The Translators: Backgrounds and Works
Introduction

From the categories of the Bangla translations of the Shrimad Bhagavad Gita and the lists of the available texts in this area, mentioned in the previous chapter, it can be assumed that the translations of this particular text in the context of Bengal is an important occurrence. Since the earliest extant commentaries and glosses till the early modern period, in the rural Bengal, it was somewhat common among the local Brahmins to translate the Gita into Bengali verse as it is claimed by the Tattwabodhini Patrika\textsuperscript{170}. Nevertheless, the scenario started getting changed from the nineteenth century. Along with the Brahmins, English-educated people began to show their interests on the Gita. Prominent individuals of different sections of the society commenced to work on the text and come up with their own opinions regarding the text and the concepts dealt in the text. In the words of Prof. Amiya Prasad Sen\textsuperscript{171}, “In the Nineteenth-century Bengal, interest in the Gita, at least so far as the English-educated people were concerned, appears to have reached a very high level of importance”\textsuperscript{172}. This was the situation of many parts of the country. As, a lot of nationalist leaders and scholars focused on the Gita, vernacular literatures got flooded with the translations of the Gita in the nineteenth century, especially last few decades. In this context, Amiya P. Sen comments that,

\textsuperscript{170} Anonimous, _Bhagavadgita Bishayak Baktrita_, Tattwabodhini Patrika. Calcutta: Tattwabodhini Sabha, 1873.

\textsuperscript{171} He is the historian working on the religion and culture of nineteenth century Bengal.

On an all India scale, probably more commentaries were written on the Gita in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries than in the preceding five hundred years and surely, the practice of translating the text into the vernacular, though not unknown, was brisk practice only in the modern times.\textsuperscript{173}

In this research project, I have focused on the Bangla translations of the \textit{Gita} of the early twentieth century.

The early twentieth century witnessed many changes broadly in the milieu of social, political and cultural spheres of the then Bengal. The social sector was reverberating with a lot reform movements, where as the political sphere was bombarded with the ongoing independence movement, and the drastic changes it was undergoing; simultaneously the cultural situation in the then Bengal was more vibrant with lot of literature and related activity throughout the state to an extent of influencing the national scenario.

One cannot also negate the impact of the socio-cultural and political movements of the late nineteenth century on the early twentieth century. To mention a few most prominent and influential movements, the Brahmo Samaj, which was at its peak in late nineteenth century and has great influence on the intelligentsia of the then Bengal in the early twentieth century. The Ramakrishna Mission was founded in the last decade of the nineteenth century (precisely 1, May 1897). Though Swami Vivekananda was the founder of the RK Mission, it flourished in great extent even after his demise in the early twentieth century (precisely 1902) soon after founding the Mission.

\textsuperscript{173} Ibid.
The establishment of the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad played a pivotal role in the literary sphere of the then Bengal. Founder members and other big literary and cultural figures in social milieu and literature, associated with the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad, were assigned to write books on various subjects in Bangla especially in humanities and social sciences like history, literature, philosophy, sociology, culture, politics and science.

In the political scenario, Bengal was undergoing tremendous changes with the influence and participation of lot of prominent thinkers and political leaders in the then ongoing freedom struggle, Swadeshi movement, nationalist movement and a continuous disappointment of the non-violent strategies of the veteran moderate leaders of the Indian National Congress and a section of it leading to a significant rising of the ‗extremist‘ revolutionary groups.

The partition of Bengal in 1905 by the then ruling British Government also added fuel to the fire of the political unrest and situation of the then Bengal in the early twentieth century. Interestingly, the first decade of the twentieth century also witnessed the transformation of Aurobindo from a complete ‗extremist‘ revolutionary to a complete spiritual leader.

One of the most interesting aspects happened during this dynamic period of history of Bengal is that people from all walks of life, as mentioned above, paid heavy attention to the Gita irrespective of their affiliation to socio-cultural-political and literary movements. The Gita has never been translated, re-translated, commented and widely read by scholars, writers, translators, political leaders and spiritual leaders during this period more than any other period in the history of the Shrimad Bhagavad Gita and its legacy in Bengal.
Hence, I have chosen the most prominent and significant translations and works on the *Gita* from among the several kinds of writers and translators from distinct walks of life, selecting each from each group prominent in that time, for my research.

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee was one of the most influential personalities, who made an impact on the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century Bengal’s several walks of life. Among the followers of the Hindu nationalist ideology of Bankim Chandra, Hirendranath Dutta is one of the most prominent. Renowned as the ‚Vedanta Scholar’, he is one of the founder members of the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad. The *Gitay Ishwarvaad*, commentary on the *Gita*, written by Hirendranath Dutta is significant for the study as the author and the book itself is highly influenced by the renowned Bankim Chandra and his ideological, political and philosophical teachings.

Shri Aurobindo is a very interesting influential philosopher in the context of the then Bengal. He is significant as a revolutionary ‚extremist’, tagged as so by the veteran moderate ‚freedom fighters’, who has transformed completely into a significant philosopher and spiritual leader with great following till date. His work on the *Gita*, the *Gitar Bhumika* was written exactly during the time of his transformation from a revolutionary ‚extremist’ to a philosopher and a spiritual leader. Aurobindo being a significant philosopher and spiritual leader, his *Gitar Bhumika* is a significant work in the history of the *Gita* in Bengal. Hence, it is crucial to include this work for the present study.

The Brahmo Samaj is a significant sect, started in the early nineteenth century is one of the most important religious cum social reformist movements in the history of the then Bengal and the then India to a great extent with people like Raja Ram
Mohan Roy\textsuperscript{174} being one of the highly influential founder thinkers of it. The Brahmo Samaj’s impact on the Bengal’s population is undeniably very prominent even till date. Dwijendranath Tagore, who hails from the highly influential Tagore family of Calcutta, is a prominent figure in the Brahmo Samaj along with being a saintly philosophical and literary figure of the then Bengal. Though two of his immediate younger brothers, Satyendranath Tagore and Jyotirindranath Tagore, along with a few prominent writers from the Brahmo Samaj did translate the \textit{Gita}, Dwijendranath’s the \textit{Gitapath} is an influential and one of the most seminal works produced by the Brahmos. Jyotirindranath Tagore has re-translated Tilak’s the \textit{Gita Rahasya} into Bangla. Dwijendranath, being one of the key figures in the Brahmo Samaj and the eldest among the Tagore family, is well revered as a saintly religious philosopher and well accepted among his contemporaries.

The Ramakrishna Mission is one more most influential and significant religious movement, with the social welfare, started in the late nineteenth century and is one of the movements that sustained long, spread across the world and is still growing in its activities and range. Many significant followers of Ramakrishna translated the \textit{Gita}. One of the most prominent Hindu revivalist religious leaders of the nineteenth and twentieth century and the most revered direct disciples Ramakrishna’s apostles, Swami Vivekananda also delivered several lectures on the \textit{Gita} at several occasions and several places. Though they were published by the R K Mission, they cannot be included as the translation of the \textit{Gita}. Swami Saradananda is equally renowned among the direct disciples Ramakrishna’s apostles on par with Swami Vivekananda. Swami Saradananda is also admired and followed by wide

\textsuperscript{174} Raja Ram Mohan Roy is a social-religious thinkers, whose influence was very significant in the fields of politics, education, public administration and religion as well. He was instrumental in finding the monotheistic Brahmo Samaj advocating against many social evils such as Sati etc.
range of pupils of the RK Mission and its followers. He is the first one to comprehensively deal with the *Gita* in the form of lectures delivered in various places on various occasions. His *Gitatattva* is a significant work intellectually intertwined with the philosophy of the *Gita*, simultaneously aligned with the religio-philosophical teachings of Ramakrishna Pramahansa. Hence, this book is very important for the present study.

As discussed earlier above and the previous chapters there were many scholars from several walks of life who have either worked, commented or translated the *Shrimad Bhagavad Gita* into Bangla. Among a vast number of scholars and writers Jagadish Chandra Ghosh is revered as the authentic and prolific scholar of the *Gita* and he was popular as the ‘Gitasastri’. Hence, Jagadish Chandra Ghosh’s book the *Shri Gita*, a translation cum commentary of the *Shrimad-Bhagavad-Gita* is a significant and must inclusion for this study.

Multifaceted Rajshekhar Basu is one of the notable literary persons of Bangla Literature during the nineteenth and twentieth century. His translation of the Mahabharata and the *Shrimad Bhagavad Gita* are worth mention for his popularity, accepted authenticity and reverence.
Hirendranath Dutta (1868-1942) and Gitay Ishwarvaad (1905)

The renowned lawyer, who is better known as the ‘Vedanta Scholar’, Hirendranath Dutta, was born in January, 1868 in an affluent Kayastha family of Hathkhola, Kolkata. His father Dwarakanath Dutta, was an employee of a flourishing British commercial firm and his mother Rakshakali Devi, a religious lady contributed a lot in shaping his mind and character.

After completing primary and secondary education studies from the Metropolitan Institution, he joined in the Presidency College, Kolkata for graduation. He acquired Bachelor of Arts (BA) and Master of Arts (MA) in English Literature in 1889. In the meantime, he passed the degree of Bachelor of Law and joined in Calcutta High Court. He was awarded with the ‘Premchand Roychand’ studentship. In 1894, he qualified the Attorney-ship examination of Calcutta High Court. Though, he received modern western education only since beginning, he was an eminent scholar of Sanskrit, specifically Indian philosophy and Hindu scriptures.

He joined in the Indian National Congress (INC) after he met Annie Besant (1847-1933) in 1894. During 1897, his participation in raising funds in Calcutta to

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175 Kayastha is a dominant caste in Bengal.
176 Pandit Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar founded this institution in 1864 in the locality of the then north Calcutta. In the initial days, this institution was named as the Hindu Metropolitan Institution. Later, in the early twentieth century, it got its present name ‘Metropolitan Institution’. The college wing of this institution, Vidyasagar College is named after its founder. Luminaries like Swami Vivekananda, Surendranath Bandyopadhyay and others were related with this institution.
177 In 1817, the Hindoo College, a non-governmental organization was established to provide the modern western education to the Hindus. Later, in 1855, it was renamed as the Presidency College of Bengal and became a government institution.
178 She was a renowned Irish-origin British socialist, theosophist and one of the strong advocates of the Home-Rule movement of India.
defend Bal Gangadhar Tilak in the court was remarkable\textsuperscript{179}. He participated in the Anti-Partition movement of 1905. His active involvement in Home-Rule movement (1916) made him one of the chief lieutenants of Annie Besant in Bengal. Though initially being inclined to the advanced nationalist politics, he finally declared himself against the moderate path of prayer and petition. His defense of Aurobindo Ghosh regarding the Alipore Bomb Case and the Shamsul Alam\textsuperscript{180} Murder Case, during 1908-1910, brought him significant reputation as a lawyer in the political sphere. Because of his disagreement with Gandhi on the issues of non-violence and cottage industries, he walked out of active politics and the Indian National Congress in 1920.

Hirendranath Dutta was a prominent member of the Theosophical Society based in Adyar, Chennai, the then Madras. He joined the society in 1894 and had been the unofficial legal adviser to the society for years. As an intimate acquaintance of Dr. Annie Besant, he was closely associated with various activities of theosophical movements. He was nominated as the Vice-President of the Indian section of this organization in 1934.

Hirendranath Dutta was a dedicated support for Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya\textsuperscript{181} (1861-1946), during the foundation of the Akhil Bharatiya Hindu Mahasabha\textsuperscript{182}. Hirendranath Dutta contributed to found the Banga-Lakshmi Cotton

\textsuperscript{179} In 1897, as a consequence of the assassination of the two members of the Plague Prevention Committee, M.W.C. Rand and Lieutenant Hyerst, the British Police arrested Bal Gangadhar Tilak on charges of publishing a report on Shivaji Utsav in his magazine Keshari. Surprisingly, Bombay Congress did not pay much attention to this, while, people like Rabindranath Tagore, Hirendranath Dutta, Shishir Kumar Bose from Calcutta raised fund and sent two efficient lawyers to defend Tilak.

\textsuperscript{180} The Deputy Superintendent of Police, Shamsul Alam, who was involved with the Alipore Bomb Case, was shot dead by the revolutionary freedom fighters of Bengal. In the account of Shri Aurobindo, he was mentioned as the detective of the Government.

\textsuperscript{181} The founder of the Benaras Hindu University, Madan Mohan Malaviya was the notable educationist and politician. He served the Indian National Congress as the president for four times.

\textsuperscript{182} A Hindu nationalistic political party formed as a counter organization of the All India Muslim League.
Mill\textsuperscript{183}, the National Bank and the Hindustan Insurance Cooperative Company etc. He, along with being one of the founder-members of the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad, served the organization as the president and as the secretary for years. Not only is his political participation in the Swadeshi Movement, but by all means, his contributions towards all the activities endeavoring the spirit of Swadeshi, worth mentioning. A large amount of his income as a reputed lawyer, used to be donated to the organizations serving nationalistic purposes. He played an important role in the Theosophical Society of Bengal and he was a pillar for the National Council of Education, Bengal. He was the trustee member for many educational institutions of Bengal, like, Visva-Bharati University.

Through, his political thoughts, deeds and financial assistances, he aimed for the cultural and enlightening rejuvenation of India. His lectures and writings contain his ideas of the new India based on the ideologies of ancient India. He was the joint editor of the \textit{Panthta} and the \textit{Brahma Vidya}, the monthly journals of the Bengal Theosophical Society. His innumerable writings were published in the journals like, the \textit{Visva-Bharati Quarterly}, the \textit{Sahitya Parishad Patrika}, the \textit{Basumati}, the \textit{Sahitya}, the \textit{Uttara}, the \textit{Bangalakshmi}, the \textit{Parichay}, and the \textit{Bharatbarsha} etc. His published books are also good in number. Among them, \textit{Gitay Ishwarvaad} (1908), \textit{Upanishade Brahmatattva} (1911), \textit{Brahmabindu Upanishad} (1914), \textit{Jagadgurur Abirbhab} (1916), \textit{Narir Nirbachan Adhikar} (1921), \textit{Mahadev} (1921), \textit{Avatar Tattva} (1928), \textit{Vedanta Parichay}, \textit{Buddhadever Nastikata} (1936), \textit{Yajnavalker Advaitavaad} (1936), \textit{Premadharma} (1938), \textit{Rasa Lila} (1938), \textit{Sankhya Parichay} (1939), \textit{Buddhi O Bodhi} (1940), \textit{Darshanik Bankim Chandra} (1940), \textit{Upanishad, Jara O Jibatattva}, and \textit{Karmabaad O Janmantarbaad} etc. along with his major works based on Indian

\textsuperscript{183} Invoking the Swadeshi spirit, this cotton mill was founded in Serampore of Hooghly district.
philosophy and Hindu religion, Hirendranath Dutta translated some classical Sanskrit texts in Bangla like Kalidasa’s *Meghdut*. Because of his immense contribution towards Bangla literature, the University of Calcutta awarded him with the Jagattarini Gold Medal.

Hirendranath Dutta died in 1942.

The *Gitay Ishwarvaad* by Hirendranath Dutta was published in the year of 1905. He was assigned to write a book on the Indian philosophy by a branch organization of Bangiya Sahitya Parishad. Hirendranath, since his teenage, was a sincere admirer and follower of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee. Though, both of them were from completely different backgrounds and professions, ideologically they were on the same path. In the context of writings, he was deeply influenced by Bankim Chandra and his ideas. The *Gita* is not an exception. Bankim Chandra started translating the text in Bangla. He could not complete the entire text except for the first four chapters. His incomplete translation focuses on the theories of action, knowledge and devotion of the *Gita*. Bankim Chandra used to speak on these topics in the gatherings of his followers also. Hirendranath studied the *Gita* in those gatherings. Later, in his *Gitay Ishwarvaad*, he elaborately wrote and discussed what he learnt from Bankim Chandra about the *Gita*. In the *Gitay Samajdarshan*, Tripura Shankar Sen Shashtri described how young Hirendranath used to listen to the discussion on the *Gita* from Bankim Chandra and its reflection on his *Gitay Ishwarvaad*184.

A few sections of the *Gitay Ishwarvaad* got published previously as a part of the monthly magazine, named the *Sahitya*. The section titled as the “*Vedanta O Gita*” was added later. He did not discuss about the history of the *Gita* as a part of the

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Mahabharata, and whether the text contains the teachings of the Krishna. He emphasized on the concept of the Almighty and how this concept has been dealt in the text Gita.


In these aforementioned chapters, he gave the brief introductions about the respective philosophical schools including the name of the profounders, canonical texts and main concepts of the respective schools of Indian philosophy. He shows there is no connection between Nyaya-Vaisheshik philosophy and the Gita. In the context of Sankhya, he compared the concept of the universal power and omnipresent existence with Herbert Spencer, quoting from Spencer’s the Ecclesiastical Institutions, and the First Principle: the Instability of Homogeneous. In the section of Patanjal Darshan, he substantiated his opinions on the differences between Sankhya and Patanjal with the quotations from the Indian Philosophy by Max Muller. While discussing the Yoga and the other orthodox philosophical schools, for every argument, he gave example from Max Muller's Indian Philosophy. In a few places, he also quoted Annie Besant.
His commentaries on the *Gita* aimed to establish the excellence of the *Gita* and its philosophy. In the *Gitay Ishwarvaad*, Hirendranath to show the supremacy of the Indian philosophy and the *Gita* extensively quoted from Max Muller’s the *Indian Philosophy*. Though he was a strong advocate of anti-British rule over India, by principle he was not against the British, rather say the Europeans. To place the *Gita* and Indian philosophy above all the scriptures and all the available philosophies, he in every context of his work along with his own explanations and commentaries gave references of the western intelligentsia’s work on the philosophical writings and religious scriptures of India in general and the *Gita* in particular.\(^{185}\)

\(^ {185}\) For a comprehensive understanding of ---- please go through ----.
Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950) and his *Gitar Bhumika* (1909)

The Indian revolutionary freedom fighter later turned into a yogi and spiritual leader, Sri Aurobindo, was born as Aurobindo Ghosh in 1872 in Calcutta in an affluent educated Kayastha family. His family from both the side, paternal and maternal, had strong Brahmo influence. His father Dr. Krishnadhan Ghosh was a former member of the Brahmo Samaj and maternal grandfather Raj Narayan Bose\(^\text{186}\) (1826-1899) was a prominent figure in the Brahmo Samaj.

In his childhood itself, Aurobindo was sent to the United Kingdom to have the elite occidental education. He spent the formative years of his life there. There is a saying that, because of his bringing up in the United Kingdom, he was not able communicate in his mother tongue Bangla until his active participation in the freedom movement. After completing schooling from the St. Pauls School, London, he joined in the King’s College, Cambridge with a senior classical scholarship in 1890. In that same year, he qualified the Indian Civil Service, though he could not pass some practical examinations at the end of the probation period. During this period, he met the king of Baroda\(^\text{187}\), Maharaja Sayaji Rao Gaekwad III (1863-1939), who offered him a job in Baroda College. In 1893, Aurobindo returned back to India to join the Baroda Service.

From 1893 to 1906 Aurobindo spent in Baroda, at first in the revenue department and later in the secretariat work. Then, he taught English in the Baroda

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\(^{186}\) A member of the Young Bengal in the initial days of his life, Raj Narayan Bose was a prominent figure in the Bengal Renaissance. In his twenties, monotheist Raj Narayan became a Brahmo and started writing in the *Tattvabodhini Patrika*, the journal of the Brahmo Samaj. He got the honorary title —Rishi” meaning “saint” for his contribution to the Brahmo Samaj.

\(^{187}\) Baroda, today’s Vadodara, was one of the princely states during the British Rule in India.
College and finally he became the vice-principal of that same college. These thirteen years, which he spent in Baroda, were the years of self-reformation and preparation for him. He was engrossed in literary activities, learning Sanskrit and other vernacular languages including his mother tongue Bangla and absorbing the spirit of India and Indian civilization from the past and the contemporary as well. This is the time when he started his covert political activities of the preparation of the Swadeshi movement with his fellow revolutionaries. These activities excluded him from the public deeds as per his position in Baroda. 1905 Bengal partition by the Viceroy of India, Lord Curzon could not resist him to quit the Baroda Service and join in the political movement openly. Soon, he left Baroda to join as the principal in the newly formed Bengal National College of Calcutta.

In 1906, Aurobindo joined in the new section of the Indian National Congress, which, having a small number of not so influential members, had preferred the direct political action rather than moderate reformism of the veteran leaders of the party. With the theory of the Non-cooperation, this party could not materialize much in action except some futile conflicts with the Moderate leaders at the annual assembly of the Indian National Congress. Aurobindo was the one who persuaded the leaders of this party to move towards as an All-India party in public with an explicit and exciting program, having the popular Maratha leader Bal Gangadhar Tilak as its head with the aim to dominate the moderate veteran leaders and take over the party and people‘s faith. This was the starting point of the tussle between the moderate and the extremist groups of the Indian National Congress.

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188 Most of his literary works, published from Pondicherry later, were written during this period in Baroda.
Aurobindo became the editor of the *Bande Mataram*, the newly started daily paper by the extremist group of the Congress. The *Bande Mataram*, completely conceptualized by him, had its circulation all over India. Though, it was winded up abruptly in 1908 because of the imprisonment of Aurobindo, it left a great impact among Indians and played a crucial role to reform their political thoughts.

In 1907 in Surat, Aurobindo chaired the Nationalist Conference which was not at all successful since two equal groups clashed forcefully and the National Congress was divided into many sects. In 1908 May, like many other suspects approximately thirty five, he was arrested in the Alipore Conspiracy Case. He was charged with the planning and supervising the attack on the magistrate Kingsford by the revolutionaries and was imprisoned in a solitary confinement of the Alipore Jail, Calcutta. Following one year of detention as an under trial prisoner, he was exonerated in May of 1909, since no valid evidence was established against him. After his release from the jail, he came out to find the party in an awful shape with the broken down organization and the scattered imprisoned leaders. Though the party was in existence, the disoriented members were not in a condition to execute any challenging action since the capable leaders were either imprisoned in the mainland India or banished to the Cellular Jail\(^{189}\) of the Andaman Nicobar Islands or were in exile. As the only remaining leader, Aurobindo tried to revive the nationalist movement for more than a year. During this time, he published the *Karmayogin*, a weekly paper in English and the *Dharmma*, a weekly in Bangla. With the realization that the nation's inefficiency to accomplish his dreams he disassociated himself from the movement and the political sphere. His spiritual awareness which he gained through the practice of Yoga and the fundamental divine experiences during his imprisonment of a year made him withdraw from his

\(^{189}\) Built in 1896, the Cellular Jail was the colonial prison for the British to punish the freedom fighters.
acquainted world. In the beginning of April, 1910, he started his journey towards Pondicherry of the French India from Chandannagar, the French colony situated on the river bank of the Ganges in the southern Bengal.

While leaving Bengal, Aurobindo might have intended to return to the movement under the positive circumstances, but the life he lived in Pondicherry changed his orientation. He completely disconnected himself from the politics, refused the President-ship of the Indian National Congress and engrossed himself in the spiritual work and meditation. He started publishing the *Arya*, a philosophical monthly in 1914. This journal serially published most of his important works on spirituality and Indian philosophy, such as the *Life Divine*, the *Synthesis of Yoga*, the *Essays on the Gita*, and the *Ishopanishad* etc. in 1921, after the appearance of more than six years, the publication of the *Arya* came to an end. In the beginning of his Pondicherry life, he was accompanied by a very few number of disciples. Gradually, the number of the followers cum disciples increased so that a community was required to maintain and guide those spiritual aspirants who left everything behind in pursuit of a higher spiritual life. This is how the Aurobindo Ashram of Pondicherry was founded initially. Later in 1926, Aurobindo, while confining himself in the seclusion, handed over “the Mother” all the responsibilities of the ashram.

August 15, 1947, on the day of Indian independence, Shri Aurobindo, one of the significant extremist revolutionaries of an era of freedom struggle, gave an important message on the dreams he worked for to the countrymen on request. In December 5, 1950 he breathed his last.

190 Born as Mirra Alfassa Richard (1878-1973), a French national was considered by Shri Aurobindo as his spiritual collaborator. After coming to Pondicherry in 1914 for a spiritual retreat with Shri Aurobindo, she decided to settle in Pondicherry itself. After Aurobindo’s retirement into seclusion, she took all the charges of the ashram and named it Shri Aurobindo Ashram. Till her last breath, she was the spiritual guide for all the spiritual aspirants of the Ashram. Aurobindo named her “the Mother”.
Although, the immense work of Shri Aurobindo on the *Shrimad Bhagavad Gita* is the *Essays on the Gita*, written during his stay in Pondicherry, his *Gitar Bhumika* written much earlier in 1909 is an important one. It was published chronically in the weekly named the *Dharmma* from September, 1909 to March, 1910. This was written after his spiritual experiences in the prison of the Alipore Jail. By then, he became a practitioner of Yoga. The *Gitar Bhumika* reflects the transformation of Aurobindo from a revolutionary to a spiritual leader.

Altogether, there are four sections in the book, “Prastabana” (introduction), “Pratham Adhyaya” (first chapter), “Dwitiya Adhyaya” (second chapter) and “Parishishta” (appendix). In the introduction, he spoke about Shri Krishna, the speaker, Arjuna, the listener, and the situation where the dialogue took place.

In the first chapter, Aurobindo discussed many issues from the context of the text to theories of Indian philosophy. Under different sections of the chapter he elaborately wrote about the key factors of the *Gita* like the clairvoyance and the clairaudience of Sanjaya, oratorical skills of Duryodhana, the premise of the war, the wretchedness of the warrior Arjuna to fight against his own kith and kin etc. There was a comprehensive mention about various thoughts Arjuna got after seeing his own kith and kin as his opponents in the battle field. Among them the author extensively mentions about the thoughts and apprehensions of Arjuna that this war will make him to kill his own relatives, which will lead to the end of the family along with the dynasty. He explicitly discusses the symptoms and limitations of the overpowering deceptive illusions that confused the great warrior Arjuna and made him step back from the middle of the battle field.
Two sections are completely dedicated to elaborately discuss the politics of Shri Krishna and its result. In these sections his subjugated revolutionary ideals and ideas come out while discussing the politics of Shri Krishna. Under these thoughts Aurobindo ornately discussed about the hegemony of the Kuru dynasty in the Indian subcontinent and the continuous clash took place between the Kurus and the Yadavas. He is praising Krishna as the “revolutionary” and the greatest politician. As per Shri Aurobindo, Krishna is an ideal of honest objectivity. Being a Yadava king, he is taking the side of the Kurus, on whose side the truth lies instead of planning to make one of the Yadavas as the emperor of the Bharatavarsha.

Shri Aurobindo begins the second chapter with the answers of Shri Krishna to the questions of the bewildered Arjuna. Here most of the discussions revolve around life, death, the god’s grace and pity, the way to overcome grief and sorrow and the ultimate truth and its pursuasion. In the appendix he mentioned about the religion of the Gita, sacrifice and renounce, form and formlessness of the god and Arjun’s vision of the celestial form of Shri Krishna. Shri Aurobindo’s Gitar Bhumika being a commentary on the Gita paves an appropriate path for the readers for further deeper studies of this religio-philosophical text.  

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191 For further details about Shri Aurobindo please go through the following sources,
Dwijendranath Tagore (1840-1926) and the *Gitapath*

Dwijendranath Tagore was born in 1840 in Calcutta with the legacy of the Jorasanko branch of the Tagore family of Calcutta. Dwijendranath Tagore was the grandson of Prince Dwarakanath Tagore (1794-1846), one of the first Indian industrialists and the eldest son of Maharshi Debendranath Tagore (1817-1905), the social reformer and the founder of the Brahmo Samaj movement.

Dwijendranath, initially being educated at home, studied in St. Paul’s School, Calcutta for some time and later in the Hindu College, Calcutta. He is the pioneer of Bangla shorthand and musical notation—Swaralipi. A poet, musician, philosopher, author and mathematician, he was an archetypal figure of the Bengal Renaissance.

Dwijendranath Tagore, passionately, had devoted his life for the love of language and literature. He was adept well in his mother tongue Bangla, as well as in the classical language Sanskrit. This distinguish thinker has good number of books in his credit, in both the languages, Bangla and English. Several topics have been dealt elaborately by him in his various types of writings. His science-related works, mainly *Ontology* (1871), *Boxometry* (1913), and a book on Geometry advocate his brilliance in that area. As a poet, he experimented with the form of composition and the style of rhythm. His first contribution to Bangla literature is the first ever Bangla

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192 Previously known as Mechuabazar, this area was the home for many leading families of the eighteenth-nineteenth century Bengal and became the cradle of Bengal Renaissance.

193 The Tagore family, originally hailed from Kushtiya in present Bangladesh, settled down in Calcutta in the early eighteenth century. As one of the leading families of Calcutta, this family has played a vital role in the Bengal Renaissance. Though this family is known for its cultural contribution, as a composite assessment their political and financial contributions must be remembered.

194 The system, used in written format to show the orally perceived music through letters and signs is called Swaralipi.

195 It was about the science of box-construction.

196 In this book, he replaced the twelfth Axioms by a new one.
translation of the Sanskrit poetry Meghadut by Kalidasa in 1861. He used two different styles of rhythm in this translation. His poetry collection Swapnaprayan\textsuperscript{197} was published in 1875 which is considered as an important work in the sphere Bangla poetry. Much later, in 1920, another poetry collection of him named Kavyamala was published. He was the contemporary of the Bengali poet Michael Madhusudan Dutt (1824-1873) whose literary influence was highly visible in the creation of the other poets of that period. Even so, Dwijendranath, with his own unique style of writing, carved the niche for himself in the literary sphere of Bengal. He wrote and composed many patriotic and devotional songs known as Brahmo Sangeet.

One of Dwijendranath’s finest creations is his philosophic writings. He had great insights and remarkable scholarship in Indian philosophy. He deeply delved in the philosophy of the Shrimad-Bhagavad-Gita. He translated the Upanishads and the Brahmo Dharma Grantha in Bangla. Among his philosophical writings, three volumes of Tattvavidya (1866-1868), Advaita Mater Samalochna\textsuperscript{198} (1896), Aryadharma O Bauddhadharmer Ghat-Protighat (1899) and Brahmajnan O Brahmasadhana\textsuperscript{199} (1900) are pioneering works in Bangla literature.

The significance of the conflict between the East and the West has been focused in the sociological writings of Dwijendranath Tagore. In this context, his other important books are Bhratribhab (1863), Sonar Kathi Rupar Kathi (1885), Aryami Ebong Sahebiyana (1890), Sonay Sohaga (1885), Samajik Roger Kaviraji Chikitsa (1891), Banger Rangabhumi (1907), Haramanir Anveshan (1908), and Prabandhamala (1920). Along with these aforementioned books, numerous articles of him have been published in various magazines like the Jnanankur, the Pratibimba, the

\textsuperscript{197} This poetry collection is actually a story of one young man’s travel to different places.

\textsuperscript{198} In this book, he attempted to disprove the Advaita theory of the Shankaracharya.

\textsuperscript{199} Following the path showed by his father Maharshi Debendranath Tagore, he discussed about the meditative Brahmabad in this book.
He was well known by his pseudonyms. The pseudonyms are 'Banger Ranga Darshak', meaning the humorous spectator of Banga aka Bengal” and 'Desher Byathar Byathi', meaning the sympathizer of the country”.

Dwijendranath Tagore’s Brahmo inclinations and his ideas and tendencies regarding this inclination developed spontaneously since his father Debendranath Tagore founded the Brahmo Samaj in his boyhood. Lifelong he had been a committed and devoted associate of the organization and served as a secretary of the Adi Brahmo Samaj for a few years from 1866 to 1871.

He was enthusiastically associated with all the con-temporal cultural and literary activities. Dwijendranath Tagore was the editor of the Tattvabodhini Patrika for twenty five years from 1885 and the Bharati Patrika for seven years since its beginning in 1887. The renowned Bengali weekly the Hitabadi was conceptualized and named by him.

He lent his hand in founding the National Society, the Saraswata Samaj (1882) and the Viddvajjan-Samagam (1874). He was closely connected with the scholarly people of the organizations like the Bharatvarshiya Bijnan Sabha, the Theosophical Society of Bengal and the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad etc. He actively participated in organizing the 'Hindu Mela' in 1867 and was the secretary from 1870 -1873. The patriotic songs of Hindu Mela composed by him became very popular. He was a distinguished member of the Bangiya Sahitya parishad and was elected as its president for three consecutive years from 1897 to 1900. He also became the president of the Bangiya Sahitya Sammelan (Bengal Literary Conference) in 1913.
Dwijendranath was a fine blend of originality and traditionalism. In Linguistics and other fields of knowledge, he had real insight into the intricacies of the subjects. But, in matter related to social life he was a traditionalist while his younger brothers Satyendranath Tagore and Jyotirindranath Tagore had rebelled against the social customs in different ways. A kind of temperamental difference between Dwijendranath Tagore and his brothers always existed.

Being born in an affluent family of Zamindars, Dwijendranath renounced all the worldly lavishness and extravagance. He chose to lead a life of simplicity. He dedicated his life to pursue knowledge in his own way. He devoted his time in cultivating and experimenting in various fields of life.

After the demise of Debendranath Tagore in 1905, he left Calcutta and reallocated to Shantiniketan to have a life of an Ashramik. There, he continued his pursuit of knowledge. A man of humor, Dwijendranath lived the last years of his life in the lap of nature in Shanitniketan. In those years, he was visited by many prominent figures of different walks of life and got very high regard of them. Mahatma Gandhi and Charles Freer Andrews (1871-1940) started calling him _Baro Dada_200, the way he was called by his younger brother Rabindranath Tagore, after their first meeting with Dwijendranath in Shantiniketan. Dwijendranath and Mahatma Gandhi regarded each other in their respective ways. There is a saying that, long before the countrymen, it is Dwijendranath, who identified Gandhi as the savior of the nation and recognized the _Mahatma_ in him.

In 1926, this exemplary figure passed away in Shanitniketan.

Dwijendranath Tagore’s most prolific writing on Indian philosophy is the text called the _Gitapath_, a commentary on the _Shrimad-Bhagavad-Gita_. Initially, the

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200 It’s a respectful way to call the elder brother in Bangla.
chapters of this text were published in the Tattvabodhini Patrika and the Pravasi. Later, in 1915, all those chapters got published in the form of a book titled as the Gitapath. Dwijendranath used to call the scholars and the teachers of the Brahma Vidyalaya of Shanitniketan for discussion sessions (Adhiveshan\textsuperscript{201}) where He used to discuss the chapters with them and incorporated their opinions and ideas regarding this before publishing. Henceforth, all the chapters are named as Adhiveshan.

There are twenty chapters in this book dealing with main philosophical concepts discussed in the Gita. With the examples relevant to his time, he gave easy explanations of the complicated concepts of Indian philosophy. Here while discussing about the philosophy of the Gita, he emphasized on the Sankhya Karika. For him the Shrimad Bhagavad Gita is a journey from the Sankhya of Kapil Muni towards the Yoga of Patanjali. Many a places he compared the Indian philosophy to the western philosophy with a special mention of Bentham and Kant. He attempted to draw parallels between the philosophers of Sophist and Stoic schools of Greece with the Kapil Muni of India and finally tried to place the Kapil Muni above all among these three. He gives priority to the ‘discourse of action’ and the ‘discourse of meditation’. Being an expert of geometry he attempted to give some explanations in the geometrical form. In the conclusion Dwijendranath Tagore has stressed on certain aspects of the Gita that should be focused by the readers and followers of the philosophy as well as he stressed on the ways of good deeds showed by the Brahmadadins\textsuperscript{202}. The text ends with those particular verses of the Gita describing Arjuna’s ultimate surrender to Shri Krishna.

\textsuperscript{201} In Bangla this kind of sessions are referred as ‘Adhiveshan’.
\textsuperscript{202} ‘Brahmadadins’ are the followers of the Brahma.
Swami Saradananda (1865-1927) and his Gitatattva

Swami Saradananda, born as Sharat Chandra Chakraborty, was one of the seventeen direct monastic disciples\(^{203}\) of Shri Ramakrishna Paramhansa\(^{204}\) (1836-1886). Swami Saradananda was born in an affluent traditional Brahmin family of Kolkata in 1836. Since boyhood, he was composed, religious and ready to help the needy poor people. Since his teenage, he became popular as a social worker in the locality of Amherst Street where his family was settled. After passing school level examination in 1882, he was admitted in the Metropolitan College of Calcutta for higher studies. In 1885, he qualified the F.A. Examination and joined in the Calcutta Medical College since his father, a rich and flourishing entrepreneur of the pharmaceutical industry, wanted him to be a doctor.

Along with his cousin brother, born as Shahsi Bhushan Chakrabarti and later known as Swami Ramakrishnananda\(^{205}\) (1863-1911), Saradananda got highly influenced by the Brahmo ideology and joined in the Brahmo Samaj; where both the

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\(^{203}\) Including Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902), others are Swami Brahmananda (1863-1922), Swami Premananda (1861-1918), Swami Joganananda (1861-1899), Swami Niranjanananda (d. 1904), Swami Shivananda (1854-1934), Swami Ramakrishnananda (1863-1911), Swami Turiyananda (1863-1922), Swami Adhutananda (d. 1920), Swami Abhedananda (1866-1939), Swami Advaitananda (1828-1909), Swami Trigunatitananda (1865-1914), Swami Akhandananda (1864-1937), Swami Subodhananda (1867-1932), Swami Vijananananda (1868-1938) and Swami Nirmalananda (1863-1938). These monastic disciples of Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, who are considered his apostles, played vital role in the Ramakrishna Mission Movement.

\(^{204}\) He, born as Gadadhar Chattopadhyay, later well known as Shri Ramakrishna Paramhansa, hailed from a poor Brahmin family of rural central Bengal, was a priest in the Bhuvatirini Temple of Dakshineswar near Calcutta in the initial days of his life. During the days of his priesthood, he was admired by a wide group of people and attracted many more by his extraordinary talks and aura. Gradually, he became a leading religious leader of the then Bengal. Posthumously he is considered as the saint of the nineteenth century Bengal. Following his path Swami Vivekananda and his monastic brother disciples commenced the Ramakrishna Mission Movement.

\(^{205}\) He was also one of the seventeen direct monastic disciples of Shri Ramakrishna Paramhansa.
brothers met young Narendranath Dutta, later known as Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902). The meeting of Swami Vivekananda with these two cousin brothers turned to be the turning point of their lives. In 1883, first time, Swami Saradananda met Shri Ramakrishna Paramhansa during a religious session where the later one was delivering a speech to a general audience, in Dakshineshwar. Since then, he became a regular visitor there and slowly but surely he became one of the close acquaintances of Shri Ramakrishna. This was the transformation time for him. In 1885, Shri Ramakrishna was diagnosed with throat cancer. Like the other disciples of Shri Ramakrishna, Swami Saradananda also devoted his time in nursing and serving him. Meanwhile, Swami Saradananda left his medical studies and decided to dedicate himself for the mission commenced by his guru Shri Ramakrishna. After the demise of Shri Ramakrishna, along with his brother disciples, renounced family life and established the first monastery of the Ramakrishna Mission order, the Barahnagar Math. The Barahnagar Math witnessed the event where all the seventeen monastic disciples of Shri Ramakrishna informally took the oath of ‘Sannyasa‘, renouncing family life and dedicate their lives for the good causes of human beings, on the Christmas Eve of 1886. Similar to the others, Sharat Chandra Chakrabaoty took the monastic name ‘Swami Saradananda‘.

In the beginning, Saradananda left for pilgrimage throughout India and spent years meditating in the Himalayas. In 1891, he returned to the Barahnagar Math, located in the northerh outskirts of Calcutta. In 1892, he took the initiative to shift the

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206 The chief disciple of Shri Ramakrishna Paramhansa and the founder of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, Swami Vivekananda represented India and Hinduism in the parliament of Worlds’ Religions in 1893.
207 In 1885, initially, Shri Ramakrishna was suffering from severe throat infection which later turned into throat cancer. From Dakshineswar, first he was shifted to Shyamapukur near Calcutta, and then to the Cossipore Garden House since his health condition became very critical. In August 1886, he breathed his last. He was taken care of by his disciples and Sarada Devi.
monastery from Barahnagar to Alambazar. After the epoch-making success of Swami Vivekananda in the West, Saradananda went to the United States to assist the former in preaching Vedanta and pooling money together for the foundation of the monastery and the welfare of the Indians in 1896. He was greatly admired there as he was a man of tranquility and moderate temperament, polite and with affectionate etiquette. His proficient and intelligent explanations of the Vedanta brought him high regards. During his stay there, the Vedanta Society was founded in New York. Saradananda was invited as a speaker at the Greenacres Conference of Comparative Religions to talk about the Vedanta and the Yoga. Lots of spectators used to gather to listen to him in cities like Brooklyn, the New York and Boston etc. His four years stay in the United States was spent to lead the Vedanta Movement in an organized way to its success. He returned back to India in 1898.

The Ramakrishna Math and Mission were founded in 1897 after Swami Vivekananda returned from the West. As one of the most eligible persons for the designation, Swami Saradananda became the general secretary of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission and continued to serve the organization as the general secretary till the last days of his life. 1902 onwards, since the demise of Swami Vivekananda and the departure of Swami Trigunatitananda towards the United States of America, Swami Saradananda took all the responsibilities on his shoulder. Together with the daily affairs of the organization, he also had to manage all the responsibilities of the Udbodhan, the Bengali journal of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. From articles writing to fund collection to final supervision, the existence of the journal completely depended on him. Gradually, the journal started getting financial support and managed to have a building of its own in 1908. During this period, he wrote the monumental biography of Shri Ramakrishna Paramhansa the Shri Shri Ramakrishna
Lilaprasanga or the Ramakrishna, the Great Master. Through his guidance only the Ramakrishna Mission and Math could avoid the problem with the British Government regarding the joining of two freedom fighters in the order.\footnote{In 1909, two freedom fighters, co-accused in the Maniktala Bomb Case, Devavrata Bose and Sachindranath Sen, quitted political activities and came to join the Ramakrishna Mission Order. Though, the senior monks opposed strongly, Swami Saradananda accepted both of them and explained the stand of the organization to the high Government officials.} Apart from these institutional responsibilities, the huge responsibility he took on was taking care of Smt. Sarada Devi.

Swami Saradananda detached himself from all the activities of the mission since the new administrative body was formed in 1926. Since then till his last breath in the august of 1927, he engrossed himself completely in meditation and contemplation. He, a man of mature wisdom, impartial decision and strong support for women, was respected and admired by a wide range of people.

Swami Saradananda’s work on the Gita is in the form of a book named the Gitatattva. This book contains the series of lectures given by him from 1898 to 1903 in various places such as the Vivekananda Society, the Ramakrishna Mission and the Harisabhas of the towns of the Gangetic planes of the southern Bengal etc. To preach the ideologies of Shri Ramakrishna Paramhansa and to give the impartial explanations of the Shrimad Bhagavad Gita, he delivered all these lectures. As a book, it was published in 1928 by the Udbodhan Karyalaya, the publication section of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission.

There are all together fifteen chapters in the book. The first chapter named “Parichay” contains one lecture delivered in the Vivekananda Samiti, in November, 1902 where he spoke about the introduction to the Gita. The second and third chapters are the gist of two lectures on the discourse of knowledge, named the Jnanayoga
(Pratham Prastab)” and the “Jnanayoga (Dwitiya Prastab)” of the Gita delivered in the Vivekananda Samiti in the December of 1902. The fourth and fifth chapters contain the gist of the lectures on the discourse of action, named the “Karmayoga (Pratham Prastab)” and the “Karmayoga (Dwitiya Prastab)” delivered at the before mentioned place in January, 1903. The sixth one named “Jnana O Bhaktir Samanvaya” is the lecture delivered in the Harisabha of Bally in January, 1903. The “Vedanta O Bhakti” and the “Sadhana O Siddhi” are the seventh and eighth chapters delivered at the Harisabha of Konnagar. From ninth to thirteenth, the chapters are the lectures delivered at the Ramakrishna Mission in August and September, 1898. The names of the chapters are respectively, the “Veda-Katha”, the “Srishti-Rahasya”, the “Sadhan-Nishtha”, the “Karmer Dvibidha Rupa” and the “Karma-Rahasya”. The Fourteenth chapter named as the “Upasanhar” is the conclusion of the previous five lectures that were delivered in the previously mentioned place. The last one is the “Aptapurush O Avatarkuler Jibananubhav”.

In the introduction itself, Swami Sradananda suggested the pupils not to follow the commentaries of the Gita by the earliest scholars like the Shankaracharya, the Madhvacharya and the Ramanujacharya etc. Here, like any other chapter, he exemplified a few issues with the life of Shri Ramakrishna. Later, in some sections, he glorified the ancient history of India. He clearly mentioned about the issues related to the four layered caste system and class in the Indian context. In many contexts while discussing about the discourse of action and devotion he quoted Swami Vivekananda comprehensively. Mostly, in the Gitatattva, Swami Saradananda focused his lectures mainly on the discourse of action with the aim to inspire and
encourage the young generation of India. Lastly he talked about the concept of incarnation.\textsuperscript{210}

\textsuperscript{210} For further details about Swami Saradananda please go through the following sources,
1. http://www.udbodhan.org/, the official website of the Udbodhan Karyalaya, the publication section of the Ramakrishna Mission.
3. http://www.abuddhistlibrary.com/Buddhism/H%20World%20Religions%20and%20Poetry/World%20Religions/From%20the%20Indian%20Tradition/Teachers%20from%20the%20Indian%20Tradition/The%20Direct%20Disciples%20of%20Sri%20Ramakrishna/Life%20and%20Teachings/life_directdisciples.htm
Jagadish Chandra Ghosh (1871-1958) and his *Shri Gita* (1925)

The legendary *Gita* scholar Jagadish Chandra Ghosh is celebrated as the ‘Gitashastry’ among the literary and intellectual spheres of Bengal.

Jagadish Chandra Ghosh was born in 1871 in a Kayastha family of the village named Dashra of Dhaka district of present days’ Bangladesh. After completing schooling in the local high school of Manikgunj, he became a graduate in Bachelor of Arts (BA) from the Dhaka College. Though later he joined in the Dhaka University to pursue a course in Law, he did not complete it. He commenced his professional life as a school teacher. As a head-master, he worked in many schools of the undivided Bengal. The experience of teaching in schools made his base strong as an educationist. Along with teaching profession, he started writing books mainly on Indian Philosophy, Hindu scriptures and pedagogy. His important works are the *Shri Gita*, the *Shri Krishna O Bhagavat Dharma*, the *Bharat Atmar Bani*, the *Karmabani*, the *Shikhsarthir Dharmashikhsha*, the *Adhunik Bangla Byakaran*, the *Chhtrabodh Bangla Byakaran*, and the *Matribhasha*. His only available book in English titled as the *Soul of India Speaks* got published posthumously in 1960. Among his books the *Shri Gita* and the *Shri Krishna O Bhagavat Dharma* are well acknowledged by several scholars and celebrated by a wide range of readers. As per a few scholars, not a single work like this has been done on the discourse of Shri Krishna after Bankim Chandra Chatterjee.
Like many other contemporaries, Jagadish Chandra Ghosh was also a dedicated nationalist in his young age. He, a staunch follower of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, involved himself in the Swadeshi Movement. Throughout his entire life he strictly boycotted all the foreign products. A book, written by him during the 1905 partition of Bengal titled *A Book for the Swadeshi*, was banned by the British Government.

In 1914, Jagadish Chandra Ghosh established a publishing house named the Presidency Library in Dhaka. It was started with the intention to publish only text books written by Jagadish Chandra Ghosh himself for school students in both the languages, English and Bangla. Later, many more books by other authors came into the fold of this publishing house, though it continued as an educational publisher. In 1930s, he handed over the charge of this publishing house to his son Anil Chandra Ghosh who opened a branch of it in Calcutta. Later, post independence, this publishing house was shifted to Calcutta. It has included the publication of religious books also and it is still operating with all the glory.

After the Indian Independence and the partition of Bengal in 1947, situation got worse there in Dhaka, the capital of the then East Pakistan. An octogenarian Jagadish Chandra Ghosh was shifted to Calcutta after the riot of 1950 happened in Dhaka. In the December of 1958, he suffered from thrombosis and breathed his last in Calcutta.

Jagadish Chandra Ghosh is notable for his book the *Shri Gita*, a translation cum commentary of the *Shrimad-Bhagavad-Gita*. This translation was published in 1925 from Dhaka. There are eighteen (18) chapters with the same title as it is there in the Sanskrit *Shrimad Bhagavad Gita*. In the introduction he wrote elaborately about

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211 The revolutionary freedom fighter Anil Chandra Ghosh was imprisoned by the British Government for years.
the greatness and the impact of the *Gita*. As per him the *Gita*, a mystic text is the synopsis of all the shastras of Indian religio-philosophical traditions. He has penned down the Vedic religion and its expansion in details. He dealt with the *Rigveda*, the *Upanishads* and the *Smriti* literature and how the *Gita* becomes a compilation of all these philosophical propagations. He further wrote about the Bhagavat Dharma and the religion of the *Gita*. In this context he threw light on the main concepts of the *Gita*. As conclusion he brought the earliest commentaries as well as the commentaries written by Gandhi.
Rajsekhar Basu (1880 - 1960) and his Shrimad Bhagavad Gita

One of the most respected figures of the 20th century Bengal, Rajsekhar Basu, who got the title \textit{Parashuram}, was born in 1880 in the Burdwan district of central Bengal. He spent his childhood in Dwarbanga of Bihar. Since then his interest in science and science related things was exhibited. After completing schooling from Dwarbanga, he went to Patna to pursue further studies. He became adept in Hindi as he grew up in Hindi speaking area. Surprisingly, one of the notable literary persons of Bangla Literature, Rajshekhar Basu became familiar with the language and got introduced to the literature after coming to Calcutta to join Presidency College for higher studies in his early twenties. Though, as a trend of the contemporary era, he also acquired the L.L.B degree and practiced law. Science has been his prior interest throughout life and made him an eminent chemist. In 1903, Acharya Prafulla Chandra Roy\textsuperscript{212} (1861-1944), the founder of the Bengal Chemical and Pharmaceutical\textsuperscript{213} asked him to join in the company. Soon after joining, he was promoted to the managerial post and later he became the secretary of the company. His contribution led this company to come up with a successful house of research and manufacturing. Still after his retirement also, he was closely associated with this organization.

Apart from being a chemist by profession, Rajsekhar Basu is celebrated for his literary creations. His significant presence is prominent in different genres of literary writings. In 1920s, he came up with his first book the \textit{Gaddalika}, a collection of short stories which was well received. His remarkable contribution to Bangla language and

\textsuperscript{212} Acharya Prafulla Chandra Roy was the renowned chemist and entrepreneur of the then Bengal. He authored \textit{A History of Hindu Chemistry from the Earliest Times to the Middle of Sixteenth Century} in 1902. He was honored by the Royal Society of Chemistry for his lifelong work .

\textsuperscript{213} The first pharmaceutical company of India was established in 1901 in Calcutta.
literature is the *Chalantika*, published in 1931. The *Chalantika*, a dictionary with the concise grammar of Bangla in its appendix, shows the effort of Rajshekhar to restructure and rationalize Bangla orthography. This work has been accepted and highly appreciated by the entire literary community of Bengal. Although, his essays, published in several magazines and journals, were not published in the form of a book in his lifetime, about twenty eight essays have been published posthumously named as the *Prabandhabali* (a collection of essays). The *Prabandhabali*, published in 2001 by Mitra O Ghosh Publications, Kolkata, is having two sections the *Uttar Chalachinta* and the *Vividha*. His translations of the *Mahabharata* and the *Shrimad Bhagavad Gita* into Bangla have enriched Bangla translation literature to a great extent. Rajshekahr basu’s short stories have been adapted by Satyajit Ray⁵¹⁴ (1921-1992) into films. The movie the *Parashpathar* was based on a short story named the *Parashpathar* and the *Mahapurush* was based on the short story the *Birinchibaba*.

Along with the orthography, Rajshekar Basu played a vital role in the printing technology of Bengal also. He assisted Suresh Chandra Majumder in creating the first linotype in Bangla. The first books, entirely printed in Bangla linotype, were the second edition of the short stories by Rajshekhar Basu, mainly the *Hanumaaner Swapna*.

Rajshekhar Basu, a man with diversity, was an active member of the National Council of Education and the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad. He did not participate in the Indian Independence Movement directly. But, he used to assist the revolutionaries secretly by providing money, chemicals and the formulas to prepare bombs.

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⁵¹⁴ Satyajit Ray, an author, illustrator, music composer and film critic, is well known as an independent film maker. Hailed from a family, prominent in the art and literature in Bengal, he received many awards, from the National Film Awards to the Bharat Ratna. He got the honorary Academy Award posthumously.
Rajshekhar Basu was awarded with many awards from different organizations. He received the Jagattarini Medal and the Sarojini Medal in 1940 and 1945 from Calcutta University. Later, the Calcutta University awarded him the D.Lit. in 1957. The Jadavpur University did the same in 1958. He got the “Rabindra Purashkar” in 1955 for the Krishnakali and Other Stories and the “Padma Bhushan” in 1956. For the Anandibai and Other Stories he was awarded the “Akademi Purashkar”.

A remarkable personality, Rajshekhar Basu, though was a chemist by profession, had expertise in various fields of wide range, both in Science and Arts. He made significant contributions to the varied areas, such as mechanical engineering, cottage industries, lexicography, literature as well as the religious scriptures. As an astonishingly creative writer with humors, he won a great place in the intellectual sphere of the then Bengal.

He had a very tragic personal life. He witnessed the demises of his near and dear ones, including his only daughter and son-in-law. Nevertheless, the tragedy could not hamper his writings and his writings had any impact of the tragedy. In 1960, he passed away.

Rajashekar Basu tried to keep the text the Shrimad Bhagavad Gita as it is in his translation in Bangla named the Shrimad Bhagavad Gita. There are eighteen (18) chapters in the translation like the source text. As per his opinion the Gita is a book, which talks about the knowledge both the theoretical and the practical aspects of life. He sees the Gita not only as ethics, but as the way of life. The author asserts that the Gita can liberate people from their mortal sorrows. In the introduction, he begins with the several factors and reasons that would encourage the readers to engage them with the Gita. He highlighted on the Sankhya Darshan and Yoga Darshan. He praised the
Sankhya Discourse of Kapil Muni. He claims that the discourse of Sankhya of Kapil Muni and present days Sankhya Discourse are completely two different things. He focuses on the usage of the Yoga that is mentioned in the *Gita*. He elaborately wrote about the Karma Yoga, Jnan Yoga, the Nishkamkarma and the Yajna. The concepts of Dharma and Swadharma have been dealt well by him. After discussion about the philosophy of the Gita, Rajshekhar Basu concludes with godliness of Shri Krishna and the discourse of devotion.