chennai; take a role for making communications between buyers and exporters. They also render financial help to the exporters for buying modern machines, raw materials. These are absent in Metiabruz. A few *ustagars* are doing export jobs by sub-contracts from *Marwari* traders.

We are also facing competition with the businessmen of other provinces for the domestic market. Our future is not so bright. So big *ustagars* are inclining themselves to other business and real estate business.

**NAME : Dr. Q. H. Hannan**

**AGE : 73   SEX : Male**

**PLACE : Kachisarak, Metiabruz**

**DATE : 10.4.2005**

I came in Metiabruz from Murshidabad in 1954. First of all I was a teacher of Metiabruz High School. I passed MBBS in 1959 and started practicing here. When I came here, there was no electricity, but people used to operate Wilson stitching machines from morning to sunset. After sunset they relaxed. On Tuesday they used to go to *haat* for selling the garments stitched for the last five days. On Wednesday *ustagars* used to pay *dorjis*. There was a rush of patients in our chambers in Wednesdays and Thursdays.

In 1964 there was a sudden strike in garment industry. For seven days the whole business became deadlock. Afterwards, *dorjis* came to *ustagars* and appealed for jobs due to starvation of their families. It was a watershed for this industry. The whole system changed. The piece-rate system was introduced in a big way from that time replacing daily-rated system. The working hours also changed. *Dorjis* started working from 6 A.M. to 10 P.M. for their earnings. Outside labourers from Medinipur, Murshidabad and other districts started to come for jobs. They joined in groups in different *dahlizs*. Local labourers were faced with competition. Polarization of traders and labourers was enhanced.

In 1970s local *ustagars* faced a challenge from the products of Bombay. But they went to Bombay and collected designs from there, copied these designs for their own products and sold the same in cheaper rates. In the meantime in 1980s *Jabbarhaat* was built here. Metiabruz started to compete with Bombay directly for capturing Indian domestic market. In export line Bombay, Delhi, Ahmedabad defeated Metiabruz.

**NAME : Sekh Nur Hossain**

**AGE : 72 SEX : Male**

**PLACE : Noapara, Akra**

**DATE : 18.3.2005**

My father was a worker of Bata Shoe Company. I had to start tailoring work at the age of 8 due to sudden death of my father. My brother and I went to the *dahliz* of Amir Hazi and after our training period we used to earn 4 to 5 rupees for our labour for a week. We stitched shirts by hand. *Ustagar's* name was Amir Ali Khan. After going to Mecca for Haj he became Amir Hazi. He used to supply the orders of *Marwaris* in *Howrahhaat*.

Before 1960s, the labour process was two *hathwalas* (who work by hand) with one *kolwala* (machine man). We *hathwalas* were paid double rate, and *kolwalas* single. Later the work of *hathwalas* became obsolete and thus abandoned. From 1970s, when Vinar, Raymonds and other companies started export work, the total work of *kolwala* for a complete shirt was broken into part jobs of collar, sleeves, pockets, front portion for separate stitching.

In 1959, the *ustagars* declared to reduce the rate of payment of *dorjis* unilaterally. *Dorjis* started an indefinite strike under the leadership of Islamuddin Laskar of Panikal (Dhoapara) of Metiabruz. Another leader Sushil Mukhopadhyaya, an employee of Anandabazar Patrika, also came to organize the strike. *Dorjis* from Chatta (Maheshtola), Budge Budge, Akra all joined in the strike. It continued for 6 to 8 months. *Ustagars* also started meetings to break the strike. All the strikers made a rally upto Assembly House in Dharmatola. Later a settlement was made and 4 annas for a rupee earning of the *dorjis* was enhanced. *Ustagars* also compelled to give an Idd Bonus to the *dorjis*. In 1960, the strikers were assembled in a union named *Sadharantantri Dorji Sangha* and a membership was fixed for the cardholders.

The export jobs were started after the strike. Outsiders also started to come for tailoring jobs. *Hathwala* system was abandoned. Formerly women in the *mahallas* stitched the buttonholes, hemming etc. by their hands. Later came the interlocking system by machines.

In the 1960s, we got a loan of Rs. 9000 by installment from Panchayat and B.D.O. office for independent business. But the capital was lost by small *ustagars*. They started to collect capital by mortgaging their lands, gold ornaments etc. 20% of them became big *ustagars* and 80% remained small *petty ustagars* or tailors. Formerly local *dorjis* used to go to *ustagar's dahliz* for work. Now most of them work in their own house. Women have also started machine-work for shirts, punjabees.

**NAME : Md. Moktar Hossain Molla**  
**AGE : 68    SEX : Male**  
**PLACE : Panchpara Road, Rajabagan**  
**DATE : 16.1.2005**

From our family deeds it revealed that in 1190 Bangabda (about 220 years ago) a man Kinu Fakir came to Akra. Later his son Sekh Eoaji sold a piece of land in Dhopapara, village Domdoma, Pargana Magura, Thana Sadar in South Twenty-four Parganas, from a Hindu landlord Narendra Nath Basu. Kinu Fakir lived in a place adjacent to Fort William. I am seventh generation of Kinu Fakir. British later built Fort William in that place of bushes and bamboo's. Kinu Fakir used to stitch clothes and also knew exorcism to clean evil spirits. After coming to Metiabruz my forefathers voluntarily worked for the Masjids and were offered Mollah title.

In Fort William there was a village peasant economy. When my forefathers came to Akra, they became *dorjis*. At that time, about two hundred years ago, local people used *Nima, Geje, Dhoti, Chadar, and Fatua* as their garments. Stitched garments were used by the British *memsahabs* (ladies). First of all stitching was done with the needles in hand. British introduced sewing machines of Wilson and Singer brands.

My father was in Pinang of Malay before his marriage. After marriage he stayed here and started to collect orders of gowns from the *memsahabs*. It was the practice of garment-making upto 1950-1955. Readymade was introduced later. First came readymade blouses, which were sold in dozens from *Manglahat* of Howrah. Later total ladies and children items were introduced in readymade business.

A relative of mine Mohit Mollah managed orders from Hall & Anderson and became rich. There were big merchant-houses in Park-Street, New Market of Esplanade who used to supply orders to the *dorjis* of Metiabruz.

I personally started order jobs from aristocrat Bengalee houses after passing class nine and took responsibility for maintaining our family, as my father became sick. The rate at that time for the orders was Rs. 24 for 12 shirts. We used to take orders for the whole family. There were 5 to 6 ladies in a family. If we could get orders of 12 blouses of *chemises* for each lady, it would enough for us. At present the work for order-jobs is not in a good position. My sons are doing readymade business of ladies items. Bartola, Rajabagan and Badartola are places of ladies items; Santoshpur, Badamtola for pant, shirts and punjabees.

**NAME : Sekh Jahangir Ahamed**

**AGE : 59 SEX : Male**

**PLACE : Akra Road**

**DATE : 17.6.2004 & 15.11.2004**

My great grand grandfather was Sital Sekh. From the land deeds at our disposal it seems they were previously Hindus and were converted to Musalmaans during that period. The time was more than 150 years from now. From the deeds it was found that our ancestors purchased the land in Jelepara from a *zamidar* (landlord) Bipin Bihari Das. My *nana* (maternal grandfather) came from a place, adjacent to the river, named Sonai. Due to industrialization and development of Calcutta Port the Sonai area was engulfed into present Hide Road industrial belt the Bengalee population was displaced. Now there is a different Bihari population in Sonai. Nana Abu Bakar and his brothers with their families came to Kanthalberia, Akra Road. Nana was married to Burmese girl at Satghara. Abu Bakar and his sons were tailors of ladies items and went to Burma. One of my maternal uncles stayed and worked as a *dorji* in Burma for 30 years. One of my relatives stayed in Rangoon of Singapore and died there.

My great grandfather started a business of fish's side by side his tailoring occupation. My father also engaged himself in this business; later became a worker of the lamp factory (*battikal*). In the year 1963 I started readymade garment business by collecting capital from my father. I myself became a cutter and stitched babasuits by three to four *Karigars*. They stayed here for months and were paid Rs. three to four for daily work along with foods. After sometime pieces rate system was introduced. There was a system of no work no pay. It was a twelve hours work for a day. They stitched three to four dozens babasuits (boys shirt and pant set). For fixing hooks, buttons etc., I engaged some women who were paid four to eight annas for a dozen pieces. Women came from the families of workers of Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Keshoram Cotton Mills. There were also Hindu women in the jobs. They earned 20 to 30 rupees per week.

Later I became a teacher in the primary section of Metiabruz High School and stopped the tailoring business.

**NAME : Shaokat Ali Molla**

**AGE : 80 SEX : Male**

**PLACE : Chatta Kalikapara, Maheshtola**

**DATE : 31.10.2004 & 26.12.2004**

I engaged myself in *dorji* (tailoring) profession when I was just 14 years old. Before 1947 we used to stitch coats. Traditionally, as I saw, my grandfather and grand grandfather used to stitch *choupat*, a cross-shaped piece of clothe for playing game with *cowries*. Initially women sewed *chowpats*

domestically by their hands. Later came the sewing machine of Wilson brand. Later I saw in my childhood the making of coats. The orders came from some wholesalers named Habibullah and Safiullah. They used to supply the coats stitched by our tailors to Jessore Bagura Kusthia Rajshahi Bagerhaat of undivided Bengal and also to Tinsukia, Kachar and Silchar of Assam. After independence, when the orders from East Bengal stopped making of items like pants, shirts were started. In the 1970s the stretchlawn cloths were supplied from Bangladesh. Lastly in the 1980s the stitching of jeans items was started.

In Chatta the business of Subid Ali Mollah was prospered most. He was given Khan Bahadur title by the then British Government. Initially capital accumulation for this garment industry was done from the surplus gathered from agricultural work. Tailoring was an occupation of the peasants of village community. Later after 2<sup>nd</sup> World War it became an independent occupation of the Muslim population of this locality.

Before independence in 1940s I personally worked for making coats. Three types of coats were stitched at that time: Cape Collar, Sporting Collar and Closed Neck. The design forma were made by *ustagars*. A cutter or *matji* used to work from 6.30-7.00 in the morning to sunset in the evening. He used to cut about 100 coats in a day and was paid a rupee or five *siccas* for the work. The stitching was done by *kolwala* (machine man) with the help of three to four *hathwalas* (helpers). A *kolwala* was paid Rs. three to thirteen *siccas* for a week. *Hathwalas* were paid less than *kolwalas* and for a complete making of coat; the total labour cost was three *annas*. When pant stitching was started, *kolwala* was paid three *annas*, fourteen *paisas* or four *annas*. *Hathwalsa* were paid four to five *paisas* per pant. These were the rates of payment before 1947.

A small *ustagar* used to start his business with a meager two hundred rupees at that time. They were helped for *ustagari* by the *Marwari mahajan* (creditor).

Initially the center of business was *Howrahhaat*. Later on, since 1970s Metiabruz became a business place and since 1980s the centre of readymade garment business was shifted to Bartola of Metiabruz. It helped to develop the entry of a wide layer of small petty *ustagars* in this industry. Traditionally women in the families acted as mere helping hands. But when jeans were introduced, women started to work for the fading of jeans items by acid-wash since the last fifteen years.

## ANNEXURE 3

### INVENTORY OF THE DOCUMENTS

Serial No.	Document / Literature	Writer	Year
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#### Official Documents

1.	The Statistical Account of Bengal	W.W. Hunter	1875
2.	The Imperial Gazetteer of India	W.W. Hunter	1887
3.	West Bengal District Gazetteer, 24 Parganas	Barun De (Ed.)	1994
4.	District Statistical Hand Book, South 24 Parganas Bureau of Applied Economics and Statistics, Government of West Bengal		2002
5.	District Statistical Hand Book, Kolkata Bureau of Applied Economics and Statistics, Government of West Bengal		2002
6.	Paschimbanga, District 24 Parganas (B) <sup>1</sup> A Journal of Department of Information and Culture, Govt. of West Bengal		2000
7.	Census of India 2001, Series 20, Kolkata		
8.	Census of India 2001, Series 20, South 24 Parganas		

#### Historical Documents

1.	Kolkata Sekaler o Ekaler (B)	Harisadhan Mukhopadhyay	1915
2.	Dakshin ChabbishparaganarBismrita Adhyay (B)	Krishanakali Mondal	1999
3.	Aspects of Society and Culture in Calcutta	M.K.A.Siddique	1982
4.	Kolkatar Chhoto Lukhnow (B)	Anil Tapadar	2001
5.	Kobiyal Gurudas Pal (B)	Malini Bhattacharya, Pradipto Bagchi	2000
6.	The Romance of Jute	D. R. Wallace	1928
7.	Indian Dress, A Brief History	Charles Fabri	1977

#### Literary Documents

1.	Ranga Megh, A Collection of Short Stories (B)	Mohammad Nuruddin	1997
2.	Onya Kolkata, A Collection of Short Stories (B)	Raghab Bandyopadhyaya	1986
3.	Dabi, A Novel (B)	Santosh Pal	1979

<sup>1</sup> (B) denotes the literature in Bengalee language.



4.	Bibarna Barnamala, A Novel (B)	Sukhen Santra	2003
5.	Metiabrujer Koumajiban (B) A Collection of Stories, Poems, Articles, lecture and Report		2003
6.	Milan Kutir	Md. Belayat Hossain	
7.	Diner Kutir	Md. Belayat Hossain	

<b>Documents from Bengalee Little Magazines</b>			
1.	Srijani, 3 <sup>rd</sup> year, No.2, 2003 a) Article: Hasim Chacha Ebang Amar Bandhur Dada b) Article: Jater Name Bajjati	a) Champa Khatoon b) Jiten Nandi	
2.	Srijani, 4 <sup>th</sup> year, No.1, 2004 a) Story: Ayeshar Kanna	Mohabbat Hossain	
3.	Barnik, No.1, 2004 a) Article: Akhri Chirimar	Jiten Nandi	
4.	Mukur, No.1, 2002 a) Article: Metiabruzer Buddhijibi—Ghar O Bahir	Jiten Nandi	
5.	Kathak, No.4, 2003 a) Article: Sahitya Charchae Metiabruz b) Story: Mukta Bihag	a) Anil Tapadar b) S. Purokait	
6.	Sohel, 7 <sup>th</sup> year, 2003 a) Story: Sudhamoyer Ghare Phera	Jakir Hossain Gazi	
7.	Kandari, 3 <sup>rd</sup> year, Idd No., 1997 a) Article: Darji Samajer Ekta Chitra O Samasya	Sekh Abdul Hamid	
8.	Kandari, 3 <sup>rd</sup> year, Idd No., 1998 a) Darjider Durabastha	Sekh Dilabar Hossain	
9.	Kandari, 6 <sup>th</sup> year, Idd No., 2001 a) Article: Darji Shilpe Ashani Sanket b) Article: Metiabruz Readymade Byabsa O Shikha-Janajiban Byabastha	a) S. Purokait b) Saokat Ali Mondal	
10.	Natun Shatabdir Alo, 3 <sup>rd</sup> year, 2002 a) Article: Darji Parar Budhbar	Sekh Jahangir Ahmed	
11.	Anubhav, 1 <sup>st</sup> Year, No.1, 2000 a) Story: Abu Chachar Kana Ghora	S. Purokait	
12.	Katha Kabita, 1 <sup>st</sup> year, No.1, 1995 a) Article: Ekti Prosongsanio Uddyog b) Kichu Katha	a) Mohammad Amin a) Haji Md. Nurrudin	
13.	Trikon, 1 <sup>st</sup> year, No.1, 1994 a) Loukikata Apachay O Amader Samaj	Shakil Moinuddin	
14.	Trikon, 1 <sup>st</sup> year, No.2, 1994 a) Article: Metiabruz Anchaler Lekhapara O Chatrider Abastha b) Article: Panpratha Dorji Samaje Dhuke Pareche	a) Arati Sen b) Haji Md. Nuruddin	

15.	Trikon, 1 <sup>st</sup> year, No.3, 1994 Story: Asafal	a) Haji Md. Nuruddin	
16.	Jhinuk, 1 <sup>st</sup> year, No.1, 1996 a) Article: Garden Reacher Kanna b) Article: Garden Reacher Basasthaan Binyas o Jogajog Byabastha c) Article: Bengalee Muslim Dorji Samajer Kichu Sanskarer Proyajaniata	a) Alif Nabi Omar b) Samsul Alam c) Sekh Tajamul Hossain	
17.	Jhinuk, 6 <sup>th</sup> year, Idd No., 2000 a) Story: Ami Dai	Md. Jakir Hossain Gazi	
18.	Jhinuk, 8 <sup>th</sup> year, Idd No., 2002 a) Article: Metiaburujer Dorjiparar Prathayam Graduate b) Article: Banglar Readymade Poshak Shilpa c) Article: Dorji shilper Atit O Bartaman	a) Alif Nabi Omar b) Md. Shariful Alam c) Md. Ali	
19.	Durbiner Chokh, 2 <sup>nd</sup> year, Idd No., 2001 a) Article: Joutho Paribar O Tar Mulyabodh b) Story: Je Nijeke Chineche	a) Sk. Jahangir Ahmed b) Jamaludd-in Gazi	
20.	Durbiner Chokh, 4 <sup>th</sup> year, Idd No., 2003 a) Article: Sui Sutor Karbar c) Story: Je Nijeke Chineche	a) Alif Nabi Omar b) Jamaludd-in Gazi	
21.	Proyas, 1 <sup>st</sup> year, No.1, 2001 a) Survey: Garden Reach Metiabruzer Library		
22.	Proyas, 1 <sup>st</sup> year, No.2, 2001 a) Survey: Garden Reacher Bivinna Bidyalaya		
23.	Proyas, 1 <sup>st</sup> year, No.4, 2001 a) Survey: Anandomoyee O Fathepur Sebasamiti		
24.	Proyas, 2 <sup>nd</sup> year, No.1, 2002 a) Survey: Mohat Udyoger Itihas Garden Reach Mudiali Uchho Bidyalaya. b) Badartala Gangapare Basinder Sange Praktir Larai	a) Prasenjit Dey b) Hrishikesh Pal	
25.	Ayana a) Article: Metiabruz-Maheshtalar Poshak Shilpa Sankat Barche, Uttaraner Disha Nei b) Story: Haque	a) Alif Nabi Omar b) Jamaludd-in Gazi	
26.	Sachetan, 5 <sup>th</sup> year, 2003 a) Article: Readymade Garmentser Bhabishyat O Kichu Katha b) Story: Ijjatdar c) Story: Talaque	a) Nasiruddin Halder b) Roushana-ra Begum c) Monira Mondal	
27.	Sanjher Pradip, 10 <sup>th</sup> year, No.1, 2001	Md. Jakir	

	a) Article: Metiabruz Bhalo Jayga Hate Parena	Hossain Gazi	
28.	Ahban, 1 <sup>st</sup> year, Idd No., 2000 a) Article: Metiabruz O Tar Nabab b) Article: Ashani Sanket c) Article: Chatta Kalikapurer Subid Ali Molla	a) Kamrul Hannan b) Samaby-athi c) Sarfuddin Mallick	
29.	Ahban, 3 <sup>rd</sup> year, Idd No., 2002 a) Article: Darjiparar Hat Bazar b) Story: Ghare Phera	a) Alif Nabi Omar b) Md. Jakir Hossain Gazi	
30.	Saptaparni, 1 <sup>st</sup> year, No.1, 1997 a) Article: Badartala Sanskriti Samanyay Khetra b) Songs: Gurudas Paler Kabigan	Tapas Sardar	
31.	Saptaparni, 2 <sup>nd</sup> year, No.1, 1998 a) Article: Phansi Kaler Tak b) Songs: Gurudas Paler Kabigan c) Poems: Dhirandranath Majumdar	Tapas Sardar	
32.	Saptaparni, 3 <sup>rd</sup> year, New Year No., 1999 a) Article: Badartala Gramin Mela b) Songs: Gurudas Paler Kabigan	Tapas Sardar	
33.	Saptaparni, 4th year, New Year No., 2000 a) Article: Badartala Lokkabi Ganakabi Gurudas Pal b) Songs: Gurudas Paler Kabigan	Tapas Sardar	
34.	Saptaparni, 6 <sup>th</sup> year, New Year No., 2002 a) Article: Badartala Anchalik Sanskritik Ruprekha b) Article: O Nadire c) Report: Matribhasha Dibaser Shiksha	a) Tapas Sardar b) Ananda Kishore Pal c) Jiten Nandi	
35.	Saptaparni, 7 <sup>th</sup> year, New Year No., 2003 a) Article: Badartala O Sanglagna Anchal Amader Gram O Kichu Katha	Tapas Sardar	
36.	Saptaparni, 5 <sup>th</sup> year, New Year No., 1997 a) Article: Badartala Prasanga: Sthaaniya Prathisthaan b) Article: Badartala Public Library O Pariparshik Anyanya Parishebamulak Kichu Tathya c) Maps: Sthaniya Manchitreer Naksha	a) Tapas Sardar d) Rabindra Nath Das b) Nikhil Ranjan Joardar	
37.	Manthan Samayiki, 1 <sup>st</sup> year, No.6, 2000 a) Article: Metiabruzer Koumajiban	Jiten Nandi	
38.	Manthan Samayiki, 2 <sup>nd</sup> year, No.4, 2001 a) Article: Metiabruzer Badartala Gangar Bhangar	Anjan Pal	

39.	Manthan Samayiki, 3 <sup>rd</sup> year, No.1, 2002 a) Article: Badartalar Koumajiban O Badarpirer Majar	Ashis Mukherjee	
40.	Manthan Samayiki, 3 <sup>rd</sup> year, No.3, 2002 a) Article: Metiabruzer Mati Theke Akashe: Ghurir Katha	Anil Tapadar	
41.	Utsav, Idd No., 1998 a) Story: Chingripotar Meye, Badartalar Chele	Alif Nabi Omar	
42.	Ider Arambha, 2002 a) Article: Darji Shilper Bhitare O Baire	Asadullah Gayen	
43.	Natun Gati, Idd No., 2003 a) Article: Shikhyadaradi o Danbir Chatter Khan Saheb Subid Ali Mollah	Sarfuddin Mallick	

### Documents from other magazines

1.	Mudialy Library Centenary (1876-1976) Souvenir, 1980		
2.	Souvenir of Maheshtola Municipality, 2004		
3.	Chatta Subid Ali Institute Diamond Jubilee (1942-2002) Souvenir, 2002		
4.	Pallab, Mudially Bidyalaya Patrika, 2001		
5.	Metiabruz High School Bidyalaya Patrika, 2003-2004		
6.	Bengalee Bazar High School Magazine, 2000-2001		
7.	Maheshtala Municipality Souvenir, 2003		

### Reports from local newspapers

1.	Naba Asha Naba Disha		
2.	Amader Budge Budge		
3.	Anchalik Darpan		
4.	Durbar Kalam		
5.	Sangbad Ahban		

## Glossary

<i>Allahwala</i>	Religious person
<i>Baaj</i>	Deduction of a percentage by the wholesale customers on every purchase
<i>Bokmachine</i>	Sewing machine of Wilson brand
<i>Boma</i>	Conical big reel of thread
<i>Botam tanka</i>	Button stitching
<i>Chora, Chutle</i>	Boy helper
<i>Chukai</i>	Finishing work
<i>Dahliz</i>	Outhouse
<i>Dorji</i>	Tailor
<i>Dorjisamaj</i>	Tailoring community
<i>Dorjishilpa</i>	Tailoring industry
<i>Full karigar</i>	Skilled labourer
<i>Gantri</i>	Large bale of garments
<i>Goyer marshum</i>	Off-season
<i>Haat</i>	Weekly business center
<i>Half karigar</i>	Semi-skilled labourer
<i>Hathselai</i>	Calf stitching
<i>Hathwala</i>	Tailor working by hands
<i>Hapta</i>	Earning per week
<i>Hater karbari</i>	Businessman operating in a <i>haat</i>
<i>Jogare</i>	Helper
<i>Jogare karbar</i>	Raw materials other than cloths
<i>Kaajghar</i>	Button hole

<i>Kaam</i>	Job
<i>Kaam dholai</i>	Acid wash of the garment
<i>Kaam selai</i>	Stitching job
<i>Kancha kaaj</i>	Unfinished job
<i>Kancha kapad</i>	An entire piece of clothe before stitching
<i>Kancha rang</i>	Non-fast colour
<i>Kancha suto</i>	Raw thread
<i>Kancha taka</i>	Cash money
<i>Kandhselai</i>	Shoulder stitching
<i>Karigar</i>	Craftsman, labour
<i>Kolwala</i>	Machine man
<i>Lorayer kaaj</i>	War contract
<i>Mahajan</i>	Creditor
<i>Matji</i>	Cutter
<i>Mot</i>	Small bale
<i>Muri selai</i>	Hem stitching
<i>Phuler kaaj</i>	Embroidery work
<i>Phul machine</i>	Embroidery machine
<i>Parer dahlizer kaaj</i>	Working in other's workshop
<i>Rukka</i>	A note for deferred payment
<i>Tenderer kaaj</i>	Order collected by tender
<i>Thaan</i>	An entire piece of clothe
<i>Tota</i>	Cylindrical small reel of thread
<i>Tukra</i>	Scrap clothes
<i>Turpui</i>	Border stitching
<i>Ustagar</i>	Entrepreneur and craftsman