

'Paschim': A Popular Medical Tourism Destination in Colonial Bengal

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Abstract: *During the colonial period Paschim of Santal Pargana was beautified by the elite Bengali people to save them from the hot and humid climatic condition of deltaic Bengal. Paschim emerged as the medicalized leisure resort under the colonial Government. During the colonial period, elite and affluent Bengali people used to go to the 'Paschim' to recover their health. The 'Paschim' consisted of Madhupur, Giridih, Deogarh, Karmatar and other places of Santal Pargana. The climatic condition of these places was very healthy. The major thrust of my paper is about why the elite Bengali people explored Paschim as a health sanitarium of Bengal? What did the 'Paschim' denote? Why did they travel to this part of our country? Who were the Bengali travelers who visited that region and set up their own resting houses? Why and how did Paschim emerge as a popular medical tourism destination in Colonial Bengal? Who were the key players in tourism, leisure and recreation in Paschim? This paper is all about finding answers to these questions.*

Keywords: Paschim; Santal Pargana; Medical Tourism; Madhupur; Giridih; Deogarh; Karmatar; health sanitarium; climatic condition; colonial Bengal

During the colonial era, the favorite travel destination of the elite and wealthy Bengalis was the Santal Parganas and the Chotanagpur areas. Madhupur, Giridih, Deoghar, Shimultala of Santal Parganas were the places where Bengalis went to recover health or recuperate from illness. Till 1912 these places were part of undivided Bengal. In 1912 Bihar and Orissa were separated from Bengal and emerged as new provinces. In 1936, Bihar and Orissa were given the status of separate states. Santal Parganas became part of Bihar. Since the settlements were on the western part of Bengal province they were popularly known as 'Paschim'. It was famous for its recovering health and also for its scenic beauty. Bengalis loved to go there during *Puja* vacation as well as in autumn, spring and winter. This vacation was known popularly as 'change' or '*hawa badal*'. Santal Parganas was famous for its pleasant weather. This area was discovered by a Bengali gentleman Bijay Narayan Kundu. He happened to be in this place on the contract of paving rail tracks from Madhupur to Giridih in 1871. He liked the hilly Madhupur

covered with a jungle of Sal and Mahua trees. So he settled there. He made the place popular. Many Bengali people followed him. Some of the famous Bengali personalities attracted by the beauty of this place were Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, Jyotirindranath Tagore, Rabindranath Tagore, Jagadish Chandra Bose, Nazrul Islam, Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay et al. Thus the Bengali people made the place popular. They created their little colony there. For Bengalis 'to go for change' or 'to go west' meant moving to Santal Parganas.

Reasons for Travel to 'Paschim':

The Santal Parganas and Chotanagpur were dry areas with an abundance of sunlight and fresh air. The climate of the plains of Bengal was not healthy. The attack of malarial fever made people in villages abandon their houses.¹ The hot weather in the city caused stomach ailments. To escape from these twin ailments Bengali people shifted elsewhere. They developed the knack of travel. They wanted to settle not in some foreign land, but the western part of undivided Bengal in a plateau region. The water of this region was tasty and digestive. The water was also very helpful in curing stomach ailments. The air was healthy and cool. Some people used to come twice a year, some stayed permanently. Not only for health reasons, but Bengali people also made a home at 'Paschim' for two other reasons: i) employment in many Government offices. ii) And many came for change. This was an ideal place for change. Santal Parganas were dry, free from urban crowd and epidemic diseases like plague, cholera, etc. The rule of law under the British helped the Bengali people to build lavish houses there. So Bengali people built their cherished sanatoriums in places like Madhupur, Deoghar, Giridih, Shimultala, Karmakar, and so on.² These were the new romantic destinations for Bengali travelers.

Colonial Architecture:

Architecture is one of the most prominent markers of colonialism. Bengali travelers had constructed their dream houses in the 'Paschim'. The houses were made in the pattern of the European bungalows. Some houses had Greek Corinthian pillars. They had wonderful names such as 'Upalpath', 'Swastika', 'Niribili', 'Khelaghar', 'Bratati', 'Mandar', 'Balaka', 'Kheya', 'Ekante', 'Aram', 'Biram', 'Banashree', 'River view' etc. Almost all the houses had gardens. Many of these had fireplaces and mantelpieces.³ So in Santal Parganas, Bengali travelers built their rest houses and Madhupur, Giridih, Karmatar, Deoghar, became the centers of pleasure travel destinations for the Bengalis.

Madhupur:

Madhupur was located in the East Indian Railway network of Howrah – Patna – Mughal Sarai mainline. It was a small junction station under Santal Parganas.⁴ It was a picturesque settlement, surrounded by *Sal-Mahua* forest.

People collected honey from the adjacent forests, so the name 'Madhupur' (Madhu means honey) was very attractive. In 1870 – 1871, Bijoy Narayan Kundu, the zamindar of Itachuna of Hooghly first came to Madhupur to lay down the rail tracks of Madhupur–Giridih branch line under East Indian Railways.⁵ His father Sri Narayan Kundu had his Salt factory in Madhupur Bazar. He was suffering from a stomach ailment for a long time. The quality of water in this region helped him get cured completely. So he built his house in Madhupur Bazar. His son Bijoynarayan Kundu became wealthy by engaging in rail contractor ship. Attracted by the healthy climate of Madhupur, he bought the land rights of Sheik para mouja for a very nominal price from the Ghatoal Raja of Pathrole. Bijoynarayan had acquired much land in Madhupur. Before the lagging of rail tracks, there was hardly any modern civilization. Due to forest and plateau, the region was difficult terrain. The inhabitants were the Santals. Bijoy Narayan started advertising the healthy climate of Madhupur. He was a living advertisement for the Bengali people suffering from typhoid, malaria and stomach ailments. The Bengali middle class known as 'changer babu' came to Madhupur. Bijoynarayan built 18 rest houses and rented them to the batoos. He constructed his residence and named 'Kundubari'. The place came to be known as 'Kundu Bungalow'.⁶

The cost of living at Madhupur was very cheap. House rent was also nominal. Farmers used to carry their fresh vegetables and fish to the doorsteps. Pure 'ghanni pressed' mustard oil was available, pure milk was abundant. Card, butter and chicken were available. No stomach problems occurred due to the fresh groundwater of wells coming from rock beds. The breeze was very cool and refreshing. Shyamaprasad Mukherjee portrayed this in his diary:

"In summer one could get, for a rupee, twelve to sixteen seers of milk. During the pujas it would escalate to eight seers for a rupee (Probably because of demand shooting up, due to the influx of a large number of people from Calcutta)... food was cheap and plentiful at Madhupur ... every morning we used to have a lamp of butter with mishri (crystallized lump of sugar)"⁷

Bengali bamboos always used to marvel at the fact that prices of foodstuffs were much less and very cheap. They used to exclaim to one another 'Damn cheap, Damn cheap'. The illiterate Santal would copy the expression and call them 'Danchi Babu'.⁸ Long before the encroachment of Bengalees, the British had come to Madhupur for imperial governance. Madhupur was initially a military Cantonment.⁹ The retired British offices built rest houses here before the Bengalees come. The British *bungalows* were built in western style. The then lieutenant of British India Alfred Benjamin constructed a rest house named 'Grey Cot' in 1888.¹⁰ All kinds of entertainment facilities were available for the British officers.

Some famous Bengalees who built their dream houses in Madhupur were

Nilmoni Mitra, Sashibhushan Chatterjee, Raibahadur Khagendranath Mitra, Poet Dwijendralal Roy, Satyendranath Dutta, Jyotindramohan Bagchi, Asutosh Mukhopadhyay and Kazi Nazrul Islam also came here for health reasons. It had become a famous health resort. In this contest L.S.S O'Mally said,

"A number of new houses have consequently, been built in recent years by residents of Calcutta and other places. It is a growing town with a considerable number of European railway employers and an increasing population of Bengali gentlemen who have country residences here."¹¹

Famous Bengali engineer Nilmoni Mitra visited Madhupur during the *Puja* vacation of 1883. He liked the place and between 1883-1894 he constructed 6 houses for the Bengali tourists. He gave strange names to his houses – '*Bat tala*', '*Kanthaltala*', '*Peyaratala*' etc. His own large two storyed houses were known as '*Jheel Bari*'.¹² Sashibhushan Chatterjee a famous geography textbook writer had built a 'rest bungalow'. It was built before 1891. He had bought 100 bighas of land and constructed a rose garden called '*Chatterjee's Rose Garden*'. The rose and blue Orchid of this garden were famous. Even the railway timetable mentioned, '*Madhupur is famous for Chatterjee's Rose Garden*'.¹³

In the east of Madhupur from Kusuma to fifty-two *Bigha*, Patoabad in the west, Patharchapti in South to Sapaha, Seth Villa in North extended colonies of the Bengalees. Many rest houses and bungalows were built. Sir Gurudas Bandyopadhyay built his house '*Kshirod Bhavan*' at Patharchapti.¹⁴ Sir Debaprasad Sarbadhikary was a member of the viceroy's council. He built a house in Madhupur called '*Prasadpur*'. The chief architect of Bengalees Settlement was the manager of the king of Pathrole, *Rai Sahib* Matilal Mitra Bahadur. Since he was the manager of Pathrole zamindars estate, the Bengalees did not face any hassle. His house was known as '*Kathaltala Bari*'. Bengal tiger Sir Asutosh Mukhopadhyay bought 10 *bighas* of land from Bijoy Narayan Kundu in 1904. In 1912 he built a huge house called '*Gangaprasad House*'.¹⁵ In 1901 – 04 his father had stayed in Madhupur for health reasons. He came with his family during the vacation of Calcutta High Court to spend leisure time. Since he was the Judge of Calcutta High Court and vice-chancellor of Calcutta University, many lawyers and Professors came to Gangaprasad House at Madhupur to meet with Asutosh. In 1921 Asutosh organized Durga Puja at Madhupur House. During 1912 – 1922 Gangaprasad House remained vibrant. Asutosh went to Madhupur in 1923 during the Christmas holiday. In 1924 Asutosh himself expired out of grief for his deceased daughter.¹⁶

To reclaim his health poet Kazi Nazrul Islam came with his wife to Madhupur. On 17 July 1942, he wrote a letter to Dr. Shyamaprasad Mukhopadhyay,

“স্ত্রী চরণেযু, আমার সশ্রদ্ধ প্রণাম গ্রহণ করুন। মধুপুরে এসে অনেক relief & relaxation অনুভব করছি। মাথার যন্ত্রণা অনেকটা কমেছে। জিহ্বার জড়ত্ব সামান্য কমেছে। আমার স্ত্রী আজ প্রায় পাঁচ বৎসর পঙ্গু হয়ে শয্যাগত হয়ে পড়ে আছে। ওকে অনেক কষ্টে এখানে এনেছি।”

Nazrul wrote a letter to his friend Zulfikar Haidar in 17 July, 1942,

“আমি অতি কষ্টে লিখছি। আমার বাড়িতে অসুখ, ঋণ, পাওনাদারদের তাগাদা প্রভৃতি সকাল থেকে রাত্রি পর্যন্ত খাটুনি। তারপর নবযুগের worries ৩/৪ মাস পর্যন্ত। এই সব কারণে আমার Nerves Shattered হয়ে গেছে।”

To help poet Nazrul out of his difficult days, Shyamaprasad Mukhopadhyay was still toiling much, before Nazrul was down with the disease, how much Shyamaprasad was active in helping him out, is evident Shyamaprasad's comment on Nazrul's letter:

কী ব্যবস্থা করা যাবে সে বিষয়ে জুলফেকার হায়দরের সহিত কথা হয়েছে। সুস্থ হয়ে ফেরৎ আসে।

Shyamaprasad stayed at Madhupur House for a month in 1945. He was accompanied by his mother Jogmayadevi. Since he had a heart attack, the doctors had advised him to go for a change. He had written in his diary that summer vacation, Christmas vacation and during *Puja* vacation, they went to Madhupur.²⁰

Many famous Bengali people built their houses in Madhupur. In 1915 Anathanath Sadhu constructed '*Matrika*' and '*Sadhu Sangha*', two huge palatial buildings Dwijendralal Roy Constructed '*Dwijashram*'. The wife of poet Satyendranath Dutta, Sonama spent her last days at '*Shama Dham*'. Maharaja Bahadur Jyotindramohan Thakur Constructed '*Tagore Cot*'. Nalininath Seth, Raibahadur of Burrabazar, Calcutta went to Madhupur for 'change'. He built a house called '*Seth Villa*'. In 1927, the Second President of Ram Krishna Math and Mission, Swami Sivananda stayed here for two months. Bhutnath Chattopadhyay constructed '*Ram Kali Lodge*'. Railway contractor Devendranath Sanyal of Sreerampore constructed '*Red-Cot*'. Raja Praddumna Mullick came to Madhupur for 'change' during the winter season. He was engrossed in a sophisticated lifestyle. Travel and hunting were his favourite pass time. He constructed '*Marble Hall*' at Madhupur. Babu Amrita Lal Shil, the zamindar of Satgachia, Kalna constructed '*Shil Kuthi*'. Some other important houses were '*Aparajita*' of Khagendranath Mitra, the zamindar of 52 *Bigha*, Dr. Haren Mukherjee's '*Swastika*', Mymensingh's zamindar's '*Subhra*', Dr. R Ahmed's '*River View*', Ashu Ghosh's '*Sonar Bangla*', '*Bagchi Villa*' of Jyotindramohan Bagchi, the zamindar of Bhagyakal, etc. Manindra Chandra Nandi, the Maharaja of Kashimbazar, Murshidabad constructed his summer resort. Famous doctor Ajit Kumar Bandopadhyay built '*Bhagyabati Aloy*'. Poet Kiran Chandra Dutta of Bagbazar, Calcutta built his house '*Lakshmi Niwas*'.²¹ He wrote '*Archana*' a collection of poems. In a poem in this book '*Madhupur*

Madhukatha', he discussed the Journey, intermediate stations as well as Madhupur's important areas and houses of famous persons were given. The poem is as follow:

মাঝে শোভে মধুপুর খালি মধু-ভরা।
 কুপ-জলে ছোট্টে সদা সুধার ফোয়ারা।।
 সাঁওতাল-পরগনা মাঝে এই গ্রাম।
 বহুজাতি সমাবেশে বহুজাতি ধাম।।
 'কুন্ডু বাংলায়' জোড়া আধখানা গ্রাম।
 'নীলমণি মিত্র' গঠে বহুবিধ ধাম।।
 পশ্চিমে 'বাহান্ন-বিঘা', স্মিথের ভবন।
 'আর মিত্র' করে তারে নন্দন-কানন।।
 'পাণিখোলা' মুখপাতে 'ঠাকুর-কুটীর'।
 'বলাই ঔষধালয়', সুন্দর প্রাচীর।।
 'পথের-চাপটি শুরু রেস্ট বাঙলায়'।
 'জজ গুরদাস' গড়ে সুন্দর আলায়।।
 ভবন, আলায়, কুঞ্জ, গ্লেন, ডেন্ নামে।
 উদ্যান-আলায়, কত দক্ষিণেও বামে।।
 অসংখ্য গোলাপ-বেল-যুথিকা-চালেমি।
 জবায় করেছে আলো-দেখ আঁখি মেলি।।
 রেলের ওপারে দূরে 'আশুতোষ-ধাম'।
 বাঙ্গালার, বাঙ্গালি শিরোমণি নাম।।
 'মধুপুর-মধুকথা' অমৃত সমান।
 শ্রীকিরণ দত্ত কহে —শূনে পুণ্যবান।²²

So the poem '*Madhupur Madhukatha*' is a historical document of Madhupur. The Bengalis not only came to Madhupur as tourists, but they also constructed roads, public health centre, hospitals, schools & colleges. In the spread of education and culture, the contribution of the Bengalees cannot be overlooked.

Giridih:

Madendranath Mukhapadhyay and Gostha Bihari Kundu of Hooghly District came to Giridih for the contract of Madhupur-Giridih rail track construction. The stomach ailment of Gostha Behari Kundu was cured by the water quality of Giridih.²³ Thus Gostha Kundu bought lots of lands – Giridih was a region rich with minerals. In 1892 'Barganda Copper Corporation' was established

by some German entrepreneurs. But at that time there was no facility for the purification of Copper. The transport facility was not good. Thus the business of the German's was a flopped venture. In 1890, German businessmen sold out all their land property in Giridih.²⁴ These lands were purchased by Bengalees. Tinkari Basu was an early inhabitant of Giridih. On the inspiration and enterprise of Tinkari Basu, many Bengali people started coming in here. Sashibhushn Basu's 'Old Bungalows' was one of the prominent houses of Giridih. Writer Jogindranath Sarkar, Dr. Nilratan Sarkar, Harakumar Guha Roy, Amritanath Mitra, Heramba Chandra Maitra, Baman Das Mazumdar, Srish Chandra Mazumdar, Brajendra Kishor Roy Chowdhury, Satyananda Basu, Gagan Chandra Holme visited Giridih for a 'change'.²⁵ The Bengali travelers came here and they were mesmerized by Giridih's natural scenery and healthy climate.

Famous physician and doctor Nil Ratan Sarkar lived in Giridih. His house was known as '*Majhla Kothi*'.²⁶ He died in 1943 in this house. Nirmal Kumari Mahalanobis's father Heramba Chandra Moitra constructed a huge garden house called '*Kamal Nibas*'. After some time, in the land given by Nirmal Kumari's father, three houses '*Mahua*', '*Uttara*' and '*Shalboni*' were constructed in Shantiniketan style of architecture.²⁷ His son-in-law the great Scientist Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis established the 'Statistical Institute' in that land. Amrita Lal Mitra was the District Judge of Giridih and he built his house '*Shanti Nibas*'. This house was the favorite destination of Scientist J. C. Bose. In 1937 he breathed his last in this house.²⁸ Jogindranath Sarkar built his house '*Golkuthi*'. This house was very famous at that time. 'Rose Villa' of Hemendra Mohan Bose, '*Upala Path*' of Suresh Chandra Sarkar, '*Dowarkin Lodge*' of Dwarakanath Ghosh, '*Jayanti*' of Biswanath Roy was famous houses at Giridih. Brajendra Kishor Roy Chowdhury, the zamindar of Gauripur, Manoranjan Guha Thakurata of Bakhargunj was attracted by the pleasant natural beauty of Giridih.²⁹

One of the famous tourists to Giridih was Rabindranath Tagore. He came here for relaxation and 'change'. He first came in 1903.³⁰ He revisited Giridih in 1904.³¹ In Barganda area, a bungalow-type house made of tile roof named 'Jore Bungalow' was given to him. He was accompanied by his sons Rathindranath, Shamindranath and daughter Mira. His close friend Srish Chandra Mazumdar was the then land acquisition Deputy Magistrate of Giridih. Tagore spent almost a year in Giridih. '*Shivaji Utsab*', a poem composed by Tagore written by him while staying at Giridih. In 1905, Tagore came to Giridih for the third time. Bengal was turbulent during the time of the Partition of Bengal. Tagore composed many patriotic songs at this time in Giridih. '*O amar Desher Mati*', '*Ebar tor Mara Ganga Ban Eseche*', '*Je Tomai chhare chharuk*', '*Jodi tor dak sune keo na ase*' are a few instances.³² Tagore invested money with the '*Giridih Swadeshi Gola*'. '*Swadeshi Bhikshu Sampraday*' was established by him for the promotion of the National Fund. In 1907 he visited Giridih for the last time.³³

Karmatar:

In 1871, the railway was introduced in Jamtara – Madhupur. Karmatar was a small station. The neo–middle class of Calcutta was attracted by the distant location, natural beauty and climate. They bought huge land at Karmatar. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar visited Karmatar to get relief from household disturbances, city chaos and relief from work pressure. Vidyasagar made a house at Karmatar named '*Nandan Kanan*' or '*Grove of Delights*'.³⁴ A recent scholar argues that:

In those days Karmatar lay in the region known as the '*Santal Parganas*'. Though less than three hundred kilometers from Calcutta, Karmatar must have seemed a world away from the social and intellectual universe of the colonial metropolis, an ideal place to escape the dirt, heat and disease of the city. Rail service to the region only opened in 1871, at which point Karmatar became a station stop on the line between Jamtara and Madhupur. It wasn't long before members of Calcutta's growing middle class began acquiring property there, attracted by the combination of remoteness, accessibility and salubrious climate. No doubt this is what led Vidyasagar to choose Karmatar to be his '*Grove of Delights*'.³⁵

During his time Karmatar was an unknown settlement. The Santals were the inhabitants. The Socio-economic situation of the Santals was upsetting. Vidyasagar tried to reduce the poverty of the Santals. He helped the Santals in many ways. So he became a favourite person among the Santals. He loved the Santals of Karmatar. If the Santals fell ill, they did not have money for treatment and buy medicine. Thus Vidyasagar started Homeopathy treatment in Karmatar. He opened a charitable dispensary at Karmatar to serve the poor Santals. He gave them medicine free of cost.³⁶ The Santals sold the corns to Vidyasagar. He bought crops and arranged for their food.³⁷ But Vidyasagar's financial situation was not very well. Hara Prasad Shastri and Shiba Prasanna Bhattacharyya, lawyers of Calcutta High Court went to see Vidyasagar in Karmatar.³⁸ Vidyasagar was the father, patron, friend and guide of the Santals. Though he came for '*change*' and to regain his health, he suffered pain from the poverty of the Santals. In 1891, Vidyasagar breathed his last at '*Nandan Kanan*' at Karmatar.³⁹

Rabindranath Tagore also visited Karmatar with Arunendranath and Balendranath in 1893.⁴⁰ He stayed at '*Mahendra Dham*', the house of Mahendranath Srimani. Tagore came to Karmatar to take a rest. The house was known as '*Golap Bagan*'.⁴¹

Deoghar:

Deoghar under Santal Parganas was a popular health resort of the Bengalees. For '*change*' and regain health, many upper-class Bengali people came to

Deoghar from Calcutta and lived for some months. From the Pujas till April – May, the town was filled with Bengalee Baboos and their families. They had many rented houses. The town expanded after Bengalee Baboos came to Deoghar. The elite area Carstairs Town was very popular among the Bengali Baboos. Other areas were Bompas town, William Town etc.⁴² The local people called newly arrived bamboos '*hawa khore baboo*' and the Bengalees called them '*Changers Baboos*'. Most of them were wealthy People, Raja and Zamindars. L.S.S.O'Malley wrote:

The place has a reputation as a Sanatorium among the Indian Community, and the numerous house springing up on its outskirts testify to its popularity among those who can afford to maintain a Country house.⁴³

'Change' and Baidyanath darshan were the two main attractions of Deoghar. For Baidyanath darshan, the first visitor was Sree Ramakrishna Paramhansa Dev. In 1861 he went to Baidyanath with Maa Sarada. To travel from Jasidih to Deoghar, at that time walking was resorted to. Ramakrishna traveled by foot. Rani Rashmani's son-in-law Mathur acted as a guide. On the way, Ramakrishna witnessed the poor condition of the local people. So he decided not to go to Baidyanath. He instructed Mathur to arrange food and cloth for those people, only then he would go visit Baidyanath. Mathur returned to Calcutta for money and arranged for food and cloth for the poor people. Ramakrishna was very pleased and visited Baidyanath Dham. They stayed there for seven days in the house of Mathur called '*Nitya Dham*'. Among the people who visited Deoghar was Raj Narayan Basu.⁴⁴ He was the great maternal grandfather of Rishi Aurobinda. He was the Head Master of Midnapore Govt. School. He had a digestive problem. So the doctor told him to take leave from work and go for a change. At that time his friend Bhudev Mukhopadhyay was posted as School Inspector at Deoghar. He initiated and brought Raj Narayan to Deoghar in 1879 with digestive problems. He wrote:

১৮৮৬ সালের ৫ই মার্চ তারিখে আমার প্রথম শুইয়া মাথা ঘোরে। তাহাতে আমি বড়ো ভীত হয়। ঐ দিন আমার বায়ু রোগের আরম্ভের দিন।

He came with voluntary retirement and at that time his monthly pension was Rs 33/- rupees. On the advice of Bhudev Mukhopadhyay, he visited Deoghar. He first stayed at the house of Surya Kanta Chowdhury, the zamindar of Taki. Later he built his own house in Deoghar's Purandah area. He wrote two books while staying at Deoghar – '*Briddho Hindur Asha Pranayam*' (1880) and '*Atma Charita*' (1889).⁴⁶ He contributed to the development of education and health in Deoghar. When Rajnarayan Basu fell ill, Dr. Nil Ratan Sarkar came for his treatment. Apart from him, other famous personalities like Rabindranath Tagore, Nabin Chandra Sen, Shibnath Shastri, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Bijay Krishna Goswami, Rantanu Lahiri, Madan Mohan Malabya, Akshay Chandra Sarkar, Gouradas Basak, Sishir Kumar Ghosh,

Krishna Kumar Mitra, Hemendra Prasad Ghosh, Sakharam Ganesh Deuskar visited Deoghar.⁴⁷

In 1885, Tagore went to Deoghar for the first time.⁴⁸ From the Diary of Raj Narayan Basu:

২ ভাদ্র, ১৭ আগস্ট, সোমবার, ১২৯২ সাল (১৮৮৫ খ্রীঃ) অদ্য রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর কলিকাতা হইতে আসিলেন তাহাতে মহা আনন্দের উদয় হয়। ৩ ভাদ্র, ১৮ আগস্ট, মঙ্গলবার অদ্য রবীন্দ্রনাথ কলিকাতায় গমন করেন। তাঁহার সহবাসে এই দুই দিন আনন্দে কাটানো যায়।

Tagore went to Deoghar on 17 August and returned from there on 18 August to Calcutta. Tagore got the resources for his '*Rajarshi*' novel and '*Bisarjan*' play from Deoghar. He went to Deoghar for the second time on the occasion of Sarala Devi's marriage.⁵⁰ Sarala Devi's marriage took place on 4 October 1905. She was brought from Mayarati Ashram to Deoghar for her marriage ceremony. Sarala Devi mentioned the wedding ceremony in her memoir '*Jiboner Jharapata*'. Sarala Devi's husband Ram Bhuj Dutta Chowdhury was a famous nationalist leader of Punjab. A separate accommodation was rented for the guests. Her other relatives like Jyotirindranath, Satyendranath, Jnanadanandini Devi, Rabindranath, Dwijendranath, Soudamini Devi, Pramatha Chowdhuri were invited as guests. Besides, tourists from Madhupur and Deoghar who were there for 'change' were also invited to that grand reception.⁵¹

Swami Vivekanada came to Deoghar in 1889 to recuperate from illness.⁵² But he did not get much result. He was very upset and he wrote a letter to Balaram Basu:

বৈদ্যনাথে পূর্ণবাবুর বাসায় কয়েকদিন আছি। শীত বড়ো নাই, শরীর ও বড়ো ভালো নহে — হজম হয় না, বোধ হয় জলে লোহাধিকের জন্য। কিছুই ভালো লাগিল না— স্থান-কাল ও সঙ্গ। কাল কাশী চলিলাম।

He wrote another letter:

বৈদ্যনাথ হাওয়া সম্বন্ধে অত্যন্ত উৎকৃষ্ট, কিন্তু জল ভালো নহে, পেট বড়ো খারাপ করে। আমার প্রত্যহ অশ্বল হইত।

In 1899 in a letter to Miss Joe he informs about the hopelessness of Deoghar. He wrote:

বৈদ্যনাথে বায়ু পরিবর্তনে কোনো ফল হয়নি। সেখানে আটদিন শ্বাসকষ্টে প্রাণ যায়যায়। মৃতকল্প অবস্থায় আমাকে কলকাতায় ফিরিয়ে আনা হয়।

Swamiji lived in the house of Priyanath Mukhopadhyay. The house was known as '*AnandaKutir*'. Due to hard work, Swamiji's Health had deteriorated. He loved to visit Santal Pargana and he Visited Deoghar several times. Poet Nabin Chandra Sen visited Deoghar in 1889. He was suffering from Cystitis (inflammation of the urinary bladder. It is often caused by infection and is usually accompanied by frequent painful urination).⁵⁶ He stayed at the house

of Sisir Kumar Ghosh. The symptom of this disease was excessive urination. Thus, during his stay at Deoghar, the poet did not sleep well at night. Thus his Deoghar stay was not a happy one. He wrote his '*Prabas Patra Bharat Bhraman Brittanta*':

বৈদ্যনাথ, দেওঘর বা দেবঘর, অতিসুন্দর ও স্বাস্থ্যকর স্থান বলিয়া শুনিয়া ছিলাম, কিন্তু আমার তত ভালো লাগিল না।

Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay visited Deoghar in 1937.⁵⁸ He stayed at 'Malancha', the house of Guru Das Chattopadhyay. Sarat Chandra wrote a letter to Dr Satyendranath Gangopadhyay:

রবিঠাকুরের সেই শ্লোকটা মনে পড়ে — নিজের আশেপাশে চেয়ে — নানান ছাপের জমলো শিশি — নানান মাপের কৌটা হল জড়ো, ব্যাধির চেয়ে আধি হল বড়ো, ডাক্তারেরা বললে তখন হাওয়া বদল করো। অথচ ভারি শীত কাতুরে লোক আমি, দেওঘরের কনকনে বাতাস মনে পড়লেই যাবার উৎসাহ নেবে zero ডিগ্রিতে এসে দাঁড়ায়।

Sarat Babu's health was improved in Deoghar. He wrote a letter to Umaprasad Mukhopadhyay, the famous Himalaya Traveller in 1343 BS. He wrote:

এখানে এসে ভালোই আছি। জ্বর নেই বোধ হয়, কারণ থার্মোমিটার দেবার কিছুমাত্র প্রয়োজন আছে মনে হয়না। ভয় ছিল কনস্টিপেশান হবার অন্তত উইন্ড নিশ্চয় পেট ভরিয়ে রাখবে, কিন্তু এখনও সেরকম কিছু দেখিনে। যেমন কলকাতায় অল্পস্বল্প ছিল প্রায় তেমনি। বরং কম সবাই বলছেন, চেপে মাসখানেক থাকতে পারলে সব দিকেই উন্নতি হবে। হয় যদি, স্বীকার করতেই হবে বর্তমান ফাঁড়াটা কাটল এ যাত্রায়।

Kazi Nazrul Islam visited Deoghar. The famous doctor Dr. Hiralal Bose established Dr. Bose's Sanatorium. Nazrul stayed in that Sanatorium.⁶¹ During his stay at Deoghar, the poet wrote '*Sneha Bhitu*', '*Muktihar*', '*Pratibeshini*', '*Chhal Kumari*' etc poems. He also composed a song in Santali tune. He wrote a letter to his friend Pabitra Mukhopadhyay:

জায়গাটা মন্দ নয়। তবে এক মাসের বেশি থাকতে পারব না এখানে, কেননা এখানে খুববেশী আনন্দ পাচ্ছি না। শীতের এ জায়গা।

Writer and Journalist Sharat Chandra Dutta visited Deoghar. He wrote about Deoghar in his article '*Baidyanath*':

বৈদ্যনাথ খুব স্বাস্থ্যকর জায়গা। বৈদ্যনাথ অথবা দেওঘর শহরটি খুব ছোট — কিন্তু ইহার চারিদিকেই বন, জঙ্গল, পাহাড়, নদী, বড় বড় মাঠ এই সব।

There was no end to the infiltration of Bengali Travellers in Deoghar. Head Master of Rajendralal Mitra Institution Sachindranath Basu built his house '*Ratnachal*' at Deoghar. Zamindar of Rajshahi Sharada Dutta built his house '*Math Bari*' at Belabagan. Radhika Prasad Ghosh built his house '*Asothya Chhaya*' The daughter of Raj Narayan Basu; Swarnalata also constructed her

house named 'Swaranalata Bhaban'. Politician Sisir Kumar, Judge Sri Chandra Madhab Ghosh, Zamindar of Agradwip Ramaprasad Mullick visited Deogarh for a change. During the Pujas and Christmas holidays, the Deogarh houses were filled with different classes of people. In the houses of Changer Baboos, all types of entertainment were available. Card play, chess, music and song, discussion, tea parties were held. Many houses had also tennis courts.⁶⁴

To conclude, the economic depression affected the Bengalese after World War II. Since then, they lost the inner urge for Santal Parganas. Bengal was divided and the Bengalese of Calcutta sold those dream houses at negligible prices. The Bengalese of Santal Parganas still hold on to these Properties, it is seen that their future generations did not have the economic source to hold on to the property. The knack of 'change' also was lost as the viewpoint changed. The joint families broke up. Due to ownership disputes, the houses were left without guardians. The nature and character of the local people also changed. The caretaker as a gardener of the Bengalese, like a family member, also did not hesitate to capture the property. The cherished sanatoriums of the Bengalese, the furniture, doors and windows, land everything was captured. During the inter-war period, with illegal trade, some non-Bengali traders took possession of the house of the Bengalese.

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