

Revitalisation of heritage awareness among the general mass will strongly advocate the case of 'proxy-disaster preventive' methodology to arrest the inevitable collapse of many such structural heritage in similar socio-politico-economic contexts. The restoration project of Barrackpore Park definitely poses valid arguments to re-think, debate and if possible, re-frame the charters of restoration and conservation to make such processes sustainable and feasible under specific contexts.

4.5 Half-done Heritage Revitalization of Hooghly river-front towns: A ray of Hope in Konnagar

4.5.1 Introduction

While throwing light on the political and social condition of English in India, W.S. Seton-Karr, C.S., President of the Record Commission, in Selections from Calcutta Gazetteers of the year 1784, 1785, 1786, 1787 and 1788, records a poem, entitled 'Bandel' (1784) which describes Bandel as a coveted land:

*Come listen to me whilst I tell,
The charms I found at fair Bandel
In pleasing lines the objects fell,
In prospect view'd from high Bandel
There's Hooghly mounted on a swell,
To improve the scenery round Bandel
Here the bank rises, there's a dell
A change peculiar to Bandel
Water you'll find in many a well
That's clear and sweet about Bandel
No dirty road, or stinking smell,
Will e'er offend you at Bandel
All bilious gloom you'd soon dispel
By a short sejour at Bandel*

*And nowhere meet with the pareil,
Of healthy air that's at Bandel
'Tis fine to hear the Padre's Bell
Summon to Vespers at Bandel
Would you be known to many a Belle
Whose beauty charms you at Bandel,
Ask, who loves to dwell
And scribble verses at Bandel
Lives like a Hermit in his cell,
Scarce ever seen but at Bandel
I thought I have found there Madame Pelle,
But she, alas has left Bandel
Each other place is hot as hell,
When breezes fan you at Bandel,
I'm sure no argument can quell,
My furious penchant for Bandel,
Had I Ten houses- all I'd sell
And live entirely at Bandel
Come let's away there. (22)*

One invariably understands that this 'penchant' for Bandel in the late eighteenth century is largely for the immaculate advancement of the region owing to its proximity to Saptagram port, as well as for the fascination to reside amidst pristine natural landscape. Incidentally, from sixteenth century onwards, the gradual settlements of various European power along the western bank of river Hugli led to the advancement of trade and commerce, which in turn, necessitated the intersection of diverse life style and construction of public and domestic buildings of diverse architectural pattern. Even seventy-two years after India's Independence, one can still notice several remnants of the time gone by in the beautiful structure that silently speak of Hooghly's chequered past. Interestingly enough in the last eight to nine years, the importance of revitalization of colonial structures as a means of preservation of their heritage values as well as



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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to confirm that the report and compendium of case studies, Hugli Heritage Management Strategy (ISBN: 978-1-910911-17-4) was published by the University of Liverpool in January 2020, co-edited by Dr Ian Magedera and I, and handed over to the Chairperson of the West Bengal Heritage Commission, Sri Suvapasanna during an event held in Serampore during the same month.

The publication features a chapter contribution by Dr Antara Mukherjee entitled, "Half-done Heritage Revitalization of Hooghly River-front Towns: A Ray of Hope in Konnagar" (pp. 84-97). The well-contextualised case study of Konnagar was a significant contribution to the monograph and central to its thematic direction and geographic thrust.

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

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