

THE RECORD OF HOW AND WHEN THE EARLY S.D.A. MISSION WORK
STARTED IN EAST BENGAL, NOW BANGLADESH
BY S K PODDAR

K.D. Poddar of Gobra village near Gopalganj was converted to Christianity from Hinduism by Reverend Mathura Nath Bose of Gopalganj, who was a member of the Baptist Mission Church established by W. Carry at Serampore, near Calcutta. K.D. Poddar was baptized by M.N. Bose in 1890. The baptism took place at Serampore Calcutta. At the time he was baptized he was already married. When he was baptized Hindus around the village opposed bitterly and tried to set fire on M.N. Bose's house but when some people tried to light a match stick, they could not light the fire even trying for several times.

M.N. Bose's faith was so strong, God used him for His glory and his earnest prayers kneeling by the river Madhumati, where the Baptist Mission building was located, God in heaven answered his prayers and turned the river current to a different direction and saved the building and other properties from being washed away. The proof of this miracle still can be seen at the original place. Many, many people still can remember the fact. Further God answered his earnest and sincere prayer and rewarded his faith performing many miracles. Among these miracles was a Hindu young man by name Sadhan Chandra Sarkar of Borasi village having leprosy who was completely healed by M.N. Bose's prayer. This young man accepted Christianity and he was baptized and became a member of the Baptist Mission church. In a very, very old photo Sadhan Chandra Sarkar's picture is shown sitting in the middle having white beard with a Bible in his hand.

M.N. Bose gave K.D. Poddar teaching work in Gopalganj and he also did some preaching work. After sometime the Baptist Mission Church Committee decided to send three young men for studies and training in Bible seminary of W. Carry at Serampore. Among the selected young men were K.D. Poddar (father of Srikanto Poddar) now retired and living in Spicer Memorial College with his second son Simpson S. Poddar, D.N. Roy of Khatra village near Gopalganj and Nilratan Battacharya of Tarpasa near Madaripur. All the three

young men were the members of the Baptist Mission Church.

As planned by the Baptist Mission Church Committee these three young men from Gopalganj came to Calcutta and then went to W. Carry's Bible Seminary at Serampore to study for 2 years. The families behind were left in the care of the Baptist Mission. They all met the officer-in-charge of the seminary and they were told that there was no vacant seat for the current period of studies because they came, very, very late. The officer-in-charge was kind enough and kept a record of their names and gave them a letter written to the Baptist Mission Church Committee at Gopalganj for them to attend the next term of studies. With great hope and interest, spending money, taking the time and the trouble the three young men went to Calcutta and then went to Serampore. But they were very much dissatisfied after being told there was no vacant seat for them and they had to wait till next term of studies begin. So they were on their way back home to Gopalganj, and came to Sealdah station to catch the train and while waiting for the train, suggestion was made that instead of waiting at the station, they should go out and see Calcutta. K D Poddar was more disappointed so he did not want to leave the station. When the other two young men went out to see Calcutta, he sat alone and was thinking about what he will do in the future, having left his work to study, whether he will get back the same job and what work he will do next. He was also thinking that when the committee sent them with their prayers, why God did not answer their prayers to fulfil their ambition and hope.

At that time when he was thinking putting his head downward, he observed two legs quite close to him and when he raised his head to look up he saw a beautiful foreign young lady smiling and greeting him with folded hands in a Bengali style and gave him a small piece of printed paper in Bengali, which without reading anything he kept in his pocket along with many other handbills received before from advertising agents. When the other two young men returned, the train came and they were on their journey and finally reached home, having much difficulty and they were very much tired due to difficulty in the mode of travel by train, by steamer and walking too.

After coming back home, discouraged and tired K D Poddar had his bath and meal and wanted to rest so he went to his bed. At that time his daughter told her younger brother S K Poddar, "father came from Calcutta, check his

shirt pocket, may be father has brought some sweets for us." Her brother found no sweets in the pocket but a lot of different kinds of printed papers and he dropped all these on the floor near his father's bed.

When he got up from his sleep having good rest and while still on the bed he noticed some printed papers on the floor and his eyes fell on a heading "Christ observed Saturday, not Sunday". He picked up the printed paper and began to read with great interest. While reading through he found a lot of quotations from the Bible about Saturday as the true Sabbath. He immediately took his Bible and compared all the quotations and he was convinced of the truth about Saturday as the true Sabbath. Reading through this printed paper he specially noted that Christ observed Sabbath on all Saturdays, even Paul also observed Sabbath on all Saturdays after Christ's resurrection.

Since K.D. Poddar was taught by the Baptist Mission Church to observe Sundays as Sabbath, his mind and thoughts were confused after reading the above mentioned printed paper. He took the printed paper, his Bible and the letter from the officer-in-charge of W. Carry's seminary and straightway went to the bungalow of the Baptist Mission church officer-in-charge. There were many elderly people gathered together to congratulate M.N. Bose's son Jogendra Nath Bose, who graduated from W. Carry's college and received a gold medal. He was the only Christian young man in the college graduated receiving a gold medal since the college was established.

As K.D. Poddar approached the door of the bungalow, all people gathered there noticed his presence and asked him questions. Why he came back so soon from Serampore? He showed them the letter which was given by the officer-in-charge of W. Carry's seminar. He had his Bible with him and all the people also noticed his Bible and some people made jokes telling if he brought the Bible to give them Bible studies, as it was the evening time. K.D. Poddar was a young man but all the other people gathered there were elderly people.

He told them that he did not come to give Bible studies to elderly people but he wanted to know and understand why we are observing Sunday as Sabbath instead of Saturday commanded by God and recorded in the Bible?

Some among the elderly remarked that you went to Calcutta for the first time (actually he had been on a secret trip to Calcutta before to be baptized into the Baptist church, this is the second time) and met some Jewish people

there and they must have misled you. Jewish people only observe the Saturday Sabbath according to their religion but we keep the Sunday Sabbath because Christ was resurrected on Sunday.

When the elderly people remarked about Jewish people and the Saturday Sabbath was observed by them, K D Poddar questioned them, "Was not Christ also a Jew then why do we not obey Him in observing Saturday Sabbath?" There was great confusion among these elderly people, so they told "M.N. Bose's young son Jogendra Nath Bose is present and he is a graduate from W. Carry's college at Serampore, he will answer the question." This graduate young man did not have any thing new to tell, he also told that we observe the Sunday Sabbath because Christ was resurrected on Sunday and added further that all the churches in other parts of the world also are observing Sunday Sabbath, then K D Poddar questioned further, "Is it written in the Bible that all Christians should observe Sunday as Sabbath because Christ was resurrected on Sunday?" After this he took out the Bengali printed paper "Christ observed Saturday and Not Sunday" which was given by a foreign young lady in Sealdah station, Calcutta and read one verse after another, all the Bible quotations from the Old and the New Testament, about the true Sabbath which was the Saturday Sabbath. Among the elderly people present there was further confusion now and there were two groups, because of difference of opinion about which day was the true Sabbath. So the chairman angrily asked K D Poddar to go out and told "We will talk with you later on."

So he left the elderly people and went out to meet all other new Baptist church members, who were converted from Hinduism, it was night by this time. As he met each member, he told that he got new truth about the true Sabbath according to the Bible. We are deceived by the teaching of the Baptist Mission church to observe Sunday as Sabbath. There was also confusion among these new converts of the Baptist Mission church.

On the following morning K D Poddar went to D N Roy of Khatra village, this young man was one of the three young men who were sent to W Carry's seminar at Serampore. He talked with this young man about what all happened the previous evening and showed him the Bangali printed paper about the true Bible Sabbath. They both talked together and decided to worship God on the coming Sabbath day on Saturday.

When Saturday the Sabbath day arrived along with thirteen families K.D. Poddar conducted Bible studies, songs and prayers for the first time on the true Sabbath day. The Baptist church officer came to know that K.D. Poddar had worship on Saturday along with thirteen families, he became very angry and informed K.D. Poddar that he cannot work any more as a teacher for the Baptist mission church, also all other new converts were threatened, who joined K.D. Poddar on that Saturday to worship God.

Under the circumstance out of the thirteen families some lost their interest and left but others kept their interest about the true Sabbath day, cooperated and stayed with K.D. Poddar. They all continued faithfully to observe the true sabbath about four months. They had no idea if there was a mission organization in Calcutta or elsewhere and if any other people kept the Saturday sabbath. They checked the printed paper written about the true Sabbath to find out who printed it, but there was no information except the name of the press in Calcutta. K.D. Poddar wrote three or four letters to the press during the period of four months to know who published this paper but there was no reply. After sometime the Seventh-day Adventist church in America sent Elder J.L Shaw to Calcutta to check the possibility about establishing S.D.A. Mission station in India. When he was preparing to come, he met one American young lady named Miss Georgia Burrus, who returned to America from Calcutta recently, this young lady informed Elder Shaw that she knew a Christian family in Calcutta converted by W. Carry, whose name was Lall Chand Mukerjee (grandfather of L.G. Mukherjee).

As planned Elder Shaw was able to come to Calcutta, India and contacted the Mukherjee family and met Lall Chand Mukherjee. He enquired from Elder Shaw, who he was and Elder Shaw told that he was a Seventh-day Adventist from America. Akhoy Kumar Mukherjee the elder son of Lall Chand Mukherjee, being present at that time, heard the two words Seventh day Adventist and he told Elder Shaw that he had four letters with him written about the Saturday Sabbath observation by a person from Gopalganj in East Bengal and there was a group of people worshipping God on the Saturday Sabbath. He showed the four letters to Elder Shaw, these letters were written by K.D. Poddar. It is to be mentioned that the printed paper about the Saturday sabbath observation given to K.D. Poddar at Sealdha station was printed in the press belonging to the Mukherjee family living in Baithakhana

Calcutta.

After meeting the Mukherjee family and knowing about a group of people observing the Saturday Sabbath in Gopalganj, Elder Shaw was very anxious to find out how Saturday Sabbath message of the Bible was known by those people. So he planned to go to Gopalganj to meet the group of people. He made the journey from Calcutta and reached Gopalganj on Friday evening and stayed in a dak bungalow in the night. On the following Sabbath morning he went to find out who was K D Poddar. Someone directed him to the goldsmith shops in the market place where the Poddars (K D Poddar's relatives) were doing their business on Saturday. There he said that he was looking for one Christian Poddar. So one shopkeeper gave him a boy to direct him to K D Poddar's home. As Elder Shaw was going closer toward his home, he saw a group of people gathered together on the Sabbath morning having Bible studies with K D Poddar.

These people were very much scared seeing a white man coming to meet them, because the Baptist church officer told them before, that their top officer will come to drive them out from the Baptist mission compound. Everybody was sitting down on the mat and K D Poddar was sitting on a mora (sitting article made with bamboo sticks), so when he saw Elder Shaw standing, he offered him this mora for him to sit down. While Elder Shaw was sitting down, he showed signs with his hands for K D Poddar to continue the Sabbath service and when the offering plate was passed from one person to another Elder Shaw gave one 10 rupee note for his offering. All the people seeing Elder Shaw giving Rs.10.00 for offering, this made a great change in their thinking and there was no more fear in their minds. Now they thought that this foreigner was their friend.

After the Sabbath service was over, Elder Shaw called K D Poddar and placed his hands on his shoulders and somehow manage to make him to understand that Elder Shaw wanted to know, how he came to know about the Saturday Sabbath truth? He showed Elder Shaw the printed paper in Bengali about the Saturday Sabbath truth which was given by a foreign young lady in Calcutta. Elder Shaw looked at the printed paper and he only could see or read Saturday & Sunday printed in English within brackets. Elder Shaw wanted to talk with K D Poddar but as he did not speak nor understand English, so K D Poddar sent for a Hindu gentleman who was a teacher and

knew English. With the help of a translator Elder Shaw told K.D. Poddar that he was very happy because the Saturday Sabbath truth reached to this place and they were keeping the Sabbath. He gave them hope telling that he was going back to America and he will come back again with funds to open S.D.A. mission work at Gopalganj.

Elder Shaw blessed them shook hands with them, told them to continue to keep the Sabbath faithfully and saying good-bye he left them and went back to Calcutta. Coming back to Calcutta he met Lall Chand Mukherjee and Akhoy Mukherjee, grandfather and father of L.G. Mukherjee. He thanked them for helping him to find and to meet all these people who were keeping the Saturday Sabbath at Gopalganj. Elder Shaw also told the Mukherjees what he told K.D. Poddar that he was coming back to India with funds and plans to open S.D.A mission work at Gopalganj. Sometime later Elder Shaw went back to America.

After going back to America Elder Shaw met Miss Burrus and enquired from her if she knew any thing about a printed paper in Bengali on the subject of the Saturday Sabbath, she told him that when she was in Calcutta she printed one paper about baptism and another paper about the Saturday Sabbath, with the help of a Bengali translator.

Miss Burrus had intense desire to come to India as a colporteur to witness for Christ she expressed her desire to the S.D.A. Church elders and requested for necessary financial help for travel etc., but no body cared to consider her request, in fact every body was opposed to her idea because she was too young to come alone to India. Any way with a lot of struggles and having much hardship she was able to make the trip to Calcutta in the year 1895. She found a place to stay in Bowbazar area. She came to Calcutta with her own expense and while staying in Calcutta, she had no financial help from any source. She was self supporting herself. God's care for her was shown by two miracles. While coming in the ship her wrist watch fell down on the floor and stopped running. She needed the service of her wrist watch very badly. She prayed to God that if her wrist watch will keep time again, she will know God is caring for her as she was alone and trying to witness for Christ in a foreign country. When she finished her prayer she heard the tick, tick sound of her wrist watch.

she also was in a financial difficulty, she had no money to meet her regular expenses such as house rent and the salary for the Bengali Pandit who taught her the Bengali language. One morning a letter was delivered to her which had no sender's address, in this letter there was enough money to meet all her debts.

After staying alone in Calcutta for a period of time she went back to America and got married with Pastor L J Burgess, they were sent to Calcutta, India, as missionaries by S.D.A. church. While they were doing missionary work, they baptized two Hindu widow ladies, the names of one of the ladies was Mrs. Khiroda Bose, who was a Baptist and the other, Nanibala Biswas who was a Hindu who later adopted Burrus as her last name.

Elder Shaw met the Mukherjee family when returning from Gopalganj, he told them that he was going back to America and he will come back again to India and open SDA mission station at Gopalganj. Akhoy Mukherjee, the father of Lall Gopal Mukherjee paid very close attention to Elder Shaw's statement about opening S.D.A. mission station at Gopalganj. This statement more or less got stuck in his mind.

Akhoy Kumar Mukherjee was now busy thinking about the future prospect of his son Lall Gopal Mukherjee. L G Mukherjee had just recently married Grace Kellogg and was doing nothing of particular importance at that time. Akhoy Kumar Mukherjee thought it best that L G Mukherjee should open up a mission station in Gopalganj, Grace Kellogg being well off could afford purchasing a property there. So the father suggested this to his son, and L G Mukherjee accepted the suggestion and promptly wrote to K D Poddar to look for a suitable piece of land for a mission station. This good news made K D Poddar and the rest of the thirteen families happy. They cherished the hope that soon a mission station will be established and a church will be organized. It must be remembered though that till now no one was baptized yet, but they were cherishing a hope that soon they would be organized into one body of Sabbath Keepers with a proper place of worship as their own. They were of course not aware that L G Mukherjee was coming there on his own expense, but with the mind of using his house as a mission station.

K D Poddar found a nice piece of suitable land near the Madhumati river bank and then informed Lall Gopal Mukherjee. He again wrote to

K.D. Poddar that he was coming to Gopalganj with his wife, and to rent a suitable house for them to stay.

So they came and occupied the house rented for them in the market area and they took care of the arrangements for the purchase of the land measuring $2\frac{1}{2}$ bighas and having agreement with the land owner and gave him cash in advance and planned to go ahead with all necessary building work etc. Men folks from the thirteen families who showed their interest in Sabbath truth, along with K.D. Poddar got busy with all different building work and a house for L.G. Mukherjee, and another house for K.D. Poddar was completed in the new mission compound within four or five months and both the families moved to the mission compound.

The varanda of the house of L.G. Mukherjee was quite large having enough place. All different church activities, committee meetings and other gatherings took place in this varanda.

The news about a new mission station at Gopalganj spread to many other villages among the Christians of the Baptist mission church. The Christians from Gopalganj village and also from Borasi were interested about the Saturday sabbath truth, so many came to the mission station on sabbath days to attend the sabbath service which was conducted by L.G. Mukherjee and assisted by K.D. Poddar. L.G. Mukherjee and K.D. Poddar continued their missionary activities about preaching and teaching whatever they knew and understood about the Saturday sabbath truth for about $1\frac{1}{2}$ years.

During the period of $1\frac{1}{2}$ years Mrs. Mukherjee became seriously ill and she went back to America with her husband. Meanwhile the father of L.G. Mukherjee came to Gopalganj to take the charge of the mission station. He was a capable man and a Bible scholar. He also preached whatever he knew about the Saturday sabbath truth. He stayed about five months at Gopalganj mission station then went back to Calcutta. After L.G. Mukherjee's father left Gopalganj, A.G. Watson with his family came to the mission station from Calcutta. He was an evangelist and continued the missionary activities with K.D. Poddar. In low lying area in East Bengal, traveling was mostly done by country boats, because there were many canals and rivers every where. Therefore A.G. Watson purchased one

large enough country boat and along with K D Poddar carried on evangelistic and visiting work in the villages, thus many people had the opportunity to hear the gospel message along with the Saturday Sabbath truth and interested people came to Gopalganj mission station to see for themselves what was going on. In this way missionary work was carried on and the time passed by.

Sadhan Chandra Sarkar was a leper and he was healed by M N Bose's prayer and he took baptism and became a Baptist church member. Because of the fact of his healing, he found it very difficult to leave the Baptist mission church. L G Mukherjee and K D Poddar also equally found it very difficult to convince him of the Saturday Sabbath truth and to become a SDA. Finally K D Poddar told him what Peter said "We ought to obey God rather than man," Acts 5:29 and told further that God made the Saturday Sabbath and man made the Sunday Sabbath. After some time he was fully convinced. He became the leader of Borasi village group of SDAs. He was quite educated so all religious activities were conducted in his home. SDA missionaries were very pleased with his interest for doing missionary work, so a very nice horse was purchased and given him, for him to come to Gopalganj for the Lord's supper and other church services and meetings etc. During this period many missionaries from Calcutta, Karmatar and Lucknow came to visit Gopalganj. Among these missionaries were Elder Shaw, L J Burgess, A G Watson and many others. Elder Shaw was quite pleased to see how the mission work was carried on.

Meetings were held and as many as two hundred were gathered at the evening meetings. On Sabbath, the last day of the meeting, Brother Poddar and the leper brother were baptized, J C Little performing the rite. In the afternoon the ordinances were held for the first time with the East Bengal Sabbath-keepers.

The time came and the Watson family left Gopalganj. When Elder Shaw and L J Burgess were at Gopalganj they observed many children and others who were sick. So the idea came that it would be better if a missionary having some medical knowledge and experience came to Gopalganj. C C Kellar and his wife who was a nurse were sent to Gopalganj mission compound to start the medical work. Many Hindus and Muslims as well as our mission people were benefited by their medical care.

It is already mentioned before that Mrs. Mukherjee with her husband went to America for treatment, she was also pregnant, while having treatment she delivered a baby boy and after some time she died. While L G Mukherjee was still in America, he made enquiry about the saturday sabbath keeping people and continued to stay and during this time he attended a SDA college. He was baptized while he was studying. He was in America for a few years, before coming to India he was ordained as SDA church minister.

L G Mukherjee came back to India and went to Gopalganj mission station to live there, in his own property. C C Kellar and his family were living in the mission compound and they left for Churadanga, Nadia District. Before L G Mukherjee returned from America, J C Little was appointed as superintendant for East Bengal and also for all missionary work in Calcutta and Karmatar area. He was appointed from the SDA headquarters at Lucknow, U.P. Some time after coming back to India from America, L G Mukherjee married an English young lady who was a secretary for the SDA headquarter at Lucknow.

J C Little supervised the mission work staying in Calcutta and often visited L G Mukherjee at Gopalganj to talk about the mission work in and around Gopalganj. L G Mukherjee along with K D Poddar continued the Bible studies every night on the veranda of his house to prepare interested people for baptism.

J C Little, L G Mukherjee, A G Watson and K D Poddar together arranged to examine baptismal candidates and among those baptized are the following persons: D N Roy of Khatra village, parents of Paresh Chandra Parui, Raj Kumar Mondal and uncle (Kaku) of Rajani Biswas, these people were from Gopalganj. In Borasi village there were four Christian families and all the members of these families were also baptized. The names of the head of the families were Umesh Chandra Sarkar, Kuteshwar Sarkar and Duarika Bala, [REDACTED]

The acceptance of the Sabbath truth by Umesh Chandra Sarkar and Sadhan Chandra Sarkar of Borasi village and the influence of their lives reached Joaria and Pathuria village and Abhoy Charan Mondal of Pathuria and another family of Joaria were interested in the Sabbath truth. L G Mukherjee and K D Poddar also visited Joaria and Pathuria to give them the Bible studies and Abhoy Charan Mondal and the other family were baptized.

Among the newly baptized SDA church members there were many young men. L G Mukherjee and K D Poddar took with them these young men by name Raj Kumar Mondal, Paresh Parui, Borada Kanta Poddar and Umesh Chandra Sarkar an elderly person when they went for evangelistic work by country boat to different villages. In this way while doing village evangelistic work, they went to Chaurkhuli village. There they met two married young men by name Ranjendra Kumar Barui and Aditya Folia. These two young men showed interest in the evangelistic work done by L G Mukherjee and K D Poddar, along with young men, so the Bible studies were given to them in their homes. These two young men also came to Gopalganj for the Bible studies with L G Mukherjee. He organized and conducted regular Bible classes, where many other young and older men came for the Bible studies. Among them was an educated, religious song composer who was a Bengali by name P C Dey from Barisal, he was a married man. He composed Bengali religious songs which are still being used now in all the SDA churches all over Bangladesh.

While L G Mukherjee and K D Poddar along with interested young men from baptized families of Gopalganj and Borasi continued visiting Chaurkhuli and doing missionary work, Aditya Folia and Ranjendra Kumar Barui of Chaurkhuli told K D Poddar and the young men with him that there were many Christian families living at Buraubari village, so they planned to visit that village. The Christians of Buraubari village came to know about the SDA mission work at Chourkhuli and they talked among themselves, why should other mission workers cause trouble with their new ideas of the Bible truth? So they were rather angry with the SDA workers. In this situation when K D Poddar with Aditya Folia and Ranjendra Kumar Barui came to Buraubari, prominent persons like Ananda Chandra Halder and Purna Chandra Gayen were furious and threatened to harm them if they tried to disturb the people of the village with their new message and truth, because all the Christians of Buraubari village were Baptist.

So K D Poddar and his two friends left Buraubari village and went back home feeling very sad. After some time K D Poddar, Umesh Chandra Sarkar, Aditya Folia and Ranjendra Kumar Barui got together and planned to visit Suagram village where there were also many Christian families. In this village they contacted faithful Baptist church members like T C Bairagi and his nephew Indra Bhusan Bairagi (now known as Pr. I B Benarjee).

T C Bairagi (the father of Mohal Lall) and his nephew who have heard that the new message and the Bible truth was being preached at Gopalganj and in other villages. K D Poddar and his friends now took the opportunity to present the SDA new truth to them, then left Suagram to go back to their homes.

After some time K D Poddar, Umesh Chandra Sarkar and P C Dey came to visit Kalikapur village where they met Purna Chandra Arinda and they had talks and discussion with him about the Saturday sabbath truth. On the way back home they visited Courkhuli on one sabbath day and attended sabbath with interested members. After coming back to Gopalganj they gave a report about visiting different villages where they have presented the Saturday sabbath truth.

When J C Little, A G Watson and L G Mukherjee heard the report about the Saturday sabbath truth which was presented to quite a number of prominent persons of several villages, they had a committee meeting along with K D Poddar, P C Dey and some others. In this committee meeting it was decided to have a general gathering together, so invitations were sent to all persons visited by K D Poddar and his party in different villages. Many accepted the invitation and came to Gopalganj to attend the meeting. Among them were Ananda Chandra Halder and Purna Chandra Gayen from Buruabari. It is to be remembered that they opposed K D Poddar and his party when they visited Buruabari, also T C Bairagi, his nephew, I B Bairagi from Suagram and P C Arinda from Kalikapur came to the meeting. The Bible studies, instructions about the Saturday sabbath truth and tithe paying according to the commandments of God, recorded in the Bible, were presented to all the people who came to attend the meeting. This meeting continued for ten days. A.C Halder and P C Gayen from Buruabari village, who openly opposed K D Poddar and his party, were convinced of the Saturday sabbath truth and tithe paying. They expressed their desire to be baptized. There was a testimony meeting at the end of the ten days, during this time A C Halder and P C Gayen confessed that they got angry and openly opposed K D Poddar and his party. After some time A C Halder, P C Gayen and P C Dey took baptism.

Upto this time there was no regular missionary appointed by SDA church for Gopalganj. The land and the house was the personal property of L G Mukherjee. Those who carried on with evangelistic work, like K D Poddar

and others did not receive any salary. With the report of this condition, the progress of evangelistic work quite a number of persons were already baptized and many showed their interest to know more about the Saturday Sabbath truth. J C Little went to the SDA head quarters at Lucknow to inform the proper church authority about the interest and the progress of the missionary work in and around Gopalganj. The head quarter officers gave sympathetic consideration about J C Little's report regarding S.D.A. mission work in East Bengal and it was decided that some SDA missionaries will go to Gopalganj to see personally the progress of the missionary work.

The missionaries who came from Lucknow maintained hope that the SDA mission could be located permanently in the place where L G Mukherjee had his property and his house, since L G Mukherjee himself had used his house more or less as a mission station. Till L G Mukherjee makes his committment the missionaries had to find some other solution. The missionaries from Lucknow and J C Little agreed to have a committee meeting at Barisal.

For the committee meeting in Barisal in 1910, all baptized members and interested persons in the Saturday Sabbath truth were invited. In this committee meeting, for ten days consideration was given to organize the mission work and appoint workers to take care of the mission work, in all interested villages. L G Mukherjee was in-charge for Gopalganj, Borasi and in addition for Jowaria and Pathoria. He was assisted by K D Poddar. Aditya Folia and Ranjendra Kumar Barui were in-charge for Chaurkhuli. P C Gayen, Ananda Chandra Halder and Basanta Kumar Halder were in-charge for Buruabari. Tarini Charan Bairagi and Indra Bhusan Bairagi were in-charge for Suagram. Purna Chandra Arinda was in-charge for Kalikapur.

After these appointments the missionaries present in the committee meeting gave thought about the place of a mission station. It is to be pointed out or kept in mind that the missionaries had talks previously with L G Mukherjee to purchase his land and his house for the mission station, But due to lack of funds the committee requested K D Poddar to find a house in Barisal and rent it for the overseas missionary family and two houses for the local workers. At this point K D Poddar questioned, why rent houses in Barisal?

the mission work started and carried on for several years. It will be better and reasonable to locate the mission station at Gopalganj. The missionaries told K D Poddar that it was not possible to purchase that property because the mission did not have much money. K D Poddar of course could not think of changing the mission station to another place. He had lived in this campus, he and the Sabbath Keepers had helped build the two buildings one for him to stay and one for L G Mukherjee. He realized now no doubt that the property belonged to L G Mukherjee, but he together with L G Mukherjee had laboured together in their missionary endeavours. L G Mukherjee had been happy to have K D Poddar stay there and to do missionary work together. But the time has come now to establish a mission station legally so a decision must be made L G Mukherjee too had to consider having spent money for the peroperty.

The missionaries had further talks and discussion with L G Mukherjee along with K D Poddar about the price of the property. During the talks the missionaries explained about the financial condition of the mission and requested L G Mukherjee to reduce his original price for his land and the house. After some more talking he was convinced to part with the property at a minimum cost to continue the mission station, so he agreed to sell his property for Rs.4,000.00. The missionaries were very pleased to get L G Mukherjee's property and thanked him sincerely. All baptized members and interested persons were also very happy to know that the mission station is being located at Gopalganj. L G Mukherjee was appointed as in-charge for all missionary work in East Bengal. J C Little gave him hope for a large enough house boat for his tour to visit different villages. It took some time to get the house boat and when it was available, it was named as Bil_Bandhu.

After the committee meeting in Barisal was over, J C Little on his way back to Calcutta visited Gopalganj, with him he brought two young men from Barisal, who attended the committee meeting. While he was at Gopalganj L G Mukherjee showed J C Little quite a number of letters he had been receiving from Khulna District, to know about the Saturday Sabbath truth from interested Christians. J C Little told that he would consider these letters. He left Gopalganj with the two young men for Calcutta, their names were Rajani Kanta Mandal and Borada Kanta Poddar (son of K D Poddar) and then took them to Karmatar to work in the

school as teachers. The mission property at Karmatar was already purchased before Gopalganj mission property was purchased, though the Saturday sabbath truth reached Gopalganj first. A missionary by name Rabinson was in-charge for the mission work at Karmatar and Miss Della Burroway was in-charge for the school work of the Santali boys and girls. There were many Santali people interested in the SDA mission work.

In Calcutta along with J C Little's evangelistic work, there was one SDA health food shop or health clinic at 75 Park Street, Calcutta. All church services were conducted in J C Little's house. Akhoy Kumar Mukherjee often attended the church service. Mrs. Khiroda Bose, her sister and another lady attended the church service regularly.

According to J C Little's work progress it was necessary for him to visit Gopalganj and in one occasion when he came to Gopalganj, he was introduced to two men waiting, who came from Sonadanga in Khulna District. These two men were educated and prominent Baptist mission church members. Their names were Bipin Bihari Sarkar and Nibaran Biswas. They requested J C Little and L G Mukherjee to send an SDA worker to Sonadanga. So they had a committee meeting and all members suggested that K D Poddar be sent to Khulna town and take care of early new work of that area including Sonadanga. He was willing to go with his family and was getting ready to leave Gopalganj. Here Krishnadhan Poddar's family information should not be out of the way. He had three sons and two daughters. When L G Mukherjee was in America. Whenever the missionaries came to Gopalganj, Mrs. K D Poddar very gladly took care of their food (rice & curry etc.) and boiled drinking water. She also always took care of food for the workers and interested persons who came to visit Gopalganj. In rendering her service for others, she always kept in her mind what Abraham did for three strangers (Gen.18:1-8) and what Jesus said about giving a cup of cold water (Matt. 10:42 & Mark 9:41). K D Poddar's first son Barada Kanta Poddar was working at Karmatar Santali school. His second son Srikanto Poddar, and the youngest son Pramanana Poddar were at home. Srikanto Poddar was with his father till he left for Khulna and the boy himself continued his study at Gopalganj, The boy had observed every thing that his father was doing and what all the others were doing at Gopalganj. L G Mukherjee and when ever other missionaries came to Gopalganj, he always gladly did many kinds of errands for them.

Before K D Poddar left Gopalganj for Khulna, J C Little made a trip

to Barisal with K D Poddar to attend a christian association meeting upon their invitation. He made the return trip from Barinal for Calcutta as usual by the steamer service and K D Poddar returned to Gopalganj by a small boat, either during the day or during the night. When this steamer reached Khulna, it was noticed that one first class cabin was closed from the inside. The door was broken open and an unidentified dead body of a white man was found. The condition in the room gave evidence to prove that the death was due to cholera. The sarang (in-charge of the steamer) did not know what to do with the dead body. The incident brought many people to the scene and there was a sarang from another steamer, who remembered this white man traveling in his steamer with an Indian from Gopalganj to Khulna. This steamer came from Madaripur and went to Khulna via Gopalganj. This sarang while returning from Khulna to Madaripur, told the people at Gopalganj station that a white man was found dead in a locked first class cabin in the steamer coming from Barisal to Khulna. Some one from Gopalganj steamer station brought the news to the mission compound. L G Mukherjee was out on tour, so K D Poddar left Gopalganj by the next available steamer for Khulna to see the dead body. By the time K D Poddar reached Khulna two days passed by and the dead body was kept in the government hospital. As the dead body was two days old and no body came to identify and the dead body cannot be kept any longer, a grave was kept ready in the European cemetery for the burial. At that time K D Poddar reached Khulna, found the dead body and identified that the dead body was of J C Little. Seeing the dead body he was shocked and wept. Feeling very very sorry. Meanwhile L G Mukherjee returned from his tour and heard the news and he and others came for the funeral. Mrs. J C Little came to Khulna from Calcutta, a four hour journey with her little daughter and wept bitterly, 'Oh Lord' In this way our faithful missionaries suffered for the Lord. After attending the burial service K D Poddar came back to Gopalganj and told everybody about J C Little's death. Every body was shocked to hear the news and felt very sorry also. A question came to every body's mind, why God allowed this incident? This question still remains unanswered. He passed the news to all the people in different mission station.

Already mentioned before that K D Poddar was getting ready to move out from Gopalganj to go to Khulna. He went there with his family but left his son S K Poddar at Gopalganj to continue his studies. S K Poddar

stayed in one of the rooms of the house where his father lived and the rest of the house was occupied by P C Dey, who was given the position of K D Poddar. After settling down in a rented house in Khulna town area, K D Poddar began his missionary work, visiting first all known interested persons.

J C Little died on August 10, 1910, after some time L J Burges was appointed in J C Little's place from the SDA headquarter at Lucknow. After coming to Calcutta he came to visit Gopalganj with his wife, with a missionary from the SDA press at Lucknow and another missionary. Before coming to Gopalganj, L J Burges informed L G Mukherjee about his coming and also requested him to arrange and invite all workers with their families, all baptized members with their families and all interested persons with their families to come to Gopalganj. So that he can meet them personally and have a committee meeting together.

After coming to Gopalganj as planned, L J Burges met all the workers, baptized members and interested persons. For all men folks different missionary conducted the Bible studies. Mrs. Burges took charge of all the ladies for giving them instructions about the Christian living etc. At the end of the Bible studies etc., all the members made two requests to L J Burges. The first request was for a school for their children and the second request was for SDA literatures, such as sabbath school lessons and other printed papers with SDA messages to give the truth to others. L G Mukherjee also made a request to publish the Signs of the Times article in Bengali. He already had translated many articles. After the three requests were presented, L J Burges, Mrs. Burges, the missionary from the press and another person who came with them and L G Mukherjee had a discussion. After the discussion, all the people present were told that they will get a school for their children. About sabbath school lessons and other printed papers in Bengali, L G Mukherjee and P C Dey were told to translate available English materials as best as possible and further L G Mukherjee was told to publish Signs of the Times articles in Bengali. And so arrangements were made to publish Jug-Lakhan magazine in Bengali.

For opening a school, a question was raised by K D Poddar and P C Gayen about the place where the school will be located. L J Burges told them that he has hired a large bungalow at 6 Dihi Serampore Road, Calcutta, where four families can stay, there were also servant's quarters. The

first SDA school for the Bengali boys and girls will be opened at this place. He instructed L G Mukherjee to inform all those who were present at Gopalganj and all church members to keep their children ready. He will be getting the place ready for the school and inform L G Mukherjee to bring all the boys and girls to Calcutta.

The missionary from Lucknow SDA press who came with L J Burges, listened to the talks about the need of SDA literature in Bengali, being connected with the press, he suggested that instead of doing all needed Bengali printing out side, why not arrange for printing to be done at the SDA press at Lucknow and look for a Bengali youth to learn the press work?

The missionary who came from the SDA press at Lucknow asked L G Mukherjee if there will be any young man available to learn the press work. He told that there were three young men by name Pratap Chandra Gayen, Srikanto Poddar and Upendra Nath Halder. He further told that it will be necessary to talk to their parents about the matter. Therefore P C Gayen was contacted about his son Pratap Chandra Gayen and he flatly refused to send his son to Lucknow. Then they talked to K D Poddar about his son Srikanto Poddar, he told them to ask his son if he wanted to go to Lucknow. In the night Srikanto Poddar was called in the presence of L J Burges, W S Mead the superintendent and treasurer and others, W E Perrin the editor from the press and L G Mukherjee. Srikanto Poddar was rather afraid, thinking if he will be scolded for some thing wrong he did. But L J Burges called him and asked him to sit close to him then L J Burges and L G Mukherjee prayed both mentioning Srikanto Poddar's name. After prayer they asked Srikanto Poddar if he will like to go to Lucknow to learn to do the press work, he agreed to go. After this L G Mukherjee gave some money to Srikanto Poddar telling him to go to the Baptist Mission school where he was studying and clear his school fees and get a school leaving certificate. The missionary from the press wanted to take Srikanto Poddar with him but L J Burges told "Let him be with his parents for some time in Khulna, when I will send a telegram Srikanto Poddar can come to Calcutta, we will meet him at the station." Srikanto Poddar left Gopalganj with his parents and went to Khulna. After some time a telegram was received from L J Burges and Srikanto Poddar went to Calcutta and then to Lucknow during the first world war. Among the working people of the press, he found Hindu, Muslim and Sikh workers but no SDA or Christian workers, he was the only SDA young

man in the press beside the manager who was from America. English, Hindi and Urdu languages were already used by the press for different literatures. Srikanto Poddar was given training for the press work, with English language first and then in Bengali language.

All arrangements for opening the Bengali school was completed and L G Mukherjee came to Calcutta, at 6 Dehi Serampore Road, with many grown up and small boys and girls. L G Mukherjee was appointed as a teacher and Pratap Chandra Gayen also came with him to work as a teacher. Upendra Nath Halder and Premananda Poddar (K D Poddar's son) were called to the school. Miss Della Burroway, an Australian was brought from Karmatar. Outside teachers were also engaged to teach. After some time Mrs. Burgess realized that the place was over crowded for all the students and it was not quite proper for grown up boys and girls staying and studying in the same place. So a two story building was rented at Tiljala, Hooghly and all the girls were moved to this place and the separate girls' school was started under the supervision of Miss Burroway. The first SDA school in Calcutta, which followed many evangelistic work in different villages was progressing gradually. By this time the world war one came to an end. In 1918, it was decided to have a general gathering in Calcutta of all the workers, students and their parents. The purpose was to present the basic and the fundamental SDA Bible truths and introduce to the workers and the young men, the importance and the need of the literature evangelistic work. The workers and the parents came from East Bengal, the students were already in Calcutta, I F Blue, educational secretary with two other missionaries, and Srikanto Poddar and Mrs. Blue came from Lucknow. Mr. Steven an experience literature evangelist came from Australia, L J Burges, A G Watson and L G Mukherjee were already present in Calcutta. Mr. Barlow and Bengamin Peter came from Karmatar. The meeting with the deligates continued for ten days. During the meeting, opportunity was given for those who were interested in the literature evangelistic work to express their desire, many workers and students stood up to show their desire. A record of their names were kept. The meeting was over, every body was happy and with new determination to push forward God's work, they went back to their homes.

Some time after the meeting in Calcutta K D Poddar suddenly became very seriously ill. A telegram was sent to L J Burges and L G Mukherjee in Calcutta about his illness. They immediately came to Khulna. L G Mukherjee enquired from Mrs. Poddar how her husband became ill? She told that her

husband left home in the morning and walked five miles to give Bible studies to a person at Matiakhali. While returning on the way he visited Kaylaghata to meet Prasanna Kumar Roy, who was a Baptist mission church worker. He spent time with his discussing about the Saturday sabbath truth and after the discussion he walked the two miles back home in the afternoon when the sun was very hot and within a very short time he became unconscious. After Mrs. Poddar's explanation, L J Burges, L G Mukherjee along with known people, including Mrs. Maiti from Sonadanga made quick arrangement to move K D Poddar to the government hospital. Arrangements also were made for Mrs. Poddar to stay with her husband in the hospital. The doctors told that K D Poddar had sun stroke. After helping K D Poddar in the hospital L J Burges and L G Mukherjee left for Calcutta. He was in the same condition for ten days and died in the hospital (this was in the year 1918 after the world war). The SDA members from Sonadanga came to the hospital and made all necessary arrangements for his burial and he was buried in the land belonging to two brothers by name Bipin Sarkar and Biren Sarkar. L G Burges was informed in Calcutta about the death of K D Poddar. He informed Srikanto Poddar in Lucknow about his father's death. Srikanto Poddar was very anxious to see his mother, but the manager sent a telegram to L J Burges that he could not spare leave because of the heavy pressure of work. L J Burges sent another telegram to Srikanto Poddar informing him that he will take care of his mother. After this L G Mukherjee brought Mrs. Poddar to Gopalganj and she was provided with a place for her to stay in the mission compound.

Mrs. K D Poddar was the first lady among the SDA worker's wife in India to get sustentation and she received for 38 years. She was called or known as "Thakuma" (Grandma) to every body. She died in the year 1956.

TOLD BY SRIKANTO PODDAR AND WRITTEN BY GIRISH CHANDRA SIRCAR

S. K. Poddar

S K Poddar

G. C. Sircar

G C Sircar

March 1, 1982

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CAN BE OF SOME INTEREST

EARLY FIRST GROUP OF WORKERS

1. Aditya Folia from Chaurkhuli - father of Dwijen Folia. Working for SDA church.
2. Ananda Chandra Halder from Buruabari - father of Upendra Nath Halder. Now dead.
3. Krishnadhan Poddar from Gobra - father of Srikanta Poddar. Retired SDA worker.
4. Lall Gopal Mukherjee from Calcutta - son of Akhoy Kumar Mukherjee. Now dead.
5. Purna Chandra Arinda from Kalikapur - father of Dr. Suren Arinda. Now dead.
6. Purna Chandra Dey from Barisal - further information not known.
7. Purna Chandra Gayen from Buruabari - father of Pratap Chandra Gayen. Now dead.
8. Sadhan Chandra Sarkar from Borasi - further information not known.
9. Umesh Chandra Sarkar from Borasi - father of Sunil (Samuel) Sarkar. Retired SDA worker.

SECOND GROUP OF WORKERS

1. Aswini Kumar Bairagi from Kaligram - father-in-law of Rohini K Pandit. Now dead.
2. Basanta Kumar Halder from Buruabari - father-in-law of Rabi Sarkar. Retired SDA worker.
3. Jacob Barui from Buruabari - further informations not known.
4. Jogendra Nath Barui from Buruabari - father of Niranjan Barui. Working for SDA.
5. Jonas Singh from Bisharkandi - father of Jitendra Nath Singh.
6. Majhimahashay - In-charge for Bil-Bandhu. Further information not known.
7. Nathaniel Das from Mihijam (now Chittaranjan), Santal Parganas.
8. Paresh Chandra Parui from Gopalganj - father-in-law of Atul Ball. Working for SDA hospital.
9. Prabhudan Kujur from Ranchi, Bihar- further informations not known.

10. Prabodh Chandra Halder from Chaurkhuly - father-in-law of Prabodh Ch. Gayen. SDA church member.
11. Pratap Chandra Gayen from Buruabari - father of Probodh Chandra Gayen. SDA church member.
12. Srikanto Poddar from Gopalganj - son of Krishnadhan Poddar. Now retired.
13. Tarini Charan Bairagi of Suagram - father of Mohan Lall Bairagi. (Now Dr. Bernad M Lall) Working for Andrews University
14. Upendra Nath Halder from Buruabari - father of Prafulla Kumar Halder. Working for SDA church.
15. Upendra Nath Sarkar from Dhamsar, Barisal - further information not known.

THIRD GROUP OF WORKERS

1. Dayal Madhu from Bethkachia - further information not known.
2. Ganesh Chandra Baroya from Buruabari - father of Manoranjan Baroya. Working for SDA school.
3. Girish Chandra Arinda from Kalikapur - father of Rabin Arinda. SDA church member.
4. Premanada Poddar from Gopalganj - father of Pramod Kumar Poddar.
5. Prafulla Mandal (Dikshit) - father of Pijush Dikshit. SDA church member.
6. Santosh Kumar Halder from Shelabunia - father of Amiya Kr. Halder. working in SMC
7. Shital Chandra Madhu from Bethkachia - retired SDA worker
8. Suren Biswas from Gopalganj - further information not known.
9. Surendra Nath Arinda from Kalikapur - father of Samar Arinda.

BOYS' SCHOOL AT GOPALGANJ (During 1922, 1923, 1924, 1925 & 1926)

The following boys came in 1922.

1. Ashu Sarkar from Bakal
2. Girish Chandra Sarkar from Barisal
3. Prasad Ch. Gayen from Buruabari
4. Prasanna Kumar from Barisal
5. Reuben Dahli (now Rabindra Nath Bas)

The following boys came during 1923, 1924, 1925, and 1926.

6. Chitta Bala (Ball) from Khatra
7. Chitta Ranjan Sarkar - village not known.
8. Dhiren Bairagi from Suagram
9. Dwijen Folia from Chaurkhuli
10. Gopal Biswas from Gopalganj

The following boys came during 1923 - 1926 continuation-

- | | |
|--|---|
| 11. Gyanebdra Karmakar from Dhandoba | 22. Pratul Halder from Chaurkhuli |
| 12. Hem Barui from Ambari | 23. Priya Nath Bairagi from Kaligram |
| 13. Jiten Bairagi from Suagram | 24. Rabi Sarkar - village not known |
| 14. Jiten Barui from Chaurkhuli | 25. Rajen Bagani from Bethkachia |
| 15. Jitendra Nath Singh from Gopalganj | 26. Rasik Bala from Borasi |
| 16. Joy Ballav from Chaurkhuli | 27. Samuel (Sunil) Sarkar from Borasi |
| 17. Joy Nath Halder Ramsil | 28. Santosh Barikdar (sarkar) village not known |
| 18. Lalit Karmakar from Dhandoba | 29. Suranjan Sarkar - village not known |
| 19. Nagen Halder from Juluhar | 30. Suren Bairagi from Kaligram |
| 20. Peter Bairagi from Kaligram | 31. Suren Bairagi from Suagram |
| 21. Pran Nath Halder from Ramsil | |

SCHOOL OPENED AT BARAGAIN, RANCHI (For standards 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th)

During 1927, 1928, 1929, 1930 and 1931.

Many of the students from Gopalganj came to Baragain, Ranchi to continue their studies.

Among all these students, the following students worked continually in the SDA church and all of them are retired now.

G C Sircar	P N Halder
Rabi Sarkar	S K Sarkar
R N Das	

Ashu Sarkar and Santosh Kr. Sarkar became star colporteurs but finally left the SDA church.

Prasad Gayen worked in the SDA hospital for several years and then left the work. But he remained a Seventh-day Adventist.

Joy Nath Halder, Lalit Karmakar, Prasanna Sarkar and Peter Bairagi and may be several others worked for several years in the church, worked in the hospital and in the school but did not continue and went out of the church.

Suranjan Sarkar died while in active service.

This is a collection of very very old record and there can be errors. Any kind of correction is welcome.

S. K. Poddar

S K Poddar

G. C. Sircar

Girish Chandra Sircar

March 1, 1982