



Chandernagore College

A Historical Evolution



CHANDERNAGORE COLLEGE – A HISTORICAL EVOLUTION

Chandernagore, situated on the western bank of the river Hooghly, is part of a unique and significant stretch of riverine civilization which has been the site of European trading posts and colonies from the 16th century. Over the last four centuries, this region, consisting of Bandel, Chinsura, Chandernagore and Serampore has hosted the Dutch, the Portuguese, the Danish, the French and of course the English traders and colonialists, earning for itself the moniker of ‘Little Europe’. The civilization and culture of Hooghly district, therefore, is marked by a remarkable fusion of multiple strands of European influences and varied indigenous cultural traditions. The pre-colonial history of this district is also remarkably rich with a literary, cultural and commercial heritage that goes back several centuries with Satgaon or Saptagram once featuring as one of the most prominent ports of Bengal through which trading flourished across Asia.

Chandernagore College itself bears testament to this rich historical context. The institution traces its origin back to the establishment of the St. Mary’s Institution, established by the Jesuit priest M. Magloire Barthet in 1862. Since then the institution gradually evolved first into *École Publique de Garçons* and began the teaching of the First Arts (F.A.) Course in 1891 under the aegis of the University of Calcutta and later developed into *College Dupleix* (1901). At this point, the college was directly administered by the erstwhile French Government of Chandernagore. However, the college was closed in 1908 owing to the escalation of revolutionary nationalist activities and only re-opened in 1931, after a gap of 23 years. Since 1931, the *College Dupleix* began to offer Intermediate Courses in Arts and Science, under the aegis of the University of Calcutta and the first graduate courses started in 1947. By then the college had been renamed *College de Bussy* and it continued as such even after 15th August 1947 when India became independent. Chandernagore became a Free City in November 1947 and that led to the rechristening of *College de Bussy* as Chandernagore College. After the formal integration of Chandernagore into India, the city came under the Government of West Bengal on 2nd October 1954 and Chandernagore College came under the control of the state administration. Since then, the college has continued to grow and currently teaches undergraduate and postgraduate students across 19 disciplines. It also has the unique distinction of being the only college in West Bengal where French is taught at the Under-Graduate and Post-Graduate levels.

Establishment of Departments and Commencement of Honours Courses:

Name of the Department	Year of Establishment	Year of Commencement of Honours Course	Year of Commencement of PG Course
BENGALI	1931	1953	2006
BOTANY	1981	1994	
CHEMISTRY	1931	1953	
COMMERCE	1947	1957	
COMPUTER SCIENCE	2007	2007	
ECONOMICS	1931	1948	
EDUCATION	2008	2008	
ENGLISH	1931	1953	
ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE	2008	2008	
FRENCH	SINCE INCEPTION.	1947	2008
GEOGRAPHY	1953	1965	2001
HISTORY	1931	1948	
MATHEMATICS	1931	1948	
PHILOSOPHY	1931	1963	
PHYSICS	1931	1953	
POLITICAL SCIENCE	1931	1966	
SANSKRIT	1931	1981	
SOCIOLOGY	2008	2008	
ZOOLOGY	1953	1994	

FIRST PHASE: 1862 – 1908

The history of French education in Chandernagore probably started during the middle of the eighteenth century under the aegis of Catholic missionaries who arrived from France and the history of the next hundred years or so is marked by the presence of various primary level institutions which offered French and Bengali education to students. Education was provided without any fees in St. Mary's Institution as well which gradually began to offer French courses of Certificatd' Etudes Primaires Elementaires (C.E.P.E). and Brevet Elementaire levels. Due to the growing demand for English education in colonised India, from 1872, the institution started teaching English as well. Based on arrangements sanctioned by the colonial government of British India, the students of the English department of St. Mary's Institution

became eligible to sit for the Entrance examination conducted then by the University of Calcutta. After Father Barthet, the institute was administered by other French missionaries like M. Perdijon (1883) and M. De Larue (1886). Eventually, in 1887 the control of the institute was handed over to the erstwhile French government, leading to secularised administration. The institute was then re-named as Ecole Publique de Garçons (Boys' Public School) with Mons. Y. Quoitanié as its first Director.

With the passage of time the popularity of the English department kept enhancing and the First Arts curriculum approved by the University of Calcutta started from 1891, as confirmed by the Calendar of the University of Calcutta. The first batch of students from the college appeared for the F.A. examination in 1893. During this phase of 1891 to 1908 there were three different streams running simultaneously in the college – students from the French section sat for Certificat d' Etudes Primaires Elementaires and Brevet Elementaires while those from the English section sat for Entrance and F.A. examinations. Though the latter examinations were conducted by the University of Calcutta based on the agreement between the British and French colonial governments, neither the British Government nor the University of Calcutta exercised any authority over College Dupleix. There were several French officials who served as Director during this phase such as M. J. F. Duillot (1893), M. H. Sirrot (1894) and M. Decosta (1895-1900). The longest serving Director of this period was the formidable M. H. Poudens who served from 1901 to 1908. However, he was ably assisted by the renowned Indian academic and revolutionary Charuchandra Roy who acted as the Deputy Director. During 1903-1904 he even served as Interim Director because M. Poudens had gone on a year-long leave. He even served in the post of Delege du Chef du Service de l'Instruction Publique and was the first Bengali to do so. Not only did he significantly contribute to the academic welfare of the college but he was also instrumental in the development of revolutionary activities in and around Chandernagore. He was even arrested during the Manikatala Bomb Case in 1908. Previously, there was also an attempt to assassinate the Mayor of Chandernagore, M. Talvarde in 1907. In view of such circumstances and growing nationalist activities, the French government of Pondicherry in consultation with M. Poudens decided to close the College section of College Dupleix. The journey that began in 1862 thus came to an abrupt end in 1908. However, the school section of College Dupleix continued till 1910 under the Directorship of M. H. Poudens. Shri Charu Chandra Roy, who was released only a few months after his arrest, also rejoined in the school section.

SECOND PHASE: 1909 – 1931

Both Charu Chandra Roy and the great philanthropist Harihar Sett of Chandannagar vigorously endeavoured to convince the French authorities of the need for re-opening the College, especially in the wake of increased demand for college education and the absence of such institutes of higher education in

Chandernagore. Their attempts were accompanied by the initiatives undertaken by Shri Narayanchandra Dey who was a councilor of erstwhile Chandernagore Municipality. Furthermore, as members of the General Council Shri Bholanath Das and Shri Manindranath Nayek proposed the establishment of an intermediate college. The French authorities argued that if the government decides to re-establish the College, the Municipality of Chandernagore will have to bear a quarter of the overall expenditure. This proposal was even accepted on 23rd October, 1927 by the municipality. However, the General Council refused to accept this proposal as they considered the proposed allocation of funds to be rather inadequate. Despite various attempts, therefore, the dream of re-opening the College continued to be deferred.

Things, however, began to improve from 1928 when Charu Chandra Roy got elected as a municipal councillor and also as a member of the General Council in Pondicherry where he served as the Vice-President. This was followed by changes in the French political establishment as well which together created a conducive environment for the re-opening of the College. In 1929 Mr. Roy proposed that the Chandernagore Municipality would build a separate building for the college and allot Rs. 4000 every year for operational expenditure. These proposals received official approval in 1930 after the arrival of Mons. Adrien Juvanon as the Governor and he approved the release of Rs. 6000 for the re-opening of the College. Finally, on 19th May 1931 Mons. Juvanon officially sanctioned the re-opening of Chandernagore College through the following order:

ORDER

Art 1. The intermediate classes in Arts and in Science will be established in the English section of the College Duplex of Chandernagore from the 1st July 1931.

Art 2. The present order will be published, registered and communicated to all concerned.

Pondicherry, the 9th May 1931

Adrien Juvanon

After 23 years of closure, the College finally re-opened on 4th July 1931 and it is a curious irony of history that the same Charu Chandra Roy, whose role and involvement in the nationalist movement had been the pretext for closing the college, got the opportunity to re-open the same college and thus inaugurate a new phase in the history of teaching and learning in Chandernagore College. In acknowledgement of his tireless efforts, he was endowed with the title of Officer d' Academic by the French government.

THIRD PHASE: 1932 – 1938

The re-opening of the College was followed by several administrative and academic transformations. Since the F.A. course was replaced by Intermediate courses in Arts and Science, the college required more space as well as renewed affiliation from the University of Calcutta. It was decided that separate buildings would be rented to start Cours d' Intermediaire. The new phase of the college therefore began on 4th July 1931 in Somerset House, near the south-east corner of Kuthir Math. On 17th July, the University of Calcutta issued the following declaration: "It is hereby notified for general information that the Government of Bengal, and the Ministry of Education are pleased to order that with effect from the commencement of the session 1930-31 the College Duplex, Chandernagore shall be affiliated in the Calcutta University in English, Bengali, French, Sanskrit, History, Logic, Elements of Civics, Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics to the I.A. and I.Sc. Standards". Significantly, not only was affiliation given from 1930-31 academic sessions, despite the college's re-opening in 1931, French remained a part of the sanctioned courses.

There were however several problems related to space, financial resources, laboratory equipments, books in the library and even furniture. Yet, teaching-learning continued due to the dedication of several teachers who performed their duties despite a meagre salary. Particularly remarkable is the example of Harihar Chattopadhyay who taught for two years without remuneration. Other notable teachers of the time were Nripendranath Mukhopadhyay (English), Sudheerchandra Chattopadhyay (Bengali and Sanskrit), Surendranath Goswami and Pramodranjan Bhar (Logic), Sitieshchandra Basu (Civics), Ramesh Chandra Mitra (History), Dheerendranath Mukhopadhyay (Mathematics), Phanibhushan Mitra (Physics), Ashutosh Gangopadhyay (Chemistry), Mons. Buffard (French) and Bhabanicharan Das (Science demonstrator).

During this phase the college was governed by several Administrator-Principals appointed by French authorities. However, the University of Calcutta objected to the appointment of such Administrator-Principals and in 1932 Mons. Buffard was appointed as interim Principal. However due to objections raised by the University regarding his educational qualifications, he was replaced in 1933 by Dheerendranath Mukhopadhyay. Till 1945, he served as both Principal and teacher of Mathematics.

In the first year of re-opening itself, there were hundred eighteen students admitted to the college and the numbers kept increasing steadily. Therefore, the college again had to be shifted from Somerset House and relocated to the comparatively spacious establishment of Bholanath Nandi's house on Quai Duplex for an annual rent of Rs. 1500. Despite all this, the French Government continued to be indifferent to the welfare of the college. Not only were there demands for curtailing its budget, there was also no eagerness

to change its status to a permanent one. In 1937, however, after both Charuchandra Roy and Sadhucharan Mukhopadhyay were elected to the General Council, there were renewed initiatives for ensuring stable and continued development of the college. Due to their attempts and the personality and influence of Charu Chandra Roy, the governor issued an order on 2nd June 1938 through which the government of French India took on the responsibility of administering the college. Thus, seven years after it re-opened the College finally secured a stable framework for its future evolution – a journey of continued improvement and necessary expansion.

FOURTH PHASE: 1939 – 1947

Under the direct supervision of Chef du Service de l'Instruction Publique, the college was renamed as College Dupleix: Section d'Etudes Superieures Franco-Angalises de Chandernagore and the teaching staff of the college were formed into a separate cadre. However, the development of the College, especially its upgradation into a College teaching graduate courses, was interrupted by the beginning of World War II and the involvement of French government in the war. After the end of the war, On 13th September 1945, the college was rechristened as College de Bussy, after Marquis de Bussy-Castelnau, who had served with distinction under Joseph François Dupleix in the East Indies Company, in order to distinguish it from the school section which continued to be known as College Dupleix and this made way for the commencement of general degree courses in the college. Incidentally the Principal of the college, Dheerendranath Mukhopadhyay, during the 1945-46 session served as the administrator of both College de Bussy and the school section of College Dupleix and was the only one entrusted with both responsibilities in the history of these institutions. In 1946, the General Council was replaced with Representative Assembly and Chandernagore had five representatives in it. One of them was Sudhangshu Shekhar Dutta, lecturer in Mathematics. It was he who submitted a proposal for the initiation of General Degree Courses in the college which was passed as well. Thereafter, with the approval of the University of Calcutta, from July 1947, Honours courses in English and French and I.A. course in Commerce began to be taught as well. Towards the end of the same year approval was received for the commencement of Honours Courses in Physics and Chemistry and an intermediate course in Geography. To accommodate students of these new streams in consultation with Mr. Bholanath Nandi, a one storey building was erected on the ground adjacent to the main college building. 1947, of course, is also the year of Indian Independence. However, even as the rest of the country celebrated independence on 15 August 1947, Chandernagore and four other places continued to serve as French outposts. However, in the same year the French authorities sought to grant greater rights and autonomy to inhabitants of Chandernagore by first creating a 6 person Administrative Council on 30th June, 1947 which was later replaced with a 25

person Governing Council on 7 November 1947. On 27th November, 1947 Chandernagore was officially decreed by the French to be a 'Free City'. The Governing Council of the Free City renamed College De Bussy as Chandernagore College and the school section of College Duplex was also renamed as Kanailal Vidyamandir, named after revolutionary Kanailal Dutt who was one of the students of Charu Chandra Roy and was also arrested and thereafter executed during the Alipore Bomb Trial. Thus, the journey that began with St. Mary's Institution in 1862, evolved into two historical institutions – Chandernagore College and Kanailal Vidyamandir - which have since contributed immensely to the holistic proliferation of education in Chandernagore.

FIFTH PHASE: 1948 – 1952

Just as the Governing Council of the Free City of Chandernagore attempted to resolve various municipal problems, they also ensured laudable improvement with regard to Chandernagore College. A building was rented for the functioning of the college office in 1948 and during that same year the teaching of Honours course in Mathematics along with graduate courses in Physics and Chemistry began after the inauguration of the Science building in February 1948 and the acquisition of necessary laboratory equipment. This was followed by the commencement of Honours courses in Commerce, History and Economics in the next couple of years. The council also attended to the issues of salary enhancement, the establishment of meteorological and astronomical observatories and the erection of a new storey of the Science Building. During this time, an annual newsletter of the College was published, a reunion programme was organised and teacher-training classes for local school teachers were also inaugurated. Despite these endeavours this phase was bound to come to an end as the people of Chandernagore, with an overwhelming majority, had demanded freedom from French rule, through a referendum held on 19th June 1949. In a consequence of the results of the referendum, a formal Treaty of Cession was signed between the governments of India and France on 2nd February 1951 which was then ratified by the National Assembly of France on 9th June 1952. From 1st July 1952, Chandernagore began to be governed an Administrator under the jurisdiction of the Department of External Affairs, Government of India. With this political change, Chandernagore College entered yet another phase of its meandering history.

SIXTH PHASE: 1952 – 1954

Even during this short and transitory phase, the College continued to grow with the commencement of Honours courses in Bengali, Physics and Chemistry as well as Intermediate courses in Botany and Zoology. During this phase, Phanibhushan Mitra, Head of the Department of Physics served as the Principal and he remained in this post up to 1964. He had also proposed the creation of a Franco-Indian

Board of Education for “continuance of French cultural heritage” in Chandernagore in accordance with Article IX of the Treaty of Cession. However, any such board must necessarily be pan-Indian in nature and approval for it could not be secured. During the early part of 1954, under the leadership of Dr. Amarnath Jha, a commission was established to determine the administrative future of Chandernagore. Based on the commission’s recommendations, it was decided that Chandernagore and surrounding areas, as part of Chandernagore sub-division would be included within the state of West Bengal. With that began the current administrative phase of Chandernagore as well as Chandernagore College, after the cessation of direct rule by the Central Government of India.

SEVENTH PHASE: 1954 – 1989

On 2nd October, 1954, Chandernagore formally became a part of West Bengal and with that Chandernagore College became a Government College as part of the West Bengal Education Service. While some of the older teaching and non-teaching members continued to serve in accordance with previously formulated French service rules, new recruits were subjected to West Bengal Service Rules. Since then, the history of the College has been one of continuous expansion in terms of infrastructure, number of students and teachers, establishment of new academic departments and even the commencement of post-graduate courses in certain departments.

A significant feature of this phase is the termination of the College’s prolonged association with the University of Calcutta and in 1960 it was affiliated to the University of Burdwan. The College continues to be affiliated to the University of Burdwan and in 2002 it was declared a constituent College of the University of Burdwan. Over the last five to six decades, the College has introduced under-graduate courses in several subjects and now caters to a wide array of academic disciplines and interests. Almost each decade has seen the introduction of new under-graduate and post-graduate courses in different departments. Departments of Philosophy and Political Science began teaching Honours courses from 1963 and 1966 respectively. This was followed by the introduction of Honours courses in the Department of Sanskrit in 1981.

EIGHTH PHASE: 1990 – 2016

From 1990 onward attempts were undertaken to initiate new under-graduate courses. In 1994 Botany and Zoology began around the same time when approval was received for beginning Honours courses in both subjects. Post-Graduate classes had also started in the Departments of Geography (2001), Bengali (2006) and French (2008). Chandernagore College thus became the only institute in West Bengal which teaches French at both Under-Graduate and Post-Graduate levels. This was followed by introduction of Honours

courses in four different subjects – Computer Science, Environmental Science, Sociology and Education within a span of four years (2007-2011).

The College was evaluated by the National Accreditation and Assessment Council (NAAC) in 2007 and was awarded ‘B++’ rank. In 2016 the College was re-accredited by NAAC with the same grade but with an improved overall score.

NINTH PHASE: 1990 – 2016

Since 2017, relentless attempts have been made by the College authority to accommodate continuous growth for which infrastructural improvements have become necessary and the College achieved several milestones with continuous financial support from the Department of Higher Education and National schemes such as Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA 2.0).

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

❖ Application of Software

In 2017, the logistics of the College Office was changed drastically and Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software was introduced in the College Office. As a result, all relevant structured data of students can be successfully captured and monitored. Admission, registration, enrolment and all other allied activities of students are practiced through online mode. This explicit change benefitted the students a lot as the online transaction can be done 24x7 instead of the Office hours limited to 10 to 5 and also their work can be done without being physically present in the College Office. Personnel involved with student related activities has also benefitted. From 2022, the previously standalone server of the college, related to the ERP system, was upgraded to a cloud-based server, enabling round-the-clock data utilization from any physical location. Through the ColoSol software, all notices are also communicated to the students through a direct, online route, ensuring perfect and transparent information transmission. Though the efficiency of the College Office has improved, there is scope for further improvisation.

❖ Girls’ Hostel

In 2018, a four storied building was built within the College campus for the purpose of a Girls’ Hostel and it became fully operational from April 2019, which has been a long-cherished demand of the students of this College.

❖ **RUSA**

In 2017, the College had submitted a DPR to the Higher Education Department for funding of the Centre-State National Scheme, Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) 2.0 project. The project was approved and a grant of Rs 2 Crores was sanctioned out of which, Rs 1 Crore was released in 2018.

In 2019, out of the RUSA project fund, restructuring and renovation of the College Office and of the Common Research Central Laboratory for Biological Science was undertaken by the Executive Engineer (Social Sector and Electrical), PWD.

In the same year, an elevator was installed in the five-storied Administrative and Academic building blocks.

Apart from these, in 2019, with the RUSA funding, scientific equipment and instruments were also purchased.

Partial digitization of the Central Library was also carried out during the same time.

❖ **Student Activity Centre**

Subsequently, despite the COVID pandemic, a two storey building was also constructed in the Gurudev Bhawan for housing the canteen, the gym and the student union room in 2020-21.

❖ **Gurudev Bhawan Campus – Second campus of Chandernagore College**

In 2019 the second campus of Chandernagore College also became functional. The plot where Gurudev Bhawan the second campus of Chandernagore College has been constructed, originally there was a huge Colonial mansion known as “Jahnabi Nivas”. Chandernagore and Kabiguru Rabindranath Tagore shared a strong mutual connection and he visited Chandernagore innumerable times. Chandernagore witnessed the final visit of Tagore in 1937, in an invitation to inaugurate the Bengali Literary Festival, Tagore expressed his desire to stay for a few days at “Jahnabi Nivas”, which however, remained unfulfilled. In honour of his memory and in keeping with the historical significance of this land the building of second campus of Chandernagore College is named as Gurudev Bhawan. Gurudev Bhawan was handed over to the College authority by the Executive Engineer (Social Sector and Electrical), PWD on 20th September, 2019 and classes commenced from 25th September, 2019. Gurudev Bhawan now hosts four Language departments (English, French, Bengali and Sanskrit) and six Social Science departments (History, Philosophy, Political Science, Economics, Sociology and Education) which cater to almost 2000 students. Gurudev

Bhavan also houses a distance learning centre of Netaji Subhas Open University (NSOU) which is operating since 1999 and it caters to approximately 5000 students. An enlarged cycle stand was also built to cater to the students' needs in the Gurudev Bhavan campus.

The college has installed its own dedicated transformer through WBSEDCL in 2021 and has also installed a Green Generator in the Gurudev Bhavan campus for providing electrical back-up during power-cuts. A Bulk Meter was also installed in the main campus, covering all the buildings for stabilized flow of electricity.

The extension of the cycle stand and the construction of a shed for the Green Generator in the Gurudev Bhavan campus have also been completed in 2022. Construction of indoor games facilities in the Gurudev Bhavan campus for the students and staff members is underway.

❖ **Renovation of Heritage Building**

A project for the renovation of the approximately 200 years old one-storey building of the College, declared as a Heritage Building by the West Bengal Heritage Commission in 2010, was also sanctioned by the Department of Higher Education, Government of West Bengal. Keeping the Heritage structure unaltered, repair and renovation work was carried out from September, 2019 under the supervision of PWD and completed in 2020. The renovated Heritage Building now includes a state of the art seminar hall for hosting different events and the other rooms of the building are also being utilized for different co-curricular activities.

A dedicated Girls' Common Room is also being built in the Gurudev Bhavan campus on top of the existing Student Activity Centre building. The project will be completed within 2023.

❖ **Renovation of Buildings in the Main Campus**

In 2020, during the pandemic, thorough civil and electrical renovation work was also carried out in the five-storied Administrative Building.

In 2021, civil and electrical repair work of two-storied science building and the three-storied Annexe building was carried out.

Complete repair, renovation and upgradation of sanitation and plumbing facilities for all buildings in the main campus, was also carried out during 2021-2022.

In 2022, roof treatment work of all the three buildings of the main campus of the college was carried out.

Repairing of boundary wall, college gates, tiling of open surface areas in the main campus and the construction of the approach road to the Gurudev Bhavan from the main campus have also been carried out during the same period.

Repair and renovation of a small one-storey French building, approximately hundred and fifty years old, in the main campus, has also started, for using it as a guest house, in 2023.

❖ **Renewable Energy**

In 2022, the college has also installed solar panels on the roof of the five-storied Administrative Building and has started using solar energy as part of its everyday usage.

❖ **Re-use of Water Resources**

The water Resource Management Project including rainwater harvesting and waste-water recycling has also been completed in the early phase of 2023.

COLLEGE JOURNAL

The College has also started bringing out a bilingual, bi-annual journal entitled *Trivium: A multi disciplinary journal of humanities of Chandernagore College* (ISSN: 2583-0422 • e-ISSN: 2583-0120 • RNI: WBBIL/2017/77163). The journal follows a double-blind, peer-review process and has so far published 11 issues, covering a broad range of topics, by authors from different parts of India and abroad.

ISO CERTIFICATION

In recognition of such activities, the college has also become an **ISO 9001:2015**, **ISO 14001:2015** and **ISO 50001:2018** Certified Institution.

All such infrastructural developments carried out between 2017 and 2023 have enhanced the overall academic ambiance of the college and has increased the scope for various co-curricular and extracurricular activities.

CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES DURING THIS PERIOD

❖ **Institutional Social Responsibility – Social Outreach Programme**

The commitment of the college towards the city and the surrounding community is also manifested through the plans for social outreach which the college is executing. In this context, Chandernagore College has primarily planned to focus on two broad issues – environment and education related to

its neighbourhood – involving students and teachers of the college, as part of its Institutional Social Responsibility (ISR).

❖ **Mangrove Plantation**

As part of this drive the college is working on a project with *Purbasha Eco-Helpline Society*, led by the “Mangrove Man” Umashankar Mandal, through which mangrove saplings from the islands of Sundarban have been planted on the bank of River Hugli near the Chandernagore Strand to prevent soil erosion on the one hand and to boost air quality and biodiversity on the other. Students of different departments of the college, including members of the NSS Unit of the college and the housekeeping staff, under the supervision of the faculty members of the college, are regularly contributing to the maintenance of these saplings.

❖ **Know Your Ganges**

A similar orientation is also evident from the Know Your Ganges project which the college has initiated. Across the country, rivers like the Ganges are being subjected to contamination, siltation, reduced water-flow and such other problems without adequate remedies. Chandernagore College has sought to redress this crisis with its own limited means by signing an MoU with the **Estuarine and Coastal Studies Foundation, Howrah** to carry out collaboration and various inter-disciplinary research related to coastal and estuarine studies, with principal focus on River Hugli, as the Ganges is known in this region, on the banks of which Chandernagore is situated.

As part of this project, training workshops and orientation programmes have already been conducted through which collection and analysis of water samples and planktons have been conducted by the students under the guidance of the internationally reputed experts associated with ECSF and the faculty members of Chandernagore College.

❖ **Joyful Learning**

In the realm of education, in consultation with Chandernagore Municipal Corporation and the HOI of eight primary schools, the college has initiated a project called Joyful Learning. The Department of Education, Chandernagore College is acting as a nodal department to uphold the project of extending supplementary academic support to students of eight exclusively primary schools functioning under the aegis of the Chandernagore Municipal Corporation. Around hundred and fifty students of Chandernagore College, who volunteered for the project, are trained through workshops conducted by around 30 faculty members of the college who work as mentors, to offer guidance to the students

so that they can teach specific topics as outlined by the schools. One mentor and a group of students are allotted for each school for the smooth conduct of the programme.

❖ **NSS Activities**

The NSS unit of the college is conducting a similarly modelled extension activity for the underprivileged children of *Prabartak Aponalaya Children's Home*. The NSS unit is also carrying out other projects for the welfare of elderly and underprivileged people in and around Chandernagore in collaboration with the NGO *Sangbed*.

CENTRE FOR HERITAGE STUDIES

Keeping in mind the rich history of both the College and Chandernagore the College has also established a Centre for Heritage Studies for the preservation and promotion of the social and cultural heritage of the city, especially its glorious revolutionary past.

The specific objectives of the Centre are the following:

- I.** The Centre will establish and maintain a museum which will highlight the history and cultural heritage of the region identified as mini-Europe as well as various other aspects of indigenous literary and cultural history. The museum will also focus on revolutionary nationalist figures and various architectural, historical and cultural aspects of tangible and intangible heritage.
- II.** In this context the Centre will also conduct a survey of architectural heritage across the district of Hooghly in general so as to formulate plans for preservation and renovation of specific sites which will aid heritage tourism in the district. Heritage walks/tours will also be conducted to raise awareness and increase public participation.
- III.** In addition, the Centre will also help to organize awareness programmes endorsed by the Government of West Bengal, Department of Information and Culture.
- IV.** In keeping with the Information Directorate's programme of digitizing manuscripts, the Centre may also undertake the digitization of the prestigious and valuable collections in Chandernagore College associated with the literary heritage of Chandernagore and Hooghly.
- V.** Hooghly is also home to various textile-based folk arts, Bohurupee performers and other folk genres. In keeping with the governmental programme of encouraging folk arts, the Centre may also host exhibitions and performances for the revitalization of such art forms.
- VI.** The Centre also plans to explore possibilities of collaborating with the West Bengal Heritage Commission and organize heritage workshops from time to time, under their guidance, for the

promotion of heritage tourism in Chandernagore and other parts of Hooghly. It will also observe World Heritage Day on 18th April, each year, preferably in association with West Bengal Heritage Commission.

VII. The Centre will also conduct a certificate course of 40 hours, with approval from the University of Burdwan, to encourage more and more students to be associated with promotion and proliferation of heritage studies. Various talks and conferences on related issues will also be held.

VIII. The Centre will also bring out booklets and anthologies highlighting specific aspects of heritage studies based on conferences, workshops and individual research.

The University of Burdwan approved our proposal based on the decisions at the meeting of the Executive Council held on 27.04.2022 vide letter no IC/Misc/G-39/978 dated 12.05.2022. (Copy enclosed).

The West Bengal Heritage Commission (WBHC) has also agreed to extend their support for the functioning of this Centre for Heritage Studies vide Letter no. No: 136/M-94/WBHC/2017-2018 dated 17.08.2022.

The College has further constituted a Task Force, based on resolutions taken in the Teachers' Council Meeting held on 15.06.2022, for the planning and execution of different academic and co-curricular activities of the Centre. Accordingly, four major working areas have been identified.

- a. Establishment of a Museum showcasing Chandernagore's glorious revolutionary past and its local cultural heritage.
- b. Survey and historical documentation of the different architectural structures in and around Chandannagore.
- c. To organize Awareness programs related to conservation of Architectural and Cultural Heritage.
- d. Certificate course on Heritage Studies.

BRIEF OUTLINE OF THE RECENT ACTIVITIES

1. On 11th April, 2022 Mr Sandip Nowlakha of the Murshidabad Heritage Development Society delivered an online talk on "Resurgence and Sustainability of Local Heritage".
2. On 18th April, 2022, the Centre for Heritage Studies organised a Heritage Walk in order to observe World Heritage Day, around Chandernagore, involving around a thousand students,

teachers and staff members to enhance community participation in local heritage conservation. The Heritage walk was led by the honorable Mayor of Chandernagore, Shri Ram Chakraborty.

The walk covered 10 (Ten) heritage sites with the following route map:

- Chandernagore College Main Gate/ College Duplex and Hooghly River view on Strand Road
- Clock Tower and French Jail / Chandannagore Correctional Home
- French Administrative Building/ Chandernagore Court
- Registry Office
- St. Mary's Institute/ Kanailal Vidyamandir
- L'Eglise du Sacre Coeur (Sacred Heart Church)
- Institute de Chandernagore (Residence of French Governor)/ Museum
- St. Joseph Convent (Baptist Church)
- Patalbari
- Band Strand / Jora Ghat will end at the Gurudev Bhawan Campus, Chandernagore College.

3. Students, participating in the "Heritage Walk" were encouraged to take photographs of the 'Heritage sites' visited to be submitted later for a "Heritage Photography Competition". Photographs submitted were displayed in the Heritage Building of the College on 3rd June 2022 for Jury Members to judge the photographs and Sandip Nowlakha of "Murshidabad Heritage Development Society" awarded the prize winners.

The Jury Members for the competition were Shree Sandip Nowlakha, Vice-President, Murshidabad Heritage Development Society; Prof. Subrata Roy Chowdhury, Associate Professor, Department of English, Ramakrishna Mission Vidyamandir, Belur Math; and Shree Manaj Saha, President of Indian Association of Art, UNESCO official partner.

The judges were so impressed with the photographs that instead of the three planned prizes they went on to award four prizes in recognition of the students' photographic excellence.

On this occasion, Mr. Sandip Nowlakha also delivered a lecture on his valuable experiences in the making of the Murshidabad Heritage Development Society.

4. Dr. Basudeb Malik, Officer on Special Duty, West Bengal Heritage Commission delivered an excellent lecture as part of a Faculty Development Programme held on 30.07.2022 on Gradation and Enlisting of Heritage Sites.
5. Based on the resolutions taken in the meeting of the Task Force held on 20.07.2022, the Task Force has started a survey for the identification of architectural heritage sites in and around Chandannagar with the first visit taking place on 6th August, 2022.
6. On 15.08.2022, as part of the celebrations associated with 75 years of India's independence, a painting competition was also organised on the heritage structures of Chandernagore, among the students of Chandernagore College.
7. It must also be noted that in consultation with the West Bengal Heritage Commission the Heritage Task Force had also submitted a proposal for the declaration of a portion of the Chandernagore Strand, stretching from The Rani Ghat to Patalbari as a Heritage precinct so that the entire zone, marked by several important heritage structures, remains preserved for future generations. It is a matter of pride that the proposal was accepted by the WBHC and as per their public notification no160/N-1/WBHC/2008-09 DATED 12/09/2022 the aforementioned stretch of Chandernagore Strand was declared a heritage zone.
8. A certificate course on Heritage Tourism, in collaboration with Murshidabad Heritage Development Society, has also commenced from 13.02.2023.

Through such actions, the Centre for Heritage Studies will continue its commitment to the people of Chandernagore in future as well by protecting their socio-cultural heritage.

MUSEUM

Alongside such short-term events, the Centre for Heritage Studies is also concentrating on the establishment of a museum, keeping in mind the social responsibility of the college to the history and heritage of Chandernagore. As we know, Chandernagore College was not only a college established and run by the French colonial authorities but the college also played a key role in the growth and development of the nationalist movement in India, in particular the activities of revolutionary organisations. In fact, the College remained closed for a period of 23 years (1908-1931) precisely because

the British government of India felt compelled to suppress the revolutionary discourses emanating from Chandernagore in general and Chandernagore College in particular. Alongside Charchandra Roy, former Principal of Chandernagore College, Aurobindo Ghosh, Kanailal Dutta and such other memorable freedom fighters, Chandernagore has been home to a total of around 18 revolutionaries, justifying the popular perception of Chandernagore as a Shrine of Revolution. The revolutionaries identified by the Task Force for inclusion in the Museum are as follows:

1. Charu Chandra Roy
2. Motilal Roy
3. Kanailal Dutt
4. Rasbehari Bose
5. Shreeshchandra Ghosh
6. Maneendranath Nayek
7. Basanta Kumar Bandyopadhyay
8. Narendranath Bandyopadhyay
9. Upendranath Bandyopadhyay
10. Suneeti Ghosh
11. Durgadas Sett
12. Tinkori Mukhopadhyay
13. Suhasini Ganguly
14. Makhanlal Ghoshal
15. Jyotishchandra Ghosh
16. Heerendra Humar Chattopadhyay
17. Deenesh Chandra Majumdar
18. Kaleecharan Ghosh

All these revolutionaries were either born in Chandernagore or took shelter in Chandernagore or spent most of their years in Chandernagore for their revolutionary activities.

In this context, it needs to be added that the college has already organised a talk by Dr. Jagatpati Sarkar of the Asiatic Society on the Nationalistic Approach to Setting Up a Museum on 03.09.2022 and a lecture on the technicalities of establishing a museum on 06.09.2022 by Shri Nataraj Dasgupta, Director, Central Research and Training Laboratory of National Council of Science Museum (NSCM) and Shri Chandan Sen, Chief Exhibition Officer of NSCM. Furthermore, a meeting of the Heritage Task Force was also held on 06.12.2022 with the participation of Chandernagore's famous illumination engineer Shri Sridhar Das, sculptor Pradip Sur and Somnath Chakraborty and heritage enthusiast Shri Rajat Chakraborty for finalizing plans related to the establishment of the Museum.

It was felt that through such a project the college will be able to fulfil its own social responsibility towards the city of Chandernagore, its people and its socio-cultural history, particularly since no other Higher Education Institute in India has a history that is so directly and intricately entwined with the history of the struggle for independence. And on this 75th year of India's independence, it is quite appropriate that the College will take up this responsibility of preserving and revitalizing this glorious revolutionary history associated with the city of Chandernagore through this museum.

NON-FORMAL SANSKRIT EDUCATION CENTRE

Under the aegis of the Central Sanskrit University, Department of Education, Government of India, the college has established in 2022 a Non-formal Sanskrit Education Centre. The classes are being conducted by a faculty member recruited by the Central Sanskrit University with the Department of Sanskrit operating as the nodal department.

BOOSTING EMPLOYABILITY

The college, in collaboration with several professional institutions and NGOs is also conducting workshops and counselling sessions with students to increase their employability and acquaint them with new career opportunities. Career Counseling opportunities are also being organised for all UG and PG students through the online mode.

With such continuous development in academic diversity and physical infrastructure, this hundred and sixty year old College, which emerged from a primary school once built by the French, grows from strength to strength and continues to play a major role in the domain of higher education in India.