IDEOLOGY OF THE FARAIZI MOVEMENT OF BENGAL

ABSTRACT

THESIS
SUBMITTED FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF THE
Doctor of Philosophy
IN
HISTORY

By
MUHAMMAD AHSAN ULLAH

Under the Supervision of
PROF. ISHTIYAQ AHMAD ZILLI

CENTRE OF ADVANCED STUDY
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY
ALIGARH (INDIA)

2001
The Faraizi movement of Bengal was the first organized Islamic revivalist movement in British India. It was not merely a religious movement but its activities also extended to socio-economic, political, cultural, *dawah*, and agrarian spheres. Its genesis could be traced to local factors such as religious, socio-economic and political conditions prevailing at that time in Bengal. But it was also influenced by the general awakening in the Muslim world and the rise of Islamic revivalist movements during the 19th century throughout the Muslim world. This movement was launched by Haji Shariatullah (1781-1840) in the first quarter of nineteen century in British Bengal. The basic aims and objectives of the movement were related to the religious reform and restoration of the true Islamic spirit but gradually its activities were extended to the spheres of Politics, economy and culture as without all round upliftment of the Muslims no real change could be expected to take place. Moreover, as Islam does not countenance a division among the various spheres of human society, the Faraizis could not have legitimately looked over these aspects.
This thesis seeks to put the Faraizi movement in its correct perspective by working out its ideology in relation to not only religion but other aspects of its activities which covered politics, economy, culture etc. This will help not only in comprehending the actual nature and character of the movement but also make it possible to assess its contribution in the transformation of the Bengali Muslim society as also its wider role outside the main areas of its influence.

The thesis is comprised of seven chapters. The first chapter delves into the background in which the Faraizi movement was launched and seeks to identify the factors which led to the emergence of the movement. Besides the factors which were clearly located in Bengali society itself, certain other factors which were operating beyond the frontiers of India almost throughout the Muslim world seem to have played a role in shaping the theological content of the movement. An attempt has been made to address the question that how far Faraizi movement was influenced by the contemporary reform movement working in India and outside India particularly the Wahhabi movement of Arabia and also to identify the elements that it might have borrowed from one or the other movement.
The second chapter explores the religio-spiritual ideology of the movement. As the strict followers of the *Quran, Sunnah* and *Hanafī* jurisprudence and *Qadiriya Silsilah* of sufism, the Faraizis emphasized on *Tauhid, Taubah, Shariat*, and all obligatory and fundamental teachings and duties of Islam. They particularly insisted on uncompromising *Tauhid*. Perhaps due to practical reasons, they followed the Qadiri *Sisilah* but they vehemently opposed everything which was not in strict conformity with the *Shriat*. They ruthlessly suppressed all kinds of un-Islamic ceremonies, rites, traditions customs, *bidat* and *Shirk* etc. As a result of their efforts and preaching, the regions under their dominance became singularly free from these evils and the true religious consciousness came to the free.

The third chapter is devoted to the study of *dawah* activities of the movement. The importance of *dawah*, its place in the Faraizi programme, the policies and strategies adopted for the realisation of this objective, the itinerant preachers and their methods have been discussed. If the whole picture is taken into consideration, it would clearly emerge that the Faraizi movement was basically and foremost a *dawah* movement.
The fourth chapter explains the Faraizi ideas and position relating to the socio-economic issues and problems faced by the peasants and weavers. The struggle that the Faraizis launched with a view to a meliorate the condition of these classes and provide them succour and relief from the overpowering burden under which they were groaning, is indeed a shining chapter in the history of the Faraizis. These measures helped in restoring the sense of dignity and self-respect among the peasants and weavers. The Faraizis tirelessly struggled against atrocities of zamindars and indigo planters and their role in organising resistance to them through combinations, strikes and risings is historical. These activities of the Faraizis forced the hands of the government to take cognizance of the gravity of the situation and seriousness of the problem and to take remedial steps. Formation of Indigo commission of 1860 and promulgation of a number of acts owe their origin to the Faraizi resistance.

Fifth chapter describes political ideology of the Faraizis. Many modern historians think that it was not involved in matters of political nature and hence it was basically apolitical, interested only in religious reform. But a dispassionate examination of the evidence available on the subject would not go to support this contention. On the contrary, it would seem that
it had all the basic ingredients of a political party, particularly because Islam does not brook any division between politics and religion as Imam Ghazali has affirmed that state and religion are twins. To begin with, along with the religious reform which was the prime concern of the Faraizis, they also sought the expulsion of the alien British rule and establishment of Islamic state as many of the religious obligations could not be discharged under a non-Muslim government. Hence their declarations of the British India as *Darul Harb* and suspensions of the *Juma* and *Id* prayers which remained suspended till the creation of Pakistan. The government also perceived their activities as anti-British and hence the Faraizi leaders were imprisoned on many occasions. Moreover, the establishment of courts to settle the disputes of the people, refusal to pay taxes and government due, occupation of government lands and other such activities in effect amounted to the establishment of a state within the state. Besides they rendered all possible help to the followers of Saiyid Ahmad Shahid and the rebels (Mujahid) during the fateful days of 1857. It was in keeping with this tradition that the Faraizis played active role in the movement for the creation of Pakistan. They continue to take deep interest in the political affairs of
Bangladesh even today. It is clear that they had a definite political ideology and worked hard for its realisation.

One of the areas where the Faraizis achieved greatest success was in the field of morality and culture. The sixth chapter seeks to study the moral and cultural ideology of the Faraizis. Morally and culturally the Bengali peasants were leading a life that was almost sub-human. While on the one hand, the Bengali Muslim society was full of ceremonies and rites which were blatantly un-Islamic. On the other hand, their long subjugation and exploitation by the zamindars and indigo-planters had deprived them of all sense of self-respect and honour. Dance, music, many ceremonies connected with birth, marriage and death which were thoroughly un-Islamic, were prevalent. Widow marriage was frowned upon. *Taziah* processions were common. The Faraizis worked relentlessly to eradicate all these un-Islamic customs and remarkably succeeded in cleansing the Bangla society from these evils. A sense of dignity of labour and self-respect was inculcated among them. Faraizi insistence on a particular code of dress and behaviour gave the peasants a distinct cultural identity. Widow marriage was encouraged and a series of such reforms were introduced which changed the very face of rural Bengal. Moreover, up to
that period generally Persian, Arabic or Urdu languages were used for the purpose of preaching and religious discourse. The Faraizis used Bangla as the medium of their preaching. It enabled them to establish rapport with the poorest of the poor and the most ignorant. At the same time it gave impetus to the Bangla which made rapid progress.

The last chapter examines the **Khilafat System** of the Faraizis and seeks to work out the hierarchical organisational structure that the Faraizis had established throughout the areas of their dominance. It was a very well-knit and effective set up and it was through its medium that they effectively controlled their vast following and kept them informed of their decisions and policies.
IDEOLOGY OF THE FARAIZI MOVEMENT OF BENGAL

THESIS
SUBMITTED FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF THE

Doctor of Philosophy
IN
HISTORY

By
MUHAMMAD AHSAN ULLAH

Under the Supervision of
PROF. ISHTIYAQ AHMAD ZILLI

CENTRE OF ADVANCED STUDY
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY
ALIGARH (INDIA)

2001
This is to certify that the thesis entitled "Ideology of the Faraizi Movement of Bengal" is original work of Mr. Muhammad Ahsan Ullah and fit for submission for the award of Doctor of Philosophy in History.

( Prof. Ishtiyaq Ahmad Zilli )
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgement</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1 - 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter – I</td>
<td>14 - 49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back Ground</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter – II</td>
<td>50 - 92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religio – Spiritual Ideology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter – III</td>
<td>93 - 106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Da’wah Ideology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter – IV</td>
<td>107 - 179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio – Economic Ideology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter – V</td>
<td>180 - 232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Ideology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter – VI</td>
<td>233 - 254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Ideology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter – VII</td>
<td>255 - 264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khilafat System of the Faraizis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>265 - 309</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim. First of all, I would most humbly like to express my profound gratitude and higher praises to Almighty Allah, who created me and gave me a chance to pursue and complete my Ph.D in A.M.U.

I am extremely fortunate to have the guidance of Professor Ishtiyaq Ahmad Zilli, whose guidance made my task easier as, I was a new entrant in this discipline. I am extremely grateful to him for his advice, help and guidance. He gave me full liberty in interpreting the evidence but always insisted on the exactness of the evidence. My research would not have been possible without him. In spite of his pre-occupations he could find time to go through the draft word by word more than once.

My gratitude is due to the chairman of the Department of History and coordinator CAS programme, Professor S.P. Gupta who was a constant source of inspiration for me. I will remain grateful to him for his encouragement. I would also like to express my thanks to professor Irfan Habib and former chairperson of the Department Professor Shireen Mosovee, who during early stage of my stay have been of much help to me.

I would like to record my sense of gratitude to the teachers and friends of AMU who have helped me in many ways. In this regard I would particularly like to mention the names of Professor I.H. Siddique, Prof. Abdul Bari, Dr. Shaikh Abdul Latif, Dr. Qamaruzzaman, Dr. Farhat Hasan, Dr. Iqbal Sabir, Dr. Parvez Nazir, Dr. Md. Ismail, Mr. Wasim Raja, Dr. I.G. Khan, Mr. Saifullah Saifi, Mr. Moinul Hoq, Taj Bhai, Dr. Mahbubur Rahman, Dr. Mohsinuddin, Idris Ali, Manzur Ahsan, Dr. Shawkat Jahangir, Dr. A.B.M. Mukhlesur Rahman, Abdul Malik, Belal Husain, Muslehuddin and others.

My thanks are due to my father in law, Professor Shafiqul Islam (former Registrar, Asian University of Bangladesh) and co-researcher Aziz Faisal for their taking the trouble of reading the proof of my thesis. My ailing mother, Begum Musarrafa Khatun (an octogenarian) waited with great patience for long four years for my thesis to be completed. My Sisters- Begum Tahira Akhtar and Begum Roqiyyah Akhtar and brothers, Md. Golam Mostafa, Md. Loqman Huq, and Maulana Solaiman Foizy- have been constant source of inspiration for me since my boyhood. It was because of them that I could work with peace of mind as they took the responsibility of looking after my ailing mother. I am also thankful to my all Bhabics, nephews and nieces.

I am also thankful to Faraizi historian, Professor Moinuddin Ahmad Khan, who provided me out line of this thesis and presented a number of unpublished articles on the subject. I am also
beholden to Professor Sharifuddin, (Director, NALB), Prof. Sirajul Islam (Director ASB), Prof. Abdul Bari, (Former Chairman, University Grants Commission), Shaikh Sayyed Assafti (Egyptian), Prof. A.N.M. Raisuddin, Prof. A.B.M. Habibur Rahman Chaudhory, Prof. Abu Bakr Siddique, Prof. Abul Kalam Patwary, Dr. A.N.M. Nurul Alam, Prof. A.H.M. Yahyar Rahman, Dr. Afazuddin, Dr. A.B.M. Siddiqur Rahman, Dr. Mustafa Kamal, Dr. Abdul Latif, Dr. M. Solaiman, Mohd. Ruhul Ameen, Sarwar Jahan, Dilwar Husain, Dr. A. R. Anwari, S.I. Nuri, S.M. Rizwan, Iqbal, Karim, Begum Khurshid Jahan, Tipu Sultan, Dr. A.F.M. Shafiqur Rahman, Gulam Mawla and Rowshan Ali and all inlaws.

My research at AMU was made possible by financial assistance from the Indian council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) and grant of study leave with pay by my parent Institution Islamic University, Kushtia. I will remain grateful to the authorities of these institutions for their kindness and favour.

My heartfelt thanks to the authorities of the Libraries of Bangladesh and India where I have consulted books and records. Libraries of Bangladesh : Islamic University, Kushtia. Islamic Foundation, Dhaka. Dhaka University, Public Library, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, National Library and Archives of Bangladesh, Supreme Court, Secretariat, National Museum, libraries of India : National Library of Calcutta, State Archives of West Bengal, Secretariat, Asiatic Society of Bengal. Nehru Library and Museum of Delhi, National Library, Jamia Millia Islamia, Deobond Madrasa, J.N.U., Delhi University, at Aligarh, Libraries of my Department Centre of Advanced Study, (Prof. Nurul Hasan Research Library) Arabic and Islamic studies, Political Science, Urdu, Theology, and Mawlana Azad Library. Thanks are due to all the staffs of above mentioned libraries specially the staff of the our Department library who generously helped me during this research. My sense of gratitude is due to Haji Shariatullah’s descendants and Faraizi leaders- Pir Mohiuddin Dadan Miyan, Haji Zonaid Sahib, Maw. Muslehuddin Abu Bakr, Nowshi Miyan, Monad Miyan, Yahya Sahib, Mow. A.L. Sharifabadi, Maw. Noman and brother of Chaudhry Kamal Ibn Yusuf (ex-Minister), who helped me to draw Faraizi ideology by visiting their strongholds and providing personal Dairies, relics and books.

My heaviest debt of gratitude is to my wife, Rahima and my elder son Fahim, who cheerfully bore the hardships of weather and loneliness through many dreary weeks and months to provide me the support that I needed most when I was busy drafting my thesis. She has been always a bulwark to me and a source of constant inspiration. I am also beholden to my son Naycem whom I consider a manifestation of divine blessing.

I sincerely thank Mr. Fahimuddin, Mr. Bahauddin and Mr. Shoeb Ahmad for consenting to type this Thesis.
INTRODUCTION

The Faraizi movement of Bengal has been rightly described as the first and foremost revivalist movement in British India. As a matter of fact, it embodied the first attempt of its kind after the advent of Islam in the region. This movement was launched by Haji Shariatullah (1781-1840) in the first quarter of the nineteen century with a view to revive the pristine purity and simplicity of Islam. It also sought to regain the lost dominion of the Muslim Political power as well. It wanted to cleanse the social and cultural life of the Muslims of Bengal from the influence of the Hindu culture and religion which has gained a sway over them and remodel the Muslim society in strict accordance with the teachings of Islam. It owed its origin both to local factors as well as the general trends prevailing in the Muslim world at large. The Muslim society world over was witnessing the phenomenon of religious awakening and as a result reform movements were working for the revival of the true spirit of Islam from the accretions that had crept in it over a period of time. It was extremely pitiable condition of the Bengal Muslim Peasants which compelled Haji Shariatullah and his son and immediate successor, Dudu Miyan, to include economic upliftment of the people of Bengal, whom they were seeking to
reform, as a part of their programme. It proved to be a great success. This thesis seeks to reassess the ideology and the nature of the Faraizi movement. The necessity to undertake this exercise stems from the fact that in spite of a very large number of studies which have been conducted on the subject, our knowledge about Faraizi movement still remains rather sketchy and a full picture portraying its ideology, objectives, and the methods which were adopted by the Faraizis to realize these aims and objectives has not so far emerged. The basic reason for this sorry situation is that no concrete effort has been made to study the movement in its totality. Various scholars and observers have produced authoritative books and treatises on the subject but unfortunately these are mostly confined to one or the other aspect of the movement. They have never sought to study the movement as a whole. On the other hand, some other scholars have tried to study the movement in a particular perspective. For example, some scholars have tried to prove that in reality Faraizi movement was a Peasant movement. The evidence that does not seem to support their theses has been entirely ignored. This has led to much distortion of the evidence and as a result, the actual position of Faraizis regarding a number of crucial issues, which they had to confront and which they sought to tackle, remain almost un-
noticed. It is therefore, necessary that the entire situation should re-assessed afresh, keeping in view various dimensions of the movement using all available source material available to us. An objective assessment of this nature is expected to make it possible to present the movement in its totality with its many facets and diverse dimensions. This will further help in placing the movement in its proper perspective and determining its historical role and contribution.

As noticed earlier, historians have studied the movement from different points of view and have come up with diametrically different interpretations of its nature and significance. The British Imperialist historians,¹ do not take into account the ideology of the any movements they talk about, at all. They mostly emphasize on patron-client bonds and also take note of local factors. The subaltern,² on the other hand, pay greater attention to the social concerns as well as ideology. They lay greater emphasis on a dichotomy of interest between the elite and subaltern classes. The Indian historians³ have mostly preferred to dwell on its ideological and anti-colonial aspects.

¹. Like Peter Hardy W.C. Smith Anil seel, C.A. Barly and Gordon, Thomson and others.
². Like Ranajit fehua, Partha Chattergee and others.
³. Like Tarachand, R.P. Dutta, R.C. Majumdar and others.
But Pakistan historians⁴ have tended to put greater emphasis on the Islamic basis of the movement and what they perceive to be its anti-Hindu elements. The stand of the Bangladeshi scholars and historians⁵ is basically determined by the standpoint from which they have sought to study the problem. For example, those scholars with Islamic leaning have naturally tried to interpret the Faraizi movement as a part and parcel of Islamic millenarianism that was witnessed throughout the Muslim world in varying degrees. But those Bangladeshi scholars who hailed from a secular background, they have tried to present it as a movement that had an agrarian background and consequently it reflected the economic problems of the period. It was therefore basically an agrarian and anti-colonial movement and its other aspects were only peripheral.

For example, British Imperialist historians like, W.C. Smith, and P. Hardy's perception about Faraizi movement is that it was ‘non-communal’, ‘agrarian’ and socio-economic.⁶ M.A.

---

4. Such as I.H. Qureshi, Hafiz Malik, Moinul Haq, Aysha Jalal, Akbar S. Ahmad and others.
5. Such as A.R. Mallick, Rafiuddin, Habibullah, K.M. Mohsin and others.
Bari, Qeyamuddin Ahmed, A.R. Mallick, and M.M. Ali think that Haji Shariatullah’s ideology was confined to religious sphere and it did not cover other aspects of the society. But after his death during the stewardship of Dudu Miyan it enormously diversified its scope and area of activities. Rafiuddin Ahmad tried to explore very briefly the basic ideology of the Faraizis. He laid more emphasis on the debates and conflicts in which the Faraizis were locked with other groups. He had made an attempt to study the theme from a secular point of view. He does not seem to believe that the British Policy of divide and rule was responsible for the origins of separatism in the society. He believes that it was in fact inherent in the basic ideology of Islam itself. The Marxist and


secularist historians\textsuperscript{9} such as S.N. Ahmad, N. Kaviraj, N.H. Chaudhary, B.K. Chudhury, R.L. Roy, R. Kanti Roy endeavoured to prove that it was in reality an agriculturist and class-struggle and its main causes lay in the economic considerations. The first well-documented and extensive research on the subject was done by Muinuddin Khan\textsuperscript{10}, the noted Faraizi historian. He came to the conclusion that Haji Shariatullah’s movement was essentially religious in nature. He also maintained that it was directed against the Hindu Zamindars and indigo-planters. He altogether denied the political character of the movement so much so that he has totally glossed over the very

; Ratna lekha Roy, Change in Bengal Agrarian Society (1760-1850), Monohar Pub. New Delhi, 1979.

\textsuperscript{10} Mojinuddin Khan, History of the Faraizi Movement (1st Print, 1965) Reprint, Islamic Foundation Bangladesh, Dhaka, 1984.
fact that the Faraizi had declared India as *Darul Harb* and also their active role relating to *jihad* and *jihad* movements. In fact, all above mentioned historians partly or totally ignored Faraizi ideological objectives for realisation of which it was launched. But the Faraizis themselves have always claimed that their movement was religio-political, distinctly anti-British and anti-oppression but at the same time non-communal in character.

In this thesis an attempt has been made to study the Faraizi movement in its totality with basic emphasis on ideological aspects and not in peacemeal manner so that the full picture of the movement could emerge and the many gaps which are still there in spite of so many studies could be filled as much as possible. As noticed above earlier historians and scholars have mostly studied the movement from particular angles i.e. from

11. For Faraizi Perception, see *Trial of Dudu Miyan*, 1848, p.47.
; *Letter of Dudu Miyan to the Government*, 1850.
; Razia Mazid, *Sotabdir Surza Shika*, 77-90
; Dudu Miyan, *Grame Juma*, pp.15,16
; ——— Faraizi Jamater Adarsha, p.3
; ——— Ghatantontra ——— p.2
; Musharraf Hosain, *Haji Shanatullah*, pp 31, 49
; *Personal Diaries of Dudu Miyan*, (1953-1997).
British, religious, sectarian, nationalist, communal and marxist points of views. They have built their theses accordingly and as such they have confined themselves only to those sources which could be expected to help them in developing and establishing their own perceptions about the Faraizis. All the available sources on the subject have not been therefore studied. In fact in most of the cases it has been a study of selected sources and it would even seem that inconvenient facts have been glossed over. Many such examples could be cited for this kind of attitude on the part of the historians. It is basically because of this that there is so much divergence of opinion among the scholars about the nature and character of the movement.

With a view to avoid this pitfall, an attempt has been made in this thesis to consult all possible sources on the subject. These includes government records, contemporary writings, gazetteers, survey and settlement reports, statistical accounts, census reports, government confidential reports, contemporary newspapers, almost the entire spectrum of the books written on the subjects, Faraizi Puthies, fatwas, Faraizi books and writings, their personal diaries and the relics connected with the movement. In search of untapped evidence, a number of Faraizi
settlements were visited and an attempt was made to solicit the views of the Faraizis themselves about the movement and their own perception about its character and ideology. The picture that has emerged as a result of this extensive exercise clearly shows that the Faraizi movement was basically a religious reform movement. But at the same time, it was not confined to religious reform alone. In fact it was connected with those aspects of the contemporary Bengali society which has anything to do with the Muslims. It has a clear cut political ideology as also a very well defined economic and socio-cultural ideology. It fought against oppression and worked tirelessly to restore and maintain the dignity of the Muslim Peasants and weavers in particular. There are several other dimensions of the movement. Detailed discussion on all these aspects constitutes this thesis. All this goes to show that it was a movement which covered all the possible aspects of the contemporary Bengali Muslim Society. And therefore to confine it to any particular aspect would not be only unjust but also a distortion of history and suppression of evidence.

It would also be incorrect to suggest that the Faraizi owed its origins entirely to the local factors. No doubt local factors played an important role. The deplorable and degraded
condition of the Bengali Muslims had deeply disturbed Haji Shariatullah and impressed upon him the urgent necessity to do something to retrieve the situation. But at the same time, it was also a part of the reform movement that was witnessed in the nineteenth century through out the Islamic World from Arabia to North Africa and from Morocco to Indonesia. And, therefore, while it is necessary to study the movement within the context of the contemporary Bengal situation, at the same time it is also necessary to study it as a part of a wider phenomenon and thereby try to discern and determine the possible influence of this wider reform movement on the Faraizi ideology. In this regard, particular attempt needs to be made to trace the possible Wahhabi influence on the movement.

As this thesis is confined to the ideology of the Faraizi movement, we have deliberately left out biographical details about the successive Faraizi leaders as it would have made this thesis rather unwieldy. We have contented ourselves with only (noting) the changes in the ideology, if any, that had occurred during the stewardship of various Faraizi leaders. Still it would be perhaps useful to give a very brief sketch of the periods in which the various leader masters led the movement. As is well known, this movement was launched by Haji Shariatullah
(1781-1840) in 1818. After his death, his son and successor, Dudu Miyan, was the leader till 1862. Then three of his Khatifas were in charge of the movement in between 1862-64. In 1844-66 son of Duda Miyan, Giyasuddin Haidar, assumed leadership. But due to his early death, the movement was led by Noyan Niyan between 1864-1884. The later leaders were Khan Bahadur Saududdin 1884-1905, Badshah Miyan, 1905-1959, Dudu Miyan ii 1959-1997. The Present leader is Pir Mohiuddin Dadan Miyan (b.1918). He, however, looks after the religious aspect of the movement while the political aspect is taken care of by Maulana Mosleuddin Abu Bakr.

The first chapter of this thesis deals with the background of the movement and tries to explore the course of the growth and to determine the causes and factors which led to the emergence of the Faraizi movement. On the one level, it tries to focus on the conditions obtaining in Bengal at that time which led Haji Shariatullah to launch this movement. On the other level, it also seeks to link the emergence of this movement with the situation prevailing in the Muslim world at large at that point of time.

---

12. Historians had different opinions about the time of its Launching. Various dates which have been put forward are 1802, 1808, 1812, 1818, 1820 A.D. and also 1227 B.S.
The second chapter describes the preaching and missionary activities of the Faraizis as well as their policies and strategies in this field.

The third chapter deals with the main ideological moorings of this movement, the position of *Quran*, *Sunnah* and *Hanafi* jurisprudence, Faraizi programme of religious reform including their relentless struggle against all kind of *shirk* and *bidaat*. This also necessarily covers spiritual aspect as well.

The fourth, chapter examines the socio-economic ideology of the Faraizis, their struggle for seeking justice and ensuring basic rights of the peasants-weavers, participation in the Indigo-risings of 1848, 1858 and 1860, 1873 and their non-communal attitude in their combinations. Their persistent refusal to pay taxes to the government and their argument in favour of their stand has also been taken note of almost for the first time with full and convincing evidence.

The fifth chapter discusses the political ideas of the Faraizis including declaration of India as *Darul Harb* and its political significance, the suspension of *Jumah* and *'Id* congregations, establishment of state within state and their participation in the struggle of 1857. Their other political activities as well as their association with other political parties
including their role in the creation of Pakistan has been also discussed.

The sixth chapter examines the cultural aspect of this movement and their exertions against all un-Islamic cultural features which had entered the lives of the Muslim society and their remarkable success in this regard.

The seventh chapter deals with the *Khilafat* system, organisational and hierarchical structure, responsibilities of the *Khalifas*, number of the Faraizis in different times and their strongholds including areas of their influence.
BACKGROUND

I

The Faraizi movement of Haji Shariatullah arose and developed in the first quarter of nineteen century Bengal. It owed its origin in the religio cultural, socio-economic and political conditions obtaining in Bengal at that time. These conditions militated not only against the very spirit of Islam but also against the well-being of the Muslims. Overwhelming majority of the

1. For religio-cultural condition of the Nineteen Century Bengal see, Salimullah, Tarikh-i-Bangala, Francis Gladawin, Press Start and Company, Calcutta, 1788.
; Gulam Husain Salim, Riyadus Slatin, Tran. M. Abdul Salam, The Asiatic Society, Calcutta, 1902.
; James Taylor, Topography of Dacca, Calcutta, 1840.
; Hunter, Imperial Gazetteer of India, Faridpur 1925,
; Hunter, Statistical Accounts of Bengal, Trubner, London 1875-1881
; —— Annals of Rural Bengal, London 1897.
; Census Report of India, 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901, 1911, 1921, 1931.
; Settlements Report, Dhaka, Faridpur, Noakhali Tipperah, Barisal, Maijansingh.
; Maw Karamat Ali, Haqq-i-Yaqin in Dhakirah-i-Karamat, Calcutta 148 A.H.
; District Gazetteers, (Concerned districts) of British, Pakistan and Bangladesh.
; M. Gracin de Tassy, Hitorie de la littérateur Hindoyi et Hindussanie, Paris, 1870-1871.
; Abdul Karim, Social History of Muslim in Bengal Down to 15.38 AD, Asiatic Society of Pakistan, Dhaka, 1959.
; Enamul Haq, History of Sufism in Bengal, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, Dhaka, 1975.
; A.R. Mallick, British Policy.
; M.A. Khan, History of the Faraidi Movement.
; M.M. Ali, History of the Muslim of Bengal.
Muslim population of Bengal consisted of the people who were converted to Islam over the centuries from the Hindu and Buddhist stocks. Here it is no occasion to enter into a discussions about the agencies through which these conversions were secured. There is also no doubt about the fact that considerable number of Muslim population of Bengal consisted of immigrants, who had come to Bengal at various points of time and settled there. Nevertheless, the majority of the Muslims of Bengal belonged to the class of converted Muslims.

Due to long contact with the Hindus and Buddhists, many of their religious rites, customs, manners and traditions were adopted by the Muslims and became part and parcel of the Muslim society. These included even such practices which were in direct clash with the basic principles of Islam and militated against its fundamentals. Even the institutions which had once served as the means of the spread of Islam in the region, had become source of much evil. Sufis and preachers (Duat) had played a significant role in the field of the dissemination of Islam in parts of Bengal. Now they were spreading ignorance and superstitions. “The pirs were to the Muslims of India what the

---

deotas (Gods) are to the Hindus”. The Muslims of the this region adored sun, moon and fire, took Hindu wives, observed Holi, Diwali, Dashera, Shivaratri, Rakha Kali, Saddah, etc. like their Hidu neighbours. Moreover, like the Hindus they practiced dowry system and prevented widow remarriage. There were even some cases of burning of widowers. They believed in the demons and devils. They served Hindu astrologers and sought their guidance in matters relating to marriage and commencement of house construction etc. In direct contravention of Islamic law, dance and consumption of wine has become the essential part of their festivals. In some places they also worshipped Sitala Devi for securing cure from small pox. They usually kept amulets for the betterment of their lives. They wore dhotis just like Hindus and Purdah System was practically abandoned.

Muslim ideals of equality and universal brotherhood were given a go by and following the practice prescribed by the Hindu caste system, the Muslim Society of Bengal was also divided into many social groups such as with Sayyid, Pathan, Mughal, Khondokar, Choudhury, Bhuiyan, Miyan, Patawari, Shaikh. These groups were considered to belong to be upper class and they would not mix with the people supposed to belong to lower classes such as peasant-weaver, Machiporoch etc. The so-
called upper class people not only shunned intermarriage with the lowly but also refrained for dining with them. Traces of untouchability were also found in the Muslim society of Bengal.

Many of the converts could not be fully assimilated into the Islamic way of life and retained many of their earlier traditions and practices. Powerful influence of the Hindu neighbours did not only contributed to strengthen these remnants of the past in the Muslim society but constantly added new elements. For example like Bhuddist and Hindus they followed the cult of Incarnation (*Avatar*). It was also under their influence that Pirs were invested with supernatural powers specially granted to the by God. *Bera* dedicated to Kawaj Khijjir (*Khizr*) were floated and special celebrations and festivities were held at the time of Prophet's birth-death anniversary; *urs* were calibrated on the occasion of birth-death anniversaries of the *pirs*, red cloth was placed on the graves of *pirs*, and flowers, and *fatiha* were offered there. They used to recite poems at these occasions in Arabic, Bangla, Urdu and Persian. Plantation of banana trees at the house of girls on their first mạnstruations, worshipping Hindu Goddesses and Gurus, consulting Hindu almanac for fixing the date of marriage, adoration of footprints of the Prophet, tigers
and leopards were believed both by Hindus as well as Muslims to be the special property of the Saints.

The *pirs* and *faqirs* had a field day. There was in fact a very huge number of *pirs* and *faqirs* such as Shah Jalal, Shah Makhdum, Shah Faran, Khan Jahan Ali, Bayejid Bustami, Pir Badar, five pir. (*Panch pir*), Adam Shahid, Shah Wali Bagdadi, Shah Qutb and others. Their followers venerated them as their saviours and intercessors on the day of judgement, healers of diseases, makers of the fate and fulfillers of all desires. In fact, these true preachers of Islam were not *Pirs* as it was called. They believed that they could reach God only through them. They also held their anniversaries as fairs. The *Murids* also made obeisance (*Sijdah*) to their *pirs*. And Favours of *gurus* as well as *Pirs* were avidly sought and they were venerated by both communities. The Sufi *silsilahs* which were active in Bengal included the Chishtiya, the Suhawardiyya, Qadiriyyah and Madariyyah.

Besides these Sufi groups, in the later parts of the century there was a group which consisted of people who were neither Hindus nor Muslims. They had great faith in songs which they considered to be their sole guide. These songs were sung on *Ektara* or *Dotara*. They believed that they could be free from worldly bondage. These emancipate themselves from the worldly
bondage with the help of songs. They sought to were called 'Bauls' narily they did not like reformers of revivalist who sought to educate and reform them.

The Muslim rulers were generally Sunnis. The Nawabs of Dhaka from earliest time to 1702 were sunnis. Shia elements in Bengal were introduced with Murshid Quli Khan who came there along with 300 Shiah officers who settled in Bengal.

In the beginning they prayed in the Sunni Mosques and listened the Sunni *khutbas* but gradually they started celebrating ceremonies associated with Moharram such as *Tazia* with great pomp ultimately they established their separate identity. In Dhaka and other cities Tazia was celebrated with such great pomp that it was considered by Giracen De Tessey and Wise as “Dashera”, and “Rath Yatra” of Hindus.

Besides, the Muslims provided *chiragh, Tabarruk* and *ziyarat* to the graves, practiced *chutti putti* and *chilla* at the birth of new borns and practiced various kinds of ceremonies on the occasions of the marriage, funeral and other functions that were totally against the spirit of true Islam. The Muslim could be distinguished from others only because of *Kalima*. They knew the *Kalima* and nothing more. They even believed that *Rama* and Prophet Mohammad were alike to them. Islam was confined to
circumcision and eating of cow's meat. It is clear that their life was devoid of any Islamic content and they were almost Hinduised. The need for reform was urgent and called for immediate action.

Like the religio-cultural conditions of the Muslims of Bengal, their economic and political condition also steeply declined during nineteenth century. It was extremely deplorable and they had a very miserable and impoverished life.

During Muslim rule, Bengal was variously referred as storehouse of silk and cotton; 'prosperous province', wealthiest

2. For their socio-political and economic conditions in detailed form see, A.R. Mallick, British Policy.
   ; M.A. Khan, History of the Faraidi Movement
   ; M.A. Rahim, Social and cultural History.
   ; M.A. Ali, History of the Muslims of Bengal
   ; District Gazetteer of Dhaka, Faridpur, Maiman Singh, Rangpur etc.
   ; C.E. Buckland, Bengal Under Livtenent Governors, vol.1, 21.
   ; Shusil Chawdhury, From Prosperity to Decline, Eighteen Century Bengal, Monohar Delhi, 1995.
   ; Gulam Hosain Salim, Riyachus Salatin
   ; C.E. Travelyon, Report Upon the Indian Customs and Town Duties of Bengal Presidency, Calcutta, 1837.
   ; H.H. Wilson, A Review of External Commerce of Bengal, Calcutta, 1800
   ; James Taylor, A Sketch of Topography and Statistics of Dacca, Calcutta, 1840.
and cheapest province”, flourishing finest province of India, and it was put forward as a parallel to Manchester. But after occupation of British East India Company within a century it was totally ruined and its prosperity and wealth vanished. Due to lack of patronage there was a very sharp decline in the production of the commodities which had earlier a big market in Europe. These avenues were now totally closed.

After the coming of the British, revenue demand was steeply increased and it was made double of the earlier rate. The gravity of the situation could be gauged from the fact that even during the devastating famine of 1772 when many people had to eat the leaves of the jungle trees for survival, the revenue collection actually increased by as much as 6 lacks and the next year it almost doubled. The situation became so hopeless that the native artisans who used to lead a comfortable life had no option but to beg for a living. Even the Nawab was not spared and he was reduced to the position of cypher in the hands of the British. His powers were drastically curtailed. In between 1765—1772 his allowance was reduced from 53,86000 to 16,0000. The grants and Jagirs of the Muslims were resumed.

After the battle of plassey, the conquerors, adventurers, administrators, nobles, military commanders,
collectors of revenues, judicial and political posts which were earlier almost entirely held by the Muslim were now assigned to the Hindus or the British. The army consisted mostly of the Muslims was disbanded and revenue collection was handed over to Hindus or Englishmen. This amounted to a very severe blow to the Muslims, who not only lost an opportunity to earn a decent livelihood but also suffered in terms of prestige and power. Moreover, as a consequence of the Permanent Settlement many Muslim zamindars lost their land holdings which came to be held by the Hindus. As a result, they became so powerful that they treated the peasantry at will and there was almost no check on their power. For example, in Faridpur they collected as much as three items illegal taxes in addition to the land revenue. The victim, had no remedial avenue against this high handedness. This naturally broke the backbone of the peasants.

The *jagirs*, *altانугha grants*, *Madad-i-Maash and Aimma*, which were meant for the civil and military officers, spiritual leaders, learned men and men of noble descent, which ensured a respectable and decent living for those people was abolished by the Act of 1793. The impact of this measure on the well being of the Muslim elite could be understood only if it is kept in mind that these grants amounted to 1/3 of the total land
holdings of the Muslims. Similarly, the Resolutions of 1811, 1817 and 1819 deprived *La-Kharaj* land holders of the Muslim society from their land holdings and thereby reduced them to object poverty. The Permanent Settlement gave to the zamindars enormous powers which they used to the extreme detriment of the peasants. Moreover, there were *patnidar, sub-patnidar*, reck renting and the money lenders who substantially added to the sufferings of the peasants. For the peasantry the poverty level of increased from 35% to 60% of the total population. The abolition of rural police by the Act of 1793 and the policy of de-peasantisation and de-industrialization in agriculture and weaving respectively greatly affected the material conditions of the Muslim gentry and from a position of economic affluence they touched the bottom rock of the society.

During first half of 19 century the Hindu managers and gomastas gradually monopolised almost all trade in salt, sugar, cotton, etc. It obliged the Muslim gentry to take *dadni* and purchase their goods from them on higher rates.

Hastings and Conowallis's policy of land opened the door for Hindu *Baniyas, Mahajans, Naibs, Siqdars and gomastas* to acquire lands previously owned by Muslims. Even the police meant for preventing anti-social activities at village level, which
was earlier manned mostly by Muslim, was now almost entirely replaced by Hindus. This deprived the Muslims from a profitable profession and threw a large number of Muslim out of employment. As they could not find any other job for their upkeep, they engaged themselves in anti-social activities and let loose a reign of terror in the villages.

The Muftis, Vakils and Qadi held honorable position in government courts. But the East India Company replaced them and rendered them unemployed. Now they found themselves on the street and entirely without any source of income. From the position of respectability, honour and affluence, they suddenly found themselves among the destitutes and paupers.

There were very large number of educational institutions in Bengal. According to Adam’s report around 1835 there were as many as 10,000 educational institutions operating in Bengal. Though government established Calcutta Madrasa in 1780 and Hindoo College in 1800 with a view to impart western education to the Indians and much emphasis was placed on the teaching of Vernaculars, but their policy to replace Persian (in 1837) with English as State Language rendered many Muslims unemployed. Its consequences were so devastating that when freedom came in 1947, as many as 90% people were illiterate.
Many parts of Bengal were very fertile and suitable for the cultivation of indigo. The indigo that was produced here was found to be of a very high grade and was fit for export and as such it was very profitable for those who were engaged in the cultivation of indigo. With a view of using this potential of Bengal for the benefit of the indigo-planters, who were mostly British, a series of measures were adopted this plantation Lucurative. By 1820 the situation has reached such point that the peasants were forced to cultivate indigo to the exclusion of more useful and profitable commodities such as rice. The money-lending system was used to tighten the grip of the classes with a vested interest in the plantation of indigo. Peasants were forced to extend the cultivation of indigo. The atrocities which the indigo planters perpetrated on the helpless peasantry included, among other things, depriving them from their cattle, destroying crops, homicide, murder, riot, decoity, plunder, fire, kindnapping by the Indigo planters, etc. These atrocities were proved by the Indigo-Commission of 1860 that it was an oppressive and inhuman business. It concluded that “the planters in order to eat fruits, they cut down the trees” and “no chest of Indigo reached England without the mixture of human blood”.
The weaving industry of Bengal which was known as a store house of silk and cotton, was totally ruined. The Dhaka city the 'Manchester of India, lost its position as the Premier producer of cotton and silk and the industry suffered enormously and it ultimately closed down altogether. This was a direct consequence of the British trade policy, in pursuance of which the company imposed various customs on inland goods. These miscellaneous duties were estimated ten times more than the duties imposed on the foreign goods. As a result, Bengal good lost their markets in Europe and Asia and gave way to machine finished goods of England which in fact amounted to cutting the fingers of the Muslim handloom weavers of world fame yarn, which could now be imported only from England. Also as direct consequence of this policy even internal market was flooded with foreign goods destroying the age old traditional weaving industry of Bengal leading to complete ruin of those engaged in the industry. A majority of these artisans belonged to Muslim community.
Faraizi movement of Bengal, which has the distinction of being first organised reform movement of India, was a religio-political, socio-economic and cultural movement, launched in 1818 by the eminent theologian Haji Shariatullah. This revivalist and *dawah* movement developed in Bengal. The factors which led to its emergence are related both to internal and external conditions prevailing in Bengal as well as in other parts of the Muslim world during that period. The puritan attitude of this movement with its insistence on return to the original purity of Islam is in fact a reflection of a wide spread phenomenon in the Muslim world in the 19th century. It is attested by the fact that around the same time a number of reform movements appeared in other parts of Islamic world, which were vastly different from each other in geo-graphical, political and social terms movements, but their aims and objectives were almost the same. These included such as *Muwahhidun* (their opponents called them wahhabis) of Arabia, *Sanusiya* of Libya, *Salafiyah* of Egypt, *Paduri* and *Muhammadiyah* movements of Indonesia, *Mahdiyah* of Sudan and Middle Africa, *Pulani* movement of Africa, *Tariqa-i-Muhammadiyah, Jihad, Tayyyuni* and *Ahl-i-Hadith* movements of Bangladesh, India and Pakistan.
There could be little doubt that the Faraizi movement of Bengal was also part and parcel of this universal phenomenon that was sweeping the Muslim world at that time. The common thread of all these movements was to work for the revival of pure and uncompromising *Tauhid* (oneness of Allah), building the society and the individual life according to the precepts of the Quran and authentic traditions of the Prophet, transmitted and practised by *Salf-i-Salatin* (first three generations after the Prophet), uprooting all kinds of polytheism (*Shirk*) and innovations (*Bidaat*), ensuring universal equality and brotherhood of Islam and unity and fraternity of the Muslims. Their efforts were also directed towards establishing Islam as the Political system of the state and overthrowing the oppressive alien rule from the Muslim world.

A closer study of the entire situation would, however, reveal that among all these movements, the Wahhabi movement occupies the place of pride. In point of time this was first to appear and therefore it has clear chronological precedence over other movements. As such, it served as the fountain head for all these movements, which mostly owe their origin to the influence and inspiration of the Wahhabis. It is, therefore, necessary to have some idea about this movement, the conditions and factors
to which it owed its birth and the aims and objectives which it wanted to achieve.

This Wahhabi movement was founded by Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab (1703-1792 AD) of Uyana, Najd, Arabia. He had learnt the Quran by heart and studied Islamic sciences in various seminaries including Makkah under renowned theologians of the period. During his studies he seems to have come under the influence of the great Muslim scholar, thinker and reformer Ibn Taimiya (1263-1328) and his disciple Ibn Qaiyyim. It was perhaps under the influence of Ibn Taimiya's thought that he came to the conclusion that it was his bounden duty to do

3. For details, look,

; M.A. Nadvi, Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab, Hyderabad, 1947
; Aslam Jayreipuri, Tarikh-i-Nazd, Delhi, 1344 A.H.
; Sayyid Ahsan, Life and Thought of Mohamad bin Abdul Wahhab, Aligarh, 1988.
; Calcutta Review, 1870, 1874.
; Ahmad bin Huzr, Al-Shaykh Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab, Makkah 1395, A.H.
; Mohiuddin Ahmad, Sayikhul Islam Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab, Hyderabad, 1947.
; D.S. Margolioth, art. Wahhabi in Ency. of Religion and Ethics vol.xii New York, 1921.
; Amin Rahini, Ib Saud of Arabia, his people and His Land, London, 1928.
; Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab, Kitabut Tauhid, Madina, 1395 A.H.
; All editions of Ency. of Islam, in English, Arabic, Urdu, Bangla etc.
; Bahattun Usbuun li Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab, (Proceedings of Seminar), vols. 2, Islamic University, Madina, 1981.
whatever he can to reform the Arabian society from the many innovations which were rampant during that time and revive the original purity of Islam. Only this could pull the community out of its degrading condition. With this resolve he launched a vigorous movement but, as could be expected in such condition, he was stiffly opposed. But the opposition failed to weaken his resolve and dampen his spirit. During this period when he wrote his celebrated book *Kitabut Tauhid* which very forcefully advocated the concept of the uncompromising unity of God and came down very heavily against all forms of *Shirk* and *Bidat*.

At a time when he was facing stiff opposition, he received valuable help and support from Muhammad bin Saud, chief of Dariyat tribe and forefather of the present ruling family of Saudi Arabia. It was went a long way in providing a safe base for his mission. The very close and cordial relations between the families continue to flourish till date.

Muhammad bin Abdal Wahhab wrote letters to rulers, kings and nobles to propagate his mission, and declared *Jihad* against those who continued to oppose him. His sternous efforts and devotions to his cause ultimately bore fruit and he achieved great success during his own lifetime. Before his death he had the satisfaction that by and large his mission has succeeded. His field
of operation was Arabia alone. Its consequences were, however, felt in many parts of the Muslim world and it acted as a catalyst for the forces of reform and regeneration.

Ideologically, the Wahhabis emphasised on *Tauhid*, prayer with congregation and vehemently attacked all kinds of *Shirk*, *bidat*, swearing with any one except Allah, intercession, *Taqlid*, group *Dhikr*, music, dancing, rhetoric, poems, *Shiah*, *Mutazila*, *Sufism*, *Maulud*, festival of *Ashura*, smoking etc, and encourage *Ijtihad* and *Ijma*. Their ideology continues to be the guiding principle of religious policy of Saudi Arabia.

Before we enter into a discussion about the nature and extent of Wahhabis on the Faraizi movement and points of agreement and disagreement between the two, it would be perhaps helpful to have some idea about the movements which owe their origin to influence of the Wahhabi movement. These movements appeared in many parts of the Islamic world. A brief notice of these movements is given below:
The Sanusiyah of Libya, was launched by Muhammad Ali-al-Sanusi al Idrisi (1791-1859). He was born at Mustagnim, Algeria and studied at Fez and Makkah. While at Makkah he came under the influence of the Wahhabis. On his return to Libya and its adjacent areas, he launched this movement with a view to reforming the Muslim society in the region from all traces of Shirk and bidaat. He also made great endeavors to establish Islamic state on the basis of original teachings of Islam. The Sanusis also worked hard to oppose the christian missionaries. This Sanusi movement produced great leaders like Al-Mahdi (d. 1846) of Mahdi movement, Al-Sharif (d.1902), Ahmad al Sharif (d. 1933) and Umar-al Mukhtar (d. 1930). During the later days it acquired military and political colour and fought Italy and other European powers who wanted to perpetuate the hold of the Europeans in the region.

4. For more knowledge about this movement see,

; Batathun Usbuun, Islamic University Madina, 1981.
; Muhammad Fuad Shurki, Al-Sanusiyah Din Wa Dawah, cair, 1948.
; Ahmad bin Huzr, Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab Aqidatwhus salafiyah wa Dawa-tuhul Islahiyyah, Cairo N.D. p.103.
; Amir Shakib Arsalan, Hadiral Alam-al-Islami, vols.2 Quoted is Bahathun Usbuun, p.228.
The Sanusiyyah of Libya, was launched by Muhammad Ali-al-Sanusi al Idrisi (1791-1859). He was born at Mustagnim, Algeria and studied at Fez and Makkah. While at Makkah he came under the influence of the Wahhabis. On his return to Libya and its adjacent areas, he launched this movement with a view to reforming the Muslim society in the region from all traces of Shirk and bidaat. He also made great endeavors to establish Islamic state on the basis of original teachings of Islam. The Sanusis also worked hard to oppose the christian missionaries. This Sanusi movement produced great leaders like Al-Mahdi (d. 1846) of Mahdi movement, Al-Sharif (d.1902), Ahmad al Sharif (d. 1933) and Umar-al Mukhtar (d. 1930). During the later days it acquired military and political colour and fought Italy and other European powers who wanted to perpetuate the hold of the Europeans in the region.

4. For more knowledge about this movement see,

; Batathun Usbuun, Islamic University Madina, 1981.
; Muhammad Fuad Shurki, Al-Sanusiyah Din Wa Dawah, cair, 1948.
; Ahmad bin Huzr, Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab Aqidawhus salafiyyah wa Dawa-tuhul Islahiyyah, Cairo N.D. p.103.
; Amir Shakib Arsalan, Hadiral Alam-al-Islami, vols.2 Quoted is Bahathun Usbuun, p.228.
This movement has played a very significant role in the history of Libya. It continued to be a force till very recently when it was disbanded by Muammar Qaddafi.

Muhammad Ali-at-Sanusi was a Maliki but he did not believe in rigid Taqlid. He advocated tolerance and flexibility and the need for Ijtihad. It is interesting to note that his stay at Makkah coincided with the stay of Haji Shariatullah there.

In Nineteen century, Fulani movement arose in West Africa under the leadership of Shaikh Uthman bin Fawdi (1754/1761 – 1807). Vast areas of Africa came under the influence of this movement. The Fulanis declared Jihad against Shirk, bidaat and superstions as well as Western Imperialism. The Shaikh was at Makkah during its takeover by the Wahhabis (1815-1818). There he came under the influence of the Wahhabis and studied their books on thoughts relating to the aims and

objectives of his movement. He laid great emphasis on the duty
of ordering what is right and prohibiting what is wrong *(amr bil
Maruf wan nahi anil Munkar)* and advocated *Ijtihad*. Because of
the peculiar conditions of the region this movement also assumed
the character of a peasant.

The leader of the movement formed a *Majlish-i-Shaura*, consultative body, respected women's rights and
emphasized unity of the *Ummah*. This movement had wide-spread
influence in Nigeria and North Africa which was survived and
preserved by Shaikh Ahmadu (d. 1842) and Al-Haji Umar (d.
1814).

This movement had great influence in Western-
Africa. It emphasized unity of *Ummah* and *jihad* under the
leadership of an *Amirul Mominin*. In North Sahara and Nigeria,
he was denounced by the Government but succeeded in capturing
Hausa, Zaria and Lake Ched, Yoruba, Bagirmi, Sokata Usakt,
Zanfara. He was survived by Shaikh Ahmadhu (d.1842) and Al-
Hajj Umar (d.1864).
In Indonesia the *Paduri* movement\(^6\) sought to reform the Muslim society almost on the same lines. The Indonesian society had remained deeply influenced by Indian culture. During this period it would seem that due to political and social condition, the Indonesian Muslim society had become highly Hinduised. Buddhist influence was also at work and it appeared that the Muslim society was facing a crisis of identity. It was in these circumstances that the Paduri Movement was launched by Shaikh Al-Hajj mask\(^m\) and his eight companions. All of them have been at Makka where they came under the Wahhabi influence and were fired with the zeal to work for the reform of community back home.

After starting this movement they fought against the imperialistic hegemony of Holland between 1822-1835. Later

---


; *Bahathun Uusbun le Athari Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab Fil Alam-at Islami*, (proceedings of the Seminar on M.B.A. Wahhab), *Nadi Madina-at Munawarah*, 1981


; Thomas Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam*, (Arabic Verson),


they continued the struggle under the leadership of M.A. Ahmad (1878-1933), A.A. Karim Amrullah (1879-1945). The last mentioned was the father of the present head of Ulama Council, A.M. Karim Amrullah and Jamil Jambik (d.1860-1947) and Taib Umar (1873-1920).

The paduri movement did not only worked against Shirk, bidaat and superstitions but they also fought against American and European economic policy and their increasing influence in the region. They offered their own economic programme which was based strictly on the teachings of Islam. They scrupulously followed the shariat in their personal lives. With a view to disseminating their ideas and teachings they established institutions madrasas, seminaries and published magazines etc. Inspite of Wahhabi influence they also like the Faraizis did not outrightly discard sufism and subscribed to the Qadiri and Naqshabandi Silsilahs. This was perhaps due to the local conditions where reaching out to the people was easier through sufisim than any other means. They upheld the flag of Pan-Islamism. Like the Faraizis they also evinced much interest in peasant problems and were involved in peasant movements. Their lasting mark was left in Mineughakabu and other parts of Indonesia.
colonial rule, these movements invariably fought against the
imperialistic hegemony of the colonial powers. Some of these
movements were *Mahdiya* of Muhammad Ahamd Abdullah (1844-
1855) in Sudan. Other distinguished who arose during this time
in various parts of the Islamic world included such men as
Khairuddin Basha-al-Tunisi (1810-1879) Muhammad Ahmad bin
Abdullah (d.1885) in North Sudan, Mohammad Sukuri al-Alusi
(1857-1924) in Iraq, Allama Shawkani (d.1830) in Yamen,
Jamaluddin Qadimi, Kamil Khattab, Tahir Jazairi in Syria,
Ahamd Walobo (in 1813) in Africa, Shaikh Takruns in Sudan (in
1848), Shaikh Umar (1796-1864), Ahmad Tizano (1830-98),
Madhat Basha (1822-1883) of Turkey.

These movements were followed by the 20th century
Islamic reform movements such as Ikhawan, Islamic Salvation
Front, Jamat-i-Islami, Tablighi Jamat, Rafah of Nazimuddin
Arbakan and many others which appeared during the course of
20th century.

It may be noticed that almost all the early reform
movements were inspired by the Wahhabi movement of Arabia
which in its own turn was influenced by the thought of Ibn-
Taimiya. Wahhabi movement acted as a catalyst. Its location in
Arabia and more particularly its dominance in the holy cities of
Makkah and Madinah was a great advantage as it ensured that the people coming from the other parts of the Muslim world were bound to come into their contact. As the conditions of the community throughout the world at that time was almost similarly dismal, sensitive souls were anxious and concerned to do something to resist this downward slide of the community and do something for the reform and revival of the original spirit. These concerned people found a working model in the Wahhabi movement, which they can follow and emulate in their own countries. Some of these movements made necessary adjustments in their ideologies in view of the conditions of their own Muslim societies. Such differences in matters of detail do not detract from the fact that all of these owed much to the Wahhabi movement and received their initial inspiration from them.

III

During nineteen century as many as five Islamic reform movements were active in Bengal. These were Faraizi, Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah, Jihad, Tayyuni and Ahl-i-Hadith with the possible exception of Tayyuni, all these movements were more or less influenced by the Wahhabi Movement of Arabia. All
these movements aimed at riving the pristine purity of Islam and reforming the Muslim Society of Bengal from all kinds of innovations which had managed to infiltrate into it. They also worked for the replacement of the contemporary order of the state with the establishment of Islamic order. The first among these movements was the Faraizi movement which had large pockets of influence in Bengal and also in Assam.

Among these movements Tariqa-i Muhammadiyah more commonly known as Mujahidin Movement\(^8\) was more organised and had successfully established a network that was spread over many regions of the country. It was founded by

\(^8\) For details see, *Calcutta Review*, 1870, 1874.
; Masood Alam Nadvi, *Hindustan Ki Pahlî Islami Tahrik*.
; M.A. Khan, *History of Faradi Movement*, Asiatic Society of Pakistan, Dacca, 1965
; *The Proceedings of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Karachi, 1955, 1952
; I. H. Qureshi, *The Muslim Community of Indo-Pak Sub-Continent*, Karachi, 1977
; Shah Ismail Shahid, *Taqwiat ul Iman*, Lukhow, 1945, (Eng. Tra by Tufail Ahmad)
; *Consus Report*, 1881, 1891, 1911
; Gulam Rasool Mehr, *Jamâ'at-i-Mujahedîn* Lahore, 1955.
; --- Sayyid Ahmad Shahid, Lahore 1954.
Sayyid Ahmad Shahid (1786-1831) of Rai Baraily in 1818-20 on the lines advocated by Ahmad Sirhindi, Shah Waliullah Shah Abdal Aziz and Shah Abdul Qadir. He was assisted by two great Islamic thinkers and reformists, Maulana Abdul Hay and Shah Ismail Shahid. While returning from Hajj, he stayed for some time at Culcutta where may people came under his influence and became his disciples. It would seem that his influence spread there very rapidly and ultimately Bengal emerged as one of the main centres of the recruitment of the volunteers.

Sayyed Ahamd Shahid was inclined to Sufism and used his Tariqa-i-Muhammadia to reach out to the people and spread his message. He aimed at reforming the Muslim society from all influences of shirk and bidat and make an endeavour to establish an Islamic state based on the principles of Islam. Shah Ismail wrote Sirat-i-Mustaqim and Taqwiatul Iman which came down very strongly against all forms of shirk and bidat and made a very powerful plea for pure and uncompromising concept of tauhid. Saiyid Ahmad Shahid was a Hanafi but he was free from extremist views in this regard. Like his preceptor Shah Abdul Aziz, he also believed that India was Daral Harb under British regime. He made great efforts to establish an Islamic state wholly based on Islamic principle. This brought him into conflict with
the Sikhs and the British and ultimately he was martyred fighting against Sikhs at Balakot. Many of his followers including Maulana Abdul Haye and Shah Ismail Shahid laid down their lives along with him. Those who survived continued to pursue the goal of jihad even after him and played a significant role during first independence movement of 1857. But later it split in a number of groups. Maulana Ishaq of Deoband, Maulana Karamat Ali of Tayyuni Movement, Inayat Ali and Wilayat Ali (the true followers of Sayyid) and Nazir Husain (1805-1902) of Ahl-i-Hadith, Titu Mir of Jihad Movement more or less tried to realise the same objectives. All these movements were actually offshoots of the jihad movement of Saiyid Ahmad Shahid. As a result of these divisions, the movement, no doubt, lost its momentum. These comparatively smaller movements whose area of operation and influence was restricted to particular regions and did not enjoy all India character. But in their own way these movements have played very important role in the different parts of the country and have greatly influenced the Muslim society. There could be no doubt that they had played a very vital role in reforming and revitalizing the contemporary Muslim Society.

With a view to establish supremacy of Islam in its pure form in the religious, social and political spheres of life
another *Jihad* movement was launched by Sayyid Mir Nisar Ali Titu Mir (1782-1831). He hailed from a respectable family of 24 Pargana in West Bengal. He had received good education in Islamic sciences. He was also interested in waailing in which he seems to have acquired good proficiency. Later he got married in a zamindar family. In 1822-23 he went for Hajj to Makkh, where he came into contact with the Wahhabis. It was there that he became a disciple of Sayyed Ahmad Shahid. After returning from Hajj, he started his movement in Narikelbaria.

He preached the basic teachings of Islam, specially, *Tauhid*, equality of mankind, brotherhood and justice and fought against all kinds of *shirk* and *bidaat*. His disciples were distinguished by their dress and manner.

---

; *Bengal Judicial Criminal Proceedings*, 1831
; M.A. Khan, *History of the Faraidi Movement*,
; Abdul Gafur Siddiqui, *Titu Mir* (Bengla) Dacca, 1360
; Hunter, *Statistical Account of Bengal*.
; *Census Report* – 1881, 1891, 1901, 1911,
; *Biharilal Sarkar, Titu Mir*, (Bangla) Calcutta, B.S. 1304.
The zamindars who were predominantly Hindus imposed many illegal *abwabs* and introduced measures which hampered the religious life of the people such as preventing construction of mosques etc. Taxes like beard tax, puja tax etc. were challenged by Titu Mir. In the face of such stiff challenge, the *zamindars* could not be expected to remain indifferent. In league with the English indigo-planters they tried to raise the ire of the government against them with the reports that the ultimate aim of Titu Mir was to establish Islamic State. Besides this, there were many cases of torture and killing of the followers of Titu Mir at the hands of the *zamindars* and indigo-planters. Consequently, feelings of anger and resentment were building in the minds of the people against those who perpetrated these crimes.

These pent up feelings found expression in 1831 when a large number of the followers of Titu Mir assembled at Narkelbaria. They consisted mostly of clubmen. As a retaliation against the atrocities of the *zamindars*, they defiled the Kali temple with the blood of the slaughtered cow.

They again gathered on 19 Nov., 1831 at Narkelbaria to fight the *zamindars*, Indigo-planters and East India Company under the leadership of Titu Mir. They were pitted against people who
were equipped with modern weapons while they could muster only some old fashioned weapons and lathies. In the unequal fight that followed they did not have any chance of success and they probably knew it very well. They were simply trying to perform what they considered to be their duty totally unmindful of the consequences. Both Titu Mir and his lieutenant, Gulam Masum, along with a large number of their followers laid down there lives in this battle. Those who survived were sentenced to different terms of imprisonment. Their sacrifice, however, did not go in vain. It continued to inspire the successive generations of Bengalis.

During this period another religious reform movement was launched in parts of Eastern Bengal and Assam by Maulana Karamat Ali Jaunpuri (1800-1873). This was Tayyuni or Rahi movement. It was not a revolutionary movement like the other

10. For details see, Hunter, Statistical Account of Bengal (1875-1888)
    ; Mawlan Karamat Ali, Dhakira-i-Karamat (Specially Muqame Mabta diem, Hujjati-i-Qanah, Nasimul Ha. ; main etc.) Calcutta, 1344 A.H.
    ; Hunter, The Indian Muslms, London, 1871
    ; M.M. Ali, History of the Muslims.
    ; M.A. Khan, History of the Faraidi Movement.
    ; A.R. Mallick, British Policy.
movements discussed above. It was moderate in nature. It professed loyalty to the government and was apolitical and intensely anti-Faraizi. Mawlana Karamat Ali was a brilliant law doctor and a noted preacher. His movement has one thing in common with in Faraizis and Wahhabis. It was also intensely against Shirk and bidaat and carried out a crusade against these evils. He, however, permitted Milad and Fatiha etc. in moderate form. He worked hard to revitalize Muslim Society of Bengal from 1835 to 1873. Though he was a disciple of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid, but in the changed situation, he did not agree with the view that India was Daul Harb. In complete contrast to the views of his preceptor, he declared India to be Darul Aman (abode of peace).

A Staunch Hanafi, Maulana Karamat Ali did not find it objectionable to observe congregational prayers of Juma and 'Ids in British regions. He wanted his followers to denounce shirk and bidaat which had crept in their lives due to long contact with

---

Proceedings of Muhammadan Literacy Society, Calcutta, 1867, 1871.
; JASB, 1894
; Sirat-i-Mawtana Abdul Awwal Jaunpuri,
; Bengal District Gazetters of British, Pakistani and Bangladesh (concerned)
; Census Report, 1881, 1891 and 1901.
suspension of *Jumah* and *Id* prayers. In this particular issue, he even disregarded the opinion and the stand of his own preceptor, Saiyid Ahmad Shahid.

There were several other issues in which he was opposed to Faraizis. For example, he did not agree with the Faraizis that *amal* (action) was part of *Iman*. Clasping hands of *Pir* by the *Murids*, during initiation, obligation of cutting navel cord by the father, belief that grass-hopper was like locust, collecting *sadqa-i fitr* and punishment by shoes etc. Apparently, his teachings and opposition to Faraizis created tension and conflict in the Bengali society. But his single minded and devoted struggle that spanned his whole life made enormous contribution to the cause of the reformation of the Muslim society of Bengal. He left lasting influence in the minds of the Muslims of Bengal.

*Ahl-i-Hadith* movement\(^\text{11}\) was in reality an off-shoot of *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid. It renewed its


; *Hunter, Statistical Account of Bengal*

; *Bangla Pedia*, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, Dhaka, (would be published in 2002)


form and content for his followers who included Maulana Wilayat Ali and Enayet Ali, Siddiq Hasan Khan, Maulana Nazir Hosain in between 1858-1880. They believed in going directly to Hadith rather than taking recourse to any of the four recognised Madhabs of the scholars of Islamic jurisprudence. Besides Quran and Hadis they believed in the efficacy of Ijtihad and Ijma but not Qias. They therefore did not have faith in any school of Islamic jurisprudence. Taqlid was vehemently apposed by them. This designated themselves as Ahl-i-Hadith, Muhammadi (Tariq-i-Muhammadiyah). Their opponents, however, called them variously as La-Madhabi', 'Gair-i- Muqallid, 'Rafi Yadan', Wahhabi, Amini, La-dini', Salafi "jihadi', 'Naya Muslman' etc. Though Ahl-i-hadith movement was a direct offshoot of the Mujahideen movement, it differed from the standpoint of Saiyed Ahmad Shahid on some vital issues and had its own independent views. For example, Saiyid Ahmad Shahid was a strong upholder of the concept of Hijrat and Imamat but they did not agree with his views in this regard. It is, however, interesting to note that in spite of these differences, they described themselves as the true followers of Saiyid Ahmad Shahid. It would seem that those leaders who escaped the trials that followed the death of Saiyid Ahmad Shaheed were responsible for the formation of this group. It is plausible that they deliberately excluded these points from their programme to be able to work in peace and avoid the attention of the government which was understandably very sensitive on this point.  

12 S M Ikram. Mawj-i-Kawthar, Lahore. 1948. p 48
The Faraizi Movement of Bengal was basically a religious movement. It has been described by the scholars variously as 'Islamic Movement',¹ 'religious reform movement',² 'revolutionary',³ 'fundamentalist',⁴ 'Quran based religious revivalist'⁵ or puritan movement.⁶

   ; Narendra Krishna Sinha, (ed) History of Bengal (1777-1947), Calcutta University, Calcutta, 1967, p.188.
   ; Calcutta Review, 1844, p.196.
It may be noticed that all these different descriptions in reality point out to the one and some basic fact that it was a religious reform movement. The movement was launched by Haji Shariatullah, a reformer, Mujahid, Alim, noted preacher and skilful disputer, and good scholar Arabic with a view to rejuvenate and revitalize the Muslim society which he found steeped in superstitions, corruptions and innovations repugnant to the very spirit of Islam. The followers of this movement called themselves Faraizis, for their strict observance of religious duties (Faraiz), prescribed by Islam. Others called them


; JASB, 1894, p.

; O., Malley, B.D.G., Faridpur, Bengal secretariat Book Depot, Calcutta, 1925, p.38.


; *Indian Musalmans 1871*, p.110

variously as 'sharawalis', 'Naya Muslman', 'Admi Rafa', 'Wahhabis', 'Dindar', 'Hedayeties', Namaj-I-Hafiz, Hajees.\(^{12}\)

The founder of this movement, Haji Shariatullah, was regarded as "the first person who stirred his countrymen by resuscitating dormant spirit of their faith".\(^{13}\) The main ideological basis or foundation of his movement was the complete submission to the Will of Allah\(^{14}\) as enshrined in the Quran and Sunnah and tradition of the golden age of Islam as interpreted by the Hanafi school of jurisprudence.

---

; B.C. Allen, *EBDG*, Dacca, Allahabad, 1912, p.64.
; J. Wise, p.22 ; *Trial of Dudu Miyan*, p.65.


14. Letter of Dudu Miyan to the Secretary of the Government. J.P. Grant, on 1st January, 1850,

\(\text{Bangal Judicial cons. January, 23, 1850. Here Dudu Miyan Said:} \) "In order therefor to direct these Muslms from the evil ways the petitioner [Dudu Miyan] and his father [Shariatullah] Laboured Unceasingly clasingly with energy and zeal to teach them the precepts of their religion, and the commandments of God ... to infuse in them the true Knowledge of Daily, Pointing out to them, the actions whereby they might please God and his Prophet : as also those by which they might in evr the devine displeasure ...".
About their ideological source, a contemporary of Haji Shariatullah and keen observer of this movement, Dr. James Taylor, observed: “They (Faraizis) profess to adhere the strict letter of the Koran and reject all the ceremonies that are not sanctioned by it”. The second head of this movement, Dudu Miyan, in 1847 declared before the sessions judge of Dhaka: “My Lord; for myself I know the Koran and the commands of Allah and Rasool…” Describing their ideological source, Hunter, a British administrator and writer remarked: “They declare that the Koran is the complete guide to the spiritual life”.

A government report distributing the basic tenets of the movement held that ‘the Faraizis lead their lives in a strict conformity with the Quran. Writing in Bengal District Gazetteer, Lambourn in 1918, observed that “the common feature

15. James Taylor, P. 248, and he also said, “I am a believer in the Koran, and the Prophet, I can’t adopt the terms and figures of infidels; it is contrary to our religious persuasion”. See, pp. XXXI, Trial of Dudu Miyan.
of these Sharawalis is that they profess to base themselves on the text of the Quran". This feature of the movement is so obvious that it is difficult to miss. This aspect of the movement's ideology is so pronounced that even most of the modern scholars, who have studied the movement, have come to the conclusion that the Quran was the code of this movement.

It is unfortunate that we do not possess anything written by Haji Shariatullah regarding the basic tenets of the Faraizis. His opponents have referred to a book (Tarikatul Ahkam) which they claim to have been instructed by Haji Shariatullah. They have condemned him and his movement on the basis of the contents of this book. His son and successor, Dudu Miyan, who may rightly

   ; Bengal Judi: Consultations, 7 April, 1847.

   ; Latifa Akanda, The Social History of the Muslim Bengal p.178.
   
   ; See J.N. Gupta, DGEBA, Bogra,1910.

21 See, Maulana Karamat Ali, Hujjat-i-Qatia,
   , Wajir Ali, Muslim Ratnahar, p.9
be considered as the co-founder of the movement, had also not left behind any treatise on the teachings of the movement. In this situation, we have no option but to draw from the contemporary writers who have taken note of this movement and its activities. Besides this valuable source, government reports, criticism of the opponents etc., also provide valuable insights into the nature of the movement. Later Faraizis have written about their movement basing themselves on the tradition and oral transmissions of the earlier leaders. All these sources have been judiciously used to draw a coherent picture of the religious beliefs and ideas of the movement.

The emphasis on the Holy Quran as the source of Muslim religious life continued to be stressed by the Faraizis. For example, Dudu Miyan ii believed that the Muslims accepted the Holy Quran as their ideal or code of life, the rule of the world and the salvation and honour of Hereafter for them. They believed that the Quran is the word of Allah, revealed through Gibral to Prophet Mohammad during his 23 years of


prophethood. The book comprised of the description of injunctions, prohibitions, and commandments of Allah, history of previous Prophets and their followers, holding out hope of reward for the believers and punishment for the disbelievers.\textsuperscript{24}

They also give full importance to Sunnah and follow it scrupulously. Regarding their commitment to the teachings of the Quran and the Sunnah, a District Gazetteer contains following observations. “They are Orthodox followers of the Quran and the Hadith or tradition ... They regard the rest of the Muhammadans as be-Shara men who don’t follow the scripture strictly”\textsuperscript{25} A report in Calcutta Review, which appeared in 1860, remarks: “the Faraizis are more scrupulous in the entire observance of the Muhammadan code than their sunni brothers, they, if we call them (are) Muslim puritan”.\textsuperscript{26}

Hadith or Sunnah or tradition of Prophet means ‘sayings’, ‘actions’, and ‘approvals of the Prophet, these were collected by traditionalists (Muhaddisun) with greatest care and it remain, unparalleled in the history of mankind. Generations of dedicated scholars have spent their lives in collecting the Hadiths from

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid, pp. 42-43
\textsuperscript{25} J.A. Vas, \textit{EBADG}, Rangpur, p.44.
every possible sources and ascertaining its authenticity by putting it to every rigorous test which involved both the scrutiny of the narrators as well as the text itself. Thanks to their untiring labour, a large corpus of authentic traditions has come down to us in the form of well-known collections of Hadith.27

All the commandments of Allah and directions of the prophet including his actions are jointly called Shariat. As Islam is a complete code of conduct for all aspects of human life, the shariat encompasses every possible sphere of human life such as worship, way of conduct, way of earning livelihood, preservation of law and order, security of the people as well as political system, agriculture, business, education, social welfare, social structure, ensuring happiness of the citizens, communications, relation with other countries, stopping war and conflicts, employment for young etc. fall under the jurisdiction and purview of Islamic Shariat.28

27. Dudu Miyan, Tariqus Saluk p.44.
28. Ibid,
   For their stressing on religious activities it is found during the life time of Dudu Miyan, there was a theology department of this movement, under the political branch of their organisation, See, M.A. Khan, History of Faraidi Movement, p.275.
The Faraizis were followers of Hanifi school of Muslim Jurisprudence. But their attitude towards the adherents of other schools of fiqh was entirely unbiased and liberal. They believed that all the Imams had shown the right path of Islam, through immense study and interpretation of the Quran and the Sunnah, making it easy for the common people to practise it.29

As could be expected from a movement, which derived its very name from the obligatory religious duties (Faraiz), the Faraizis laid much emphasis on five pillars of Islam30 as obligatory duties along with supereogatory duties prescribed by the Quran and Sunnah as codified and embodied in Islamic jurisprudence. They laid the utmost emphasis on Tauhid and five fundamentals of Islam. In this regard J.Wise, said: “The principal doctrines of these reformers being founded on the fundamentals of Islam.”31

29. Ibid;
M. A. Latif, Amar Jivani, p.33, Hence the Faraizis were followers of Taqlid (imitation); See, M. M. Ali, History of the Muslims of Bengal, vol.ii. p.312.
30. Wazir Ali, Muslim Rainahar, p.32
Durri-Mahammad, Puthi, p.11
M.A. Khan, HFM, p.222
31. James Wise, Eastern Bengal, 1883, p.28,
JASB, 1894, 52
Hunter, India: The Districts and Provincial Gazetteer, Bengal, Faridpur, Calcatta, 1925, 45.
The five fundamentals of Islam are (i) Declaration of *Kalima La Ilaha Illallahu Muhammadur Rasulullah* (There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His prophet), (ii) Performing five daily prayers (iii) Payment of *Zakat* (Alms) (iv) Fasting during the month of Ramazan and (v) Pilgrimage to Makkah.\(^ {32}\)

A Faraizi *puthi* illustrates the Faraizi concept of Islam and how they sought to rejuvenate the Muslim Society. The Faraizi *puthi* *Durr-i-Mohammad* compares the five fundamentals of Islam with the root, branch and flower of a tree in the garden of Islam ...

... The other religious obligations (*Faraiz*) are according to this *puthi*, like in-numerable smaller branches which are meant not only to embellish it but also to impart vigour and vitality to it. According to his assessment, Haji Shariatullah's contribution to Islam in Bengal consists in revitalizing the tree of Faith (*Iman*) and bringing back life and vigour to the garden of Islam.\(^ {33}\)

Any body who has some idea about the conditions of the Muslims in Bengal during that period, will fully agree with the

---

32. Wajir Ali, *Muslim Ratnahar*, p.32
   ; *Durr-i-Muhammad, Puthi*, p.11.
assessment of *Durr-i-Mohammad* about the very vital and crucial role played by Haji Shariatullah in the field of reforming that society. Almost the same sentiment was echoed by Hunter when he remarked "a century ago (in 18th Century) Muhammadan seemed to be dying of in animation in Bengal.\(^{34}\)

The Faraizis laid particular emphasis on the wel-defined, clear-cut doctrine of *Tauhid* (belief in One God), on which they would not accept any compromise. This emphasis on the unity \(^7\) Goh assumed greater significance if the conditions of the contemporary Muslim society of Bengal is kept in mind which was full of all kinds of *shirk* (poly theism), *Bid-at* (innovations) rites and ceremonies that are antagonistic to the very spirit of Islam and which they sought to reform. Haji Shariatullah would not accept the contemporary interpretation of the concept of *Tauhid*, (unity of Allah), which could accommodate many of the practices prevalent in the Bengal society and which were against the very spirit of Islam. To him belief in God was not enough unless it was associated with complete adherence to the unity of God which negate all kinds of association and partnership with Him. To him even the remotest resemblance with *Kufr*

(infidelity), *shirk* (polytheism) and *Bid-at* (innovations) was abhorrent and totally unacceptable. Hunter correctly summed up the basic doctrine of Haji Shariatullah when he said: The articles of faith on which he [Haji Shariatullah] chiefly insisted were duty of war (*jihad*), the sinfulness of infidelity (*kufr*) or introducing rites and ceremonies into worship (*Bid-at*) and giving partnership to the one God (*Shirk*).^35

Other British writers make the same point when they say that it constituted "a return to the simple habits and pure monotheism of the Quran".^36

They held the view that any body who professes or practises any thing contrary to it, ceases to be a Muslim. This


    ; Hunter, *India;The Districts*, p.399.
    ; Peter Hardy, *The Muslims of British India*, p.55.

"Even Taylor said, "the Faraizis were strict followers of the letters of the Quran and rejects everything that are not sanctioned by it", Taylor, Topography, p.248.
point was highlighted in the deposition of Dudu Miyan before sessions Judge of Dhaka in 1847.  

This uncompromising interpretation of *Tauhid* could not be tolerated by the conservative society of Bengal. An idea of the opposition aroused by the Faraizis on this count could be had from the fact that they were dubbed as “*Kharijis of Bengal* by Mawlana Karamat Ali Jaunpuri.  

The utmost emphasis that the Faraizis put on *Tauhid* and its implications prompted some scholars and historians to call them the Wahhabis. For example, J.A. Burdillon in his Census Report (1881) observed “like the Wahhabis, the Faraizis insist on the Unity of God and the uselessness of intercession by all saints, angels and spirits”.  

The Faraizi attitude towards attributes of Allah is some as believed by the majority of Ahl-us-sunnat-wa-al-Jamat, who were followers of the Ashari school. They believed that He is the creator, omniscient and omnipotent. His word is eternal, not created. He has the good qualities and Muslim should emulate these qualities.  

The prophets were the messengers of Allah and recipients of Wahi (revelation) and were sent down for the guidance of the humanity to the right path. All of them were protected from sins- (Masum) and their lives were the model for all the mankind to follow and attain the bliss of both the worlds. Our prophet is the last of the prophets and for all the time to come. True guidance can be attained only through him. 

The prayer (salat) is the means of purification of the body and soul. This is an obligatory duty for all Muslims. The Quran laid utmost emphasis on the performance of salat which is the means of nearness to Allah and source of spiritual bliss. It is the differentiating factor between the believers and non-believers. Following this tradition literally, the Faraizis did not participate

41. Ibid.
42. Dudu Miyan, Tarquis Saluk, pp 55-56.
in the funeral prayer (janaza) of those Muslims who were not punctual in their observation of salat. For this they were bitterly criticized by Maulana Karamat Ali and his followers. They said this was in fact the Khariji line of thinking. And, therefore, they were dubbed as the Kharijis of Bengal. But the Faraizis refuted it vehemently and said that they took resort to this extreme step not because they agreed with the Kharijis but they did it with a view to inculcate in the minds of the Muslims the extreme importance of this pillar of Islam.

One of the most remarkable declarations of Haji Shariatullah was the suspension of Juma and 'Id prayers in British Bengal as according to him it has become a Darul Harb (abode of war) after the assumption of power by the British.


44 Current tradition in the family of Haji Shariatullah.

45 J. Wise, Eastern Bengal, p.22.
; ----- JASB, 1894, p.52.
; Hunter, India: The Districts, p.38.
; O' Malley, Bengal District Gazetteer, Faridpur, p.38.
The Faraizis were, however, not the first to declare British India as *Darul Harb*. They were preceded by renowned scholar shah Abdul Aziz who had earlier declared India as *Darul Harb*.\(^{46}\) Similarly, suspension of *Juma* and ‘*Id* congregational prayers were resorted to by Muhammad bin Tughlaq (1325-51) though in a different context. He believed that these prayers can not be legitimately offered till the recognition of the caliph.\(^{47}\)

But the Faraizis have shown remarkable consistency in their attitude.\(^{48}\) While Shah Abdul Aziz and his followers continued to believe in the legality of *Juma* prayers in the *Darul Harb*.\(^{49}\) The Faraizis maintained their instance till the creation of


\(^{49}\) (b) *Durr-i-Muhammad Puthi* (written in between 1903-1906). The Faraizis were followed by two renowned theologians, Maw. Fuzlur Rahman and Maw Wajih of Calcutta, see Hunter, *Indian Muslams*.

Shah Abdur Aziz’s followers were, Sayyid Ahmad Shahid, leader of Mijahidin Movement. Titu Mir-leader of Jihad movement, Maulana Karamat
Pakistan in 1947. It was only after this that they started offering *Juma* prayers. In this way, in the Faraizi strong holds *Juma* and *‘Id* congregational prayers remained suspended for about one and half centuries.\(^{50}\)

It is well known that there is much difference of opinion among the Muslim Jurists on the question of holding these congregational prayers. This difference basically relates to the definition of *misr-i-jami* and the presence of a Muslim ruler or his representative there. Imam Malik, Imam Shafi, Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal, Imam Abu Yusuf and Imam Abu Hanifa hold different views on the question of *Misr-i-Jami*. Even the Imam Abu Hanifa are attributed three different definitions. According to one, "*Misr-i-Jami* is a locality whose inhabitants could not be properly accommodated in the biggest of its mosques. According to other opinion, *Misr-i-Jami* means "considerably large member" while in the third he defines it as "a large township in which there are roads, lanes, market places and many places attached to it, and where the Wali (governor or administrator) resides, who is able to administer justice and to protect the

oppressed from the oppressor to whom the people turn whenever any calamity befalls them. 51

Moreover, according to Hanafi Law there are six pre-requisites for holding Juma prayers. These necessarily include the condition of its being Misr-i-Jami and the presence of Muslim ruler or his agent there. 52

After the consolidation of British power in India, naturally the question of the holding of these congregational prayers in the country arose. 53 While the overwhelming majority of the Muslim scholars of different schools of thought came to the conclusion that these should be held but those who were not very sure about its legality could add four Rakaats of Zuhr to it as a precaution. 54 But Haji Shariatullah and some others concluded that in the prevailing situation the basic pre-conditions of holding it could not be fulfilled as there was no Muslim ruler or his representative

51. For details account of this stand see, Syayikh Buhanuddin Marginani, Hedayah.
; Allama Aini-al-Hanafi, Umdatul Qari fi-Sharh-al-Bukhari, p.iii.

52. Ibid., and Reference no. 44 of this Chapter.

53. Hunter, The India Muslims, pp.133-137.

any where, and, therefore, these congregational prayers could not be legally held.\textsuperscript{55}

This seems to have led to much bickering and debate between the Faraizis and other Muslim scholars\textsuperscript{56} besides the British authors declaring it a dangerous policy.\textsuperscript{57} Much energy was spent in argument and counter argument in favour of this stand and against it. Ultimately, it became one of the most controversial issues between them and others and a number of books were written and \textit{Fatwas} issued on this point.\textsuperscript{58}

\begin{itemize}
\item 55. B.C. Allen, \textit{EBDG}, Dhaka, p.63.
\item E.A. Gait, \textit{Census of India}, 1901, p.173.
\item James Wise, \textit{Eastern Bengal}, p.22 and their other treatises.
\item 56. For details of these debates, look at Mawlana Karamat Ali, Dhakhira-i-Karamat, \textit{Nasimul Haramyin-Hujjat-i-Qatia}.
\item Nazimuddin, \textit{Puthi}
\item 57. Hunter, \textit{The Indian Empire} (1881), p.437.
\item Hunter, \textit{The Indian Muslims}, p.135-136.
\item \textit{Imperial Gazetteer of India}, Faridpur
\item \textit{Statistical Account of Bengal}.
\item 58. For details see, Rafiuddin Ahmad, \textit{The Bengali Muslims}, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1982.
\end{itemize}
Zakat is also one of the pillars of Islam. There is much emphasis in the Quran and the Hadith on Zakat which is to be collected from the rich and distributed among the poor. The wealth should not remain confined among the wealthier selections of the society.

As the right of the poor, it should reach their hands. The Faraizi perception about zakat is not different from others. They believed that Zakat should be spent both on the needy as well as in the field of Jihad for the defence of Islam. For the down trodden people Zakat is like the circulation of blood in the body politic of the society which nourishes and sustains the weak and the poor and takes care of their needs.

It is, however, very surprising that the Faraizis could not evolve any centralized mechanism for the purposes of collection and distribution of zakat. If the crucial importance of zakat both as religious duty and a means of ensuring social welfare and upliftment of the poor is kept in the mind, this seems to be truly amazing. It would have been rightly expected that, at least in the areas of their dominance, they must have initiated some

59. DudU Miyan, Tariqus Saluk, pp.61-63.
60. Ibid., pp.63-74.
organized efforts for collecting and distributing the *zakat*. A very large number of Faraizi following consisted of the poor peasants and weavers. Through collective management of *zakat* much could have been done to solve some of their most pressing problems and alleviate their sufferings. This indifference regarding one of the most important aspects of religion on the part of a movement, which was committed to the revival of the original glory of Islam, is nothing less then baffling and very difficult to be explained. It could not be expected to have remained totally unreported if something was done in this regard because almost all the other activities of the Faraizis have been fully reported.\(^{61}\)

They, however, laid much emphasis on the observation of other pillars of Islam such as fasting (*saum*) and pilgrimage to Makkah (Hajj). Since it is in complete uniformity of the mainstream Islam as believed and held by the overwhelming

---

\(^{61}\) Only one report reached to us, on the basis of tradition of Faraizi district Chandpur, where they have been paying "*Ushar* (one tenth of their crops – a rate of one fortieth(?)) of Islamic *Zakat* System. See, M.A. Khan, *History of Faraizi Movement*, p.278. This historian also based on the tradition of the Farizis said the unit *Khatifas* of the Faraizi organisation have been "collected payment of *Zakat* and *fitra*," (see, Ibid., p.277).

On the other hand, J. Wise observed that the *Khalifas* collect contribution for the furtherance of the object of the association. (See, J.Wise, *Eastern Bengal*, p.23. But whether they were paying \(2^{1/2}\) of *zakat* or not we have no evidence to suggest certainty.
majority of the Muslims, a detailed discussion about their
description of the same does not seem to be necessary. 62

Spiritual Dimension of Faraizi Movement

Haji Shariatullah received his basic religious education and
training in Arabia where he stayed for a considerable period of
time in two different spells. 63 Makkah, where he spent most of his
time was during those days under the complete dominance of
Wahhabis. With their uncompromising stand about Tauhid and
total rejection of all kinds of innovations, they seem to have
deeply impressed Haji Shariatullah and its effects could be
clearly felt in his teachings. 64 Realization of urgent need to do
something to reform the Muslim society of Bengal, take it out
from its degradation and restore the pristine glory of Islam, were
also most probably a consequence of his stay in Arabia. And it is
because of this reason that many apparent similarities are found
between the Wahhabis and the Faraizis.

62. For details see, Dudu Miyan, Tariqus Saluk, pp.63-86.
63. W.H. Thomson, Final Report on the Survey and Settlement in the District of
; L.S.S.O' Malley, B.D. G., Faridpur, p.38.
But there is one aspect in which they are completely at variance from the Wahhabis. Wahhabis do not countenance any form of sufism and sufi practices. This is totally unacceptable and abhorrent to them. But Faraizis did incorporate certain features of sufi beliefs and practices in their plan of work for the restoration of true spirit of Islam in Bengal. To some it may seem rather inconsistent with the general spirit of the movement with its great emphasis on weeding out all kinds of innovations. And therefore it is necessary to find out the reasons, which might have been responsible for this situation.

For one thing, it might have been due to the great influence that his main teacher at Makkah, Tahir Sambal, had over him. Tahir Sambal was himself a Qadiri Sufi. As a teacher he had great influence over Haji Shariatullah. It could be a consequence of this influence that in spite of the stridently anti-sufi

64. E.A. Gait, *Census of India, 1901*, p.372. Gait said, he was disciple of the then Wahhabis.


; see, also, Dudu Miyan, *Tariqus Saluk*.

; M.A. Khan, *History of Faraidi Movement*. 
atmosphere of Arabia, he got himself initiated into Qadi
r
silsilah and tried to effect a kind of compromise between the
teachings of the Wahhabis and the sufis.

Another consideration also might have influenced Haji
Shariatullah to take recourse to the sufism to bring about the
changes that he wanted to effect in the Muslim society of Bengal.
Bengal has long been a centre of sufi activities. Many eminent
sufis have lived and worked there. It is also generally believed
that a large number of Muslim population of Bengal owed its
conversion to Islam to the missionary efforts of the sufis
particularly eminent shurawardi sufi, Shaikh Jalaluddin Tabrezi,
in the beginning of the establishment of Muslim rule in that
region. Since that time till the days of Haji Shariatullah there has
been a long and continued tradition of sufis and sufi activities in
the region. Muslims of Bengal were more familiar with the sufis
than any other class of Muslim religious groups. Masses were
deeply influenced with the sufis and held them in great respect
and reverence. They were familiar with the sufi discourses which
has permeated the society at all levels and had become an important part of their religious consciousness and ethos.\footnote{For details see, James Wise, \textit{Eastern Bengal}, 1883, pp.12-20.}

In the kind of situation a hypothesis can be advanced for explaining his decision to get himself initiated in a sufi \textit{silsilah} in a place which was literally seething with anti-sufi sentiments. It is possible that during his stay at Mecca, Haji Shariatullah would have been pondering over the degradation of the Muslim society in Bengal, and the urgent need to do something to stop this rot and rid the Muslims of Bengal from all the innovations in which they had got themselves enmeshed. During these ponderings an important question must have confronted him that how this stupendous task was to be fulfilled. One can hazard a guess that he might have thought of various options for achieving the desired goal and might have weighed their pros and cons. Ultimately the deep rooted belief of the people in sufis and sufism might have led him to the conclusion that inspite of its

\footnote{\textit{JASB}, 1894.}

\footnote{Muhammad Enamul Huq, \textit{History of Sufism in Bengal}, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, Dhaka, 1975.}

\footnote{Abdul Karim, \textit{Social History of the Muslims in Bengal Down to 1538 A.D.}, Asiatic Society of Pakistan, Dhaka, 1959.}

\footnote{Asim Roy, \textit{The Islamic Syncretistic Tradition in Bengal}, Sterling Publ. Priv. Ltd., New Delhi, 1983.}
drawbacks, reform via sufism was best calculated to enable him to achieve his desired goal. Sufi masters are followed and implicitly obeyed without any reservation and question. This could be the way to lead the Bengali Muslims entangled in the meshes of tradition, ignorance and innovation. This method could be more effective than any other that could have been available to him.

This is a mere hypothesis to explain the introduction of sufism in the movement that for all practical purposes was a revolutionary movement. It is presented for consideration of the scholars in the field.

Haji Shariatullah was initiated into Qadiria order through his teacher Maulana Tahir Sombal-al-Makki. It is interesting to note that the Wahhabis, who were in complete dominance there during those days, were deadly opposed to sufism. The possible reasons that might have been responsible for his decision to get himself initiated in the sufi system have been already taken note of briefly. But according to the Faraizi sources, it was due to the realization that the purification of the soul (Tazkia-i-Nafs) which

68. Thomsan, SSR, Noakhali, 1920, p.28.

; M.A. Khan, History of Faraidi Movement, p.245.
has been mentioned in the Quran among the primary responsibilities of the Prophet, could be best achieved only through this means.\textsuperscript{69} He, therefore, seems to have regarded mystic order as a branch of higher religious knowledge. He also held that in order to be able to tread on the mystic path, a person must be fully conversant with the \textit{shariat} as well as the \textit{tariqat}, because an initiate would otherwise be perpetually in danger of falling a victim to the temptation, and allurement, which might ultimately lead him astray. The Haji, therefore, made a distinction between the \textit{Khawas} (the select) and the \textit{Awam} – (the commoners) and allowed only the former to be initiated into mystic order; the latter were, on the other hand, encouraged to recite from the Holy Quran regularly.\textsuperscript{70}

It is remarkable that during Haji Shariatullah's time in Bengal, there were innumerable \textit{pirs}, mystics and guides. Even some ignorant Muslims were inclined to Hindu \textit{Gurus} and some Hindus were also initiated by Muslim Pirs. Through this syncretistic attitude gradually many un-Islamic or even purely


The writer quoted \textit{Quranic Verses}, \textit{Al-i-Imran}, 164, and others, including, many \textit{Hadiths} in this regard.

\textsuperscript{70} M.A.Khan, \textit{History of Faraidi Movement}, p.246, based on the tradition.
Hinduized features and practices were introduced in the sufi system as it was believed and practiced in Bengal during those days. They were considered to be intermediaries between man and God.\(^{71}\)

Even though Haji Shariatullah himself was now a sufi of *Qadiria silsilah*,\(^{72}\) it would be seen that his long stay in Arabia, had firmly ingrained in his mind the crucial importance of *taulid*, which he was not prepared to compromise at any cost.

It would seem that he came to the conclusion that the root cause of all this degradation was the prevailing *pir-muridi* system. The *pirs* came to be associated with many supernatural powers and attributes and were even considered to hold position of intercessors between man and God.\(^{73}\) He perhaps thought that it could not be possible to get rid of the evils associated with the *piri-muridi* system unless it was altogether abolished.

---


; see also Asim Roy, *The Islamic Syncretistic Tradition in Bengal*:


; *SSR*, Tipperah, p.28.


He, therefore, ordered, for the purposes of describing the relationship between the preceptor and novice the titles of ‘Ustad’ and ‘Shagird’ instead of pir and murid should be used as these terms did not signify the that of which is? Something left here implied in the earlier terms.\(^74\)

According to his opinion the term pir had acquired an air of demigodness and had lost its real significance, because of the enormous corpus of legends about their supposed miraculous and supernatural powers, that had gathered around the names of many real as well as legendary pirs. Therefore, he abolished these terms altogether.\(^75\) But it does not seem to have made any difference in the attitude and beliefs of the people who were initiated under the new nomenclature. There is no way to ascertain that, by replacing the terms of pir and murid with those of ustad and shagird, any real change in the spirit and outlook of the system was brought about. The relationship between a sufi preceptior and his disciple is determined not by the words which

\(^74\) J. Wise, Eastern Bengal, p.22.

\(^75\) M.A.Khan, pp.246-247.
are used to describe this relationship but by the prescriptions of the *sufi* ideology and its traditions. The essence of this relationship is complete and unreserved submission. To describe the nature of this relationship the sufis are fond of citing the example of dead body in the hand of the washer who turns it as he wants. Now the fundamental nature of this relationship can not be changed by merely replacing a term by another. Haji Shariatullah is not reported to have made any attempt at redefining the basic concepts of sufism. At the best it was a kind of cosmetic surgery that was performed by him most probably to ease his own conscience which was, no doubt, very sensitive about *Tauhid*.

That replacement of the terms of *pir* and *murid* with those of *ustad* and *shagird* could not actually introduce any fundamental change is proved by the fact that his son and successor, Dudu Miyan, restored the old nomenclature. People were used to the earlier term and as it did not make any difference as far as the nature of this relationship was concerned, there was perhaps really no need to keep up with this façade which must have been quite unfamiliar and inconvenient to the people.
But his son and successor, Dudu Miyan, reintroduced this term.\textsuperscript{76} It was a deviation from the early Faraizi doctrine of its founder. Needless to say that it continued to be followed by the subsequent generations of the Faraizis. Apparently, it is difficult to discern any particular difference between them and other \textit{pirs}.

It is well-known that \textit{ba'at}\textsuperscript{77} occupies a very important position in sufism. It is through the \textit{ba'at} that a novice is initiated into the \textit{sufi} system. It signifies that the novice accepts the \textit{pir} as his spiritual preceptor as well as that the \textit{pir} agrees to accept him as his disciple and take up the responsibility of his spiritual training. According to the accepted norms of sufism, it is through the \textit{ba'at} that the novice is initiated and introduced to the mysteries of the inner world of sufism. The method of performing \textit{Ba'at} was that the disciple puts his hand on the hand of the preceptor as a symbol of accepting his spiritual authority and repeats certain formula which he is asked to do. \textit{Sufis assert

\textsuperscript{76} J. Wise, \textit{J.A.S.B.}, 1894, p.50.


\textsuperscript{77} Baat means, agreement, promise, initiation, buy, sell, etc.

that this was the way the Prophet used to initiate people into Islam and they claim that it is in emulation of his *sunnah* that they follow it.\(^\text{78}\)

But according to the findings of Haji ShariatuUah, this form of *ba'at* which required putting of the hand of the disciple on the hand of the preceptor is not proved to have been practiced by the prophet.\(^\text{79}\) He therefore, considered it an innovation. Accordingly, he abolished the prevalent mode of *Ba'at*. While his decision to change the nomenclature of *Pir* and *Murid* with *Ustad* and *Shagird* does not seem to have aroused much opposition, the discontinuance of the mode of *ba'at* led to much hostile criticism. Among those who reacted very sharply against this practice was included Mawlana Karamat Ali Jounpuri.\(^\text{80}\)

For the initiation of a disciple Haji ShariatuUah required from every one *Taubah* (repentance) for past sins and solemn

---

78. See, *Al-Quran*, *Surah* Al-Fath, Ayat, 10, and all books of its Tafsir, there it is significant that except the Faraizis all other reform movements and Sufi orders, there are laying hand is practical method.


determination to lead a more righteous and pious life in future.\(^{81}\)
The process of Taubah comprised of administering a formula by the ustad to the shagird. Both of them will sit face to face.

English translation of the code of taubah is as follows:

"I am repenting for whatever sin I have committed knowingly and intentionally, in the form of ascribing associates and partners to Allah (Shirk), committing sinful innovation (bidat), disobedience to Allah, injustice, or oppression, and I am resolving that I shall continue to believe in the unity of Allah (Tauhid) and carry out His Commandments in so far as it lies in my power and lead the life in accordance with the tradition of the Prophet".\(^{82}\)

This formula was recited in Bangla which other sufis used for this purpose either in Arabic, Persian or Urdu language. Undoubtedly, Bangla was their mother tongue and, therefore,

---


82. This formula was read by the present Faraizi leader Muhiuddin Dadan Miyan, at their three day long annual conference on 4,5 and 6 of March 1999 at Bahadurpur, Mudaripur. The Leader claimed that it is formulated on the tradition of Haji Shariatullah. Present writer was present at this conference and delivered a Lecture on Faraizi activities where near about 2 lakh people had gathered.
they could fully graspe the meaning and significance of what they were saying.

There are two kinds of sins. One is the henious sin (kabirah) and the other is venial sin, (saghirah). The former would not be remitted without sincere taubah and the latter may be pardoned by prayers, sadaqah, helping destitute etc. To erase the effects of heinous, sin taubah is essential.  

Like others, the Faraizis also considered taubah as the beginning point of a reformed life. The Faraizis laid great emphasis on taubah and it was considered as pre-condition for becoming a Faraizi. According by those who performed taubah came to be known as “Taubar Muslim” or Mumin”. The Faraizis also called it ishtigfar i.e. seeking forgiveness from sins. So a Faraizi would seek forgiveness of Allah and undertake to lead a pious life. While performing taubah, the ustad, and the shagird were required to sit face to face, but they were not touching each other’s hands. This ceremony was called iqrar-i-bayat, (affirmation to baiat). As noted earlier, he did not believe in dasta-i-baiyah (collapsing hands) as he thought that it was not proved that the Prophet has done it. According to him during

83. Dudu Miyan, Tariqus Saluk, pp.118-119.
prophet's time the practice was Iqrar-i-baiat (honest resolution) not dasti baiyat as held at by others. He considered it as a bida, (innovation).

The prescription of taubah is considered by some modern writers as the essence of the basic aspects of this reform movement.\(^8^4\)

As noted earlier, Haji Shariatullah himself subscribed to the Qadiria order. But the latter Faraizis also got themselves enrolled in Naqshbandiya, Chistia, and Mujaddidia orders. But they did not subscribe to the Shurawardia order. The reasons behind this decision have never been spelt.

The Qadiria order founded by Abdul Qadir Jilani (d.561 A.H./1165 A.D.) of Baghdad, was introduced in Bengal by Hazrat Shah Qamis, a descendent of the founder who had settled in Salurah or Salar and was subsequently succeeded by Abdur Razzaq.\(^8^5\) The disciples of this order were divided into three categories according to their spiritual status and attainments; the

---


     ; see M.A. Latif, *Amar Jivani*.
     ; *Tariqus Saluk*, p.147.
ordinary, the special and the most special. Certain practices were prescribed for the followers of this silsilah such as Dhikir-ar-Raha, Shugul-i-Burjakh-i-Akbar, Shughal-i-Ism-i-Dhat, Muraqaba-i-Fana, Muraqaba-i-Nur-i-Allah, Muraqaba-i-Maut, Muraqaba-i-Suhbat-Allah, Muhaqaba-i-Tauhid-wa-Sifat. These are to be practised by the disciples.

Dhikr occupies a very important place among the Faraizis. They are very particular about it and offer it after Maghrib and Fajr prayers. It is specially held on Wednesdays after Maghrib prayer collectively. Dhikr means remembrance of Allah but in Sufism it means remembering Allah in such a way that nothing remains in one’s heart except Him. This stage may be attained by the recitation of Holy Quran, Dua, and Durud. La Ilaha-Illalahu Muhammedur Rasulullah is the greatest Dhikr. First it may be

86. For stages and practices of Qadiria order, see, Dudu Miyan, Tariqus Saluk, pp.147-162. The leader Dudu Miyan II also discussed Naqhabandia order, Chistia order and Mujaddidia order with their stages, practices, effort, kinds of remembrance. For detailed account of these orders, see, Dudu Miyan, Tariqus Saluk, pp.164-208.


; Abdul Karim, Social History of the Muslims in Bengal.

; S.A.A. Rizvi, History of Sufism in India.

recited by tongue, then by soul which inspires love for Allah. Blessing of Pir is essential for a murid without which he can not hope to achieve anything.  

In principle Dhikr could be divided into four kinds; Nasuti, Malakuti, Jabaruti and Lahuti. On the otherhand, Dhikr by tongue is Jismi, by thought is fikri, by Muraqaba is Qalbi and by Mu‘yaina is Dhikr-i-Sirri.  

There are some essential ingredients to control Nafs (soul). These are ‘Musharita’ and ‘Muhasiba’. Fast the Kalima should be uttered, then blessings of Allah is to be sought and then past sins are to be repented and only then it should be contemplated that nothing except Allah exasts.


89. For more details about Dhikr and other practices of the Qadiri orders which was followed by the Faraizis. See, Dudu Miyan, Tariqus Saluk, pp.144-150.
DENUNCIATION OF RITES, CEREMONIES AND INNOVATIONS

In Bengal as also in other parts of India, during the time of Haji Shariatullah the condition of the Muslims has been very aptly described by O’Malley. He observed “They profess to be Muslims, but to them Islam is only circumcision and eating cow’s flesh”. 90 Their beliefs, customs, rites and ceremonies were Hinduized and in most of the cases have nothing to do with Islam. Haji Shariatullah realized that for introducing any kind of reform in the lives of the Muslims of Bengal, it was imperative to erase the traces of these innovations which were entrenched in the contemporary Muslim society. Only then there could be some hope of reviving the glory and purity of Islam. According to H. Beveridge, this movement was “a sort of primitive Church movement or return to the doctrine of Muhammad and an attempt to abandon the superstitious practices which have gathered round the earlier creed by lapse of time and by contract with the Hindus”. 91 One of his contemporaries regarded him as a strict

follower of the letter of the Quran and denouncer of all practices not sanctioned by it".⁹²

The rites, ceremonies and customs which were totally against the spirit of Tauhid having any resemblance with Shirk and bidat were denounced by this reformer. These included practices like adoration of Pirs and seeking assistance from them, festival of Berah floating in honour of Khawja Khizr, Hinduised marriage ceremonies, offering fruits and flowers at the graves and raising them above the surface of the ground and marking out by any building of brick or stone. Fatiha ceremonies, listening music, dancing or any thing which savoured of frivolity, sacrifice at the tombs of Holymen, adoration of Hindu Goddess-Kali, or Durga, paying customary cesses for pujahs, seeking intercession of the saints at their tombs, consultation of Brahmins, vegetarianism, restriction on remarriage of widows, witnessing Hindu festivals, specially kali, sacrificing goats to the Goddess, astrology, worship of footprints of the Prophet, Urs (birth and death anniversary of pirs), fixing date of marriage after

---

consultation of Hindu Almanac, and many others.\textsuperscript{93} He strongly denounced all these and every thing else which even distantly approached idolatry in his view.\textsuperscript{94}

Moreover, he also detested building shrines of \textit{Gazi Kalu}, worshipping shrine of Bibi Fatima, witnessing twelve puja’s such as \textit{Rathyatra}, \textit{Dashera}, \textit{Charak Pujah}, etc. worshipping of saints,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{93} James Taylor, \textit{Topography}, pp.248-50.
\item Durr-i-Muhammad, \textit{Puthi}, p.27.
\item W.H. Thomson, \textit{SSR, Tipperah}, p.22.
\item --- \textit{SSR, Noakhali}, p.28.
\item J.E. Webster, \textit{EBADG}, Noakhali, Poineer Press, Allahabad, 1911, p.38.
\item Peter Hardy, \textit{The Muslims of British India}, p.59.
\item B.C. Allen, \textit{EBDG}, Dacca, pp.63-64.
\item \textit{Islam Procharak}, (Bangla News Paper), 1299, B.S. Achar.
\item \textsuperscript{94} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
plantation of banana trees at the house of girls on her first menstruation, holding zari songs in commemoration of Hasan and Husain, even witnessing of Taziah procession and participation in this Ashura Festival.

He strove hard to eradicate all these rites and practices which had crept in the Muslim society as a result of ignorance and their long association with their Hindu neighbours. These have so much influenced their lives and their outlook that according to an assessment they were Muslim only in name. Unless the Muslim society was fully free from these, there could be no hope of any real change or reform. His efforts bore fruits and many of these evils disappeared from the Muslim Society of Bengal. As a result of his strenuous efforts, the situation changed so much that according to a Faraizi Puthi “by his preaching all kinds of Shirk and bidat were abolished and through his propagation the sun of Islam arose throughout Bengal”.

95. Ibid.
Haji Shariatullah has been accused that he forced people belonging to other Muslim sects to join his own movement. It is suggested that in 1831, he forcibly converted a person of traditional Muslim society of Ramnagar of Munshiganj into his sect. Similarly, his son Dudu Miyan was also accused for converting people to Faraizi movement. This was stated by some witnesses on the occasion of the trial of Dudu Miyan (1847), who were mostly partisans of zamindars and indigo-planters. Their evidence is the main sources of the allegations against the Faraizis in this regard, levelled by Bihari Lal, N. Kaviraj and others. On the basis of this, they alleged that the Faraizis were proselytizing and forcibly converting people into their own sect. This line of argument has been followed by many other writers as well. But in fact there is no evidence to prove this allegation. This is proved by the report of the Government of Bengal in 1831, which came to the conclusion that it was not supported by

99. Bengal Criminal Judicial Consultations (Lower Provinces), No.6, Fort William, the 3rd April, 1832. Robokari of the Magistrate of Dacca-Jelalpur, 29th April, 1831.

100. Trial of Dadu Miyan, pp.3 and 65.

proof. It states "that Haji Shariatullah... was apprehended, but no proof existing against him, he was released...."  

In the same way Dudu Miyan was also released without any fine, due to the lack of trustworthy evidence. It can, therefore, be said with some degree of certainty that the early Faraizi leaders were not involved in this kind of activities. It was, perhaps, nothing more than the accusations of their opponents which have been lapped up by some modern scholars without any creditable scrutiny of the evidence in this regard.

---

102. *Bengal Criminal Judicial Consultations*, 3rd April, 1832.

103. See, *Appendix of the Trial of Dudu Miyan*, 1847.
DA’WAH IDEOLOGY

Haji Sharitullah was basically a preacher (da ‘I) and he spent his entire life in preaching (da,wah) of his ideology. Preaching and da,wah are used here in their in widest possible meaning. His reform activities as well as social and political ideas were simple different facets of da,wah that inspired and motivated him to take up the challenging task of making a Herculean effort to pull out his people from the degrading position in which he found them at that time. This aspect of his mission has not received. It is therefore, necessary to try to understand different aspects and dimension of the preaching of Haji Shariatullah and his immediate successor.

The entire efforts of Haji Shariatullah, Dudu Miyan and their successor were in reality aimed at propagating and preaching the original ideals of Islam. This also included, besides the reformation of religious outlook, reformation of socio-political and cultural aspects of the contemporary Muslim society of Bengal. As such, no aspect of faraizi activity could be Faraizi activity could be possibly excluded from the ambit this movement from close quarters and came to the conclusion that Haji Shariatullah was the first preacher in Eastern Bengal.
For example, wise says that Haji Shariatullah “born of poor Muhammadan weavers amid the swamps of Eastern Bengal, should have been the first preacher to denounce the superstitions and corruption’s, which a long contact with Hindu polytheism had developed is sufficiently remarkable”.¹ Same opinion has been pronounced by Hunter and others, who had almost copied the words of wise.²

Renowned English Orientalist and an authority on the history of Muslim preaching, T.W. Arnold who has been for his objectivity and lack of bias against Islam and Muslim, has observed:

“In the nineteen century there was a remarkable of the Mohammadan reigion in Bengal and several sects that owe their origin to the influence of the wahhabi reformation have their missionaries through the province out remnants of Hindi

---

¹ James wise, *Eastern Bengal*, p.23
; Wise, *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1894, p.49.
; Ravensaw said, “Haji Shariatullah was a noted preacher” see, *Trial of Ahmadullah*, p.140.
superstitions, awakening religious zeal and spreading the faith among the unbelievers".  

This observation in fact relates to the faraizi *Da'wah* activities as this was almost the only movement that was engaged in this kind of work around that time.

F. Strong confirmed the same view when he observed: "Of recent years what might be described a Muhammadan revival under the auspicious of itinerant *Mullahs* has being going on. They traveled about the koran, result was considerable, many Muslim joined what in locally called the community of *Naya Muslmans*". This is not to suggest that this great change in the perception and outlook of the people was brought about by the faraizis alone. Muslim karamat Ali, leader of the Tayyuni Movement and his followers as well as the later followers of *jihad* movement of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid had also made significant contribution at least in the region about which F. strong speaks.

   J. Wise, p.32.
The faraizis adopted Quranic teachings and prophetic *da'wah* activities as the main ideology of their movement. According to one faraizi book “in the Quran there are many injunctions and directions. Similarly the *Hadith* literature is replete with the details of the prophetic mission and the problems and hardships that the prophet had to face in this way. After the prophet it has been the bounden duty of the Muslim community to continue this mission”.^5

According to the Quranic injunction at least one section of the Muslim community should be engaged in the missionary activities.\(^6\) Another verse of the Holy Quran charges the entire Muslim community with this responsibility. It further them responsible to propagate good and resist evil (*amr bil-maruf wa nahy anil munkar*).\(^7\)

---


6. Dudu Miyan, *Faraizi Jamater Adarsha*, p.4. The writer quoted one verse of Holy Quran where Allah declared: “Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good and enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong. They are the ones to attain felicity,” Al-Quran : Al-i- Imran : 104.

7. Dudu Miyan, p.5 He quoted here another verse of Holy Quran, it reads: you are the best of peoples, evolved for mankind. Enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong and believing in Allah”. Al-i- Imran : 110.
In this regard the contemporary Muslim society of Bengal was a case in point. The people had fallen far away from the ideals of Islam. They were leading a life that had almost nothing to do with Islam except the name. This could be changed only through dedicated preaching (da’wah). Haji Shariatullah and his successors were first of all preachers. They preached original teachings of Islam to the people who had forgotten it. And it was because of their preaching that a revolution of sorts happened in Bengal, a total change in the views and lives of people and almost a complete break from the past. Da’wah (Tabligh as it is called in faraizi literature) or preaching therefore occupies the central in the faraizi ideology. It is perhaps because of this importance of da’wah that the faraizis themselves have written on this subject. But it should also be noted that these writings and explanations belong to a much later period. From the earlier period we do not posses any theoretical exposition of this concept. As also other concepts associated with them. About the early period, their activities are

10. See, Dudu Miyan, Faraizi Jamater Adersha.
our best guides and their basic principles could be deduced and formulated in its light.

According to the faraizis, *Da’wah* is an obligatory duty of every Muslim and a means of securing the pleasure of Allah. Every Muslim should engage himself in *Da’wah*. The field of *Da’wah* is not confined to personal life, rather its activities should be extended to all spheres of life and efforts should be made to take message of Islam to everybody.\(^{11}\)

According to one Faraizi book, following prophet’s example, Haji Shariatullah began his mission with a call to those who were nearest to him. He first called upon his relatives and neighbors to join his movement, and take the *baiat* of *Taubah*, to order their lives according to, the Quran, the sunnah and Hanafi jurisprudence.\(^{12}\)

But it was not a smooth sail for him. He met with stiff opposition from various corners. Besides the zamindars and indigoplanters, who opposed him because they perceived his


mission as a threat to their vested interests, ever the traditional Muslim also bitterly opposed his efforts directed at reforming the Muslim society of Bengal. Those Muslim who joined his hands were pressurized and ex-communicated from the society so much so that some of them came to return their Taubah. Then the Haji reconciled them. They were made to understand that Taubah was something that could not be returned. This however, explains the kinds of difficulties that he had to face in this way.¹³

Afterwards, he went to Arabia for further studies. During this second visit he was instructed by the prophet in dream three times to propagate Islam in Bengal. In consequence of this, he seems to have intensified his efforts after his return.¹⁴

As a result, he traveled to many places with a view to disseminate the fundamental teachings of Islam. These places which he visited included districts of Faridpur of Barisal, Khulna and pabna. This attracted many people to his mission, who because his ardent followers.¹⁵

¹³ M.A. Latif, Amar Jivani, p. 35.
¹⁴ Ibid, pp. 43-44.
¹⁵ Ibid, pp. 46-47.
; See, Trial of Dudu Miyan. pp. 30-35.
Emulating the example of the prophet, he preached in market places, public gatherings mosques, fairs, peasants’ fields, business centers and weavers’ houses. This untiring effort while established his reputation as a great preaches and his following increased, it also aroused the animosity of many people who misbehaved with him and called him names. 

The strategy that he adopted and the way he won the people on his side is best explained by an incident, which occurred while he was coming back from Arabia. While travelling through Bihar, he fell into the hands of robbers who robbed him of all his possessions including his books and the relics he was bringing from Arabia. With a view to reforming these people, he joined their gang. These hardened criminals were deeply impressed by his character and piety and not only renounced their wicked ways, but they because his zealous supporters.

16. Ibid.
; James Wise, Eastern Bengal, p.23.
; Ency, of Islam, (1927), vol. 11, p.57.
18. J. Wise, Eastern Bengal, p.22
; JASB, p.48,
; O’Malley, BDG, Faridpur, 1925, p.38.
But this strategy did not always work. There were occasions when he had no other alternative but to withdraw. His experience in Nayabari in Modern Munshigonj district is a case in point. He was virtually driven out of that place.\textsuperscript{19} Afterwards he decided to settle down in his birth place and carry on his mission from there. There he had already some following to whom he could look for help and support. The results of this decision were momentous and in the words of James Wise "in short time he enlisted the vast majority of the uneducated and most excitable classes of the Mohammadan population. His influence has become unbounded and no one hesitated to carry out his orders".\textsuperscript{20}

According to one Faraizi puthi, "As a pious guide he taught every one lessons in kalima, fasting prayer, hajj, zakat and the other fundamental teachings of Islam according to Hanafi School of law. He did not teach them only shariat, but also Tariqat, Haqiqat and Ma'rifat". By his preaching many people came to believe in his philosophy and Islam flourished.\textsuperscript{21}

\begin{flushright}
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
\end{flushright}
Most of the time the mode of his journeys, which he undertook for the purpose of preaching, was boat. It is perhaps due to this fact that the river ports and those places easily accessible by rivers came under his greater influence than other places. In one such journey he started “from Bahadurpur and undertook religious journey by boat to the river ports of Faridpur, Barisal, Dhaka, Narayangonj, Chandpur, Comilla (Tipperah) and Noakhali. His frequent visits to those places attracted the ordinary Muslims to his way of thinking and ideals and imbubed them with a desire to lead their lives according to these ideals”.

It was a very strenuous life. Preaching and reforming a society with deep rooted traditions and well-entrenched practices was not an easy job. But with single-minded commitment to his mission, sincerity of purpose and a remarkable tenacity, he ultimately succeeded in convincing the people about the genuineness of his mission. The change that followed in the thinking and lives of the people so was deep and significant that games wise was obliged to remark (in 1883 and in 1894) that “the apathetic and careless Bengali peasants

should have been roused into enthusiasm is still more extraordinary. To effect this required a sincere and sympathetic preacher and on one ever appealed more strongly to the sympathies of a people than Shariatullah. People admired him as a blameless and exemplary life ... they venerated him as a father, able to advise them in seasons of adversity and give consolation in times of affliction".  

Dudu Miyan who succeeded. Haji Shariatullah, was a dynamic leader and a persuasive preacher. Through his constant journeys and vigorous preaching, he was able to attract a large number of people to the fold of Faraizi movement. His success in the field of preaching the Faraizi teaching could be assessed from the fact that his name almost because a household name in many areas of Bengal. It was because of his exertions that the movement spread not only throughout Bengal but parts of Assam also came under its influence.

---

   ; __________ *JASB*, 1894, P.49.
25. J. wise *Eastern Bengal*, p.24
   ; __________ *JASB*, P.50.
   ; o'Malley, *BDG*, pp.40-41.
The strategy that he adopted for disseminating the teachings of the movement consisted of personal visits to the regions concerned. Wherever it was not possible, he sent his emissaries for the purpose.27 As they used to travel by boats, the regions lying on the banks of Ganges and Meghna were their favorite resorts. As a result, over the period of the time this region particularly became a stronghold of the Faraizis. Some school have pointedly referred to this fact. For example, James wise says “The churs or alluvial islands among the Ganges and Meghna are the favorite retreats of the Farazi royts”.28 A modern scholar R.L. Roy also reported that “the movement spread along the banks of the delta down ehich the Muslim missionaries floated by boats in order to preach the cult of Muslim peasants”.29

According to a Faraizi puthi (B.S 1335/1928) Dudu Miyan also succeeded in converting many non-Muslims to Islam

27. Shorter Ency. of Islam, 1974, p.100.
; J. Wise, Eastern Bengal, p.37.
; J.E. Gastrell, Geography and Statistical Report of the Districts Jessore, fureedpur and Backergunge, Calcutta, 1866, p.36.
29. Ratna Lekha Roy, Change in Bengal, Monohar, Delhi, 1979, p.244.
; Mohibuddin Ahmad, Pir Dudu Miyan, Shariatia Library and Prokashani, Dhaka, 1992, p.15.
through his preaching. But this is not supported by other contemporary or near contemporary sources. It is possible that some people might have converted but their number would not have been large enough to attract the attention of others. For example, we know it for certain that second wife of Dudu Miyan was a converted Brahmin lady.

The tradition was carried by the successors of Dudu Miyan who continued to treat this aspect of the movement as very important segment of their activities. Besides direct preaching and inviting people to accept their ideology, they resorted to establishing madrases, hifz-khanas, orphanage, rendering social- political organisations, sending their leaders to the provincial and National Assemblies, summoning justice through their panchayats (village courts), driving out all anti-Islamic activities from the society, and endeavoring for establishing Islam ideology at state level.

32. Tradition current in the Family of Haji Shariatulla. There are many organisations established by the Farazis. Some of these are "The Faraizi Jamat", The Faraizi Ulma Jamat, "The Faraizi Youth Jamat", etc for sending their leader to the Assemblies, see, Proceedings of Pakistan National Assembly, 1965
Through education and social services they sought to disseminate their ideas and reach out to the people. There could be no doubt that it was a very effective method. It would seem that they had taken a leaf out of the Christian missionaries.

Moreover, the tradition of extensive tours by the Faraizi leader, for the purpose of propagation of their ideology was carried by the successive leaders. During these tours they had *waz-Mahfil Tafsir Mahfil*, religious conference etc. To bring home to the people their basic message.

In recent time they have even established institutions with the express purpose of training and preparing preachers (*Muballighs*). Da'wah was the basis of Faraizi movement and in spite of many ups and downs, they had by and large stuck to it and it continues to be guiding principle of their activities. Percival Spears has rightly observes that the Faraizi leaders "were actively propagandists and did much to purify and strengthen East Indian Islam".

---

33. See, Dudu Miyan, *Faraizi Jamater Adarsha*, p.44.
SOCIO-ECONOMIC IDEOLOGY

The Faraizi movement was launched basically as a religious reform movement to reform and rejuvenate the Muslim society of Bengal. But the circumstances under which it has to operate made it imperative for it to take note of the socio-economic conditions of the people whom it sought to reform. As a result, it was inexorably drawn to play a very radical role in the socio-economic life of contemporary Bengal. It had great impact on the Bengali mind and its far-reaching consequences were felt for long. It is, therefore, necessary to try to study and analyse the socio-economic outlook of the Faraizis.

The Faraizis basically worked among the weavers and the peasants. It was the pathetic condition of these classes and their unabashed exploitation by the British merchants, indigo-planters and Zamindars that compelled the Faraizi leadership to turn their attention to the socio-economic front. They could not have possibly remained indifferent from the sufferings of their followers. But the nature of the problems of the peasants and

---

weavers was not identical. Their problems differed from each other and similarly the nature of their exploitation was also different. It would be, therefore, in the fitness of the things to discuss the Faraizi response to the problems of these classes and their prescriptions for their solution separately. This would, on the one hand, ensure clarity, on the other it duly avoid repetition. This discussion is therefore divided into two sections. First is devoted to a study of Faraizi attitude towards the peasants, while the second is concerned with the weavers.

But for proper appreciation of their fight for the cause of peasants and also to some extent for the weavers, it is necessary to first have a very clear understanding about their economic philosophy and its sources. Only then the real significance of this struggle could be fully understood and the role played by the Faraizis in ameliorating the conditions of the Bengal peasantry and giving to this suppressed and exploited community a sense of confidence and self respect, could be appreciated in its true perspective. Otherwise, there would remain
strong possibility of calling it a ‘class struggle’ as some historians with Marxist leanings have tried to portray it. It certainly was not a class struggle; rather it has its firm moorings in the religion and it was a deep sense of commitment to the teachings of Islam that inspired and sustained the Faraizis to stand up for the rights of the down-trodden and challenge the might of powerful zamindars, Indigo planters and even the policy of the British Government itself.

The economic ideology of the Faraizis was rooted in the teachings of the *Quran* and the *Sunnah* of the prophet. As such there was, for example, no room for earning of livelihood from unlawful means. Naturally, the people were encouraged to earn their subsistence through purely lawful means and methods.

Interest and usury were not tolerated and totally abandoned. Dignity of labour was highlighted. As they drew their inspiration from the religion, it would indeed be extremely far-fetched to conclude that they believed in Capitalism or Socialism.

---

2. Those who said that it was a class struggle include W.C. Smith and Rafiuddin. For details see W.C. Smith, *Modern Islam in India*, 1946, p.161; Rafiuddin Ahmad, *The Bengali Muslims*, pp.43-44. But Wakil Ahmad said, Due to some reasons it could not turned into a ‘Class War’, *Unish Sataker Bangali Muslmaner*, p.55.
as some modern writers had tried to say. It would amount to putting words in their mouths and attributing to them something which they never meant or pronounced.

Dudu Miyan, the second head of the movement, in consonance with the Islamic concept of the equality of mankind, asserted egalitarianism of mankind and taught that the welfare of the lowest and poorest was as much an object of interest as that of the highest and richest. Their general philosophy was, as J. Wise opines. "When a brother fell into distress, it was the duty of his neighbour to assist him". This would obviously include economic distress as well.

Both Haji Shariatullah and Dudu Miyan underscored industry as a great virtue and emphasized the dignity of labour. In Bengal, at that time, oil grinders, weavers, fish-mongers and such other professionals belonged to the lower strata of the society. It was perhaps due to the long association with Hindus and exposure to Hindu ideas regarding the division of the society


based on caste system. But it was totally un-Islamic because Islam does not recognise any distinction between man and man on the basis of professions they pursue. Adhering to this tradition, the Faraizis acknowledged and ensured dignity of labour. In M.A. Khan’s opinion: (Haji) “upheld the theory of income through work, honest earning was to be basic foundation for a Muslim’s way of life. He preached that honest earning was the precondition for (the acceptability of) prayers. Allah does not accept the worship of those who earn their livelihood by tyranny and oppression. He also bestowed the highest position on persons engaged in any profession or art and gave them the honoured title of worker (Karigar), even minor oil grinders and weavers.” He also declared that industry is the main source of rights and wealth. Hence, the crops are the right of tillers, not that of zamindars or intermediators, who are generally oppressors. This view is also taken from the Quranic verses that the fortune and earnings depend on men’s industry. The Faraizi society was free from the business of interest, because the Quran vehemently


attacked the very concept of interest as it clearly appears from the writing of J. Wise. It reads:

"Another usage has a most important bearing on the business habits of this class (Faraizis) of Mohammadan, interest (sud) is denounced by the Maulavies, but as large profits (manafi) are legitimate, among them are found great traders in Jutes, hides, rice and country produce generally, who never join with the professionals, bankers and money lenders, unless they agree to a division of profit instead of certain rate of interest, when giving an advance of money, it is usually stipulated that the sum shall be repaid with in the certain period and that one eighth or fourth of the net profit shall be paid to the lender in addition to the principal. By this arrangement the lender often receives more than market rate of interest, but if the payment be delayed nothing additional is gained. This system", (as these Englishmen thought) "of profit however is virtually interest under another name".\(^{8}\) Hunter and O'Malley not only agree with the views

---

*JASB*, 1899, p.50.
expressed by Wise, but they have copied him varbatim with our any acknowledgement.\(^9\)

The assumption that it is "interest under another name" is born out of ignorance about the basic difference between the interest and the profit in the Islamic economic system. This difference has been clearly marked by the Holy Quran when it declares: "The infidels assumed that the trade and usury are alike, but Allah permitted trade and forbidden usury".\(^{10}\) The *munafa* is uncertain and it has no fixed period for increase or reduction. On the other hand, interest is certain as well as its period is fixed, if payments are delayed the interest will increase in the same proportion. The Faraizis in reality followed the precepts of Islam in this regard and did not demand any additional charge in case the payment was delayed as Wise has put it" "nothing is gained, if delayed". To make a gain over and above the market rate is not praiseworthy but it does not violate the provisions of law. The policy of the Faraizis in this regard

---

\(^9\) Hunter, of *India: The District and Provincial Gazetteer*, "Faridpur", 1925, p.46.

\(^{10}\) O., Malley, *BDG, Faridapur*, p.32.

\(^{10}\) Al-Quran, ii: 275.
was therefore a total prohibition of interest and strong disapproval of the existing money lending system.\textsuperscript{11}

There was a common rule that every Faraizi family including the poor ones, would contribute every month an amount not specified in the sources from their small savings. The words which have been actually used are handful rice or hard savings. The Khalifas of the organisation, scattered in the whole Bengal, were responsible for collecting these contributions, and these were spent for the furtherance of the aims and objectives of the organisation or for settlement of disputes among the people through the Panchayet (village courts), instead of Government

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{11} Here it is remarkable that Hunter's assessment about the Faraizi interpretation of the Quranic injunction is not correct he wrote: "In a traditional district like that of Noakhali, the commandment of the Koran against taking usury is found irksome and orthodox Faraizis indigenously evade the letter of the sacred law by advancing a sum of money and taking re-payment in double the value in betel-nuts or some othe articles of commerce Muhammadans of this district are very strict in religious observance". Taking addition in one article at the time of repayment is unlawful but in another article is not so, in Islam. For details see, W.W. Hunter, \textit{Statistical Account of Bengal}, Noakhali, p.297.}
courts as also for helping the distressed and the poor peasants and the weavers for mitigating hardship, of their daily life.\textsuperscript{12}

By avoiding the courts that were generally inclined towards the oppressors\textsuperscript{13} and were more likely to give their judgement in their favour, the Faraizis could save enormous expenditure, which otherwise would have to be incurred by the victims, who were already under great disadvantage and badly exploited.

In this background it is extremely surprising that their attitude towards collective system of \textit{Zakat} is not known. As good Muslims who believed that the discharge of the religious obligations was imperative for everybody and hence they came to be known as Faraizis, it must be expected that individually they must have paid the \textit{Zakat}. It is still surprising that how an organization like that of the Faraizis which sought to revive and

rajuvenate pristine purity of Islam, could ignore such an important pillar of Islam and such an important instrument for the upliftment of the conditions of the poor. In this context it is interesting to note that some of the Faraizis belonged to the class of the big Landlords\textsuperscript{14} and great traders in hides, Jutes and rice\textsuperscript{15} as also and money lenders and officials. But the Faraizi leadership did not tolerate any misdemeanour on their part simply because they happened to be Muslims or Faraizis. The Faraizis were against the oppression and exploitation and not against any particular class or community. In this regard their stand was not coloured by any community or sectarian feelings or bias.

This brief discussion would provide the necessary ideological background for the Faraizi struggle for the rights of the peasants. It is expected that with this background in mind, it would be easier to understand the Faraizi exertions in this field and to put them in their proper context and perspective.

Within a short period after its inception, the Faraizi movement succeeded in attracting a large number of people to its

\textsuperscript{15} Hunter, \textit{Imperial Gazetteer of India}, Vol.IV, p.399.
fold. This following was basically drawn from peasants and weavers who constituted the most oppressed sections of the Muslim Society of Bengal. They were subjected to many acts of oppression and extortion at the hands of the zamindars and Indigo-planters who constituted the exploiting class and consisted of the members of all the three communities, Charistians, Hindu and Muslims. 16

The Faraizis found themselves in a situation where they could not have possibly remained indifferent to the sufferings of their followers and the people among whom they worked and whom they sought to reform. Initially perhaps they had not envisaged any particular role for the movement to play in the socio-economic field as they had conceived the movement as a religious reform movement. It would seem that in the beginning their response was aimed simply at protecting their followers from the oppression of the zamindars and indigo-planters. But gradually it got more and more involved into socio-economic issues and ultimately they found themselves engaged in a grim struggle not only against the zamindars and indigo-planters but the Government itself. The malaise was deeper than they have

perceived and it could not be rectified without striking at its very roots.

As the Faraizi movement was based on the teachings of the *Quran* and the *Sunnah*, it was natural that their response to the socio-economic conditions obtaining in Bengal at that time was also moulded in accordance with the guidelines provided in the *Quran* and prophetic traditions regarding these issues. Consequently, the basic features of this response were in conformity with the teachings and laws of Islam as they could interpret and apply it to their conditions. For example, their most important plank in this regard was that “Land is God’s creation, no one has the right to levy any tax on it.”

Similarly, they declared that “Those who own the plough own the Land” and not the zamindars and indigo planters, who thrived on the toils of others. As the prevention of tyranny, oppression and exploitation and the upliftment of the down-trodden (Mustazafin) is enjoyed by the religion and therefore it was very much in accordance with the spirit of Islam. Likewise

17 *Calcutta Review*, vol. 1, 1844, pp. 215-16.
; See Ency. of Islam, all editions of Bangla, English and Urdu
; Bengal criminal consultations, 7 April, 1847.
establishment of justice for all, upholding of morality, abolition of usury and money lending, elimination of purely Hindu cesses imposed on Muslim peasantry, like Durga Puja, Kali Vritti etc., were some of the other notable characteristics of the socio-economic ideology of the Faraizi movement.

It is clear from this brief discussion that the Faraizi movement began as a religious movement with a view to reform the Muslims of Bengal who, during the preceding period, had drifted away from the pristine teachings of Islam. A look at the life of Haji Shariatullah and an analysis of the different kinds of influences to which he was exposed during his two stays in Arabia, reveals that the fact that he was bearing a zeal to reform his countrymen who had fallen down from the ideals and teachings of Islam. It was only some time after the launching of the movement and particularly when he had succeeded in attracting a sizeable following that he felt it necessary to widen the area of his activities and include in his scheme of work issues which were though not directly related with the original plan of reforming the society but deeply concerned the people who followed him and directly related with their well being rather with their very existence.
A genuine leader cannot shut his eyes from the sufferings of his followers. A reformer cannot be expected to be entirely indifferent to the problems of the people whom he seeks to reform. It was concern of Haji Shariatullah for his followers which compelled him to introduce the economic dimensions of the movement.

This is further confirmed by the fact that during the first few years of its existence, the movement did not involve itself with any activities other than religious reform. There is no evidence from the early formative years to indicate any interest in economic problems faced by the people. The first tentative step in this direction becomes discernible only in 1831. And even this first reported skirmish in which the Faraizis were involved, does not indicate any pre-planning. It is obvious that the diversification of the area of activity into newer field was only an attempt on the part of the leadership to adjust the movement to the new situations and demands.

But many modern historians and scholars have preferred to describe this movement as an agrarian movement or

---

even a peasant uprising\textsuperscript{19} in a religious garb.\textsuperscript{20} They think that it was basically an agrarian movement which the Faraizis have successfully dressed up with the religious catchwords to give an impression that it was a religious movement.\textsuperscript{21}

These sentiments have been expressed by a very large number of scholars. Some of them have linked it with the Moppilla movement of the south India. It will be only in fitness of things to have a brief look on some of the opinions of the Scholars.\textsuperscript{22}

According to K.K. Aziz, originally it was a socio-religious movement but under the revolutionary leadership of Dudu Miyan it turned into political economic resistance, which


\textsuperscript{20} Narahari Kaviraj, \textit{The Wahhabi and Faraizi Rebels of Bengal}, p.90.

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., Kaviraj, p.90.

sought to protect rights of peasants from the tyranny of oppressors.²³

Some scholars believe that this movement had basically a political and economic complexion and Dudu Miyan organised the Muslim peasants... to resist unjust and illegal activities of European indigo-planters and local zamindars.²⁴ The Faraizis were protesting against the heartlessness and hardship of new order Permanent Settlement by the Alim Shariatullah ....the uprisings of 1834, 1844, 1846 organised by his son Dudu Miyan.²⁵

Discussing the nature of the movement, R.K. Roy comes to the conclusion that “as an agriculturist movement, the Faraizis had been reclaiming land from the forest. The tightly organised hierarchy of the Faraizi sect enabled these bands of land reclaimers to resist the Hindu Landlords for a share in their new prosperity”.²⁶

“The Faraizi as a tightly organized purinitical sect...administered justice and attacked and plundered the estates of Hindu Zamindars and European Indigo planters”.27

In the opinion of an agrarian historian “the movement of Tipu Shah and Titu Miyan and Faraizis during the period of 1837-1851 attracted tens of thousands of reck rented and evicted peasants recruited armed bands to many thousands and strove to drive out their Hindu Landlord, and British rulers and established a reign of righteousness....Dudu Miyan ran parallel Government... divided into circles under the deputies, every deputy settled disputes among the tenants, protected cultivators from the zamindars, excesses... till his imprisonment”.28

A peasant historian Benoy K. Chowdhury conclusively stated that the programms of peasant movements for a forcible cultivation of indigo, various developments tented in course of time to make peasants more determined stand against


; For estate ownership see, Narahari Kaviraj, Agrarian System in East Bengal (1870-1810), K.P. Bagchi, New Delhi, 1974.

indigo and the programme they set themselves was the complete over through of indigo system”.

Going one step further, an other scholars Ratna Lekha Roy, thought the basic idea behind the movement was to encourage the Muslim agriculturist entrepreneurs, she said:

“The ideology of Faraizi movement was tailor-made for the needs of Muslim agricultural entrepreneurs, who were determined to retain the fruits of their enterprise, by violent action if necessary. Between the Hindu gentry, declared landlords at the permanent settlement and the land reclaiming Muslims, defined tenants by the same settlement, competition for local power became increasingly sharper over time”.

But partly disgracing, with their view, Percival Spear thinks that Haji Shariatullah was involved in agrarian but on the whole the movement was peaceful” Sayyid Nesar Ahmad, a marxist writer, said that it is exclusively peasant movement, this movement according to Hunter, they were mainly engaged in


30 Ratne Lekha Roy, Change in Bengal Agrarian Society (1760-1850) Manohar, 1979, p 245.

trade-dealing in rice, jute, hides and tobacco "the inherent ideology in Faraizi movement helped to consolidate the position of the Muslim enterprising classes".

FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE FARAIZIS AND ZAMINDARS-INDIGO PLANTERS

Faraizi movement, though mainly religious assumed agrarian character, due to certain factors which brought the Faraizi agriculturists into conflict with the landlords and indigo-planters and even Government itself. These factors may be summed up as discriminating British Land policy including Permanent Settlement and its bye-products, the zamindars and indigo-planters, various kinds of atrocities perpetrated on the peasants and impost of illegal abwabs (cesses). Forced cultivation of indigo in place of rice and instigation of civil and criminal cases against the peasants by the help of law enforcing forces, and other acts of discrimination and oppression were equally important over and above these factors which were


primarily agrarian and economic and adversely affected the economic well-being of the people.

There were several other factors which infringed on the religious freedom of the people and acted as great irritants and created enormous resentment and ill-feeling among the masses against the rulers, zamindars and Indigo-planters. For example, the tax on keeping beard, restriction on calling *Adhan* and slaughtering of cows etc, could not but add to the hostility and animosity which the people nursed against these classes. The religious awakening that was brought about by the Faraizi movement enabled the people to realize the sinister aspects of these measures and the imperative need to resist them. These were not only harmful and injurious to their economic well being and prosperity but also made it impossible to practise the teachings of the religion which they considered their bounden duty. And hence the urge and determination to break free of these unjust limitations and disabilities.

There can be little doubt that the British land policy that culminated in the Permanent Settlement under Lord Cornwallis, was the basic factor for creating friction between
the masses and the ruling classes, which were later spearheaded by the Faraizis.33

This had led some Faraizi historians to conclude that Faraizi movement Arose in order to defend the Muslim peasants against the Hindu landlords.34 This British land policy in Bengal did greatest mischief and as a results of this policy the “records of tillage right disappeared” and under this system the peasants became “tenants at will.” As majority of the Zamindars were Hindus and most of the tenants were Muslims, its consequences were felt more acutely by the Muslims.35

It is clear that the Permanent Settlement was a source of great misfortune and oppression and the seeds of discontent and conflict were inherent in it from the very beginning, more particularly those sections of the settlement which dealt with the payment of revenues by the zamindars to the government were

; Sawpan Basu, Gano Asontosh O Unish Sataker Bangali Samaj, Pustak Biponi, Calcutta, 19984.
34 Ibid, p.41.
highly oppressive. It was stipulated that there will be no remission or suspension of revenue on account of natural calamities, such as drought and flood etc. In any case the revenue was to be in time failing which the land would be put to auction to make up for the default and it came to be known as "sunset law".

The pinch of this draconian law was felt not by the zamindars but by the peasants who were forced by the zamindars to pay their revenues at every cost. As such it became a source of great oppression and suffering for the peasants and ultimately brought them into conflict with the zamindars. This dismal situation was further aggravated by the sub-feudation system which is referred in local terminology as Patni, Dar

Quoted in sirajul Islam, art. The operation of 'sun set law' and changes in the landed socie of Dacca District-1793-1818, found of Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, Dhaka vol. XIX, no.1, 1974, p.49.

37 Ibid.
Patni, Se-Patni etc. This aspect of the new system emphasized "parasitic character" of New Zamindari tenure. The system was diametrically different from the old system which existed under the Mughals before the introduction of Permanent Settlement and it was extremely injurious to the interests of the people.

The Permanent Settlement in effect conferred vast advantages and powers upon the Landlords over the cultivators, to treat them as they wished and there was absolutely no check on their abuse of power and no limit to their oppression.

Besides this very important factor which brought the Faraizis into conflict with the zamindars and also with the government, there were solid ideological factors which put them on war path. For example, they believed and declared that "Land belongs to none except God and therefore no one has the right to levy any tax on it" or "God made earth common to all men, the

---

38 Ibid., Moreover, the regulation 14 of 1793 and regulation 3 of 1794 were framed... These regulations laid down that the zamindar were to pay the annual public revenues in twelve kists (instalments). If zamindar failed to pay his kist punctually, then the arrear would be recovered by selling his land in public auction immediately after the kist fell due. The strained rate against the revenue defautation is popularly known as the "Sunset Law", Ibid., p.49, and see note no.20.

39 Sayyid Nesar Ahmad, p.40.

payment of rent is contrary to His Law".\textsuperscript{41} "Plough owners are the Landowners". "Those who cultivated lands had the right to do what so ever they wish".\textsuperscript{42} This attitude stemmed from the fact that Islam does not sanction any taxation on land, it provides only \textit{Ushr} on the produce of the land.

To the Faraizis these were not mere slogans but part and parcel of their ideology which they believed and which they openly preached. As could be imagined these brought them into open confrontation with the vested interests.

The Islamic concept of universal brotherhood and equality of entire mankind was nothing less than an anathema for the caste-conscious Hindu Society. Theoretically, the Muslims have always believed in egalitarianism but it was given a new emphasis and meaning affecting the life style and behavior of the people. The sense of this new system found, dignity among the


\textsuperscript{42} Ametendu De, \textit{Bangali Bhuddijibi O. Bichinnatabed}, Calcutta, 1974, p.67\textsuperscript{42} ; Nesar Ahmad, pp.44-45.\textsuperscript{42} ; Qeiamuddin Ahmad, p.88.
oppressed and downtrodden people was unacceptable to the vested interest groups and produced powers that be and even the consequent friction and conflict. The extraordinary rapidity with which the movement was spreading and attracting large numbers of people to its fold, tended to further accelerate the sense of alarm and threat perception among the zamindars and indigo-planters.  

It is also clear that the peasants generally received a raw deal from the zamindars and indigo planters. They were subjected to much oppression, they were harassed and terrorized. But when they got united under the leadership of Faraizis, they began to organise themselves and resist the high handedness of these people.

This was a direct threat to the interests of the zamindars and it created feeling of hostility and enmity between the two groups. When the zamindars and indigo-planters tried to stop the peasants working on their lands from going to the Faraizis and joining them, they retaliated and there were open

---

44 R.C. Mujumdar, p.58.
confrontations between the two groups leading to clashes and even loss of life. This is what happened in the case of a well known indigo-planter, Mr. Dunlop. When he failed to dissuade the peasants from going to Dudu Miyan, he organised an attack on Dudu Miyan’s house in which five Faraizis were killed and plundered his estates including his residence.\(^\text{45}\) In retaliation, a mob of Faraizis which is reported to have consisted of about 800 people, attacked the factory of Mr. Dunlop, razed it to the ground, destroyed property and also in their fury destroyed idols of the workers of the factory.\(^\text{46}\)

It was primarily this incident which led to the institution of trial against Dudu Miyan in 1847. The proceedings of the trial and statements of the witnesses clearly suggest that the conflict arose because Faraizis posed a threat to the indigo planters and the zamindars.\(^\text{47}\) They and the government perceived it as a criminal offence on the part of Dudu Miyan.\(^\text{48}\)

\(^{45}\) Trial of Dudu Miyan, p.14.
\(^{46}\) Ibid., p.4, 14, 106.
\(^{47}\) For details see, Trial of Dudu Miyan, 1847, 403 pages.
\(^{48}\) B.C. Allen, Eastern Bengal District Gazetteer, Dhaka, Allahabad, 1912, Allen said, “Dudu Miyan made a determined stand against the levy of illegal cesses by Lords and he was tempestuous career during which he was repeatedly charged with the criminal offence”, p.63.
Moreover, the Faraizis Programme of reclaiming the lands belonging to *Khas Mahal* (newly alluvial *chaurs*) and forests was also a source of friction. These lands were considered to be the monopoly of Hindu zamindars and now they apprehended that it could get out of their hands. Naturally they felt deep resentment against the Faraizis for this.

Forcible indigo plantation was another important cause of conflict between the Faraizis on one hand and the indigo-planters and government on the other hand. The British government tried to plant indigo forcibly on the expense of rice which was more lucrative for the farmers. This was naturally resented and resisted by the peasants, many of whom belonged to the Faraizi movement. This increasingly led to conflict between the Faraizi supporters and private troops of the landed interests along with the law and order forces of the state who sought to suppress the resistance which was spearheaded by the Faraizis. The Government imposed prison terms and court trials on them. This instead of having desired effect of containing the activities of the Faraizis led to further intensification of their

---

49 J. Wise, JASB, 1894, p.51.
struggle setting on them on a course of head on collision.\textsuperscript{50} Their refusal to pay taxes only added to the intensity of hostility between two classes.\textsuperscript{51}

The zamindars were known to spend money exacted from the Muslim peasants, among other things, on the idolatrous Hindu rites like \textit{Durga Puja} and \textit{Kali Vritti} etc.\textsuperscript{52}

Besides these illegal \textit{abwab}, the Hindu zamindars declared restriction on slaughtering of cows and even prohibited calling \textit{Adhan} in some areas of Bengal. They also imposed a beard tax and restrictions on erecting mosques in their areas. These arbitrary and oppressive acts of the zamindars were resisted by the Faraizis leading to conflict and confrontation.\textsuperscript{53}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[50] \textit{Trial of Dudu Miyan}, 1847, p.106. \\
; Sayyid Nasar Ahmad, p.48. \\
; Peter Hardy, p.56. \\
; Rafiuddin Ahmad, \textit{The Bangali Muslims}, p.43.
\item[51] Kaviraj, p.110. This writer and others said that “Faraizis were like the peasant jaquire movement”. \\
; Percival Spear, \textit{The Oxford History of India}, 1965, p.101. \\
\item[52] Peter Hardy, \textit{The Muslims of British India}, p.56. \\
; Ametendu De, \textit{Bangali Bhuddijibi}, p.67-68.
\end{footnotes}
But this was not all. In addition to these exactions there were many other illegal abwab which were demanded by the landlords from the poor peasants. These included "Tar Kharcha (telegraph expenditure), Rusud Kharcha, Iskool Kharcha (school expenditure). Baruni Kharcha, Hat Kharcha etc. An idea about the magnitude of the illegal aswab which were realized from the peasants, could be had from the report of the collector of Faridpur. In 1872, he reported that as many as 23 illegal adwab were being collected by the landlords from the peasants.

Thus the zamindars and indigo-planters not only exploited the peasants in various ways, but also used law and order agencies for the purpose of oppressing them. They instituted false cases against them and by using these methods brought the recalcitrant peasants to their knees. Forcible detention, tying up their beards with tree or pole, putting hot chilli powder in their nostrils, sending them in a box to the police station, confining in dark room, placing poisonous and ferocious insects on the navel and confining beautiful peasant girls in the

54 Atul Chandra Gupta, pp.520-22.
55 Letter from the Collector of Faridpur, W.A. Wells, to the Secretary of Government of Bengal, 16-05-1872
From these 23 illegal cesses, remarkable ones are, Bebaha, Srudda, Paita, Selami, Ruth, Diyadah Kharchas
factory for their pleasure etc. were some of the inhuman and barbarous punishments which were unclassed upon them. This situation was intolerable and Faraizis were bound to take serious notice of it as it affected their own people. Resistance could not be tolerated by the zamindars as it threatened their privileges to which they have become accustomed. This was bound to lead to grim confrontation.\(^56\) It is also a cause of conflict that during Mughal period the revenues collected from the peasants and others were spent in India for personal purposes of the sultans or welfare of the society but in British period major portion of money was transmitted to England, that caused a degradation of the economy of the country men.\(^57\)

---

; Peter Hardy, *The Muslims of the British India*, p.56.
; Mujeeb Ashraf, *Muslim Attitude Towards the British Rule and Civilization*, p.147.
; *Bengal British India Society*, Proceedings 5, September, 1844.
; *Bengal Harkura*, 11 Sept., 1844.
; Rajat Kanta Roy, *Social Conflict*, p.74.

; Sayyid Nesar Ahamd, p.40.
; see, *Calcutta Review*, 1861.
Haji Shariatullah’s primary concern, as noticed elsewhere, was to reform his people of the many degradations and innovations which had crept in their lives and behavior. But very soon he was confronted with the dismal conditions in which those very people were leading a thoroughly degrading and deprived life. The oppression and the tyranny of the zamindars and indigo-planters had crossed all limits and they were making them to lead almost sub-human life. A sensitive man like Haji Shariatullah, who firmly believed in Islamic ideals of equality, equity, and justice, could not shut his eyes from the pitiable conditions of his followers and the inhuman treatment that was meted out to them could not fail to attract his attention. There were not many options before him. He could not avoid standing up for the cause of the oppressed peasants. And this is exactly what he did. It is, however, difficult to say with any degree of certainty whether he had realised the implications of his decision to take up the cause of the peasantry and take upon not only the zamindars and indigo-planters but the Government in this process. Whether he had realised it or not, he added a new dimension to his religious reform movement which was destined to become one of its
primary concerns and an integral part of its programme. After all, resistance to oppression is considered a great virtue in Islam.

The zamindars, of course, could not like this development which was a serious threat to their interests. The rapidity with which the movement grew and gained popularity among the peasants alarmed them and awakened them to the danger that was looming large over them. They tried to contain the movement by demanding from their peasants not to join this movement. This ultimately brought the movement into conflict with them.

Moreover, growing unity and organization of the revolts inspired by a renewed religious fervour and the ideal of a reformed and respectable life, was a development that was bound to invoke deep concern and hostility among the rank and file of vested landed classes as their social superiority and economic prosperity rested solely upon the toils of the common men.  

To deal with the situation as it developed and unfolded itself, the Faraizi leadership took a series of measures


"It is reported that “Dudu Miyan and Hajis, as his followers called, became objects of dread to the Hindu, old Muhammadan and European Landlords”, J.Wise, JASB, 1894, pp.50-51.
that were basically in response to the conditions prevailing at that time. In the following pages we will make an endeavor to study and analyze these measures.

The first confrontation between the zamindars and the Faraizis seems to have occurred as early as in 1831. It is, however, not clear as to what were the reasons leading to this conflict and what was the actual nature of the conflict that took place in the village of Nayabari in the modern district of Munshigonj. The Faraizis have been accused by Biharilal of looting the village and forcing a person to convert.\(^59\) But he wrote in the early years of 20\(^{th}\) century and he does not quote any source. James Wise writing towards the end of the 19\(^{th}\) century simply says that as the result of growing unity among the Faraizis disputes and quarrels arose leading to the deportation of Haji Shariatullah.\(^60\) This seems to be more likely. The Faraizis refute the charge of looting etc., and maintain that they were falsely implicated in this case.


\(^{60}\) Bangal Criminal Lodicial Consultations, (lower province) No.6, for William, 3\(^{rd}\) April 1832. The Roobookaree of the Magistrate of Dacca Jalalpur. 29\(^{th}\) April, 1831. Here this report mentions that two Muslim groups came into an affray, one is the Faraizis and another is traditionalist, who venerated pirs etc. The Faraizis accused the zamindars for engineering this incident.
As a result, Haji Shariatullah was deported from Nayabari. But even the Faraizis do not throw any light as to what had really happened and what were the factors leading to it. In this situation perhaps it would not be possible to know for certain the details of this incident. Whatever might have been the actual development, for us it remain to be important as it is the first reported clash between the Faraizis and zamindars.

Haji Shariatullah was imprisoned around 1837. The reasons for this do not seem to be clear. It may be connected with the incident reported by "Samachar Darpan" regarding some young Faraizis who are alleged to have created disturbances in a village of Faridpur. It is alleged that they objected to the worship of idols and encouraged slaughtering of cows.61

But most probably it was connected with the refusal of the Faraizis to pay revenues as James Taylor had reported only shortly after the imprisonment.62

It is however a matter of controversy whether the Faraizis refused to pay illegal Abwab which were imposed upon them by the Hindu Zamindars and which had very obvious

60 Vames wise, Eastern Bengal, 1883, p.22.
61 Brajendra Nath Bordopadhya, Sombad patrer sekaler kath, 1342, B.S./1837, B.C. p.311-12.
religious overtones such as Kali Vritti, Durga Puja etc. or they were refusing all kinds of taxes including Government revenues. This line of argument is avoided by many modern scholars such as M.A. Khan and M. Mohar Ali.63

These scholars would like us to believe that the Faraizis objected only to the payment of illegal taxes. But James Taylor, a contemporary, wrote in 1839 that he believed that Haji Shariatullah was taken in police custody “for exciting his disciples in the country to withhold the payment of revenue”.64 Even police report in 1842 revealed that the Faraizis believed that “payment of rent is contrary to His (Allah) law and they frequently resist all demand on this account”.65 Besides this, Bengal Criminal Consultations mentioned that “In fact the Farazees consider the payment of rent at all, especially to an

---

64 J. Dunber in his Divisional Commissioner’s report said: “they (the Faraizis) not only resist successfully the levy of all extra or illegal cusses by the Zamindars and Talloq dars, but with equal ability to their hard rent...” The commissioner’s Report, Dhaka 18, March, 1847, para-7-8.
65 James Taylor, Topography of Dacca, p.250.
infidel, as opposed to the word of God”. It may be noted in this connection that Islam does not impose any rent on land as it is clear from the Quran, Sunnah and Hanafi jurisprudence. The land tax system introduced in India by British was in fact modelled on English system under Mughal, this system was not in operation.

It would give the impression that it was as well the government revenue which the Faraizis refused to pay and not only the illegal abwabs with idolatrous overtones which were imposed by the Hindu zamindars over the Muslim peasantry. And if the ideological position of the Faraizis in this regard is kept in mind, this explanation would seem to be more probable. The important thing in this connection, however, is that the economic exactions had already forced the Faraizis to turn their attention to the issues which were not the core issues when the movement was launched. This change led to direct confrontation with the

---

Dampier's (police Super of Bengal) Report, 24, April, 1843, Bengal Criminal Judicial consultations 29 May, 1843, No-26, para-8, James Wise observed that, “the Churs or islands, along Ganges and Meghna, are the favourite retreats of Faraizi rayots, and the Lords being managed directly by Government, and not by any zamindar, or middlemen, the arbitrary taxes sanctioned by the ancient custom of the country are no longer collected” See, J. Wise, Eastern Bengal, p.37

---JASB, 1894, P.63. The writer further said Dudu Miyan "proclaimed that the earth is God's and that no one has a right to occupy it as an inheritance or lavy taxes on it" Eastern Bengal p.24

JASB, P.51.
zamindars and even imprisonment of Haji Shariatullah. This was destined to become more pronounced in the days to come.

Around this period two very important developments took place which were destined to have great impact on the history of Bengal and consequently the Faraizis. The first was passing of charter Act 1833 which gave European Indigo planters right to own and purchase landed estates in Bengal; second was formation of “land holders society” in 1837 consisting of Bengali zamindars and European estate owners. These developments strengthened the position of the Land lords and indigo-planters vis-à-vis the peasants and gave them enormous leaverage to use their collective might against the interests of the peasants.67

Faraizi response to this new situation was quick and effective. Fortunately for them, Dudu Miyan returned during the same time from Makkah after completing his education and he played key role by joining the Lathial, which was organised a kind of militia wielding lathies (clubs) under the command of Jamaluddin Mullah, a renowned lathial. This militia was charged to protect the Faraizi peasants from the oppression of zamindars and indigo planters. They seem to have actively pursued their

---

Consequently, Dudo Miyan was accused on several occasions to have incited the lathials. Consequently, Dudo Miyan was accused on several occasions to have incited the lathials.

But to achieve success against the combined might of the zamindars and indigo-planters was not easy. Their capacity to oppress the peasants and the extent to which they can go could be gauged from the fact that even the Christian missionaries working in the region found it intolerable and pleaded with the government to stop their atrocities.

These were hard times for the Faraizis. They had no means to highlight the oppression of the landlords which went on unabated. Even barbers and washermen were prevented from rendering their services. The Faraizis were virtually driven to stand up against their oppression.

---


69 *Proceedings of the funeral conference of Bengal Protestant Missionaries*, sept., 4-7, 1855, Calcutta, 1855, pp.108.


; *Calcutta Christian Observer*, April, 1838, Vol. VII, p.232, and 18, April, 1843, Vol. IV, p.329. The reporter accused the Zamindar remarking them as "for deeper evils" and "greatest oppressors in the country".


It would be seen that perhaps in view of the sad plight in which Dudu Miyan found his followers he wanted to avoid headlong collision with the landlords. It was obviously with this end in view that he directed his followers to settle in *Khas Mahals* (newly alluvial lands) to avoid confrontation with the landlords. This land was to be distributed among the poor peasants. But this policy was calculated to adversely affect the interests of the landlords. If the peasants left their ancestral places and were allowed to settle in *Khas Mahals* and lead peaceful lives, the work force of the landlords would increasingly decrease and their interests will be adversely affected. In this situation they were bound to act. False cases were instituted not only against many Faraizi peasants but Dudu Miyan was also implicated. But due to lack of evidence he was eventually released.\footnote{Trial of Dudu Miyan, p.47.\footnote{J. Dumber, *Dhaka Divisional Commissioner’s Report*, 18 March, 1847, para 11. Here it may be recalled that the occupation of *Khas Mahals* (waste lands) by the Faraizis is fully in accordance with the prophet’s tradition, all Muslim jurists agree that “the person who first appropriates and cultivates waste lands becomes ipso fact the bed of the soil”}}
These measures instead of breaking the spirit of the Faraizis created more bitterness and tension. The zamindars were also determined to maintain their pressure and to further tighten their stranglehold over the peasants. This seems to have further provoked the Faraizis. As a retaliation, Dudu Miyan gathered around 800 Faraizis (in 1841/1842) and they carried out an attack at the house of joy Narayan Gosh. His house was ransacked and his brother Madan Lal Gosh, against whom the peasants seem to have particular grudge, was carried away and eventually killed. This led to the arrest of 117 peasants out of whom 22 were sentenced to 7 years imprisonment with labour in iron. The investigation revealed that their attack was not motivated by a desire of plunder. On the other hand, the report of the police superintendent clearly indicated that it was caused due to the high handness of the zamindars. The report maintained: “If a tenth part of what they say after their conviction, stated to me in a petition expressing this conduct, was true. I am only surprised that much more serious and general disturbances did not occur... The zamindars appear to have done every thing which could degrade these men in their religion and their femeles”.  

cautioned the Magistrate of Faridpur "to keep a strict watch not only over the peasants but also over the zamindars specially who encourage idolatrous taxes." 74

This Incident proved to be of great psychological advantage for the Faraizis. It gave them self confidence, greater strength, unity and also popularity. But at the same time it was bound to alarm the landlords.

The struggle against the oppression of the landlords seems to have entered a decisive phase around 1843. About this time two important developments took place which were destined to give a new impetus to this movement. Dudu Miyan returned from his second Hajj (1843-1844) 75 to lead his followers with renewed zeal and determination. During his absence at such a crucial juncture they must have felt at a loss as there was no one to lead and guide them. The second development that provided a new impetus to the movement was an incident that took place in Jessore. Some peasants converted to Christianity were beaten up by zamindars. This attracted the attention of the missionaries working in Bengal. Consequently, "The Bengal
British India society" took initiative in 1844-1845 to form a committee to stop the atrocities of the zamindars on the peasants.76

In another retaliatory measure the Faraizis (in 1841) attacked the Sikdar family of Kanaipur, where they took away every brick of his palace in protest against the idolatrous and illegal taxes.77

During this time, A. A. Dunlop, an indigo-planter, whose factory was adjacent to the village of Dudu Miyan, instituted two cases against Dudu Miyan and his followers for abduction, murder and unlawful assemblage.78 But he could not prove it. Then he and his allies, including Gopi Mohan Gosh, planned to put an end to Dudu Miyan's life and finish the Faraizi movement by force. Consequently, his house was raided in 1846.

---

75 Letter of sup. Of police, Lower Bengal, to the govt. of Bengal, No. 1001, 13 May, 1843, para-6; Bengal Jadl. Cors. 29 May, 1843, No. 25.
76 Bengal Harkare, 31 Jan. 1846
   11 Sep. 1844
   12 Oct. 12 Nov.
   and 9 Dec. 1844.
; Bengal British India Society 1846, in Bengal Harkara, 31 Jan. 1846
77 M.M. Khan, History of Faridi movement p. 175
; J. Wise, Eastern Bengal, p 25
78 Trial of Dudu Miyan p.42.
Dudu Miyan escaped unhurt. But there were several casualties and much damage to property of Dudu Miyan.79

Dudu Miyan lodged a case in the court of Joint Magistrate of Faridpur' G.C. Fletcher. But the case was never properly investigated as the magistrate himself had intimate relations with the accused.

Moreover, Mr. Dunlop and his allies some how got hold of Dudu Miyan and kept him confined in the factory for two days and one night at the time of statement, and threatened him of dire consequence'. However' he was released later on.80

It was at that stage that losing hope for justice and fair deal' the Faraizis decided to take matters in their own hands. On December 6, 1846, Dunlop's factory at Panchchar was attacked and burnt. His gomasta (agent) named Kali Kanji Lal was carried away. Later, he was killed. The house of another zamindar' Gopee Mohan' was also ransacked. According to the report of the police superintendent, the attackers numbered

---

79 Trial of Dudu Miyan. It heads : “On the dockyard of the court Dudu Miyan expressed that” this Dunlop with 700 or 800 armed men attacked my house, broke the front door, murdered four watchmen, severely wounded others and pandered about one and half lacks in cash and property, concealed the body of slain .. one of the Amiruddin died in Hospital, pp. 47-48, and Appindix vi

80 Ibid.
around 300 to 500. The attack was with the motive of retaliation.  

The joint Magistrate who has remained totally indifferent regarding the attack and looting of Dudu Miyan’s house’ which has resulted in loss of 5 lives and much property, became very active. Two separate cases were instituted. One against Dudu Miyan for instigating attack on the factory and the other against 63 of his followers for the commission of the alleged crime. Both the cases were committed to the court of the session judge of Dhaka district at Faridpur. In July 1847, the judge Henry Sweetenham, convicted Dudu Miyan and his followers, and refereed the case to Calcutta Sadar Nizamat Adalat. The Adalat concluded that the evidence was not conclusive. As a result Dudu Miyan and his followers were acquitted.  

81 Bengal Judp. Criminal Consolations, 17 February, 1847, No. 134, Para 2  
; H. Bereridge, District of Bakargoin, p.340.  
; Partiantenary papers, vol. Xliv 1861, indigo Commission, Extract from Minute of Evidence, p.255, Reply No. 3917.  
; Trial of Dudu Miyan pp. 48, 188-189.  
; Wajir Ali, Muslim Ratanahar, p.8.  

; Trial of Dudu Miyan, Appendix p XXXiii
In the history of the struggle of the peasantry Panchchar incident occupies a very important place and may be rightly regarded as a turning point. It not only gave the Faraizis confidence to continue their struggle with more determination but it also made both the Government and the zamindars more cautious in their dealings with the Faraizis. Now they could also devote their attention to their basic aims and objectives for which the Fariazi movement was launched in the first place.

In 1854, the peasants of Nadia and Jessore, who were mostly Faraizis resolutely fought back the planters, attempt to get indigo sown by force. But a greater success was the upholding of the right of defence by the Nizamat Adalat.83

But this was only the beginning of a grim struggle between the peasants and the planters. As a result of recent successes the Faraizis had gained confidence and they were determined to resist the oppression of the landlords. On the other hand, the landlords and planters were not prepared to take it lying down and see their interests openly threatened. They used all the tricks in the book to force the peasantry to fall in line, but it only aggravated the situation and led to more serious

confrontations. It is in this background that the outburst of the peasant’s anger, which came to be known as “Indigo Rebellion” of 1858, 1860 and 1873 should be studied.

The first indigo rebellion took place in 1858. “The cultivators organized themselves and refused in a body to cultivate their lands with indigo, even at the sacrifice of their hearth and home, nay of their lives”  

A new dimension was added to peasants’ struggle as the Hindu masses made a common cause with the Muslims. This marked beginning of a new phase, as it was a silent demonstration without violence. It will be useful to remember that these areas were very much under the influence of the Faraizis and the area of Pabna-Sirajganj was well known as a Faraizi stronghold. K. Blair, indirectly said, “this Faraizi movement was checked by 1859, many of the peasants who participated in indigo disturbances were Faraizis, skilled in military organisation and use of arms.”

---

; *Bengal Judicial Proceedings 90-91*, June, 25, 1858 and 105-11, February, 1860 here Faraizi influence clearly, was stated.
demonstration local newspaper, "Amrita Bazar Patrika" sponsored by the Hindus, reports that this rebellion revolution is the first real revolution in Bengal since the advent of the English, which taught the natives for the first time the value of combination and Political agitation". 87

The continuing struggle of the Faraizis in defence of peasant’s rights and the effects of the missionaries and others seems to have at last bestirred the government to take some remedial steps. Any delay in addressing this problem could lead to grave implications and widespread unrest in the country side which could not be in the best interests of government itself. It would simply mean that the government was totally indifferent to the plight of the peasants and they were left at the mercy of the landlords. The agitation of 1858 has proved that the patience of the peasants was fast running out and if nothing was done urgently the consequences could be disastrous.

It was in this backdrop that the government decided to introduce "Land Act of 1859" which for the first time sought to give some rights to the peasants and set procedures for

---

settlements of disputes arising between the landlords and the peasants. The salient features’ of this Act were as follows:

The peasants were entitled to receive *pattas* for the lands cultivated by them, the landlords were entitled to receive *Kubuliats*- written engagements. Penalties were prescribed for the exactions of any extra legal or unauthorized process. Procedures and mechanism were set to take care of disputes that could arise in future between the landlords and the peasants. Similarly clear checks were also provided for the powers to landlords and restrictions were imposed by this Act.  

No doubt it was a great step forward. The British even went to the extent of calling it “Magna Charts of the Royts”. As would be seen later, this Magna Charts could not solve the problems of the peasants of Bengal and they were obliged not only to continue their struggle against the exploitation and oppression of the landlords but to intensify it further. Nevertheless, it must be conceded that it was a turning point in the history of the peasants’ struggle in Bengal and major credit for this must go to the Faraizis who were among the first to take cudgel and raise voice against the oppression of the

---

landlords which has been going on for the last so many years unabated and unchallenged. The struggle continued but in a sense its nature has undergone a change. Now it was to secure the rights which were already given to them by the government while earlier there was no such rights as such.

It was expected that this Act will bring about a great change in the relations of the landlords with the peasants and will guarantee better life conditions for the oppressed peasants of Bengal. But it would, however, appear that inspite of this Act' there was no noticeable change either in the attitude of the planters or the material conditions of the peasants.

All the expectations, which might have been naturally aroused by the promulgation of this Act that it will usher into a better tomorrow' were belied and frustrated. The landlords were well entrenched and they were not prepared to allow their interests to be put into jeopardy. They will do every thing to hoodwink the government and the peasants and maintain their strong- hold over the peasants.

The peasants who have seen what their combined strength can achieve, could not continue to watch the situation as

89 Ibid.
passive spectators. They have come to the bitter realization that even the government and its pious intentions could not ensure their rights to be given to them. It was a battle which they themselves have to fight and win.

This impatience with the prevailing conditions found expression in the second agitation which was much more wide and successful. The Bengal Indigo-strike of 1860 was the first large scale strike in India and one of the most successful agitations that demonstrated the initiative and discipline of which the peasants were capable. It involved hundreds of thousands of tenants who stood up against the British planters. The tenants were forced to grow indigo at very low prices for the British textile industries, to the exclusion of most other crops, when they refused to sow indigo, they were kidnapped, flogged, exposed to strokes and even murdered. Once decided upon, the strike spread rapidly. The tenants assembled with staffs, swords, bows and arrows and matchlocks to defend their settlements. In Pabna an
army of 2000 peasants appeared and wounded a magistrates' horse. Otherwise, there was little violence.\textsuperscript{90}

The success of this strike can be gauged from the fact that according to some historians the indigo plantation was almost stopped and the planters found it more advisable to move westward to Bihar.\textsuperscript{91} Continued agitation and disturbances were bound to adversely affect their business interests. This marked beginning of a new phase as it was silent demonstration without violence and it ultimately won the sympathy of the government

\textsuperscript{90} Kethalin Gcouh, \textit{Peasant Struggle in India}, p.110. For detailed account of this upheaval, see, O'Malley, \textit{BDG}, Pabna, 19L3.


; \textit{Selection From the Records of Bengal Government}, related papers of 1860.


; C.E., Buckland, \textit{Bengal Under the Leitawant Fieaverners}, S.K. Lahiri D.Co., Calcutta, 1901, pp.192, for Faraizis resistance, see p.193.


\textsuperscript{91} Kethalen Gough, art. In an Peasant Uprisings, in \textit{Peasant Struggle in India (ed.)}, A.r Desai, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1929, p 110.
against the white oppressors, which by all means was a great achievement.

Because for this agitation, the peasant community could achieve sympathy of the government. This forced the lords of the government to take cognizance of the situation. The stance of the government is reflected in the following reports:

In 1860, Lt. Governor J.P. Grant witnessed two continuous rows of men, women and children, extending from 60 to 70 miles on both the sides of the rivers through which he passed Pabna to Calcutta. He acknowledged that this demonstration gave him more anxiety than the mutinous days of Delhi and he was convinced that “a shot fired in anger or fear by one foolish planter might put every factory in Lower Bengal in flames”.92

It is clear that like the rebellion of 1858, in this rebellion also the inspiration most probably came from the Faraizis. To be sure this region was a Faraizi stronghold. Even today many families claim that they are Faraizis.93 Peasants’

---

92 See O’ Malley, BDG, “Pabna” Calcutta, 1914, “Indigo”.
93 Ibid.

; Kaly an” Kumar Sengupta, Pabna Disturbances and Policies of Rent-18970-1885, New Delhi, 1974, p.51.
agitations clearly demonstrated to the world the ugly face of the indigo plantation and it was no more possible for the government to avoid this issue. As a result, the government appointed Indigo Commission to investigate these disturbances. After examining large number of peasants and planters, who put forward their own point of view, the commission in 1860 arrived at the conclusion that the business of indigo is motivated, sinful, in fact wrong one and the oppression of the planters is the main cause of the rebellion. Besides these findings, the commission totally discredited the planters describing this system as a source of evils.\textsuperscript{94}

This report, though it indicated the indigo planters, was much below the expectations of the peasants. The intensity and brutality of the oppression to which the peasants were subjected failed to find full expression in this report. This oppression was so inhuman and brutal that the English Magistrate of Faridpur’ De Latour’ was constrained to remark that “there is no box of indigo sent to England without a mixture of the blood

\textsuperscript{94} Indigo Commission Report, 1860 in Selecton from the Records of Government of Bengal, No.xxxiii, Part-1, Papers related to Indigo Cultive from in Bengal, Calcutta, 1866.
of peasants”. He acknowledged to have seen many dead bodies of peasants killed by planters.95

It was only natural that this report evoked very sharp reaction from the newspapers like Amrita Bazar, who considered it shameful falsehood and criticized it in the strongest terms.96 Calcutta Review also blamed the planters for their murder, rape, homicide etc. and commented that “no chest of indigo reached England without being stained with human blood”.97

FARAIZI STRUGGLE FOR THE RIGHTS OF THE PEASANTS AFTER THE DEATH OF DUDU MIYAN

After the death of Dudu Miyan in 1862 there was a momentary decline in the fortunes of the Faraizis. In absence of the towering personality of Dudu Miyan, the zamindars redoubled their efforts. Immediately after his death the agents of the zamindars became very active, made a night attack on the residence of Dudu Miyan’s family at Bahadurpur, and burnt all

---

95 Ibid., pp.70-71.
96 Amrita Bazar, 1860.
the houses to the ground including all their relics, books and manuscript's all was consumed by fire. 98

There was no strong central leadership for quite some time and as a result, Faraizis could not pursue a vigorous and substantial plan to safeguard the interests of the peasants. But the claim of the scholars like M.M. Ali, A.R. Mallick, M.A. Khan, and others, who maintained that the Faraizis struggle for the rights of the peasants come to an end with the death of Dudu Miyan 99 is absolutely unwarranted and without foundation. Even during the immediate period after the death of Dudu Miyan when the affairs of the Faraizis were very much in disarray, the Faraizis continued their struggle against the oppression of the landlords though in a subdued and rather sporadic manner and in most of the cases these actions seem to have been taken on the spur of the movement. But important thing is that even during that period it was not totally abandoned. Later on, when Naya

98 M.A. Khan, *H.F.M.*, pp.203-204. He depended on the current tradition in the family of Dudu Miyan. It is sorrowful to identify their ideology and it became very difficult for this barbarous incident.


M.A. Khan, *H.F.M.*, pp.208-212, only one event of “Kite of Allah” is brought out by this writer for the later Faraizis, where the Faraizis killed a oppressor zamindar, Chakrvarty hed thrown his body into the river and claimed that this was done by the “Kite of Allah”, see, Navin sen, Amar Jivan, iii, p 144.
Miyan came of age and took control of the Faraizi in his hand, a very vigorous struggle was launched in the defence of Peasants’ rights, as the following developments would show.

That even during the period following the death of Dudu Miyan the Faraizi struggle against the oppression of the Landlords did not totally stop’ is evident from the events which took place at Barasat. According to the government report: “Charghat had several thousands Musalman inhabitant, all banded together to prevent any interference with the rights real or supposed”.100 The report continues “These Sharawallies (another name of the Faraizis) have a complete organisation and frequently meet together to interchange ideas”101 Not only that but the Faraizis also took part in Indigo uprisings of Pabna, Murshidabad and Nadia.102 In all such cases Faraizis influence is clearly discernible.103

100 Letter from Ashely Eden, Officiating Joint Magistrate of Barasat to Commissioner of circuit Nadia Division 6, April, 1858: SRBG, pp.164-171.
101; Kaviraj, pp.82-83.
102 Evidence No.3626, also 3629, Report of the Indigo Commission, here it is notable that at that time the followers of Titu Mir and Faraizis were described by the officials, as Faraizis for their intimacy and unity of purpose.
103 Selection from the Records of Bengal Government, pp 393-94.
104 Bengal Judicial Proceedings, November, 1870, No 163
It is under Noya Miyan's leadership (1864-1884), who succeeded his brother Giasuddin Haidar (d.1864), that the caparaizis gained their lost ground and once more became very strong. His great prestige among the Faraizis misled the Dhaka Divisional Commissioner, J. Dunber, to regard him as their "prophet" which shows his gross ignorance about the faith of the Faraizis. But it is interesting to note that according to this assessment, the Faraizis enjoyed a following of more than a million strong. During the early years of Naya Miyan's stewardship of the Faraizi affairs, the Faraizi activities on the peasants front were not only vigorous but were also marked by a kind of aggressiveness. Moreover, these were very much focussed. It would seem that a new leaf was turned and building on the previous experiences, they took up the challenge with a new determination and greater confidence.

In 1870, for example, they went to the extent of killing a zamindar Purna Chandra Roy, who had attained much notoriety among the peasants for his oppressive methods. Government took very serious note of this incident and all kinds of Faraizi demonstrations were banned but it was also

---

recommended that Muslim Deputy Magistrates should *not* be stationed in Madaripur. 105

One significant aspect of the leadership of Naya Miyan was that he was able to bring together different sections of the peasantry including non-Muslims and that was perhaps the main reason of his effectiveness. Such collective gatherings' which for the sake of convenience have been described by some scholars as ‘combinations, were successfully brought about in Dhaka, Faridpur, and Bakargonj 106 and were used not. Only against the zamindars but government officials as well. For example, one such combination attacked the office of income tax assessor at Taranir Hat, the revenue agents and office bearers were beaten up, the records were torn and thrown into water. The assessor could be rescued only by the Police. In this case seventeen Faraizis were arrested and made over to the Magistrate. 107

105 Annual General Report, Dhaka Division, 1878-79; General Department Pros., Nov., 1879.
106 Dhaka Prakash, 14 December, 1870; Bangal Judicial Proceedings, Dhaka, November, 1870, No.163.
107 The combination is called as ‘Banda’ strike, see Bengal Judl. Procs., October, 1869, No 102.
107 Bengal Judicial Proceedings, October, 1868, Nos.102,104.
This would indicate that in these activities leading role was played by the Faraizis. It would further suggest that now they were becoming more assertive and they had started targeting even government officials whom they considered to be oppressive or unjust. It would appear that the increasing belligerency of the Faraizis gave rise to apprehensions of imminent uprising and as a preventive measure they were disarmed in Dhaksin Shahbazpur area in 1870.\textsuperscript{108} But even such drastic actions seems to have failed to subdue the spirit of the Faraizis. During the same year they organised lathi wielding demonstration against oppressor Patnidar Gaur Charan Chakravarty in Bakarganj.\textsuperscript{109}

Similarly, the Faraizis of Maldah\textsuperscript{110} formed a strong combination like “Trade Union of England” and resisted all kinds of atrocities by all means both legal and illegal, following their own code. A significant development connected with this movement was that it did not keep itself confined to resisting the atrocities of the landlords but it went a step further; they challenged their very rights over the land that was under their

\textsuperscript{108} Bengal Judicial Proceedings, May, 1870, Nos 238, ibid, September 1870, No.99.  
\textsuperscript{109} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{110} These Faraizis perhaps both the followers of Titu Mir and Dud Miyan, because in Government reports were described as Faraizis in the later days.
tenancy. This would mean that they threatened the very source of the privileged position of the zamindars. Their slogan was “the owner of the plough is the owner of land.”\textsuperscript{111}

The Faraizis of Nawabgonj also followed the suit and sought to prevent the oppression of landlords by claiming that the land belongs to them by occupancy right.\textsuperscript{112} If the right over the land under their plough could be established, the stranglehold of the zamindars would naturally lose its grip.

In Dhaka, the first peasant combination sprang up on a huge alluvial formation in Faraizi inhabitant of Munshigonj.\textsuperscript{113} The Faraizi movement seems to be increasingly acquiring an aggressive edge around this time and it would appear that their patience with the oppressors was running out. This would seem to have been the case with a gomasta of Palang Thana, when they killed and threw his body into a river.\textsuperscript{114} It clearly shows that they even did not hesitate to take the law into their own lands. This attitude of defiance was not confined to the zamindars. Some times it spilled over to the government officials as well.

\textsuperscript{111} Bengal Judicial Proceeding, October, 1870, No. 31.
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid., 1870, No. 28, Report of Maldah, ; Bengal Judicial Proceedings, October, 1870, Nos. 31-32.
\textsuperscript{113} Bengal Revenue Proceedings, 1874, collection, 14, No. 26-27.
\textsuperscript{114} Navin Sen, \textit{Amar}, p. 311.
when their actions were perceived to be detrimental to the interests of the people. For example, in 1871-1872 census was resisted by the people of Noakhali, where 80% of the population was Faraizis. They not only prevented the officials from conducting the census but also shouted such slogans as "kill English officers". 115

As mentioned earlier, under the leadership of Naya Miyan a number of powerful peasant combinations were formed. Under the influence of these combinations several peasant resistance movements were organized. For example, during 1873-1874 in Dhaka and in 1870-1874 in Faridpur, wide spread peasant resistances were organized. The determined stand of the Faraizis during this strike imparted strength and contents to it.

The powerful peasant revolt of Pabna in 1873 for securing occupancy rights against the landlords who used extra legal measure and rack rented and subjected the tenants to all kinds of physical torture, was a great success. It was spearheaded by the inspiration of the Faraizis, who succeeded in

115 Bengal Judl. Pro., January 1872, Nos 235-37, February 1872, No 102, March 1872, Nos 9-11
almost stopping these atrocities.\textsuperscript{116} It is because of its far-reaching consequences that it occupies a special place in the socio-economic history of Bengal. More particularly because of the initiative for this revolt was taken by the Muslim peasants of Bengal and the main inspiration came from the Faraizis.\textsuperscript{117} The non-Muslims also participated in it whole-heartedly. It was, therefore, a non-communal combination that has successfully challenged the might of the planters.\textsuperscript{118}

\begin{itemize}
\item C.E. Buckland, \textit{Bengal Under the Lieutenant Governors}, Vol.1, Calcutta, 1901, pp.546-548.
\item \textit{Freedom of India}, July 1873.
\item \textit{Pojneer}, July 29, 1873.
\item \textit{Hindo Patriot}, July, 7, 1873.
\item \textit{Hindo Patriot}, July, 14, 1873.
\item \textit{Hindo Patriot}, Sept. 22, 1873.
\item \textit{The Bengalee}, Oct., 25, 1873.
\item \textit{Amrita Bazar Patrika}, 18 July, 1873.
\item Hunter, \textit{Statistical Acc. Of Bengal}, Vol.IV, “Pabna”.
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{116} Kulyan Kumar Sengupta, \textit{Pabna Disturbances}, p.51, here Mr Gupta remarked that among the Pabna roys the influence of the member of the Faraizi sect was considerable”
\item O., Malley, \textit{BDG}, Pabna, Calcutta, 1923, p.32.
\textsuperscript{117} Ibid., here Sengupta remarks that among the Muslims the combination is easier than the Hindu, who are distrustful each other for multitude stages of their casteism.
The struggle secured important gains not only for the peasants of Pabna who had taken this bold initiative but also for whole Bengal. This led first to the passing of “The Agrarian Dispute Act (1876)” and later it was followed by “The Bengal Tenancy Act”. I, of 1885. These Acts though not very radical, still these were instrumental in putting restrictions on many abuses to which the peasants used to be subjected.

In 1874, the zamindars of Madaripur showed unwillingness to accede to the occupancy rights of the peasants. But the Faraizi combination effectively resisted this move of the landlords.

The Faraizis of Maimansingh even went a step further and stopped paying all kinds of rent. It is confirmed by the government report.

---


As a result of a well-organised passive resistance that was spear-headed by the Faraizis and extended over a period of five years during the 1875-8, they succeeded in putting up Agrarian Leagues having 10,000 to 15000 tenants in the district of Maimansingh.\textsuperscript{123}

During the period 1874-1880 the Faraizis of Faridpur, Madaripur, Bakerganj and Singhali, led agrarian combinations and resisted all demands of landlords.\textsuperscript{124} The measure of their success in this regard can be assessed from the observations made by Dhaka commissioner that “the Faraizis boast that their combinations banished indigo planters from Faridpur... and the worst feature in Bakargoinj and Faridpur is the dread of the zamindars of wealth and influence to live amongst the royts.”\textsuperscript{125}

\textsuperscript{123} Bengal Land Revenue Proceedings, June 1874, Misc. Collection, 14, Nos.26-27.
\textsuperscript{124} Divisional Report, Dhaka, 1878-79, file 87/5/6, Bengal Govt. Proceeding November, 1879.
\textsuperscript{125} Divisional Commissioner of Dacca, Annual Report for 1879-80, Bengal General (Mise) proceedings, August 1880, file 38/20/26, Para 188.
It would seem that in consequence of successful agitation and combinations of their united struggle they have become very assertive. It was perhaps because of this that some of the places such as Mahdigonj police station area, came to be identified as a trouble spot in 1881. Moreover, this struggle was now not confined to securing the rights of the peasants and resisting the abuses to which they were subjected but it seems to have acquired a somewhat aggressive tone around this period. In some regions such as Husainpur of Maimansingh, the peasants attacked on the Government officials and maltreated the zamindars. They even formed Unions of the peasants against all who sided with the landlords or paid any rent.\(^{126}\)

For the next few decades we do not have any evidence to shed any light on the Faraizi attitude towards the peasant problems. It can however, be assumed that they continued to take interest in peasant problems though its tone and nature might have been subdued. This can be said with some degree of certainty because we found that Badshah Miyan (d.1959) was

---


; *Report, Dacca, for 1882-83 file 49/3/4, Bengal Govt. proceedings*, August, 1883.
reported in 1921 as the leader of 60 lackh peasants of Bengal. As O’ Malley wrote in 1923, that in the district of Pabna where Faraizi inspiration led a great upheaval of 1873, based on the Quran and Mosque, that the Faraizi element is still among the Mahammadan of Sirajgonj.

It clearly indicates that the tradition of standing up for peasant rights was ending one and continued well into 20th century.

Weavers problems and the Faraizis:

‘During the Mughal period, Bengal was regarded as ‘paradise;’ storehouse of cotton and silk,’ ‘wealthiest’ and ‘cheapest province of India’. But after British occupation it
remained nothing more than a mere shadow of its past glory and prosperity.  

During the life time of Haji Shariatullah the condition of cotton weavers was sharply declining both at social and economic levels. The impoverished weavers were leading their lives below poverty line. British East India Company’s policy made them de-industrialized. The world renowned muslin cotton industry patronized earlier by Mughal rulers, now found it increasingly difficult to hold to its own place both in the country as well as in International markets. For ensuring basic rights of weavers and with a view to promote their interests, Haji Shariatullah and Dudu Miyan led these deindustrialized weavers. It is therefore, necessary to examine the issue in the light of general decline of cotton weaving communities of Bengal.

The main cause of de-industrialization was restrictive barriers of British, imposed upon the movement of indigenous cotton piece goods from one part of Bengal to another. A system of chokees-custom houses existed at various prominent sectors.

---

133 For details of weavers’ condition, see, Hameeda Husain, The Company Weavers of Bengal The East India and the Organization of Production in Bengal 1750-1813, Oxford University Press Delhi, 1988.
of this weaver-peasant province. Tolls had to paid in many places for entry and exit of cotton goods. Consequently, the value of indigenous cotton piece goods thus soared up sky high.\(^{133}\)

On the other hand, East India Company by the Act of 1815, reduced import duty on England made goods to \(21/2\) %.\(^{134}\) That was less than half of internal goods. Thus, England made goods got readier market in India, cheaper than indigenous ones. This made it impossible for Indian commodities to retain a competitive position against the foreign goods, which entered Indian market in ever greater qualities.\(^{134}\)

The decline of indigenous cotton industry led to progressive ruralization of the weaving community who having lost the hope of ever being able to earn their livelihood\(^{135}\) by


their old profession turned to agriculture. This naturally swelled the ranks of the agriculturists in Bengal.

Moreover, the Bengal cotton products failed to retain their position in the markets of America, Africa and Java against the stiff competition put by the English goods. For instance, the sicca of Bengal fabrics during 1820-21 was Rs. 12, 68, 587, which declined during 1826-27 to 58, 464. After sometimes it ceased altogether.\textsuperscript{136}

The decline was so sudden and so complete that it must have left the people at the end of their wits. For example, talking about Dhaka which has been the emporium of the Muslin for many centuries, J. Taylor, a contemporary of Haji Shariatullah, says that during 1817-18, the export quality cotton piece goods that passed through Dhaka customs houses, was 152, 497. But in its proportion was reduced to an alarming extent during 1834-35 to 38, 122.\textsuperscript{137} This could very well provide an idea about the magnitude of the decline and its enormous effects on the weaving communities.

\textsuperscript{136} See, H. H. Wilson, A Review of External Commerce of Bengal, Calcutta, 1800.

\textsuperscript{137} James Taylor, A sketch of Topography and Statistics of Dacca, Calcutta, 1840, p.191.
According to another contemporary of Haji Shariatullah, Trevelyan, who said that foreign goods had captured the Bengal goods markets in other countries as well. During the period 1813-1814 to 1832-1833, the Bengal goods dwindled from 52, 9, 458, to 8, 22, 891, in the markets outside India.\(^ {138}\)

On the other hand, the foreign goods registered a steep rise during this period from 9, 070 to 42, 64, 707.\(^ {139}\) Thus the Bengal weaver communities were irrevocably de-industrialized. As a result, they were forced to lead a life of object poverty and erstwhile affluent people found it difficult to earn their substances.\(^ {140}\)

The over all decline in their fortunes is attested from the collection of the chowkidari tax of Dhaka, which plummeted from 31, 500 in 1814 to 10,000 in 1838.\(^ {141}\)

In this kind of situation it could be only expected that they will join any call or movement from which they could expect some solution of the problems faced by them or some noble


\(^{139}\) Ibid.


\(^{141}\) Ibid.
support and spiritual solace. It was, therefore, only natural that they flocked to Farizi movement as that offered the only glimmer of hope in that total darkness of despair. It was deliberate policy of the East India Company to push out the world renowned muslin weavers of Dhaka from their trade to make room for the England manufactured cloths. They are even said to have cut the fingers of these master weavers to incapacitate them and make it impossible for them to weave any more.

It is, therefore, not surprising that the de-industrialized indigenous cotton weavers were mostly Faraizis. During 1820-40, for example, they comprised one third population of Dhaka city.

Similar is the case of Faridpur where the weaver communities carried on a remarkable agitation under the leadership of Haji Shariatullah which continued even after him. The details of these agitations are unfortunately not

---

142 Abhijit Dutta, p.132.
145 Abhijit Dutta, p.132.
available. But it is clear that these frustrated and unemployed people could at least voice their grievances through Faraizi movements and force the authorities to take notice of their problems and to find solution for them. It would seem that the Faraizi movement provided for them a platform from where they could not only articulate their grievances but also they could use it as a refuge and shelter. For example, in the case of their inability to pay back the money lenders.  

Some modern Scholars, who are not inclined to fully accept the role of the Faraizis in the field of religious reform, would like us to believe that the weavers joined the Faraizi movement simply because of economic reasons. This is an attempt at oversimplifying the situation obtaining at that time in Bengal.

It cannot be expected from any movement howsoever religious its nature may be, to totally ignore the material well being of its followers. Faraizis could not have shut their eyes to the pitiable position in which they found most of their adherents both peasants and weavers. Similarly, there could be no harm if a

---

147 For example, see Abhijit Dutta, p. 132.
people following a particular movement for religious and spiritual reasons could use the platform provided to them by that movement to safeguard their material interest as well. It would be unjustifiable to call their intentions into question because of this.

Haji Shariatullah and Dudu Miyan led many agitations and inspired the weaver communities to fight for their rights and stand up against British East India Company’s policy. But it is not possible to work out details of their struggle for the rights of the weavers. It is surprising that while there is wealth of information about their fight for the cause of peasants, there is almost total lack of evidence regarding their attitude towards the problems of the weavers except some strong references, here and there. One can only surmise that their contribution towards the well-being and up-liftment of the weavers must have been enormous. Otherwise Haji Shariatullah could not have received the epithet of “Pir of Jolah”, — saint guide of the weavers, and his followers that of the “sons of weavers” (Jolahar Pola).

9 M.A. Khan, History of Faraidi Movement, p.86.
150 Wajir Ai, Muslim Ratnahar, p.8.
: C.A. Bayley, The New Cambridge History of India, Orient Longmen, Delhi, p.95.
: M.A. Khan, History of Faraidi Movement, p.188.
POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

The Faraizi Movement of Bengal was the first and foremost organized Islamic movement in British India. It would seem that initially this movement was a purely religious reform movement. But the Faraizis could not remain indifferent to the economic exploitation and miserable plight of the people among whom they were working and whom they sought to reform. As a result, they found themselves entangled in combatting the economic exploitation of the helpless peasantry by the Zamindars and indigo-planters and this imparted to their movement an-anti-British character and ultimately it become one of the distinctive features of the movement. Therefore it would not be incorrect to say that this movement though basically a religious reform movement had also inherent in it elements of a political movement, almost from the very beginning.

But it is surprising that “Faraizi movements militancy had attained greater prominence than political objectives and

---

activities”.\(^2\) This was perhaps due to conscious and tactful planning on their part. A reporter of *Calcutta Review* wrote in 1870:

“There are scores of Faraizi villages in Bengal, the Government and the public alike are quite in dark as to them or their organization, their politics or their organization, or their religion... both sects (Faraizi and Wahhabi) and their political objects must be dear to all Mahammadans, who as men, naturally sigh for the Lost dominion and acceptors of an aggressive creed believe in the duty of war against the infidels, Christians or Hindu, jews or Bhuddist”.\(^3\)

This seeming ambiguity about their political objectives appears to have led some modern scholars Bangladeshi, Indian or British to conclude that it was merely a socio-economic movement and not a political organisation, directed against the British. But there are a number of other scholars who do not agree with this view and argue that it had

---

3. *Calcutta Review*, vol.50, No.ii, 1870, pp.73-75 art.

, See also *Hindu Patriot*, 2 August 1870 A sketch of Wahhabis in India down to the death of Sayyid Ahmad in 1831, pp 73-104.
also a definite political ideology and endeavored to achieve certain political objectives and with a view to realize these objectives engaged itself in specific political activities. In view of this sharp difference of opinion among the scholars regarding political character of the Farazizi movement, the subject needs to be further investigated.

Dr. Azizur Rahman Mallick is one of the prominent scholars, who had argued that the Faraizis were not politically motivated. Similarly Dr. M.A. Khan ‘writing about 40 years ago had put forward the thesis that Haji Shariatullah’s Faraizi movement’s “nature was out and out religious character”. But both the writers seem to have revised their earlier views about the nature and character of this movement, perhaps in view of new evidence that might have come their way. For Millick has now arrived to the conclusion that “initially this movement had religious orientation which turned into socio-economic and

---

finally political one culminated in anti-British character". Similarly in total reversal of his earlier stand Dr. M.A. Khan observed that "Islam is a code of life ... Faraizi movement manifested an attempt to stop the internal decay of Muslim society and direct resistance to the imperialistic and colonial tendencies of foreign youk". But these writers did not elaborate their views as to how and why they have revised their earlier opinion and came to the conclusion that it was also a political movement.

However, evidence at our disposal clearly suggests that the Faraizi was very much political as it had almost all the basic ingredients considered to be essential for a political entity

---


; M.A. Bari also basing on J. Wise report said that Haji Shariatullah totally confined in his life as a religious reformer. For detailed account of his argument see, A comparative analysis of early Wahhabis-Unpublished, and his two articles in Pakistan Historical conference, 1957 and in History of the Freedom Movement in Hind-Pakistan.

in the modern political thought. It had an executive body, judicial body, appointed *Khalifas* (deputies) and a militia (*Lathial*) based on strong Islamic brotherhood.

It was perhaps due to these considerations that some modern historians like P.N. Chopra thought “this movement started by Haji Shariatullah in East Bengal with the object of restoration of Muslim rule after driving out the British”.

This particular aspect was pointed out even during the Trial of Dudu Miyan in 1847. It was then categorically stated that “this person (Duda Miyan) and his father established a new creed in contravention of the former principles of Muhammadan faith”. As far the teachings of Haji Shariatullah and his son are concerned they did not deviate from the accepted beliefs Islam and of could not be even imagined that they established a new creed by any stretch of imagination. The faraizi ideology could not amount to the establishment of a new creed in contravention of Islamic faith. There could be, however, on doubt that it went beyond the limited and conventional meaning of the religion as it

---

8 P.N. Chopra, Indian Muslims in Freedom Struggle, New Delhi, 1988, p. 3

9 *Trial of Dudu Miyan (Translation of the Proceedings held in two cases Tried in 1847 before the Session judge of Dhaka in which Doodoo Meea and his followers belonging to the sect of Hadijees or Fazees were charged with Wounding, plunder, Ansar et al.* Calcutta, p 65
might have been understood by those people. It may well be that their idea of religion did not include political activity and was confined to prayers, devotions and rituals.

Dr. James wise' who has intimate knowledge about the Faraizis' wrote a book in 1883 only for the Government. In this book he made a revealing statement about the nature and objectives of the Bengal revivalist movements. He writes:

"The Mohommadan revival of Nineteen century is one of the most momentous events in the Modern History of India, not only from its Uniting under the banner of common faith millions of the population, but from its treating to (?) became a political movement, having for its object the over throw of the Christian Government by a Mohommadan one, with the Quran and the Sword as the leading agents of civilization. The seed sown by a few earnest untitled (?) men has borne a abundant fruit and at present day overshadows the whole of Eastern Bengal (Now Bangladesh). To understand how it happened that a movement unsupported (?) by the Landlords or the richer classes and discouraged by the state, spread far and wide, embracing the large majority of the agricultural and manufacturing classes, it is necessary to go back to the days of Mohommadan rule and
ascertain the state of religion at that time and the means which were adopted to preserve and promote the faith of Islam".  

It is clear from this report that the activities of the Faraizis gave the impression to the contemporary observers that the agenda it pursued was quite political in nature so much so that British interests felt threatened. The aim of their political pursuits was apparently replacement of British hegemony by the establishment of an Islamic state.

There is no denying the fact that Dadu Miyan divided Eastern Bengal into many circles, each circle was entrusted to the care of a Siyasi Khalifa-a political-spiritual leader. It would also suggest that political elements were not altogether absent in the scheme of the Faraizis. The Faraizi ideology and activities had led a number of scholars, contemporary and later, to arrive at this conclusion, as Lawrence ziring observed.


11 Lawrence Ziring, *Bangladesh from Mujib to Ershad : An Interpretive study*, University Press Ltd. Dhaka. 1992, p.9
Regarding the duties of the Khalifa, Khan remarks
"The Khalifa was to keep Dudu Miyan fully apprised of every
new political development of his area".\textsuperscript{12}

Well known historian K.A. Nizami also seems to be in
agreement with this view. Discussion the nature of the faraizi
movement, he had made the following observation "Faraizi
movement had definite political objectives and its drift and
direction was determined by the political and economic focus and
Dudu Miyan created a sort of Government".\textsuperscript{13}

Some scholars have gone even further. For example
H. Malik, believes that "Dudu Miyan's policy created a state
within the state, thus liberating the Muslims from the obnoxious
laws of the English".\textsuperscript{14} So, obviously this movement had a mixed
color and combined religious social economic and political
elements.\textsuperscript{15}

Haji Shariatullah from the very beginning was
disgusted with British rule. The very idea of the transfer of

\textsuperscript{12} M. A. Khan, \textit{History of Faraidi Movement}, p.275.
\textsuperscript{13} K.A. Nizami, art. Socio-religious Movements in India Islam, in \textit{India and
contemporary Islam}, (Proceedings of Seminar ed. Lokhandwala, \textit{Institute of
\textsuperscript{14} Hafiz Malik, \textit{Muslim Nationalism in India and Pakistan}, Washington publishing
\textsuperscript{15} Amalenda De, \textit{Roots of Separatism}, 1974, pp 20-25.
power from the Muslims to the British was not acceptable to him. This was perhaps mainly due to the teachings of his first teacher Maulana Basharat Ali of Hugly, who was known for his anti-British ideas. He was bored so deed anti-British feeling that he did not like to live under the Shadows of their rule and migrated to Arabia. It would seem that he had inculcated these ideas in the mind of his pupil Shariatullah. It is therefore, quite possible that Shariatullah's anti-British attitude had some thing to do with his discipleship of Maulana Basharat Ali. As is well known that Shariatullah went to Arabia in his early age in pursuit of higher studies. His long stay there in the two spells could not blunt his abhorrence against the British. After his return to Bengal resistance to British rule naturally became an integral part of his movement. Which basically aimed at the resuscitating dormant spirit of the faith. This led to the resurgence of a strong spirit of revolt among his fellowmen against the dominion of British power and their allies Hindu Landlords.

16. Ms. Abdul Halim, *Haji Shariatullah, fols. 7-8;* See also, Mawlana Abdul Latif Sharifabadi, *Hazrat Pir Badsha Miyan,* Shariat id Library, Barisal, 1958, p 7, The writer said, "he started his movement to free the country from the dominion of the British."

It is also a well known fact about the Faraizis that they had declared India as 'Dar-al Harb' (abode of war).\textsuperscript{18}
Earlier this declaration was made by shah Abdul Aziz of Delhi.\textsuperscript{19}
But Haji Shariatullah had gone a step further as he also declared that (India) being under non-Muslim rule, congregational prayers like ‘Juman’ and Italics could not be legally held. This declaration to many amounted to the declaration of war against the British, as W.W. Hunter thought that “Darul Harb is a place where waging war against infidels is Lawful”.\textsuperscript{20}

This also meant that till such time as the country is not free from British rule, the Muslims would be deprived of the right to lead their lives in accordance with the Islamic Law.\textsuperscript{21} It, therefore, goes without saying that if they wanted to lead a normal religious life then it was incumbent upon them to make efforts to change this situation and to free the country from the British dominion. Therefore, though the declaration of India as

\textsuperscript{18} J. Wise, Eastern Bengal, p.22, Journal of the Pakistan Historical society, 1954 p.169 quoted from Beven Jones, p.200; Rafiuddin, Bengali Muslims, p.43.
\textsuperscript{19} Shat Abdul Aziz, Fatwa-i- Aziz, vol.1, p.32 and vol.ii, p.4.
\textsuperscript{20} W.W. Hunter, Indian Muslins pp.142-143.
\textsuperscript{21} See, Hunter, Imperial Gazetteer of India, Faridpur, p.60;


\textsuperscript{21} M.A. Khan, History of Bangladesh pp.201-205.
Darul Harb, is apparently a purely religious act but in reality it was a matter of "great political significance". It amounted to a "permanent degree of condemnation of British power".\(^{22}\)

B.C. Allen, Dhaka district Magistrate, explaining its significance that Haji Shariatullah, as he said, also held that "India was Darul Harb, where the observance of Friday prayer is unlawful and waging war against infidel is religious necessity?\(^{23}\) This ultimately led to political regeneration of his people. Prof. Nurul Islam rightly thinks that "in such a declaration of Haji Saheb lay the undoubted germ of political regeneration of his countrymen".\(^{24}\) Though Haji Shariatullah did not declare \(Jihad\) openly against British,\(^{25}\) like Sayyid Ahmed shahid and Titu Mir, but his Darul Harb theory in fact amounted to a kind of passive non-cooperation and civil disobedience. For all practical purposes it was a political theory, by which he inspired his countrymen’s insight and consciousness. It ultimately aimed at preparing his people for struggle against the usurpers. Later on

\(^{22}\) K.K. Dutta, \textit{History of Bangladesh} pp.201-205.
\(^{24}\) \textit{Journal of the Pakistan Historical society}, Karachi, 1955, p.177.
\(^{25}\) P.N. Chopra, Nizami and Khan without mentioning any source said that Haji Shariatullah demanded solemn pledges from his disciples to carry on a struggle against the political dominion and economic exploitation of the foreigners ; K.A. Nizami, in \textit{India Contemporary Islam}, p 107.

this passive non-cooperation ideology was used as the main weapon by Indian National struggle for independence”. 26

According to M. Ashraf this declaration “has politically significance ... where he implicitly called upon the Muslims to participate in Jihad, for independence of India or Bengal to convert it into Darul Islam”. 27 In fact this declaration is not a “doctrine for doctrine sake”. It was really a protest against the administrative changes brought about by the British to the detriment of Muslim sentiments”. 28

To understand the real significance of this doctrine it is necessary know what the British themselves thought about it and what was the degree their threat perception in this regard. In this connection observations of Hunter makes it possible for us to have some idea about what British thought regarding this


27 Mujeeb Ashraf, Muslim Attitude Towards the British Rule and Western culture in India, Delhi, 1982, p.147.

At one point he remarks: "From political point of view the most dangerous doctrine is that the sect was to assert India as Darul Harb, against the ruler of which war is religious duty".29

At another place he further adds that the Faraizis were "found annoyed against the British in the field of War".30

Dunder, the Divisional Commissioner of Dacca, writing in 1847 reminded that "among the Hindu population as well as the Muhammadan of old creed that their (Faraizis) ultimate object is the expulsion of the present rulers of the land and restoration of Muhammadan power".31

Similarly, Dampier, the superintendent of Bengal police, says that "the real objective of Faraizis is expulsion of the British and establishment of Mohammadan power".32 A.R. Mallick, an eminent modern Scholar, disagreed with their view and described the motive attributed to the Faraizis in the

---

29 W.W. Hunter, *The Indian Empire: Descriptive*, (1881) Reprint, Delhi, p.437. Here wahabi and Faraizi's are same.


32 *Trial of Ahmadullah*, p.141; Mujeeb Ashraf, pp.151-152.
Dampier’s report as “rumour”. But he seems to have revised his opinion since and has come to believe that the Faraizi movement had a political overtones.

Even the Faraizis themselves seem to have continued to believe that this doctrine was in reality an attempt to dislodge the British and restore the Muslim rule. Fatwa Regarding of 1903 a prominent modern Faraizi leader and Secretary of Faraizi Jamat, M.A. Latif, had made the following observations in his book on the life of Haji Shariatullah - “Amar Jivani” that “His Movement was against the British and was in fact an endeavor to restore Islamic state”.

Faraizi defiance of the British authority found expression in several ways. Probably the first open demonstration of anti-British feelings by the Faraizis was Haji Shariatullah’s call to his followers to stop paying all kinds of revenues to the government and also to the Zemindars. This is confirmed by the

---

33 A.R. Malick, British Policy, pp.70-90. This controversy based on Faraizi practies and doctrines, Mallick focussed on their activities and by-passed their fatwa, whether, Dampier, Looked on their doctrines related with political motives, for details, see, Mujeeb Ashraf, pp 151-153
34 See, Rafiuddin Ahmad, Islam in Bangladesh: An overview, proceedings of Seminar, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, Dhaka, 1982
35 M.A. Latif, Amar Jivani, Barisal, 1958, pp. 50, 57, 63, 79
In another act of defiance of the British authority they began occupying *Khas Mahals* (virgin and waste lands of the Government). The motive behind occupation of the *Khas Mahals* is supposed to have been a desire to avoid payment of taxes as also to distribute it among the poor and the landless.

In 1837 a correspondent, who was partisan of Zamindars, wrote in a local News paper "*Samachar Darpan*" regarding the activities of the Faraizis. He alleged that Haji Shariatullah wished to establish "Badshahi" : or Islamic state and destroy Hindu religion". According to his assessment the Faraizis were "more powerful than Titu Mir's Followers".  

It is true that the movement was launched primarily with a view to revive pristine purity of Islam and therefore it was only natural that it laid much emphasis on obligatory duties.

---

36 James Taylor, *Topography* (A Sketch of Topography and Statistical of Dacca, Calcutta, 1840, Taylor said: "I believe for exciting his disciple in the country to with hold the payment of revenue" He is now under police custody.  

37 Calcutta Review, 1844, pp.215-216 See, also Socio-economic ideology.

prescribed by the Quran and Sunnah. But it should also be kept in mind that politics in Islam is inseparable from religion and Islam does not accept any division between the two as Imam Ghazali has said that “state and religion are twins and one can not be sustained without the other.\textsuperscript{39}

Quranic verses and the example of the Prophet and the Khalifas clearly show that politics is essential for the discharge of religious obligations. That is why the religious reform in Bengal went hand in hand with political regeneration of the Muslims.\textsuperscript{40}

Quran declares: obey Allah and obey the Prophet and beware of evil if you do turn back...\textsuperscript{41} And Allah commands” that judge you between them by what Allah had revealed and follow not their vain desires...\textsuperscript{42} Further God Exalted said “And if any failed to judge by what Allah had revealed, they are wrong doers.\textsuperscript{43} ‘Say if you do love Allah follow me (Prophet) Allah will love you and forgive your sins. For Allah is Oft-Forgiving most merciful” and say (O Prophet) obey Allah and His messenger. But

\textsuperscript{40} \textit{Proceedings of Pakistan Historical conference}, Karachi, 1955 p 177
\textsuperscript{41} Surah Maidah; Ayat, 92.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., Ayat, 49
\textsuperscript{43} Al-Maidah, 45, 47 44.
if they turn back Allah does not love those who reject faith". At another place Allah declared "Against the unbelievers make ready your strength to the utmost of your power including steeds of war, to strike terror into the hearts of the enemies of Allah and your enemies". It has been declared very clearly and forcefully that "there is no law except Allah’s”.

Further Quran declares "whatever it be where you differ, the decision thereof is with Allah and steadfast or establish religion. This Muslim polity is based on mutual consultation as Quran says: "(the believers) who conduct their affairs by mutual consultations. All affairs as Quran clearly states are wholly dependent on Allah’s desire.

These Quranic verses as well as prophet’s commandments as well as those of the Khalifas are real reflection of Islamic political orientation that was adopted by the Farazis. Haji shariatullah was aware of the religo-political movements which were launched in different parts of the world by contemporary reformers. Besides the revival of the pristine

44 Surah Al-I-Imran: 31, 32.
45 Arfal: 60, 3.
46 Al-Shora: 10.
48 Al-Quran, Surah Shura: 38.
49 Al-Imran: 154.
purity of Islam which was their basic objective, they were also aiming at the political regeneration of the Muslims. These movements included the *Muwahhidun* of Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab in Arabia, the *Sanusiayah* by Muhammad Ali Al-Sanusi in North Africa, *Tariqa-i-Muhammadiyah* of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid of Barely in the footsteps of Shah Wahiullah of Delhi and in Bengal by Titu Mir and Enayat Ali, and Wilayet Ali.

Around 1837 Haji Shariatullah's disciples and followers who were mostly agriculturists and weavers came into bloody conflict with oppressor zamindars and indigo-planters in protest against the atrocities which were being perpetrated upon them. Zamindars had the full backing of the Government. As far as the indigo-planters were concerned, they were mostly British and therefore they naturally enjoyed the full support of their Government. The Faraizi rebellion against the Zamindars and indigo-planters, therefore, in reality was a rebellion against the government itself. Seen in this background, the explanation of the British historians that it was an inter-religious conflict and was not aimed against the British Government becomes untenable. Any impartial observer will come to the conclusion that it was in fact as much against the British government as against Zamindars and indigo-planters. The objective of the
British Historians in giving this conflict a particular colour is obviously aimed at projecting a good image of their rule as well as an endeavor to sow the seeds of dissension and discord between the two communities. It need not be reiterated that they were past masters of this game.\(^{50}\)

Haji Shariatullah was succeeded by his son Ghaji Didu Miyan who assumed the leadership of the organisation as Ustad after his death in 1840. The important thing in this regard to remember is that this was not a succession by nomination; rather he was selected for this grave responsibility by the Faraizis.

Dudu Miyan was more political minded and he sought to establish a state within the state, Calcutta Review in 1847 states “The chief (Dudu Miyan) styles himself as Sindar-i-Mominan “(Leader of the believers)”.\(^{51}\) He seems to have made an endeavour to establish his own state. It is evident from the fact that he forbade his followers to take resort to British judicial system and established for the purpose panchayat at village levels to settle cases and disputes among the Faraizis and others. J. Wise in 1883 wrote about these village courts some of which

\(^{50}\) P.H.S., 1955, p 141.

exist even now in some areas. He observed: "The *panchayat*
posses great influence upon the common people and in Faraizi
villages as they take cognizance of all offences, it is exclusively
rare that any case of violence or assault within them finds its way
into the regular courts".\(^\text{52}\) According to him, 22 such courts
operated only in Dhaka.\(^\text{53}\) This seems to have compelled the
British authorities to take cognizance of this situation and he was
taken under police custody. But interestingly enough the cause
of these arrests, was attributed to the apprehension of the
authorities regarding "disturbance in the country". The Indigo
commission report is a clear indication of the immense popularity
that was enjoyed by the Faraizis as it stated that putting him
[Dudu Miyan] down would lead to lot of bloodshed.\(^\text{54}\)

This could be taken as an expression of desire on the
part of the Faraizis under the leadership of Dudu Miyan to set rid
of the British and establish an alternative system which was to be
rooted in the teachings of Islam.\(^\text{55}\) Some modern scholars such as

\(^\text{52}\) J. Wise, *Eastern Bengal*, p.23. See also, Trial of Dudu Miyan, Here the
Government said: "He (Haji Sharitullah) and his son (Dudu Miyan), the
prisoner, have hitherto received applications and memorials like
soverigns from their disciples, fined them and ... decided their disputes"
pp.3 and 31.
\(^\text{53}\) Ibid.
\(^\text{54}\) *Calcutta Review*, 1847, p.199.
\(^\text{55}\) Muzaffar Imam, *Role of Muslims in the National Movement*, Millat
D.N.A. Chaudhuri and R.C. Majumdar also subscribe to this opinion.  

Dudu Miyan was also known as Ghazi Mujahid. Like his father, he was much concerned about the plight of the peasants and took effective steps to secure their rights. This was one of the reasons behind the decision to boycott the British courts. Besides this he also launched a powerful campaign against the extortions of the Zamindars and European indigo-planters. This would seem to have inspired the people to take concrete measures to find solutions for their problems and consequently they wanted quick and firm action.

Dudu Miyan gave further impetus to it by declaring that the land does not belong to any one except to God and no one has the right to levy taxes on it. "The yield of the land must be the right of the tiller" The imposition of tax is contrary to the law of the Quran.

This was clearly in contravention of the British authority and an open challenge to it. It is obvious that this

---

58 Quoted in Mujeeb Ashraf, Muslim Attitude towards British, 1982, p.149.
movement against the paykent of revenue was clearly political in nature and its motivation did not come purely economic considerations. This is exactly what British themselves thought about it. In a report of 1843, the East India Company came to the conclusion that "the main objective of the Faraizis (amounted at that moment 80,000) was to finish the company rule and strengthen Mughal power". Some modern writers have, however, suggested that the main objectives of the Faraizis in resorting of this tactic was "establishment of Islamic Shariat", "Islamic values", "Tawhid" or "Imam".

Noted historian K.A. Nizami suggested that the Faraizis had a definite political objective. In support of his argument he has quoted T.N. Komarov of the Academy of Science, USSR, who had remarked that "we come to conclusion that this movement (Faraizi) was directed against the colonial yoke and their fight was against social oppression".

59 Ibid.
The anti-British activities of Faraizis have been noticed by many contemporary and later observers of the political scene of Bengal such as Darbar, T.E. Ravenshaw, Hunter and a reporter of Calcutta Review. For example, Darbar, Divisional Commissioner of Dhaka in 1842, said “Doodoo Meeah not only be (removed) from his part of the country, but the country itself... Doodoo Meeah should be transported, on the ground of his being a notorious disturber of the peace....” And Ravenshaw observed that “this sect of Faraizis was generally reported to entertain ideas of subverting the British Government”.^65

The British Government could not have watched this situation as silent spectator and allow it to get out of hand. With a view to contain the damage and avert a head on collision with the Faraizis, the government decided to detain Dudu Miyan. After some time when the authorities wanted to release him, there was strong protest from the Zamindars. One of the Zamindars even wrote to the government that “Indeed to release him will be tantamount to throwing your lordships petitioners to the graps of

---

tiger”\textsuperscript{66} Clearly, the Zamindars considered his activities as a great threat for their interests and thought that they would be better off if he continued to languish behind the bars.

Besides appointing Khalifas in his strongholds to take care of various aspects of the Faraizis, Dudu Miyan also “formed a sort of Majlis-i-Shura or consultative body, by which he not only unified the Faraizis in a strong brotherhood, but he also established a kind of local Administration parallel to that of East India company. The Faraizis therefore successfully avoided company’s courts, civil and criminal.\textsuperscript{67}

As the British courts were instruments of oppression the need to avoid these was obvious. To fill this vacuum, the Faraizis established Islamic courts.\textsuperscript{68} These courts followed the Islamic law as interpreted Hanafi school of jurisprudence. But the British sought to give impression that Dudu Miyan’s words to the


\textsuperscript{68} M.M. Ali, Art “Impact of Salafi Movement in Indo-Pak Sub-continent” MAIZILLAHUL ULOOMUL URUJAH (Social Science Magazine), Imam Muhammad bin Saud Islamic University, Riyadh, 1980, p.10.
tens thousands followers were the law.\textsuperscript{69} They further described the establishment of the Islamic courts as "Lawless conduct" and "dangerous doctrines".\textsuperscript{70} To set up such courts and successfully run it required great organizing capacity as well as enormous prestige and influence among the people. Dudu Miyan seems to have possessed both. This attested by the Bengal criminal judicial consultations that" this man has authority over thousands... his word and orders are the law of Faraizis... many of the Mohammadan officers, high or low, have imbibed the principle of this sect".\textsuperscript{71}

During the entire period of great struggle of 1857 Dudu Miyan was in jail on a series of charges of conspiracies and disturbances and he was not in a position to make any particular contribution to it personally. But almost from the very beginning the Faraizi movement had acquired a quite visible anti-British stance\textsuperscript{72} as already discussed, the Faraizis fully sympathized with the revolutionaries and at several places participated in their...

\textsuperscript{69} Bengal Judicial Proceedings, 7-24 February, 1848, No.147; Narahari Kaviraj, The Wahabi and Faraizi Robes of Bengal, p.75; Trial of Dudu Miyan quoted in Narahari Kaviraj, p 80
\textsuperscript{70} Report of Dacca Divisional Commissioner, Bengal Judicial Proceedings, 7 April, 1847, No.98-100.
\textsuperscript{71} Bengal Criminal Judicial Consultations, 17, February, 1847, No 133, Para 1-8; Bangal Judl. Proceedings, 7-24, Feb , 1848, No.147.
\textsuperscript{72} Asim Pada Chakrawarty, Muslim Identity and Community Consciousness, Minerava, India, Calcutta, 1993, p.1
struggle. One such place was Nadia. The district Magistrate of it
J.H.E. Gearret's statement is that it is "found in Nadia sufficient
body of disaffected Faraizi husbandry as to lend him (Dudu
Miyan) to set up the standard of revolt and for the short to defy
the British Government". It was only natural then that their
resentment against the government found expression during the
fateful days of 1857 as the following report would suggest "They
have no love for the Government who cherished the restoration of
Muhammadan power, were enthused by the event of 1857. They
removed their children from the school for complaining to eat pig
and making Christians".

Seeing the wide spread popularity of the Faraizi
Movement among the peasants and weavers and their deep apathy
for the British, they could have been expected to play a much
greater role in the struggle of 1857. Apparently, because of the
imprisonment of Dudu Miyan, they were deprived of the benefits
of a dynamic leadership had most probably it was left to the local

73 J.H.E. Garret, Bengal District Gazetteer, "Nadia", Calcutta, 1910, pp.51-
52.
74 Bengal Judicial Proceedings, 10 August, 1857, p.417, Kaviraj, Wahhabi and
Faraizi Rebel, p.73.
See also, Further Papers Related to the Mutinies IN THE EAST INDIES into the
Parliament By the Command of Her Majesty (FP) vol.v and vol.ix 369 etc.
; W.W. Hunter, Statistical Account of Bengal,Faridpur, vol.v, Trubner
leaders to decide their cause of action. This might be one reason why the full potentials of the Faraizi movement was not realized and the Faraizi could not play a more decisive role during the crucial days of 1857. There were sporadic outbursts of public anger but there was no sustained movement against the Government. At the time when most part of North India were virtually ablaze with a life and death struggle against the British, Bengal was largely peaceful and there were no large scale disturbance.

There is some evidence to suggest that the Faraizis were believing in Jihad. This was more pronounced during the fateful days of 1857 though they could not make any particular contribution to it due to reason noted above. However, they were very sympathetic toward the Mujahids, who were struggling in NWFP. They tried to help them in whatever manner they could by recruiting men to fight along with them, as well as raising funds

; W.W. Hunter, Indian Muslman, p.100.
; Abbas Ali Khan, Banglar Muslmaner Itihahs p.199-203.
for them. It is reported that every Faraizi family of Bogra
donated a handful of rice for this purpose on daily basis.\textsuperscript{76}

This attitude of the Faraizis towards the \textit{Mujahids}
stemmed for the fact that they nursed very deep rooted
resentment against the British and therefore they felt natural
inclination for those whom they found on their side of the fence.
The British government was very apprehensive about them. It
would have been any body’s guess that in the eventuality of any
rebellion breaking out in the country against the British rule, the
Faraizis would whole heart-ledly join it, as superintendent of
police suggested the Government that Dudu Miyan would be
transported to some other country as he was a dangerous
intriguer. It therefore is recommended that the Faraizis should be
closely watched.\textsuperscript{77} This recommendation came when the clouds of
rebellion were gathering fast and thick over the horizon of North
India and it betrays the anxiety that the government felt

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{76} J.A. Bourdillon, Census of India, 1881, Report on the Census of Bengal, vol.1.
\end{itemize}
B.G.S.D. Calcutta, 1883, p.82.
\begin{itemize}
\item Hunter, \textit{St. Account of Bengal}, vol v. p.409.
\end{itemize}
\begin{itemize}
\item Rafiuddin Ahmad, \textit{The Bengali Muslims}, p.43.
\end{itemize}
\begin{itemize}
\item Bengal Government, letter No.1277, 17 July 1857.
\item Ziaul Hasan Faroqi, \textit{The Deoband school and the demand for Pakistan}, Asia
\item pub. House, New York, Delhi, 1963, p 18, here he said “the Faraizis were “Red
\item Republican” in Politics”.
\end{itemize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{Selections from the Records of Bengal Government, Trial of Ahmadullah},
\item Alipare Jail press, Calcutta, 1866, p.141.
\end{itemize}
regarding the intentions of the Faraizis. Dudu Miyan was not transported but he was imprisoned and effectively prevented from playing any role in the struggle. The Faraizis were thus deprived of the benefits of his dynamic leadership. He remained in jail till after the end of rebellion.\textsuperscript{78} James Wise's assessment of the situation is very revealing. He says:

"In 1857 Dudu Miyan was thrown into prison and the story goes that he would have been released, if he had not boasted that fifty thousand men would answer to his summons and march whether so ever he orders them."\textsuperscript{79}

The apprehensions of the English Government and their allies- the zamindars and the reporters of the local newspapers were not unfounded. Their assessment that the Faraizis would whole-heartedly participate in this struggle was not a figment of their imagination, it was based on the correct assessment of the conditions obtaining in Bengal at that time. It was a possibility that was likely to affect their interests and in their own way they tried to prevent it from becoming a reality.

\textsuperscript{78} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{79} James Wise, \textit{Eastern Bengal}, p.25.

; Gastrell, \textit{Geographical and Statistical Report}, p.151

; \textit{JASB}, 1894, P.52.
The reporters of local newspapers like “Dhaka News” and “Hindoo Patriot” reported ‘Faraizis fraternity with the mutineers’ as also ‘Wahhabi and Faraizi political dominion and influence.’ To arouse the animosity of the British against the Faraizis, some of the newspapers also flashed news items about the possibility of the Faraizis cutting the throats of the Christians.

Zamindars also played their role in arousing the fears of the British regarding the intentions of the Faraizis. The Magistrate of Patna, Ravenshaw, brought to the notice of the Government on their behest the hostile intentions on the part of the Faraizis.

---

82. Hindoo Patriot, 1870.
84. Tofail Ahmad Manglori, Muslmanu ke Rawshan Mustagmil, p.160.
It is perhaps in response of these alarm bells that Dhaka District Commissioner stated that the Government was alert and could imagine possible activities of the Farazis.\textsuperscript{84}

Atmosphere in some regions was so thick with suspicion in view of Faraizi activities that the Christians living in the districts of Faridpur and sirajgonj were in panic and made frantic appeals to the Government to make adequate arrangements for their protection.\textsuperscript{85}

The Government itself did not remain silent after sending Dudu Miyan into jail. From jail Dudu Miyan managed to send a massage in a letter without any name to his son-in-law that he intended to go to Delhi to participate in the battle.\textsuperscript{86}

The officers of government were fearful of Faraizi intimacy with the Freedom fighters and the possibility of combining their forces against the Government. As a precaution against this possibility, the government ordered local officers to

\textsuperscript{84} Dhaka Division Commissioner, Department of Revenue, Dhaka Collectorate, Latter, 25 July, 1857, Bangladesh Archives Records, Dhaka Dist. Vol.189, no-129 and 18 August, 1885.
\textsuperscript{85} M.M. Ali, p.358.
\textsuperscript{86} Bengal Judicial Proceedings, 10, Sept. 1857, No.777.
keep a close watch on the areas of Pabna, Sirajgonj, Nadia, 24 Parganas, where the Faraizis were the dominant force. On the basis of their observations they took various measures to prevent and forestall any untoward happening. One of the most significant decisions that was taken in this regard at that was not to deploy native regiment of Kamrop in Bengal for the suppression of growing anti-government and anti-Christian feelings behind which the Faraizis, hand was suspected. It was apprehended that the Faraizis would succeed in fraternizing with them. It was due to this reason that no native regiment was posted in Bengal during the entire period.  

It is during this period that Dudu Miyan is reported to have issued instructions to 50 zamindars under his influence to launch struggle against (launch) the British. This massage was sent through his son-in-law.

A.L. Clay, Principal Head of the History and statistics of Division, Quoted in Ratan Lal p. 41.  
Bengal judicial Progs 10, Sep. 1857, No. 778-782.

According to the reports emanating from government sources, Faraizis became very active during this period. A number of meetings were held.\textsuperscript{89} Arms were procured and sent to the \textit{Mujahids} and leaflets were circulated,\textsuperscript{90} which held out the promise that in case the struggle succeeded the words of the Quran will be exalted and Justice will not be denied to any body.\textsuperscript{91} There is also some evidence to suggest liaison between the Faraizi Khalifas and the freedom fighters.\textsuperscript{92} To help those who were engaged in the struggle money was collected and guns were manufactured.\textsuperscript{93}

\textsuperscript{89} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{90} On 30, Oct. 1868, in the Writings of R. Tomson. P.139, of The Mohammad of Mr. T.E. Ravenshaw, Selection No.xlii, \textit{Wahhabi Trial} 1868-1870 No.170.
\textsuperscript{91} Bengal Judicial proceedings, 10 Sept. 1857, No.417and 659-662.
\textsuperscript{92} Bengal Judi. Proceedings, 10, Sept. 1857, No.780-81.
\textsuperscript{93} See B.C. Allen, \textit{District Gazetteer}, Dacca, p.63.
\textsuperscript{90} For Faraizi Participation in this Independence, See
\textsuperscript{91} Rafail israel, \textit{Muslims in China}, p.110
\textsuperscript{92} jaintene Maitra, \textit{Muslim Politics in Bengal}, 1984, p.24.
\textsuperscript{93} Census of India, 1881, p.82.
\textsuperscript{90} S.B. Choudhuri, \textit{Civil disturbances During the British rule in India, pp.50-51.}
\textsuperscript{91} Census of India, 1901, vol.1, p.174.
\textsuperscript{93} Hunter Imperial \textit{Gazetteer of India}, vol.iv, 1885, London, p.399.
\textsuperscript{90} Bengal Judicial proceedings, 7 Jan.,1858, No.90, 10 August, 1857, No.532, 659-662, 10 Sep. 1857, No.778.
But inspite of deep involvement of the Faraizis with the ongoing struggle for the freedom of the country and their complete identification with those who sought to expel the British from the Indian soil, their potential could not be utilized for achieving these objectives. The basic reason why the full weight of the Faraizis was not brought to bear in this struggle is no doubt, absence of Dudu Miyan from the scene of action.

It was due to this reason that the Faraizis could not play any significant role in this struggle and by and large Bengal remained peaceful. If the full weight of the Faraizi potential could have been brought to bear and their deep resentment against the British and sympathy for the cause being championed by the freedom fighters could have been translated in action, the course of the rebellion of 1857 would have been entirely different. No doubt, it reveals the extent of control Dudu Miyan exercised over his followers. But at the same time it also shows that there was no second rank leaders who could take over the leadership of the movement in the absence of Dudu Miyan. The total dependence of the movement leader deprived the Faraizis

94 In patna, Sirajgonj, Nodia, Noakhali, Faridpur, Rajshahi, Dacca, Commilla, Chittagong, jessore, Bekarginj, Dinajpur, sylhet, there more or less mutiny in 1857, for details see, C.E. Buckland, Bengal Under the Lieutenant-Governors, vol.1, Calcutta, 1902, pp 66-152.
from playing their rightful and historical role. It was a misfortune of great magnitude. As a result, the Faraizis failed to deliver when the time came. They failed the country and their own ideals, by any reckoning it was a colossal failure.

The imprisonment of Dudu Miyan for more than a decade and his subsequent death pushed the movement to run in law ebb for quite some time. But with the assumption of the leadership by Noya Miyan, who was at the help of Faraizis from 1864 to 1884. The situation totally changed and a complete reversal in the fortunes of the movement is clearly noticeable. Like his father he also seems to have great hold over the Faraizis who adored and obeyed him. The immense influence that he enjoyed among his followers prompted Navin Chandra Sen a magistrate-cum-poet-writer and a contemporary, perhaps the person who made loyalty in the movement towards Government by his tactful policy, wrote that "his (Noya Miyan) work like the scripture of Veda, who established a state within the state, even no nation I have heard to follow their leader as the Noya Miyan's followers do".  

It is significant to note that during his leadership the Faraizis came into direct clash with Zamindars. The quality of his leadership could be judged from the fact that he succeeded in bringing Hindu and Muslim peasants together on one platform to fight against their common oppressor. This led to a number of peasant combinations and leagues including indigo revolt of 1873 in Pabna. As could be expected in this kind of situation, the Government in these clashes and combinations intervened in favour of landlords to suppress the peasants uprisings led by Faraizis.96

Another noteworthy aspect of the Faraizi movement during this period is the help that Faraizis rendered substantial help to the Mujahiden the followers of Sayyid Ahmad Shaheed, who were engaged in a great struggle against the British in

---

96 Patern Hardy, *The Muslims of British India*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1972, p.56; J. Wise JASB, 1894, pp.51-52; Rafiuddin, *The Bengali Muslims*, p.43. In 1864, Handey, officiating magistrate of Pabna, wrote in alarm to the commissioner of Rajshahi Division that Seditious leaflets were being circulated throughout the villages of Pabna and Bogra in North Bengal, calling for the overthrow of British rule in India – circulation of sedition papers in Bogra, *judicial proceedings* No.47, June 1864. West Bengal State Archives, Calcutta. One of the confiscated leaflets runs as follows: This is the last of the English Government. Their Hakeems are partial... You are well aware of the expression of the Europeans. I need, therefore, repeat the same here... The roys are directed hereby to kill all Europeans, planters and Barkandages” (Ibid.)
Northern India. This is testified by the district Magistrate of Bogra.  

After the death of Noya Miyan in 1884, Khan Bahadur Saiduddin succeeded him. This leader was at the helm of Faraizis from 1884 to 1906. This period may be considered as a lean period in the history of Faraizi movement. In an almost total reversal of the earlier policy of complete apathy towards the British Government which was followed by the Faraizis from the very inception of the movement, the new leader developed Pro-British attitude. It was in recognition of effecting this great change in the policy and direction of the Faraizi movement that he was conferred the title of “Khan Bahadur” by the Government. It was indeed, a far cry from the aggressive policy pursued by his brother and immediate predecessor Noya Miyan. This cooperative attitude was formulated perhaps by the then Magistrate Navin Chandra Sen for which they became loyal to government.

97 Their raising subscription as handful rice daily and other assistance be found expression in “Census of India, 1901, Bengal, p.175; Sedition committee Report, 1918, p.175.; SRBG., XLII Trial of Ahmadullah 1866, p.138.; Rafiuddin, The Bengali Muslims p. 43; Hunter, p 43, India Muslims, p.92.

98 For this collaboration, How and why entered in Faraizi policy see, Navin sen’s biography “Amar Jivan” and Gulam Murtuza’s Chepe rakha ithisas (Forcibly Hidden History) Bisha Bangio Prokashan, Calcutta 1991 p 336.
But inspite of this great change in the attitude and policies of the movement which was brought about by Khan Bahadur Saiduddin, the anti-British feelings were so deeply entrenched in the minds of the common Faraizi's that in some degree they continued their aggressively anti-British posture. It is clear from the government confidential reports that those pockets of Bengal, where Faraizis were dominant, continued to remain highly agitated during the first decade of twentieth century when 'Swadeshi' Movement was running in the full swing. 99

A modern Swadeshi historian observed that "Muslim religious sentiment against the British in a manner which must have recalled in the minds of the latter the days of Wahhabi agitation". 100

Later on, during the period of Badsha Miyan's leadership (1906-1959) the Faraizis openly participated in the national politics. They seem to have taken active part in the formation of Muslim league in 1906, which ultimate led to the

100 Ibid., p.434, quoted from officiating joint Secretary Government of East Bengal and Assam to Government of India (Home) Home political proceedings 10, February, 1908. No. 42 and November 167C. June, 1907.
creation of Pakistan in 1947. Besides his active participation in the Pakistan movement, he also took deep interest in the affairs of Jamiat-i-Ulama-i-Islam, United front Government of 1954 as also A.K. Fazlul Haq’s Krishak Proja party. The participation of Faraizis in these parties enormously strengthened them added to their prestige and enlarged their area of influence.

When Khalifat movement was launched under the count aegis of Muslim league and Congress, the Faraizis played an active role, obviously those who have been working for the restoration of Muslim rule in India by expelling the British could not have possible remained silent spectators. When a powerful movement was launched for the restoration of the Khilafat which was abolished by the Turks under the leadership of Mustafa Kamal Pasha. It was only natural then that the Faraizis enthusiastically participated in the Khilafat movement as Government confidential report confirms that “the majority of the Muslims of Bengal were influenced by the Ulama, who were either products of Deobond school or followers of Pir Saheb of

Furthura or of Badsha Miyan of Faridpur, who was the head of the Faraizi sect of Bengal.” 102

The anti-British stance of Badshah Miyan is also confirmed from a speech that he gave at town Hall of Noakhali in 1923, in this speech he said that “we are unable to discharge all our religious duties in British occupied India. As adherents of the Hanafi law we can not perform Juma and Ids under this aline rule till the establishment of Islamic state in India... Therefore, overthrowing the British rule in urgently necessary”. 103

Regarding the Khilafat movement, the intelligence report also affirms that Badshah Miyan was one of the active leader of the movement. 104


Even in this time the jute peasants, for going down price of jute seed from $2^{1/2}$ to 16 seers a rupee, agitated and ploughed up jute plants in Dacca, Noakhali, Maimensingh which pave the way for a full-fledged civil disobedience movement. As a result the Khilafat movement became very popular in Bengal and caught the imagination of the youth. And therefore as a part of anti-British policy of the movement a call was given to boycott the British goods and use Khaddar cloth. Among the Muslim youths wrapped it up, with a view of supporting the movement that took tough measure.

Badshah Miyan, one of the vice Presidents of the Provinical Khilafat Committee and the religious head of the Faraizis who numbered no less than 60,00000 (sixty lacs) of the

---

105 Government of India. Home (Political) confidential file No. 18/1921, July 1921, August 1921 pp. 10 and 42 respectively for civil disobedience and jute peasant struggle see. B.C. Bamford, Histories of Non Co-operation and Khilafat Movement. Home (political) Department, government of India, File No. 185, 1925, p.73 extracted Shukhbir choudhery, Peasant and Workers Movement in India 1905-1929, forwarded by Tara Chand, peoples Publishing House New Delhi, 1971, pp.102, 103.

then Bengal, was arrested for nationalist activities and working for the independence of India on 23 September 1921. The resentment of the government against him could be gauged from the fact that he was led to the police station in chain. This humiliating treatment of Badshah Miyan seems to have triggered large scale public anger and protests. As an expression of their resentment and anger, the people refused to pay taxes till he was released. This happened more particularly in Faridpur which is confirmed by Government report.

It may be recalled here that the clout of the Faraizi (Leader Badsha Miyan) and Wahhabi or Ahl-I-Hadith Ulama was so strong among the Muslim masses of Bengal that they could think of giving a call for boycotting the elections of 1920. As a result even Nawab Habibullah and A.K. Fazlul Haq thought it

---

107 Local News paper, Bangabasi, October 1, 1921, News on Indian News papers (Bengal) p, 798. Quoted in chandiprasad Sarkar, The Bengali Muslims, p.103; See also Sharifabadi, Pir Badsha Miyan; Zulfiqar Ahmad Qismati, Bangla desher Songrami Ulama Pir Mashaikh, progati Prokashani vo I, Dhaka 1988, pp.19-26.
108 Government of India, confidential report, file No. 121/22, part, I, weekending, October 8, 1921, See also Shariafabadi, Badsha Miyan,; Qismati, Bangladesher Songrami Ulama Pir Mashaikh.
advisable to keep silent on the issue and do not openly plead in favour of voting in their own constituencies.  

Like Khilafat movement, the Faraizis also took active part in Pan-Islamic movement, Badshah Miyan joined this movement and delivered lectures in many meetings in its support. Afterwards, this leader formed “Anjuman-i-Rashidul Islam, aiming at the establishment of Islamic ideology and dissemination of education in the country. Later on, Badsha Miyan became Chief Patron of A.K. Fazlul Hoq’s Krishak Proja Party as well as chief Patron of ‘Nizam-i-Islami Party. During this period he played a significant political role. It is noteworthy that the Chief demand of Nizam-i-Islami Party was implementation of Islamic ideology in the country through constitutional means.

---


When communal riots broke out particularly in Noakhali and Bihar during 1929-33, Pir Badsha Miyan played, vital role in combatting these riots through his speeches and statements.113

For curtailing his political activities, Pir Badsha Miyan once, asked by the Madaripar district Magistrate to shun the politics, he then and there replied "It is our religious duty to expel unjust British rule and establish just right of the country men".114

---


113 Ibid.

114 See Sharifabadi, *Pir Badsha Miyan*, Qismati, Bangladesh Sorgrami. P.14 *Government confidential* report stated that Badsha Miyan of Faridpur in a provincial Muslin conference on the 7th and 8th June caused administration anxiety ... the conference declared itself ... the civil disobedience movement ... a prominent speaker being Sir Badsha Miyan, a religious leader of much influenced in that part of the country whom the congress party has been making strenuous efforts to win over." Confidential Report: Government Home Department (Political) fortnightly report confidential frost half of June-1930 18.6.1930. National archives of India, New Delhi.
He met M.A. Jinnah on many occasions and demanded that the constitution of Pakistan should be prepared according to the guidelines provided by the Quran.  

Last leader of the Faraizi movement Pir Maulana Dudu Miyan ii (1917-1997) assumed the leadership of the movement in 1959. Even before the assumption of the leadership of the movement, he was deeply involved in political activities. He worked hard for the creation of Pakistan. But Muslim league's secular attitude disgusted him and he supported United Front Government of 1954. He became a member of parliament in East Pakistan in 1965. As a member of provincial Assembly in 1954 and as a member of National Assembly of Pakistan in 1965. He played an active role in the Parliament. His personal diaries as well as parliamentary proceedings reveal the significance of his role in the struggle for the implementation of Islamic ideology in


(A) *Ms. Dudu Miyan’s bio-graphy*, written by his son, Munad Miyan, photo copy of this manuscript is preserved by present writer.

(B) Dudu Miyan maintained writing of his diaries from 1954-1997. Consulted these diaries. Present writer by the assistance of his sons Haji Zonaid Miyan and Naushi Miyan The parliamentary proceedings are preserved by the Bangladesh Songshad Bhavan Library (Bangladesh Parliament House Library).
the country. He raised this question in the House again and again. In 1965 he demanded that the laws of Pakistan should strictly confirm with the Quran.

He further demanded that the budgetary allocations should be in accordance with the Islamic principles. Moreover, who a “Council for the implementation of Islamic ideology” was formed in the Parliament in 1963, Pir Dudu Miyan II made repeated demand for the implementation of its recommendations. He worked tirelessly for the preservation of Islamic culture and declaration of *Quran* and *Sunnah* as the guiding principles of the constitution. For the welfare of society he also demanded ban on liquor.

In the Pakistan Parliament there used to be no fixed time for prayers, Pir Dudu Miyan insisted that the Parliament should introduce recedes at the time of prayers.


\[117\] Ibid.

\[118\] Ibid., pp.1669-1670.

\[119\] Ibid., 1965, 22 June, pp.383, 384,385.

\[120\] Ibid., p.658.

\[121\] Ibid., p.658.

\[122\] *Personal Diary of Dudu Miyan*, 1965.
During those days the issue of Qadianis was hanging fire in the Parliament. He forcefully argued that the Qadianis should be declared as non-Muslims.\textsuperscript{123}

Later he was thoroughly dissatisfied with the policies of Muslim league with which he has been associated for quite some time. It was at this point that he joined Jamiat-i-Ulama-i-Islam of East Pakistan as its President.\textsuperscript{124}

The credit for the reorganization of Faraizi Movement in 1968-67 also goes to him. With a view to revitalize this 150 years old movement necessary modifications were introduced in its constitution\textsuperscript{125} in accordance with the needs of the time. It was a reaffirmation of the objectives of the movement; which was the implementation of Islamic ideology in the country. In its reorganized form it came to be known as “Bangladesh Faraizi Jamaat”.

It would appear that Dudu Miyan was in favour of the integrity of Pakistan because he believed that an independent Bangladesh would find it difficult to successfully withstand the

\textsuperscript{123} Persona Diary of Dudu Miyan; (MS) Biography of Dudu Miyan.


\textsuperscript{125} “Dainik Itfay” the most circulated daily news paper in Bangladesh, 01/12/1976.
pressures from India. It is perhaps because of this that he did not seem to have played any significant role in the events of 1971. But a man of stature Dudu Miyan with the kind of commitment to the well being of his people could not have remained silent for long. And therefore it was not surprising to find him working as acting President of Democratic League in 1976. Here it may not be out of place to recall that at that time the president of this league was no less a person than Khondokar Mustaq Ahmad, former President of Bangladesh. During that time he seems to have exerted himself enormously in the cause of the restoration of Democracy in the country. Pir Dudu Miyan also supported the then ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), founded by Late President Ziaur Rahman, during the period of 1980 and 1991 and spoke a number of meetings in favour of BNP. But it would seem that he was thoroughly dissatisfied with the developments which were taking place in Bangladesh and by 1996 he stopped to take active interest in national politics.

Pir Dudu Miyan died on 8 August 1997 and was succeeded by his younger brother, Pir Mohiuddin Dadan Miyan (b.1918) as the Chief of the movement. He is very old and does not seem to be much interested in what is going on around him.

126 Almost all national dailies of Bangladesh 09/9/1997.
But his nephew and eldest son of Dudu Miyan Muslehuddin, Abu Bakar is quite active in the country's politics. He is one of the Vice-Presidents of Islamic Okkaya Jote, which represents a combination of seven or eight parties. In terms of political influence in the country it (I.O.J) ranks fifth. Their basic slogan is what sovereignty belongs to only to Allah and therefore country should be run in the light of the teachings of the Quran and the Sunnah.

Interestingly a modern American Scholar, Ziring, has argued that three most influential political leaders of Bangladesh were in one way or the other influenced by the Faraizi movement. It may, however, be noted in this regard that they pursued a secular line in politics and did pretty little to further the objectives where which was always so dear to the Faraizis. In Lawrence ziring's words: “The Faraizis could produce leaders like A.K. Fuzlul Haq of Barisal, Maulana Bhasani of Maimangsingh and Shaikh Mojibur Rahman, a disciple but contemporary of these older personalities”. She further observed that “these leaders were contemporary of Badsha Miyan

127 Lawrence Ziring, Bangladesh from Mujib to Ershad: An Interpretive Study, Dhaka University Press Ltd., 1992, p.9. It is significant that the present Prime Minister Shaikh Hasin's marriage ceremony was conducted by Pir Dudu Miyan on the request of the then political leader Shaikh Mujibur Rahman, as claimed by the Faraizi present descendents.
and last leader of Faraizis, Dudu Miyan, the Later Faraizi movement minimized fundamental Islam and devoted their efforts to stimulating political consciousness and organisation among the Muslim peasants contravailing power was needed to challenge the Hindu monopoly and the Faraizis were uniquely successful in their actions”. 128

It could be, therefore, clearly seen that with only brief exceptions, the Faraizi movement has strenuously struck to its original stand of the implementation of the Islamic ideology.

In the light of the above discussion it would be clear that from the very beginning it has a well-defined political ideology and it has been all along its endeavor to put this ideology into practice. This political ideology which involved, among their things, a deep desire to work for the restoration of Muslim rule and expulsion of the alien rulers from the Indian soil, not only largely shaped their own course of action but also left a deep and lasting impression on the contemporary and political developments particularly in Bengal.

But at the end of this discussion and question remains unanswered. How and why the British government did not adopt

128 Ibid.
towards this Faraizi's the kind of tough and repressive attitude that it usually adopted regarding those people and groups which were suspected by them to be working against their interest. Some Faraizi leaders were, no doubt, imprisoned and some repressive measures were adopted in an obvious effort to deter the Faraizis from adopting such programmes as non-payment of taxes or those regarding *Khas mahal* etc. But still they were generally not dealt and ruthlessly as their counterparts in other parts of the country. The evidence at our disposal does not give any idea as to what were the factors which determined comparatively 'softer' British Policy towards the Faraizis. Possibly the Faraizis tackled the situation more tactfully than the others. But even if the situation was like this, the question still cries for an answer. If the entire situation regarding the political ideology of the Faraizis both as it was declared by its founders and later leaders and as it found expression in their activities through the existence of the movement, is kept in mind certain conclusions would seem to emerge. It would appear that in its formative years it was intensely religious and strictly anti-British. This phase of movement spans roughly the period between 1818 to 1882. This covers the entire period of Haji Shariatullah and Dudu Miyan and Giasuddin Haider and the
almost the entire period of the leadership of Naya Muyan except for the last years of his stewardship of the movement. This may be considered to be the golden period of the movement when it had a clear and focused objectives before it and tirelessly worked to achieve those objectives. Their goal during this period was the implementation of the Islamic ideology which very clearly involved the expulsion of the British the country.

From about 1882 during the closing years of Nayan Miyan a shift in the policy and attitude of the Faraizi leadership becomes discernible. The movement gradually lost its anti-British stand and during the stewardship of Khan Bahadur Saiduddin and the opening years of Badshah Miyan it slowly sheds its earlier policy of hatred towards this allied rulers and becomes loyal to them. It could be said to have been a total reversal of the original stand of Faraizis and their cherished ideals. Records at our disposal do not inform us about how the Faraizis felt about this change in the policy which was nothing short of a gravious deviation.

This phase in the history of the movement began from around 1913 and continuous till date. During this phase the movement seems to have returned back to its original ideology. It once more adopted anti-British posture, co-operated with the
forces working for the liberation of the country from the British and worked for the creation of Pakistan. After Pakistan came into being all its efforts were directed towards the goal of getting Islamic ideology implemented in Pakistan. They cooperated with many parties before and after the creation of Bangladesh which worked for the establishment of democracy. It may, however, be useful to keep in mind that their deep commitment to religious ideology did not allow them to co-operate with the secular parties. That is one point which they never allowed themselves to forget.
CULTURAL IDEOLOGY

Faraizi movement has been often described as a revolutionary movement. It sought to bring about a total change in the life and perspective of the Muslim society of Bengal. It wanted to pull out the Bengali Muslims of the degrading situation to which they were reduced to many historical factors. The basic point of reference of this movement was Quran and it aimed at reviving the original parity of Islam. Islam is a complete code of conduct for life covering every possible aspect of life and human activities. No aspect of human life is out of its ambit. It is only natural then that the Faraizi movement did not limit its reform efforts to those aspects which are generally considered to be the dominion of the religion. As such moral and cultural aspects of life were very much included in their scheme of reform. As morality and culture are the apparent manifestations of the beliefs and convictions a community holds, these aspects could not possibly remain outside the purview of Faraizi reform movement. History is witness to the fact that the Faraizi efforts in this field met with great success so much so that the very appearance of the religious under their dominance changed. The poor peasants and weavers who constituted a majority of the
Faraizi following, were educated and trained to be morally much superior and culturally more conscious of their identity and heritage than their other brothers who did not accept Faraizi ideology.

Morality and moral values of a community are directly related to the religious ideas and beliefs which a community holds and believes. By all accounts, the Muslim society of Bengal during the first quarter of the nineteenth century was in an extremely degraded condition. It was under complete sway of all kinds of superstitions, ignorance, poverty and moral bankruptcy. In a situation when their lives were under the total control of their exploiters who were exploiting them to the maximum possible limits, there could hardly be expected any remnant of morality and nobler ideas of left in them. The credit for infusing a new sense of life, religious consciousness, morality and a desire and determination to lead an honourable life goes entirely to the Faraizis.

This was, no doubt, achieved by reviving the true spirit of the religion among the people and by making them to realise the utter futility of the kind of degraded life that they were living in: The Bengali Muslims one can say, woke from their long sleep and realised their predicament, they exerted them
selves with great determination under the leadership of Haji Shariatullah and Dadu Miyan. They made a gigantic effort to get out of this malaise. And in this way a new identity was built by them.

All contemporary accounts affirm that the Faraizis were better human beings than others who did not subscribe to this ideology. They were intensely religious, very disciplined and morally upright. Their code of morality was very strict as they would not go ever near any thing which was not permitted by the religion whether it concerned relationship between the sexes, consumption of wine, music, dancing or enjoyment of luxuries.

1. They (Faraizis) have the character of being stricter in morals than other Muslims”
   See James Taylor, Topography of Dacca, p.250.

2. Dudu Miyan, Tariqus Saluk, pp.118, 133.

   ; Muntasir Mamun, Unish Satake Bangladeshi Songbad Patra O. Samaiki, pp.374-77.
of life. They were puritans with a very high sense of morality which altogether lacking among their contemporaries generally.

Along with religious reform/Haji Shariatullah also made every possible to inculcate a higher sense of morality and cultural identity among his followers. Their bearing and appearance should be such that they should be easily distinguished from others. To begin with, he paid his attention to the outer appearance of his followers. He wanted them to wear distinctive garment. During those days both the Hindus and the Muslims wore Dhoties and it was impossible to distinguish between them on the basis of dress. Haji Shariatullah wanted them to dress in such a way which should be indicative of their religion. Insistence on a particular dress of them was not a consequence of fanaticism and religious bigotry but this decision was backed by important religious and moral considerations. Islam has not prescribed any particular dress for its followers. Rather it has provided certain principles which should be followed. People living in different climate conditions could devise dresses convenient to them but in doing so these principles should not be violated. For the males it is prescribed that they

4. J. A. Bourdillon, Census of India, 1881, Bengal, Reprint, Vol 1, Calcutta, 1883, p 82.
should not reveal their body from the navel to knee in public. But
the Muslim women is expected to cover her entire body except
her face, legs and hands to wrist. During those days the Muslims
in Bengal used to wear dhoti like the Bengali Hindus.\(^5\) Dhoti did
not conform to the Islamic requirements of the dress as it failed
to covered those private parts of the body which according to the
Islamic code of dress should be covered.\(^6\) In this way it violated
Islamic norms of dress. It was therefore replaced with other kind
of clothes which were calculated to serve this purpose. Haji
Shariatullah ordered his followers to wear paijamas or lungis.

If somebody due to some particular reason wanted to
wear Dhoti, he could do so plainly without passing one end
between the legs, so as to avoid inconvenience at the prayer
time.\(^7\)

This dress distinguished the Faraizis not only from
other others but also from the Muslims and Christions. Some
Europeans even thought it was "to avoid any resemblance to the
Christian trousers."\(^8\)

\(^5\) M.A. Khan, History of Faridi Movement, p.252.
\(^6\) Abdul Mansur Ahmad, Atma Katha, pp.23-25.
\(^7\) M.A. Khan, History of Faridi Movement, p.252.
\(^8\) W.W. Hunter, Imperial Gazetteer of India, Vol.Iv, p.399.
\; H. Beveridge, District of Bakerganj, p.255.
As the Faraizis adopted this particular kind of dress, they were distinguished from others as a distinct community which attracted attention. Government records of this period clearly indicated it, as Hunter says in his report:

“Faraizi may be distinguished from the other Muslims by the following external characteristics. He dresses differently from the other Muhammadans and wraps his dhoti or waist-cloth round his body without crossing it between his legs, from the aversion to anything like Christian trousers”.  

This dress became a kind of symbol and distinctive feature for the Faraizis and they were easily recognised by it. This fact has been noted and reported by many Englishmen and others. For example, when the judge asked a witness as to how he knew that those who attacked Dunlop’s factory were Faraizis, he replied: Dudu Miyan’s disciples waist clothes without tracing them up between their legs”.

Similarly, a contemporary of Dudu Miyan records that “I recognised those (Faraizis) who were dressed like priest

(without the folds down between legs) and the disciples of Dudu Miyan have leather girdles about their waists”.11

J.E. Webster reported as late as in 1911 that “the Faraizi Muhammadans commonly wear a Lungi which is cotton cloth, generally stripped or in coloured checks wrapped round the lions but not passed between the legs and little Muslin Cap”.12

‘Naya Muslman’ (New Muslim), another name of the Faraizis, is described by E.W. Strong that “In dresses they effect the cloth worn like a skirt rather than the dhoti worn by the ordinary Muhammadans of the district”13 of Rangpur.

As a result of the emphasis laid down by the Faraizis on the propriety of dress, there was gradual change in the style of dress and many took to paijama and lungi. Coming to the modern times’ wearing dhoti has been almost entirely abandoned by the

11. Trial of Dudu Miyan, pp.98 and 123.
12. J.E. Webster, Eastern Bengal and Asam District Geazetter, Noakhali, Poineer Press, Allahabad, 1910, p.40. "Faraizi struggle for separate culture is also emphasised by the last leader Dudu Miyan, in Pakistan parliament he declared: "The purpose of the creation of Pakistan as a homeland for Muslim. What? The sole purpose was that the Muslims could lead their lives according to their own culture, civilization social system, and religion and to improve their economic condition". See, Dudu Miyan’s lecture on Budget. Proceedings of Pakistan National Assembly, 22, June, 1965, pp.383-385.
people of Bangladesh. This trend could be traced to the Faraizi efforts to change the mode of the people’s dress.

As a result of ignorance regarding the real spirit of religion and long contact with the Hindus, many of the ceremonies and sites prevalent among the Hindu, had also found their way among the Muslims and there were very scrupulously followed. Among these were included a number of ceremonies which were connected with birth, death and marriage. In keeping with the true spirit of Islam which does believe in any kind of such ceremonies and rites, Haji Shariatullah prohibited them. There were a number of rites, for example, connected with the birth of a child known as chutte, puttee and chilla. All these were abolished and only those ceremonies remained which are sanctioned by the shariat such as aqiqah. According to a contemporary report: “They (Faraizis) reject the rites of puttee, chuttee and chilla which are performed between the first and fortieth day after the birth of a child and observe the rite of Uqueika (aqiqah), which consists in sacrificing two he-goats for a male and one for a female child. The ceremony of shaving the

14. Now 100% Muslims and 95% Hindus of Bangladesh are not wearing dhoti
child's head check in gold or silver, according to circumstances of the parents, is distributed among the poor."  

About the cutting of navel cord of a new born, there was another misconception. The higher class Hindus or Muslims would not cut this cord as they considered it a dirty job to be performed only by the *dai* (mid wife). The midwives seem to have been in short supply in some of the regions of Bengal, specially in Faridpur, the birth place of Haji Shariatullah. This generally led to much hardship to the new born as well as the mother because the mothers were not expected to be tree navel cord of the new born was severed and hence they could not even feed them. Sometimes it caused so much delay that the babies died. Haji Shariatullah took cognizance of this problem and pronounced that this midwifery work should be done by an elderly women of the family or of the village and if need be the father of the baby ought to do it. J. Wise in this regard records: “Haji Shariatullah’s promulgation of the dogma that it was deedly sin and one derived from the Hindus, to allow a midwife

15. *James Taylor, Topography of Dacca*, 1840, p 249
to cut the nevcl cord when it was obvious duty of the father to do so". 16

Haji Shariatullah’s endeavour to root out this practice seems to have met with great opposition specially his pronouncement that it was the duty of the father to cut the naval cord, seems to have led to much resentment. Many people thought it to be derogatory to their position. Mawlana Karamat Ali bitterly attacked him on this score. There are even reports that some Faraizis left the movement due to their difference on this point. 17 Similarly, there were a number of such ceremonies associated with marriage. These included “sitting in state” of “carrying and applying turmeric”, of measuring for wedding garments and the subghast procession. All this was prohibited. The only they that was permitted on this occasion was adornment of the bride and bridegroom on the day of their marriage. They also used to be lot of music and dancing on this occasion. It was totally banned. They only celebrate that wa allowed was holding

16 James Wise, Eastern Bengal, p.22. 

; Hunter, India: The District and Provincial Geazetteer, 1925, Faridpur, p 38. 
; Hidayat Hosain, in Ency. of Islam, E.J. Brill, Vol II, 1927, p 57
of the feast called *walima khana*, to which friends, relations and the poor were invited.\textsuperscript{18}

The Faraizis also observed their funeral obsequies with a degree of simplicity. Offering of fruits and flowers at the greve and various *Fateha* ceremonies were prohibited. The groves of the Faraizis were not raised above the surface of the ground, nor marked out by any building of brick or stone.\textsuperscript{19}

Islam stands for the unity of God and unity of mankind. As no compromise is possible on the unity of God which is the bedrock on which Islam stands. Similarly, there could be no question about the equality of the entire mankind. Islam from the very beginning sought to demolish the artificial division of low and the high on the basis of birth, clour or race and sought to establish an egalitarian society in which all Muslims were brothers and equal without any distinction except the one based on piety.\textsuperscript{20} This is so well-known that it hardly needs any further elaboration.

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., See also Maulana Karamat Ali, *Hujjat-I-Qanta*, pp.105-106.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., p.250.
\textsuperscript{20} *Al-Quran*, 49: 13.
It has been, however, a great misfortune of Muslims that due to outside influences, there have been attempts indifferent periods of history to divide the Muslim society on the basis of extraneous considerations. But the position in Bengal at the time of the beginning of the Faraizi movement was extremely deplorable. In consequence of their long association with the Hinuds, almost all the inequalities and rigidities of the caste system has crept in the Muslim society and was firmly entrenched.

Beside religious reform, social reform was also a great challenge to the leadership of Haji Shariatullah. It goes to his credit that he regularly succeeded in ridding at least his followers from this great evil.

At the time Haji Shariatullah began his reform movement, casteism and untouchability were rampant in the Muslim society of Bengal. In the words of Taylor "several of the communities into which the lower classes of Mohammadans are divided, according to their occupations and employments, have assumed the character of cates and in regard to marrying and eating with each other, they are quite as exclusive as Hindoos". Many other writers contemporary, near contemporary and later
writers have taken note of this situation. Beveridge, Wise, Hunter, Risley, Fuzle Rubee, O'Malley, M.K. Siddiqui, Gurunebaum and others have pointed out that due to untouchbility and casteism of Hindu neighbours, the Muslims of Bengal divided into many sections such as Sayyid, Mir, Pathan, Khan, Mughals, Shaikh, Ashraf, Atraf, Arzal, Ailaf, Palki bearer, Pankha bearer, Mullah, Khondokar, Tolah, Kulu, Beldar, Dai and so.\(^2\)

In keeping with the true spirit of caste system and in total contrvention of the teachings of Islam, these different groups did not intermarry nor could dine together. They tried to preserve their separate and exclusive identities.

\(^2\)For details see, H. Beveridge, *The District of Bakergonj, its History and Statistics*, London, 1876. 


A religious reformer like Haji Shariatullah who wanted to revive the prestige glory of Islam could not allow this situation to continue. He strongly denounced this concept which was against the norms of Islam and directed his followers to rise above these considerations. As a result of his consistent efforts and exhortations this evil was totally eradicated from the regions of Faraizi dominance and in the words of J. Wise, and others “with in short time he could bind the Muhammadan peasantry as one man”\textsuperscript{23}

The crusade against inequality was continue after Haji Shariatullah by his son and successor, Dudu Miyan, who affirmed his commitment to the concept of the equality of the mankind. This led Dampier, the Superintenddent of the Police of Bengal, to observe:

“The Faraizis were noted as Professing to retain only the pure doctrine of Koran... They asserted complete equality among themselves and the sect was confined to the lower classes.

\textsuperscript{23} James Wise, \textit{Eastern Bengal}, p.22.
; \textit{JASB}, 1894, p.47.
They hung together and supported each other in difficulties. Looking on the cause of the highest as that of the lowest” 24

Dampier is not the only one to have taken note of the Faraizi attitude in this regard, for example Dr J. Wise and O’Malley recorded that “He (Dudu Miyan) asserted the equality of mankind and taught that the welfare of the lowest and the poorest was as much as an object of interest as that of the highest and richest, when a brother fall into distress it was he thought the duty of his neighbours, he affirmed, was criminal or unjustifiable which had the object in view”. 25 As these writers considered.

Modern scholars have also noted Faraizi emphasis on the equality of the entire mankind. This was not only an ideal but it was put into practice as per as their own fraternity was concerned. There is complete unanimity among the scholars that among themselves Faraizis believed in complete equality without

any consideration to the factors of family background etc. In the caste-ridden society of Bengal this was nothing less than a revolution. It also speaks very highly about the leadership qualities of the early Faraizi reformer and their unshakable commitment to the teaching of Islam.

This noble tradition was carried by the later Faraizis who stressed the idea of fraternity and brotherhood; they even addressed each other as “Bhai” (brother). They argued that a child is not born in the condition of superiority on inferiority, all

   ; Dilip Kumar Chattopadya, *Dynamics of Social Change in Bengal* (1817-1851).
   ; P. Hardy, *The Muslims of British India*, p.55.
   ; *Ency. of Islam*, (Urdu), p.223.
   ; *Ency. of Islam*, (Bangla), Vol.13.
   ; J.N. Sarkar, *Islam in Bengal* (1300-1900), Ratna Prakashan, Calcutta, 1972, p.73.
   ; Pir Dudu Miyan, *Bangladesh Faraizi Jamaier Adarsha*, p.23.
   ; N. Kaviraj, *Wahhabi and Faraizi Rebels of Bengal*, p.110.
men are equal as the teeth of a comb. Birth, race, colour and heredity are not to be stressed but Islamic brotherhood should be strengthened.

To educate people in the principles of equality the early Faraizis had even created a fund and collected subscriptions for the furtherance of the object of the sect and helping the destitutes.

In a caste-ridden society where people belonging to lower classes were subjected to much disadvantage and they were highly discriminated against the movement was bound to attract large number of people. Consequently many people belonging to occupational groups deceded to discard their caste affiliations and joined the movement in many districts of Bengal.

As a result, in the census of India, 1872, out of the total of 588,740. Muslims of Faridpur 57,4740 registered Muslims and 142 Muslim weavers got themselves registered as

---

   ; Muntasir Mamon, *Unish Sataker Bangaladesher Somgbad*, p.17.
"Karigar" against 6036 of the same caste who registered as 'Jolah'.

Before closing this section, a small clarification is perhaps called for. Haji Shariatullah is reported to have been averse to share meal with a stranger. Some modern scholars had used this evidence to suggest that Haji Shariatullah himself was not completely free from the effects of casteism, and in some way or the other he also protected casteism. This is, of course, far from the truth. The commitment of Haji Shariatullah to the concept of equality and his untiring efforts from furthering this cause which ultimately succeeded in eradicating this evil from the regions of Faraizi dominance, are enough to refute this allegation. The truth of the matter is that he was very particular about the source and nature of the food and was careful that it should have been earned through lawful means. In the case of strangers this cannot be ensured. This was the only reason why he refrained from taking food with the strangers which has been blown out of all proportion to level unseeming allegations against him. There can

be no better proof than the fact that his son Dudu Miyan who married a converted Brahmin girl.33

Language is a very important constituent of culture. It reflects the value system and ethos of the community that speaks it. It gives them a sense of belonging and identity. The best way to reach out to a people is to speak to them in their own language. It is not only easier for them to comprehend but it also helps in striking an immediate rapport with the audience. Haji Shariatullah seems to have been aware of this crucial role of the language and wanted to make full use of it.

Before Haji Shariatullah, the medium of religious discourse in Bengal was Urdu, Persian and Arabic language. The Ulama and reformers generally used one of these languages to communicate with the people. Naturally for the illiterate, poor masses of Bengali peasants and weavers this meant very little or nothing at all. They could feel awe and admiration for the scholars who could speak so fluently these learned languages but they could comprehend very little of it or nothing at all.

Haji Shariatullah is the first among the class of Ulama and reformers who used Bengali language for the purpose of

33 Wissa, Eastern Bengal, p.25.
communicating his teachings. It was an immediate success as people could fully grasp and comprehend what is being said to them and what they are expected to do. This could be perhaps one of the reasons of the rapid spread of the movement.

Besides using Bangla language for oral communication, he also paid attention to prepare necessary religious literature in the local language. It was on his instruction that a book entitled 'TariqatuI Akham', written by Rupai Akan explained the Faraizi teachings was prepared. This was in fact the beginning of a series of puthies and other books which were written by the later Faraizis in their own language. Except one Fatwa that is mixed with Urdu and Arabic. This not only made religious literature available to the people in a language that they could understand but it also enriched the Bengali language by imparting new ideas to it. It must have played on important role in the growth and development of Bangali language and literature. Later Faraizis also followed the tradition of communicating with the people in their own language. But at the same time they continued to lay great emphasis on the learning Arabic as the language of the Quran and Sunnah.

Before closing this chapter, perhaps it would not be out of place to say a few words about the Faraizis and communalism. Some modern scholars have blamed the faraizis to have been communalists.  But any body who will study the political ideas of the Faraizis and their struggle against the zamindars impartially, is bound to come to the conclusion that the Faraizis were singularly free from communalism. Their struggle was directed not to any particular class or community oppressors but against oppression and oppress ore to what so ever community they might have belonged. They wanted to root out oppression from the society which has made the lives of millions of people an unbearable burden. All the oppressors and exploiters were sworn enemies of the Faraizis without any consideration for their ethnic or religious affiliations. They fought against the

; Amelendu De, Roots of Separatism pp.18-20.
; Peter Hardy, The Muslims of British India, Cambridge, 1972, p.59.
; Rajat Kante Roy, Social Conflict and Political Unrest in Bengal (1875-1927), Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1884, p.74,
; Wakil Ahmad, Unisk Sataker Bengali Muslmaner, Bangla Academy, Dhaka, 1983, p.185
Muslim zamindars and English planters with the same zeal as against the Hindus. They destroyed the houses of both Hindu and Muslim oppressors with the same impartiality.\(^{36}\)

There can be no doubt that they were more concerned about the Muslims but it never crossed the limits where it becomes communalism.

The poison of communalism in the Indian body politic is a contribution of the British.\(^{37}\) This phenomenon as we are familiar with it now, was not known before the advent of the British.

---

\(^{36}\) James Wise, *Eastern Bengal*, p.22-23

; Narahari Kaviraj, *The Wahhabi and Faraizi Rebels of Bengal*, pp.82, 104, 108,
; *Trial of Dudu Miyan*, in this trial three Hindus and one native Christian deposited in favour of Dudu Miyan,
; W.C. Smith, *Modern Islam in India*, London, 1943, p.189, here the writer said, the Faraizis have broken the houses of Musalmans and Hindu Land-Lords with perfect impartiality.
; Like Smith, M.A. Karadikas, also narrated same variation, see his book, *Islam in India’s transition to Modernity* Orient Longman, New Delhi, Re. 1969, p.135,

; W.C. Smith, p. 190,
Here, Smith said that British policy was “Devide et Impera was Roman motto should be ours”. This policy was given by Mount Stuart Elphinslane to the British Government. henceforth it was adopted. Quoted from Lord Edenburgh in despatch to the Duke of Willington, dated 18-6-1843,
The aims and objective that the Faraizis had set for their movement could not be achieved without strong and an effective organization. In fact a movement spread over a vast region with a large number of followers could not be effectively controlled and mobilised without an efficient organisational set up. It would seem that Haji Shariatullah, the founder the movement, was fully alive to the necessity of such an organisation and had even taken initial steps in this direction. A few years before his death in 1840, he had instructed Jamaluddin Mullah, a renowned Lathial to recruit clubmen with a view of protecting the might of the Peasants. The importance of this step could be gauged from the fact that Dudu Miyan himself joined this organisation after his return from Mecca in 1837. But Haji Shariatullah perhaps could not get more time to establish the organisational structure of the movement on a sound basis and it was left to Dudu Miyan to do the needful in this regard. The credit of establishing a very efficient organisational structure through which he could effectively control his followers living in the further regions of Bengal, definitely goes to him.
Dudu Miyan was a very good organiser. It seems that he had given considerable thought to the problem keeping in mind the particular problems of the region as well as the nature and composition of his followers. It would also seem that he had a very clear perception about the organisational requirements of the movement which was very rapidly spreading to new regions and increasingly attracting the people in large numbers. The kind of organisational structure that he ultimately succeeded in putting up would indicate much planning on his part. Ultimately, he was able to establish a complex network of local and regional units through which the entire movement was guided and controlled.

Dudu Miyan seems to have conceived and implemented this huge organisational structure in first few years of his taking over the leadership of the movement after the death of his father. There is evidence to suggest that by 1847 it was fully functional. In that year Commissioner of Dhaka informed the government that “in every place where the Faraizis were to be found, Dudu Miyan had an agent, known under the designation of Khalifa, Munshi, or Sirdar, whose duty was to keep the flock together and make proselytes and through whom was collected a general tax for the furtherance of the
interests of the association". Navin Sen and James Wise also expressed their opinions about the Faraizi organisation in the same vein. They, however, added that the Faraizis avoided all government Diwani (civil) and Fujdari (criminal) courts, without the permission of the Khalifas who settled disputes, administered summary justice and punished any Hindu, Muhammadan or Christian who dare to sue in the Munsifs courts (Government).

Dudu Miyan, who was known as Ustad, maintained all the paraphernalia of a regular government. Dividing Eastern Bengal into circles (gird) and appointing Khalifas, he established a wel-knit organisation. He also maintained a network of spies and emissaries to keep a close watch on the people and their activities in the region. These emissaries carried Dudu Miyan's orders to the distant villages. Perhaps out of precaution or due to some other unexplained reason, he

---

1 Report from the Commissioner of Dacca to Government of Bengal, Bengal Judicial Proceedings, 7 April, 1847 No.99
   ; see also, letter from the superintendent of the Police, Lower Provinces to the Government of Bengal, Bengal Judicial Proceedings, 29 May 1843, No. 25.

2 Trial of Dudu Miyan p.35.
   Navin Sen, Amar Jivan, III, p.149
   ; James Wise, Eastern Bengal, pp.22-23
   ; ------ JASR, 1894, p 51
   ; see also, Narahari Kaviraj, p.81
used to sign the letters as ‘Ahmad Na Malum’ (unknown Ahmad).³

As noticed earlier, contemporary and near contemporary reports clearly suggest that the Faraizis have an elaborate organisational structure which reached out to the remotest regions and through which the followers of the movement were guided and controlled. But unfortunately they do not provide any details about its actual structure filled only by these traditions regarding various aspects of the movement have been collected by M.A. Latif, (a Faraizi organisational secretary) in his book _Amar Jivani_ and by Mr. A. Khan in his book “History of Faraidi Movement”. He compiled the traditions with the help of Badsha Miyan, the then chief the Faraizi movement. For study of the organisational structure of the Faraizis has heavily drawn for this book.⁴ However, other sources including constitution of the Faraizis have also been used.⁵

---

³ See, _Trial of Dudu Miyan_, 1848, p.35.
The Faraizi organisational structure consisted of two separate wings: Siyasi (Political) and Dini (Theological or religious). The Political wing was charged with the duty of raising corps of Lathial (clubmen) to protect the basic rights of their followers, mostly peasants-weavers, from the tyranny and imposition of illegal taxes such as Durga Puja Cess of the zamindars and indigo-planters. This wing was also charged with the responsibility “to keep Dudu Miyan fully apprised of every new political development of his area.”

On the other hand, the main concern of the religious branch was to take care of religious needs and requirements of the Faraizis. Both the branches were however headed by the same people who formed the hierarchy of the Faraizi movement.

At the head of the hierarchy was the Ustad, the chief of the Faraizis. Below him were Uparastha Khalifas (superior agents), then superintendent Khalifas, and the lowest rank of this system consisted of Gaon (village) Khalifas, or ward Khalifas. The Gaon Khalifas had jurisdiction over 300 to 500 Faraizi families depending on the situation. Ten or more such

---

village units formed a gird (circle) which was headed by Superintendent Khalifa. The Superintendent Khalifas had a peon and a piyadah (footman) at his disposal. He acted as intermediary between the Ustad and the Unit Khalifas. It was his responsibility to execute and implement the orders of the Ustad at the level of Unit Khalifas. The Ustad had a council of Uparastha Khalifas as Majlis-i-Shura (consultative council) to advice him on various issues.  

The responsibilities of the Unit Khalifas included instruction regarding fundamentals of Islam, such as Kalima, prayer, fasting, Hajj, Zakat, constructing mosques, appointing Imams etc. They also took care of socio-religious and political activities and the requirements of the followers including administering weddings and funerals, establishing Maktabs (schools), settling disputes relating to marriage, inherence, public quarrels etc. For this, he received one tenth of the production of his unit as remuneration.

The Superintendent Khalifas supervised the working of the Unit Khalifas in the area of their Jurisdiction. They also looked after all aspects relating to religious, social, economic

---

and political affairs of the region under their control. Moreover, they also acted as courts for settling disputes of Unit Khalifas. They were further expected to erect rest houses (Astana) for the central leaders, arrange Halqa-i-Dhikr, (circle of zikr) on every Wednesday, pay visits to the girds and raise the Lathials and arrange for their training. It goes without saying that they were answerable to the Ustad.

In this context the question assumes importance as to what were the areas where Faraizis were dominant and what was approximately the number of the followers of this movement. Unless we have some idea about these aspects, it would be difficult to fully appreciate the need of establishing such a complex administrative structure for guiding and controlling the Faraizis.

It would seem that almost from its very beginning the Faraizi movement has great appeal for the Muslims of Bengal and also perhaps some areas of Assam. Records at our disposal suggest that in 1837 the sect numbered around 12,000. In 1839, the Faraizis consisted of one third population of Dhaka city, and one sixth population of Faridpur, Maimansingh and

---

Dhaka districts.\textsuperscript{10} In 1843, according to the report of the police Superintendent, they were somewhere between 50,000 to 80,000.\textsuperscript{11} But when a case was moved against Dudu Miyan in 1847, a number of witnesses affirmed that Dudu Miyan was the leader of two (200,000) or two and half lakh (250,000) people.\textsuperscript{12}

\textit{Calcutta Review} in 1861 reported that the whole Eastern Bengal was under the influence of the Faraizi movement.\textsuperscript{13} Though the death of Dudu Miyan in 1862 was a severe blow to this movement,\textsuperscript{14} but the appeal and popularity of the movement seems to have continued to increase. It is therefore not surprising that during the tenure of Noya Miyan, the Faraizis were more than millions\textsuperscript{15} and in 1920, Badsha Miyan the then Faraizi head, was supposed to have been the leader of 60 Lackhs peasants of Bengal.\textsuperscript{16}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{10} Janes Taylor, \textit{Topography of Dacca}, p.248
  \item \textsuperscript{11} Report of the Commissioner of Dacca to government of Bengal 18, March 1847; \textit{Bengal Judl. Progs.} 7 April, 1847 No. 98-100; Dalhosie Papers, Scottish Record office, (Edinburgh), GD 45/6/443
  \item \textsuperscript{12} \textit{Trial of Dudu Miyan}, p.30.
  \item \textsuperscript{13} \textit{Calcutta Review}, 1861.
  \item \textsuperscript{15} Annual General Report, Dacca Division, 1878-79, General Department Proceedings, Nov. 1879.
  \item \textsuperscript{16} \textit{Bongobashi}, (News paper), October, 1, 1921, Quoted in Chandiprasad Sarkar, \textit{The Bengal Muslims}. P.103.
\end{itemize}
With such a vast following, it could be only expected that the reach of the movement was spread over a very vast area of Bengal. Their main concentration, however, was in Eastern Bengal. But they were also found in some parts of Assam and West Bengal. In the light of available records their main concentration may be identified in the districts of Madaripur, Faridpur, Barisal, Dhaka, Maimansingh belt, Noakhali, Pabna, Sirajgonj, Keranigonj, Chandpur, Jessore, Narail, Kushtia, Jhenaidah, Magura.  

In the rest of the areas of the region now known as Bangladesh there was some following of the Faraizis in the region, from Rangpur-Dinajpur to Chittagong and from Sylhet to Sundarban.

---


18 Ibid
Besides this, there were many Faraizis among the Muslim population of Goalpara, Lakhampur, Sibchar, Darang and Kamrup of Assam as well as in the districts of Maldah, Nadia, 24 Parghnas of West Bengal and some parts of Agartala.\textsuperscript{19}

It has been noticed earlier that the Faraizis carried on extensive activities in the riverine areas. As a result, it succeeded to in creating important pockets of its influence on the banks of Bhuvenshar, Arial Khan, Madhumati, Navaganga, Barakur, Harigatha, Padma, Yamuna, Meghna rivers. As a result, this movement acquired a riverine character in its endeavours whether they concerned recruitment or propagation of its ideas and teachings.

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid
CONCLUSION

The Faraizi movement of Bengal was the earliest religious reform movement in British India. But its activities were not confined to the sphere of religion only but it also took deep interest in the fields of society, politics, culture, economy, *dawah* etc. Founders of this movement, Haji Shariatullah and his son, Dadu Miyan, launched the movement to revive the pristine purity of Islam and cleanse the Bengali Muslim society from the depths of religious degradation to which it has gradually slipped over a period of time. As the religious degradation was accompanied with the worst kind of political and economic exploitation and social and cultural deprivation, it had to address its attention to these areas as well. It was not possible to ignore the extremely pitiable condition of the people whom they wanted to reform and redeem. Though this movement owed its genesis in the conditions obtaining in Bengal at that point of time but it was also part of a universal urge for reform and revival of the true spirit of Islam that was sweeping the entire Muslim world during that period. And therefore, while there were certain aspects of the Faraizi movement which were specific to the conditions prevailing in Bengal, there were other features which were
common with other movements operating in various parts of the Islamic world like the Wahhabis, Paduri, Pwlanj, Sannusi, Muhammadiya, Jihad, Tariq-i-Muhammadiya and Ahl-i-Hadith movements.

This thesis is an endevour to analyse the basic ideology of the Faraizi movement in totality. Without taking into consideration the whole spectrum of the ideology of the Faraizis and the aims and objectives for which they worked and which they wanted to realise. It will not be possible to comprehend the real nature and character of the movement. A number of scholars who failed to take this aspect into consideration have fallen into serious error regarding the character and nature of the movement.

The Faraizi movement was located in Bengal and it owed it origins in the conditions obtaining in Bengal at that time. Keeping this in view an attempt has been made to identify the factors which led to the emergence of the Faraizi movement. As pointed out above, these include not only the religious factors but political, economic, social and cultural factors as well. It was the combined impact of all these factors that had brought about a situation in which on the one hand the Muslim community was Muslim only the name, and on in other hand it was a thoroughly
exploited' deprived and degraded lot' with a view to place the movement in its proper perspective, these aspects have been analysed and discussed in detail in the Chapter relating to the background. It also takes note of other reform movements working in Bengal as well as other parts of the Islamic world. This has inevitably led to the question as to how far the Faraizi movement was influenced by the Wahhabi movement of Arabia. A comparison of the aims and objectives as well as the ideology of both these would reveal many points of close similarity between the two movements. For example' both the movement laid greatest emphasis on the concept of *tauhid* and abhorred innovation in matters of religion. It would be, therefore, not far-fetched to say that while there were certain points of difference between the two movements such as their respective attitude towards sufism, the Faraizi movement would seem to have drawn considerable inspiration from the Wahhabi movement. It would seem to be beyond reasonable doubt that during his stay in Makka, Haji Shariatullah came under the influence of the Wahhabis and his son Dudu Miyan also came into contact with the Wahhabis of that time and it was reflected in their teachings.

After locating the movement in its proper perspective, it was only in the fitness of things to examine the religio-
spiritual aspect of the movement as it was basically a religious reform movement. This Chapter seeks to study the religious ideology of the Faraizis and its wider implications for the Muslim Society of Bengal. It seeks to identify the aims and objectives of the movement in the field of religious reform, the methods and means that it adopted and the degree of success that it achieved.

As is well known, the Faraizis put great emphasis on the fundamentals of Islam (Faraiz) and hence the name of the movement as Faraizi. It was based on unadulterated teachings of the Quran and Sunnah and the example set by the earlier generations of the Muslims (Salaf-i Salehin). In matters relating to jurisprudence, they followed Hanafi school of law. They laid great emphasis on tauhid and sought to cleanse the Muslim society of Bengal from all kinds of innovations, accretions and ceremonials which were not sanctioned by Islam. They believed that Political Power was necessary for leading a religious life that was fully in consonance with the spirit of the religion. As the Muslim power was replaced by an alien rule, they felt that juma and ‘Id congregations were not permissable till Muslim ruler was re-established.
The Faraizis achieved great success in their objective of religious reform. The quality of true religious consciousness among the Muslims of Bengal enormously increased. All traces of *shirk* and *badat* were removed from considerable parts of Bengal which came under the sway of the Faraizis.

Next the *dawah* (missionary) aspect of the movement has been taken into consideration. This aspect of the movement is not generally given the importance that it deserves. As the Faraizi movement was essentially a religious reform movement, the *dawah* in fact occupies centre stage in the programme of the movement. Haji Shariatullah was a great preacher and the contemporary literature produced by the British observers had taken due notice of this aspect. This chapter also identifies the strategies which were adopted by the Faraizi leadership to realise their objectives and aims in the field of *dawah* and how far these methods proved successful. This also inevitably leads us to make an endeavour to identify the areas of Faraizi influence, where their *dawah* had greater impact on the lives of the people.

The fourth chapter deals with the economic ideology of the Faraizis. This is one of the most misunderstood aspects of the Faraizi movement. Faraizi struggle for the rights of the
peasants and weavers had led many scholars to characterise it as a *peasant movement*.

It is useful to remember that the Faraizi movement began as a purely religious reform movement. But as movements do not operate in vacuum, it had to take notice of the miserable plight of the people whom they were seeking to reform. They were subjected to worst kind of exploitation by the zamindars and the indigo-planters and many of them were forced to lead almost subhuman life. What perhaps started as an attempt to ameliorate the conditions of the people's inexorably led the movement into a headlong conflict with the landlords, indigo-planters and even the government and it became one of the most salient features of the movement.

To achieve their objectives in the field of economic betterment of the people, the Faraizis organised a number of peasant agitations and uprisings such as those of 1837, 1844 and 1847. They also played leading role in organising the great indigo uprisings of 1858, 1860 and 1873 besides many other comparatively smaller agitations. This struggle of the Faraizis for the rights of the oppressed and the downtrodden bore fruits and forced the government to take cognizance of the high-handedness
of the exploiting classes and the abject conditions of the peasants and a series of measures were initiated with a view to reform the situation. Among other things, it led to the constitution of the Indigo Commission of 1854-60 whose recommendations had far reaching consequences for the peasants of Bengal. Moreover, Act of 1859, Agrarian Acts of 1879 and 1884 and finally Tenancy Act of 1885 may be counted among the direct consequences of the relentless struggle that was carried out by the Faraizis at times at great personal cost. The significance of these measures is too well-known to require further elaboration here. They also refused to pay taxes, not only illegal taxes which were imposed by the zamindars' but also government taxes.

In this regard it should be useful to remember that the economic ideas of the Faraizis were also rooted in the teachings of the Quran and hadith. As Islam is a religion that encompasses entire spectrum of human life, the economic well-being of the people could not be possibly isolated from the programme of religious reform. Their economic ideology, therefore, was a part of their overall understanding of the religion. And, therefore, when they refused to pay, for example, government taxes in support of their stand they cited evidence from the Quran and the Sunnah.
Sixth chapter seeks to identify the political overtones of the movement and to determine the extent of its political involvement. Many modern historians have fallen in serious error when they concluded that Faraizi movement did not contain political elements and it was a purely religious reform movement. Even those few scholars who thought that the movement had political dimension have failed to substantiate their claim with the support of soled evidence.

In the light of the evidence at our disposal, it becomes crystal clear that the movement had a very strong political content from the very beginning and it directly emanated from their understanding of the religion. As Islam does not believe in the separation of religion and state, the Faraizis had a very clear political agenda and they pursued it very vigorously. On a closer analysis, it would appear that the Faraizi movement had all the ingredients of a modern political movement. Their declaration of India under the British rule as Darul Harb, suspension of juma and 'Id prayers, occupation of government lands, refusal to pay taxes, establishment of village courts, participation in the great struggle of 1857, establishment of state within state were clearly political acts and were directed against the British presence in India. They had made the expulsion of the
British from the Indian soil and establishment of Islamic state as one of their main objectives. They also sympathised and supported all those parties and movements which were working against the British interests. Their involvement in politics continues till date.

The seventh chapter deals with the cultural ideology of the Faraizis. One of the greatest achievements of the Faraizis was registered in the field cultural and social reform of the Bengali Muslim society. Due to long contact with the Hindus and also due to total ignorance regarding the social teachings of Islam, the Bengali Muslim society had reached such a stage when it was Muslim only in name and was it absolutely impossible to find it in any way different from the Hindu society of Bengal. The same kind of dress, the same rituals and ceremonials were prevalent and it has almost totally lost its Muslim identity. The Faraizis set out, on one hand, to banish all those features of the society which were either taken from the Hindus or which had developed within the Muslim society as a result of ignorance and superstition. On the other hand it strived to inculcate in them those habits of social behaviour which were in consonance with the teachings of Islam and which were calculated to establish their identity as a community of Muslims. Their efforts in this
direction not only cleansed the Bengali society from most of the non-Islamic elements but also gave them a sense of dignity and self respect which they were totally lacking.

_**Khilafat** system constituted an important aspect of the Faraizi movement. It was through the means of **Khilafat System** that the Faraizi leaderships supervised and co-ordinated its followers spread over vast regions of Bengal. It was a four-tiered hierarchy and its smallest unit was the village. As an instrument of controlling the organisation, it was extremely effective. The extra-ordinary success of the Faraizi leadership in keeping their vast following in different parts of Bengal at their beck and call mostly depended on the efficient functioning of the **khilafat** system.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Abbasi, Mohammad Yusuf, Muslim Politics and Leadership in south Asia- (1876-1892), Institute of Islamic History, Culture and Civilization, Islamic University, Islamabad, 1981.


Abdul Karim, Social History of the Muslims in Bengal down to A.D. 1533, The Asiatic Society of the then Pakistan, Dhaka, 1959.


Adam, W., *Reports on the State of Education in Bengal (1835 and 1838)*, edited by A. Basu, Calcutta University 1941.

Adil al-Din, Mawlawi, MS, *Halati Kar Guzar* (Persian biography of the Fara'idl leaders), 1958,


Ahmad, Mawlawi Faid, MS. *Fatwa* (on the validity of *fatihah* in Persian, collected by the present writer from Chittagong.).


Aini, Allama (al-Hanafi), *Umdat al-Qari fi Sharah Sahih al-Bukhari* (place of publication and date are not mentioned).


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ali, Chaudhuri Muhammad</td>
<td><em>The Emergence of Pakistan National Movement Stand For</em></td>
<td>Cambridge, W. Heffner and Sons, 1933</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ali, Chaudri Rahmat</td>
<td><em>Pakistan, The Father Land of the Pak Nation</em></td>
<td>Pakasia Literature, Cambridge, 1947</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


• *Allen, B.C., Assam District Gazetteers*, Kamrup, Allahabad, 1905.

• *Allen, B.C., The Eastern Bengal District Gazetteer, Dacca the Poineer Press, Allahabad, 1912.*


• Anisuzzaman, Muslim Mans o bungla Sahitya, Moktadhara Decca 1964.


• Arnold, T.W., The Preaching of Islam, Aligarh, 1913.


• Ashraf, Mujeeb, Muslim Attitude Towards British role and Western culture in India, Idarah-I-Adabiyat-I-Delhi, Delhi 1982.


*Bangladesh District Gezetteer* Bakargonj, Bangladesh Govt. Press, Dacca, 1980.


Buckland, C.E., Bengal under the Lieutenant-Governors, 2 vols., Calcutta, 1901.

Butt, Abdullah, ed. Aspects of Shah Isma'il shaheed, Lahore, 1943.

Calcutta Review, Calcutta, 1844, 1847,1845, 1860, 1861, 1870, 1874, 1894.


Chand, Tara, The History of Freedom Movement in India, vols. 2 publication divisions of the Govt. of India, Delhi, 1957.


Chaudhuri, B. “Agrarian Relations, Eastern India. “*In the Cambridge Economic History of India 2*, 1757-c, 1970,


Chopra, P.N., A Social, Cultural and Economic History of India, Macmillan India, Delhi, 1974.


De, Amalendu, *Islam in Modern India*, Maya Prokeshan, Calcutta, 1982


De., J.G. "*The History of the Krishak Praja Party of Bengal, 1929-1947*, A Study of Changes in class and


Dhaka Review, Dhaka, 1858.


Dikshit, K.N., Memoirs of the Archaeological survey of India, No.55, Delhi, 1938.


Encyclopedia of Religion


Englishman (Daily Newspaper), Calcutta, 1878.


Faruqi, Burhan Ahmad, *Mujaddid's conception of Tawhid*, Lahore, 1940.


Gladwin, Francis., *A Narrative of the Transactions in Bengal during the Soobadaries of Azeem us Shan, Jaffe Khanr Shuja Khan, Sirfaraz Khan and Alyvirdy Khan Translated from original Persian*, Calcutta, 1788.


Guha, Ranajit, *Subaltern Studies 1, writings on South Asian History and Society*. Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1982.


*Hawrah District Gazetteer,* Calcutta 1909


Hunter, W.W., *Our Indian Muslims, are they bound in conscience to rebel against the Queen?,* London, 1871.


Hunter, W.W., *The India of the Queen and other Essays (edited by Lady Hunter),* London, 1903.


Huque, Muhammad Mozammel, *Maulana Parichaya, Calcutta 1914.*


▪ Husain, Munshi Hamid (publisher), Al Durar al-Manthur fi Tara jm-I-Ahl I Sadiqpur, (also known as Tadhkirah-I-Sadiqah), edited by 'Abd al-Rahim, Ilahabad, A.H. 1345.


Ishaq, Dr. Muhammad, *India's Contribution to the Study of Hadith Literature*, Dhaka University, 1955.


*Jessore District Gazetteer*, Calcutta, 1912


Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan, Dhaka.


*Journal of the royal Asiatic Society, Bombay.*

*Journal of the royal Asiatic Society, London.*


Khan, Muinuddin Ahmad, (MS) *Faraidi Movement, an Historical Interpretation*, (1960).


Khan, Saif Allah, MS, *Fatwa (on the validity of milad Sharif)* in Urdu.


*Khan, Sir Sayyid Ahmad,* Review of Dr. Hunter's Indian Musalmans, Benares, 1872.

*Khan, Sir Sayyid Ahmad,* *Translation of the Report of the Select Committee for the Better Diffusion and Advancement of learning Among Muhammadans of India,* Benares, 1872.


*Khulua district Gazetteer,* Calcutta 1908.


Luteef, Nabab Abdul, *The Present condition of the Indian Mohamedans and the Best Means for its Improvement (being a Memorial on the Memorial of the CNMA...)* Calcutta, 1883.
Luteef, Nawab Bahadoor Abdool (Nawab Abd al Latif), *A Short Account of My Life* (and other biographical materials), 2 vols, Calcutta, 1885 and circa., 1915 (preserved in the Dhaka Museum.)

Lutfullah, *Autobiography of Lutfullah, a Mohammedan Gentleman and his Transactions with his Fellow Creatures, interspersed with remarks on the Habits, Customs and Character of the People with whom he had to deal*, London, 1820.


Majumdar, R.C. *British Paramountcy and Indian Renaissance* P.1 Bombay, 1963.


*Memorendum on Wahhabism*, Microfilm, Centre of Advanced Study in History, A.M.U., Aligarh.


Miyani, Sayyid Muhammad, Ulama‘I-Haq, awr un ka Mujahidanah, kar Namah, 2 parts, Delhi, A.H. 1365-1367.


Muhammad Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab, Kitab al-Tawhid, (Copy preserved in the Asiatic Society of Pakistan).

Muhammadan Education in Bengal, Calcutta 1900.


Mukherjee, R.K., The changing Face of Bengal, Calcutta University, 1938.


Murshidabad District Gazetteer, Calcutta 1914.


• Nawshahrawi, Abu Yahya Imam Khan, Tarajim-I-Ulama-I-Hadith-I-Hind, Delhi, A.H. 1356.


• Nizami, Tawfiq Ahmad, Muslim Political Thought and Activities in India During the First Half of the 19th Century, Aligarh. 1969.


• O'Malley, L.S.S., Bengal District Gazetteers, Jessore, Calcutta, 1912.


• O'Malley, L.S.S., Bengal District Gazetteers, Murshidabad, Calcutta 1914.

• O'Malley, L.S.S., Bengal District Gazetteers, Pabna, Calcutta, 1923.


Sabiri, Imdad, Sirat-I-Haji Imdad Allah awr unke Khulafa, Delhi, 1951.


Sen, D.C., History of the Bengal Language and Literature, Calcutta University, 1917.

Sen Gupta, Kalyan Kumar, Pubna Disturbances and the politics of Rent (1873-1885), Peoples Publishing House, New Delhi, 1974.


Sengupta, K.K. "The Agrarian League of Pabna, 1873". *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 7 (June 1970), 253-68.


Sharma, Kamalesh, *The Role of Muslims in Indian Politics* 1857-1947.


Smith, W.C., Modern Islam in India a social analysis, Lahore, 1943, 2nd ed., 1946.

Smith, Welfred Cantwell, Islam in Modern History, New Jersey, 1957.


Sufi, G.M.D., Tarikh-I-Hind wa Pakistan, Mughal ke zawal se Aj-tak, New York, 1953.


Thanisari, Mawlana Muhammad, *Kala Paniya Tarikh-I-Ajib*, Lahore, Iqbal Academy, n.d.


