



ISSN - 2348-9596



IMPACT FACTOR NO
5.105

The Mirror

VOL-9, 2022

AN ANNUAL PEER REVIEWED JOURNAL
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY, CINNAMARA COLLEGE, JORHAT, ASSAM

(In collaboration with Assam State Archive, Guwahati, Assam)

LISTED AND INDEXED BY INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ORGANISED RESEARCH
URL - <http://www.i2or.com/bhtml>



Edited by
Dr. Anjan Saikia

Theme of the Cover



HISTORICAL COINS OF DIFFERENT ERA

NORTH EAST COLORS

NORTH EAST COLORS • AGARTALA
FRIDAY • 21st JANUARY • 2022

Book Review ■ By Bhaskar Roy Barman



The Mirror Vol. 8, 2021

The Mirror, a peer-reviewed international journal with ISSN 2348-9596, listed and indexed by International Institute of Organized Research, is published annually by Department of History, Coochbehar College, Jorhat, Assam in collaboration with Assam State Archive, Guwahati.

The present issue being reviewed is neatly edited by Dr Anjan Sanku, Principal of the college, and contains many articles and a book review in addition.

The three-page long editorial article entitled 'Research in History and its Allied Disciplines in Post-Covid-19 Pandemic Period' by Dr Anjan Sanku, assesses the role of historical research against the backdrop of the Covid-19 which, as says Dr Sanku, 'has made a serious impact on our life'.

Ranjana Mishra, former professor and Head, Department of History, Sri M.D. Saha Mahila College of Arts and Commerce, Mumbai, in her article 'Mahabodhi Temple: A Symbol of Buddhist South East Asian Religious Interface' avers that the Mahabodhi Temple, 'a unique testimony to the ancient history of Buddhism in India', symbolises the Buddhist South-East Asian religious interface. To substantiate his opinion, Dr Mishra says, 'In the folklores and [the] Jataka, Bodhiya has been mentioned in Mahabodhi, the place of great importance and in some scriptures as the naval of the earth.' (72) The article is embellished with five photographs at the end.

Dr Anil Kumar Sarkar, Professor of History, Kalyani University, West Bengal, in his article 'Darjeeling District in the Study of Regional History', makes an elaborate study of Darjeeling from a historical perspective. Through 'the local or regional history is four hundred years old', 'its positive ending could be visible from the Second World War' (P16), because of 'the rapid spread of colo-

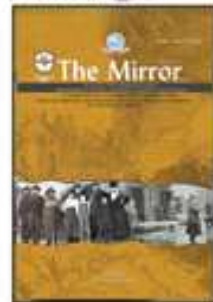
nalism'. The article leads the reader well deep into the regional history of Darjeeling.

In the article entitled 'Dissemination of Buddhism in Contemporary West Bengal' co-authored by Dr Raj Kumar Barman, Professor, Department of History, Jadavpur University, Kolkata, and Jashika Barua, Assistant Professor, Nabajyoti Hindu College, the authors elaborately and historically deal with how Buddhism got disseminated through West Bengal. To drive home what they want to say they launch into dealing with the following topics: 'Spread of Buddhism in Pre-colonial Bengal', 'Buddhism of Bengal under the British Rule', 'Partition of Bengal and Displacement of the Buddhists', 'Spread of Buddhism in Post-colonial West Bengal', 'Spread of Buddhism in North Bengal', 'Buddhism in South Bengal', and 'The Scheduled Caste and Buddhism in Contemporary West Bengal'. They also bring into the discussion the following organisations devoted to fostering and propagating Buddhism: 'Sundarban Aarobhadra Samity (SAS)' and 'The Pranda Mahasangha (PMS)'. This article is interspersed with a table and a photo.

Dr Sagar Baruah, Retired Principal, Khasrajyan College, Nagaw, Assam picks in his article 'Social Movement: A study of 19th Century Assam on two different dimensions' on two movements to discuss in detail. One is 'The Treaty of Yandabo' signed in 1826 between the British and the Burmese Government; and the other is 'The Hindu Remarriage Act' passed in 1856. Both the Treaty and the Act characterise the 19th century in the history of Assam.

Dr Karik Chandra Sutralkar, Associate Professor, Department of History, Cooch Behar Panchanan Barua University, West Bengal, in his article 'Dissemination and its Im-

port on Society and Environment: Perspective of North Bengal and West Bengal' discusses in elaborate detail the effect and impact of deforestation on society and environment, as the title itself suggests.



Dr Jaya Kulkarni, Assistant Professor, Department of History, Shyam Lal College, University of Delhi deals in his article 'Wild Life and Hunting in Mughal Period and Ecological and Environmental Issues: Case Study of Upper Gangetic Valley' with how the wild life and hunting in the Mughal period, impacted upon the ecology and environment of Pre-colonial Gangetic Valley. The article 'Early Tamil Cinema: A Historical Perspective' co-authored by Dr T. Anand, Associate Professor, Department of History, Bharathidasan University, Tamil Nadu and Dr S. Anbalagan, former Research Scholar of the same university, as the 60c mail/film, deals with early Tamil cinema against the historical background.

Dr Parvati Kaur Dhillon, Assistant Professor, Department of History, Panjab University, Patiala, discusses in his article 'Select Organizations and Associations for Women

Emancipation in Colonial Punjab': the roles adopted by Organizations and Associations formed in Colonial Punjab in righting the wrongs done to women against the backdrop of the effect of the colonial rule and in awakening them to the need of asserting themselves.

In consideration of the constraint on space, I feel compelled to skip over a few other articles dealing with topics hovering around the same theme to give room to other articles dealing with new topics of some interest in the present discussion. The articles skipped over are: 'Understanding Reportage of Violence by the Regional Print Media: The Assam Movement (1979-1985) in Context' by Dr Alankar Kandlik, Assistant Professor, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, FEI, University, Regional Campus, Shillong; 'White Revolution in Contemporary India' by Dr. Om Prakash, Faculty Member, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, National Law University, Jodhpur, Rajasthan; 'Working of the Imperial Service Troops of the Sikh Ruler of the Punjab States' by Sandeep Kaur, Assistant Professor, Department of History, Panjab University, Patiala; and 'Nationalistic Ideology of Jyoti Prasad Agarwala through Music and Cinema' by Dr Parag Nath, Associate Professor, Department of Assamese, Sankaradeva College, Shillong. The articles skipped over are as good as the articles briefly discussed. But their titles themselves suggest what they deal with. Dr Binay Hozarika, Principal, Dhing College, Nagaon, Assam in his interesting article 'Origin and Early Development of the Post-Sankaradeva Sattra' singles out the term 'Sattra' as 'supreme place adopted by gods and Vaisnava where devout devotees perform duties pleasing to God and nine-fold Bhakti pursuits' (Note 1, P144) and elaborates upon it in detail.

In the article 'Narmada and its

Land in Ramayana' co-authored by Priya Sharma, Research Scholar, Department of History, Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, Amarkantak and Dr Devesh Kumar Singh, Assistant Professor, Department of History of the same University, the authors exclusively deal with the Narmada, affording its place in Ramayana. This article is enlightening.

Other articles of religious and cultural importance, except for the articles such as: 'Exploring the Significance of Barbaro's Dishi Aini Sultani: Focusing on Inconspicuous as Projected in Barbero and Shikhspeare' by Dr Deepshikha Mahanta Barman, Assistant Professor, Department of English, University of Delhi; 'Tipsu Sahas and his Builders' by Manish Ahumada, Head, Department of History, SECAB ARSI, Assam Science & Commerce, College for Women, Bijoiga, Kamakhya State and Dr M.S. Ramdhani's 'Contribution to Art and Punjabi Literature' by Dr Ravindra Singh, Former Research Scholar, Department of Punjabi Historical Studies, Panjab University, Patiala; are: 'Sati-Vishnava Alignment in the Context of Guru Tegh Bahakar and Sanku' by Gangadhar Kaur, Assistant Professor in History, Guru Harjot Singh Khanda Grief College, Kathak Sahib, Patiala; 'The Origin and Evolution of Vishnavism in Bengal: Historical Analysis' by Abhishek Sarkar, Assistant Professor, Department of History, Nalanda Vidyasagar College, West Bengal and 'Cultural Construct of Tivanga in Early India: An Inter-textual Exploration' by Aradhana Singh, Research Scholar, Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

The issue ends with a review of the book 'The Rajik: A Transnational River' by Raj Kumar Barman, Professor, Department of History, Jadavpur University, West Bengal by Ananta Das, Sanku University.

ISSN-2348-9596



IMPACT FACTOR NO
5.105

Vol-9, 2022

The Mirror

An Annual Peer Reviewed Journal

Department of History, Cinnamara College, Cinnamara, Jorhat, Assam

(In collaboration with Assam State Archive, Guwahati, Assam)

Listed and indexed by International Institute of Organized Research

URL-<http://www.i2or.com/bhtml>

Edited by

Dr. Anjan Saikia



Cinnamara College Publication
Cinnamara, Jorhat-8(Assam)

www.cinnamaracollege.org

Journal link page

<https://www.cinnamaracollege.org/Publication/journals.php>

The Mirror Vol-9, 2022: An annual peer reviewed Journal, Department of History, Cinnamara College in collaboration with Assam State Archive, Guwahati edited by Dr. Anjan Saikia, Principal, Cinnamara College, published by Cinnamara College Publication, Kavyakshetra, Cinnamara, Jorhat-8 (Assam).

International Advisor

Dr. Olivier Chiron

Bordeaux III University, France

Chief Advisor

Prof. Saiyid Zaheer Husain Jafri

Department of History

Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Delhi

Advisors

Prof. Ananda Saikia

Founder Principal

Cinnamara College

Dr. Girish Baruah

Ex-Professor, DKD College

Dergaon, Assam

Dr. Jogen Chandra Kalita

Ex-Director, UGC-HRDC

& Professor, Gauhati University

Dr. Aswini Sarma

Executive Director

Resource Centre for United Nations

North-East Region

Guwahati, Assam

Dr. Jayanta Kumar Bora

Professor, Department of Assamese

Dibrugarh University

Dibrugarh, Assam

Dr. Dharmeswar Sonowal

Retired Director

Assam State Archive, Guwahati

Dr. N.V. Aski, Former Principal

Govt. First Grade College, Karnataka

Dr. Binapani Devi

Retired Vice Principal

J.B. College, Jorhat

Dr. G.P. Singh

Former Professor Emeritus

Department of History

University of Manipur, Imphal

Dr. Jagdish Lal Dawar

Former Professor

Department of History &

Ethnography School of Social Science

Mizoram University, Aizawl

Dr. Yogambar Singh Farswan

Department of History & Archaeology

H.N. Bahuguna Garhwal University

Dr. Rupam Saikia

Inspector of Colleges

Dibrugarh University, Assam

Dr. K. Mavali Rajan

Department of Ancient Indian History

Culture & Archeology

Visva-Bharati University, West Bengal

Dr. Anil Chandra Borah

Regional Director

Indira Gandhi National Open

University, Jorhat

Dr. Anil Kumar Saikia

Retired Vice Principal

Kakojan College, Jorhat

Peer Reviewers

Dr. Rup Kr. Barman
Professor, Department of History
Jadavpur University, West Bengal

Dr.T. Asokan
Associate Professor
Department of History
Bharathidasan University
Tamil Nadu

Dr. Devendra Kumar Singh
Faculty Member
Indira Gandhi National Tribal
University, Madhya Pradesh

Dr. Daljit Singh, Associate Professor
Department of Punjab Historical

Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala

Dr. Rahul Raj
Faculty Member
Department of Ancient Indian History
Culture and Archaeology

Banaras Hindu University, Uttar Pradesh

Dr. Om Prakash
Faculty Member
School of Humanites and Social Science
National Law University, Rajasthan

Editor

Principal, Cinnamara College

Dr. Anjan Saikia

Associate Editor

Dr. Suresh Kumar

Former Assistant Director (Research)
Indian Council of Historical Research
New Delhi and Faculty Member
Department of Buddhist Studies
Nava Nalanda Mahavihara, Bihar

Dr. Uma Shanker Singh

Assistant Professor
Department of History
Dyal Singh College, University of
Delhi

Assistant Editor

Rumi Saikia

Assistant Professor
Department of History
Cinnamara College

Ranju Kumar Bharali

Assistant Professor
Department of Economics
Cinnamara College

Dr. Deepan Das

Assistant Professor
Department of Political Science
R.G. Baruah College, Guwahati

Dr. Jyoti Rani Jaiswal

Assistant Professor
Department of History
Arya Kanya Degree College
University of Allahabad

Dr. Dipen Nath

Assistant Professor
Department of Assamese
Cinnamara College

Dr. Rupjyoti Dutta

Assistant Professor
Department of Sociology
Cinnamara College

Editorial Members

Podmeswar Katoni
Assistant Professor
Department of Political Science

Cinnamara College

Bhupen Borah
Assistant Professor
Department of History
Cinnamara College

Dr. Plabita Bordoloi
Assistant Professor
Department of Political Science
Cinnamara College

Sewali Saikia Bordoloi
Assistant Professor
Department of Assamese
Cinnamara College

Madhavi Kutum
Assistant Professor
Department of History
Cinnamara College

Bina Borah
Assistant Professor
Department of Education
Cinnamara College

Journal Co-Ordinator

Amaljyoti Chiring
Assistant Professor
Department of Geography
Cinnamara College

Cover Design & Plan
Name of the Publisher
Mode of Publication
Copyright Reserve to

Subscription Rates

e.mail

website

Journal link page

Printed at

Contact Number

Simanta Borah
Assistant Professor
Department of Philosophy
Cinnamara College

Jabalik Khaund, Jorhat
Cinnamara College Publication
Annual (October-November)
Cinnamara College Publication
Cinnamara, Jorhat-785008, Assam
(India)

Annual (Individual)- Rs.300 /-
(Institutional & Library)-Rs.400/-
themirrorhistoryjournal@gmail.com
dr.ansaikia@gmail.com

www.cinnamaracollege.org
[https://www.cinnamaracollege.org/
Publication/journals.php](https://www.cinnamaracollege.org/Publication/journals.php)

L.G. Computer & Printing, Jorhat
9435738645, 9101924299

N.B. The views expressed here are those of the authors and do not reflect the views of the Editor or Publisher. Besides, Plagiarism in any form is not acceptable under any circumstances. A declaration of original work must be submitted with the final article, failing which the article will not be considered for editorial screening. Author/s must ensure the authenticity of the articles. Any unethical behaviour (plagiarism, false data etc.) may lead to the rejection of the article at any stage (peer review, editing etc.), published articles may be withdrawn if plagiarism and/or falsifying results are indicated.

Contents

		Page No
❖Editorial		
❖Main issues in the naval history of India 1650-1857: 'brown' versus 'blue' water navies	✍ Anirudh Deshpande	1
❖Babu Jagjivan Ram as a savior and liberator of the Indian working class	✍ Anil Kumar Sarkar	10
❖Kesaria: A Stupa of Declivity and a milieu of the Kalama Sutta in Lichhavi Kingdom	✍ Ranjana Mishra	33
❖Jurisprudential Dimensions of Juvenile Laws: Some Critical Aspects	✍ Rupam Saikia	48
❖TALA-an archaeological glory of Chhattisgarh	✍ Devendra Kumar Singh	72
❖The Men and the River: Visual Narratives of the Brahmaputra in <i>Bornodi Bhotiai</i> and <i>Ekhon Nedekha Nodir Xipare</i>	✍ Alankar Kaushik	82
❖From the whites to the Browns: The <i>Adivasi</i> tea-labourers in the historical Context of Assam	✍ Prashanta Puzari	96
❖Social Legislations and Reforms in Modern India	✍ Om Prakash	105
❖ <i>Hen Puthi</i> , a specimen of functional literature in medieval Assam-An Analysis	✍ Suryya Kumar Chetia ✍ Chandra Kamal Chetia	114
❖M.S. Randhawa Contribution to Agriculture Advancements in Punjab (1945-52)	✍ Ravidit Singh	126
❖Popular Uprising In South-East Punjab during 1857:A Case of Rohtak Region of Present Day Haryana	✍ Uma Shanker Singh	137

❖ Iranian Elite Culture and Indian Sub-Continent the Family of Qazi Hamid-Ud-Din Nagauri In Jaunpurand Salon(Awadh)	✉Jaya Kakkar	145
❖Bad Conditions of Babbar Akali Prisoners in the Punjab Jails	✉Gursewak Singh	159
❖The Contribution of the Indian Government with regard to modern education in Bhutan	✉Ratna Paul	168
❖The Compassionate Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das: Commitment to Responsibility and Patriotism	✉Akhil Sarkar	177
❖Afghan <i>Kabuliwalas</i> of Calcutta A Historical Analysis of their socio-cultural Lives (1801-2015)	✉Anisul Haque	188
❖Port History and the Development of Maritime Research: India and the World	✉Soumyajit Mukherjee	197
❖British India policy towards Tibet through Darjeeling: A study on the opening of trade route 1849-1890	✉Yangden Lepcha	215
❖History of Tea Plantation in India: transition of tea from China to northern region of West Bengal	✉Saurav Chettri	229
❖From look East to Act East Re-envisioning the strategic significance of North-East for India's Act east policy	✉Sampiya Mahanta	240
❖Survival of indigenous system Medicine and the British Raj	✉Suman Yadav	250
❖Prison Writings Reflections on Jail Experiences of 'political prisoners'	✉Anshuman Srivastava	263
❖Book Review	✉Payel Deshmukh	278

Editorial

Kunteswari Dutta

Emergence of women Peasant leadership in the Southern Part of Jorhat District of Assam in the wake of Quit India Movement

The story of civilization is the story of men and women struggling up from necessity, from their helpless dependence on nature to freedom and their partial mastery over nature. The basic assumption then, with which we must state any theorizing about the past, is that men and women build civilization jointly. Nevertheless, what is of even greater concern is that women's contributory role in society; economy and polity have seldom been acknowledge by policy makers or academics. Of course, the study of the history of women participation in the Indian freedom struggle against the rule of the British has been given much importance in the recent years which it has provided wider scope in re-orienting historiography, that is 'History from Below'. In the present trend of analysis of Indian national movement, many have made efforts to deal with the role of women in the national movement. They have explored various aspects and themes; but the regional and local variations of the theme have remained marginalised in many cases. For instance, the local peasantry of women folk of the Brahmaputra Valley of Assam who formed popular organisation called Ryot Sabha through which they stood for the interest of the local region in the pre-independence period. In the light of this discourse, this editorial intends to focus the role of Kunteswari Dutta, a leading women leader of Koranga Rayot Sabha located in the southern part of Jorhat district in the wake of Quit India Movement.

Before analysing the role of Kunteswari Dutta, a few discussions are necessary regarding the emergence of women and Ryot Sabha particularly the Brahmaputtar Valley in the wake of freedom struggle. Needless to say, we are fortunate to have leader like Mahatma Gandhi who advocated equality to women in the freedom struggle. Emphasising the importance of women, Gandhi argued that women is the companion of men gifted with equal mental capacity. She has the right to participate in the minutes details of the activities of men, and she has the same light to freedom and liberty as he has. In the perspective of Brahmaputra Valley since the Non Co-operation movement a new dimension began to emerge with the participation of women. Gandhi, who had been relentlessly working for the uplift of the Indian women, now became a symbol of courage and inspiration. Following his footsteps the women leaders in the state level like Chandraprabha Saikiani, Rajbala Das, Bijuti Phukan and Nalinibala Devi undertook extensive tour to organise the rural women. Similarly, it was during the Civil Disobedience Movement period, the Ryot Sabha, a popular organisation of the peasantry of the Brahmaputra Valley began to

emerge. Like other parts of the Brahmaputra Valley a number of Ryot Sabha had emerged in the southern part of Jorhat district. For instance, Cinamara Baruah Gaon Ryot Sabha, Koranga Ryot Sabha, Hejari Gaon Ryot Sabha and so forth are to be mentioned here. The emergence of the Ryot Sabhas, we have seen two interesting aspects. As a matter of fact, the Ryot Sabha not only played remarkable role in the moments of civil Disobedience and Quit India Movement for political emancipation, but boosted local socio-economic as well as constructive activities in the grass-root level also. Another aspect was the mobilisation of the womenfolk through local Ryot Sabha on the basis of strong democratic front. Hence, it is seen that Kuteswari Dutta was the leading women of the historic Koronga Ryot Sabha. The hierarchal structure of the All Assam Ryot Sabha according to the Niyomawoli (constitution of Ryot Sabha also emphasised on women folk in the organisational structure).

‘Sisters! Why should you sit in that cage-like structure? Who dares to prevent you from sitting outside it? Avail yourself of the opportunity of learning something for your next generation. Let the freedom of the country be your gift to the future generation to come’. These words of Chandra Prabha Saikiani had an electrifying effect not only on the women of the Brahmaputra Valley of Assam, but it had injected a new imprint in the Southern part of Jorhat also. As a result Kuteswari Dutta came out openly from the four wall of the family into the path of socio-economic-political agitation against the colonial British government. Noteworthy that, Kuteswari Dutta was born at Hunari Gaon of Na-Ali Dhekiajuli (Titabor) in 1896 and later on she married to Kadam Hazarika of Koronga Kumar Hazarika Gaon. Keeping away from the seer poverty of her day to day life, she devotedly joined in the freedom struggle. It is to be noted that she was popularly known as other two nick names viz. Bor Aaita (great grandmother) and Kolkhati Burhi (the old women who likes Banana).

The Quit India Movement drew the largest numbers of women to the forefront of the movement. They came out to join the movement with the preparedness to face any eventuality that might come in the way of attaining the independence of India. The women Ryots from the local villages like Katoni Gaon, Raidang Komar Gaon, Hejari gaon, Khariachuk, Napamua, Komar Hazarika and the like came out into the path of political emancipation inspired by Kuteswari Dutta. It was due to active mobilisation of Kuteswari Dutta, Konai Baruah of Baruah Gaon, Dalimi Saikia of Hezari Gaon came forward from kitchen to rescue the country in this region. Similarly, inspired by Kuteswari Dutta peasant freedom fighter like Guna Kanta Baruah, Malbhog Sarma, Siba Hazarika, Boliram Borah, Bogaram Gogoi, Hiteswar Neog, Radhanat Mahanta from Raidongia Komar Gaon Rayot Sabha, Baruah Gaon Rayot Sabha, Rongajan Ryot Sabha participated in the movement

and many of them were thrown into jail. Not only have that, Kuntswari Dutta encouraged his son Gongadhar Dutta to involve in this historical movement. In the Later Phase of her life, she actively associated with the establishment of Karanga Girls' H.S. School in 1952, Karanga Sewasram, Post Office and the like. These are some of few aspects that have been humbly focused here. Our erudite scholars will be hopefully able to reflect various ramifications of local heroes and their contribution to infuse a sense of research among the digitize generation.

However, it is our ninth and humble approach to publish this volume of Journal of history department of our College. This editorial does not claim any originality. Much of the thoughts expressed here have been picked up from numerous publications. Not a perfect volume in many ways, nevertheless we feel that the completion of this volume, in a way, is redemption of our pledge to the subject of history. In addition, we are emphasizing and trying our humble endeavour to popularize the strong root of history and allied research for today and for tomorrow and to establish the link in academic and true research reciprocity among the colleges, research institutes, interested and learned section of the country and beyond. In this context, special expression of our gratefulness goes to our founder Principal professor Ananda Saikia, who is also a devoted scholar in the field of historical research, Sjt. Durlav Chandra Mahanta, founder President, Governing Body of our college and Dr. Girish Baruah, one of the prolific Philosophers of North-East India including our peer reviewers of the Journal. Their inspiration and guidance, in fact, has enabled us to sustain through all odds. We would forever remain grateful to all the contributors for their research papers learned Advisory Board and peer reviewers. Finally, we offer our sincere thanks to Mr.Latu Gogoi, L.G. Computer & Printing Centre, Lichubari, Jorhat for taking up the computer work with much care and patience.

*Expecting healthy criticism and encouragement from the learned section,
With regards,*

Department of History
Cinnamara College
Cinnamara, Jorhat-8(Assam)

Editor

Main issues in the naval history of India 1650-1857: 'brown' versus 'blue' water navies

Dr. Anirudh Deshpande
Professor of Modern History
Department of History
Faculty of Social Sciences
University of Delhi
Email : anirudh62@gmail.com

Abstract

This essay questions several assumptions of modern naval history which, by inception, has been Eurocentric. Written Indian naval history since the 19th century has been colored by colonial prejudice. It glorifies the European navies and denigrates the indigenous Indian naval traditions with the nomenclature of 'piracy'. The Indian historian must recover these Indian 'brown water' navies from colonial condescension. This process can begin by outlining the main issues of naval history and sea power in the context of early modern Indian history. The Angres of Konkan, the Sidis of Janjira and the Marakkars of Malabar made exemplary use of 'brown water' navies to register their political dominance in their respective regions from the 16th to the mid 18th Centuries. How did they manage to resist the technologically superior navies of the West for so long and why did this resistance end are important questions of Indian history and notions of sovereignty.

Key words: Navy, Seapower, Blue Water Navy, Brown Water Navy, Gunpowder, Sail, Galley, Angre, Sidis, Marathas, Marakkars.

This essay lays down the guidelines for writing a rigorous naval history of India. At the heart of the matter is a re-definition of *naval history* made possible by researches into local naval contexts. To begin with, the British wrote accounts of English naval exploits as *documented history* the best example of which is the tome on the East India Company Navy, the Bombay Marine, by C. R. Low called *History of the Indian Navy*. Written by an ex-officer of the service, the book uses the term *Indian Navy* for the *hybrid* navy of the Bombay Presidency.¹ The Portuguese also wrote in similar vein; European captains, eager to please their home authorities, painted Indian naval resistance in colonial colors.² Indian indigenous navies became 'pirate' gangs in colonial accounts.

Indian naval prowess does not feature in the list of great navies. The naval powers of the early modern period were Spain, Portugal, England, Holland and France. Pre-colonial China had a large ocean going navy capable of staying at sea for months. Had China not turned inwards in seafaring policy from the seventeenth century the history of the Pacific and Indian Ocean regions would have been different. To a casual observer, written history registers an absence of Indian naval history. Does India have a naval history? This question needs a considered answer because India's seafaring history goes back to the times of the Indus Valley civilization. The history of Indian sea trade is established and we wonder whether this was possible without naval protection. After all, piracy is as old as sea trade-trade, piracy and land robbery have gone hand in hand in history. Further, 16th Century India witnessed the rise and spread of gunpowder technology. Under Western and Ottoman influence Indians began to manufacture and use firearms on a large scale in the 16th and 17th Centuries CE.³ Portuguese accounts are also replete with references to guns being mounted on Asian warships, including the fleet maintained by the *Samudri Raja* in Kerala.

The Mughal military hardware was sophisticated but they left their trading and haj ships to the protection of the 'brown water' navy of the Sidis of Janjira. Till the mid 18th Century, the Sidis were the naval arm of Malik Ambar and the Mughals whose trading and *haj* ships regularly sailed towards the Persian Gulf, Arabia and East Africa. Not much work has been done on these Ethiopian seafarers and till date the well researched monograph D. R. Banaji remains the best work.⁴ The Sidi navy and its integration with the coastal and island forts was the model which the Marathas followed. It is known that initial Maratha military prowess, including the popularization of the *bargi* system of light cavalry, owes its rise to Malik Ambar who recruited Marathas in large numbers in the Nizam Shahi armies.

There was another formidable naval power which operated from the southern part of west coast of India, namely Malabar, in the sixteenth century. This power posed a serious challenge to growing Portuguese hegemony in the Indian waters after the arrival of Vasco da Gama at Calicut in 1498. The hundred year plus history of the naval family of Kunjali Marakkar is practically unknown to most Indians and non Indians. The Marakkars were Admirals of the Zamorin (*Samudri Raja*) of Calicut (Kozikhode) the kept the Portuguese at bay inflicting several crushing defeats on their fleets during the sixteenth century. The Marakkar resistance forced the Portuguese to operate from Cochin in the south and Goa in the north. In the 16th century the Marakkars were literally the thorn in the side of Portuguese coastal trade the value of which was considerable. Over time the

KunjaliMarakkars grew too powerful for the Zamorin who allied with his old enemy the Portuguese to bring them down in 1600.⁵ In contemporary Portuguese and European accounts, the history of the Marakkars appears as the discursive exotic story of the Malabar Pirates. A similar history was repeated in the case of the Angres of the Konkan in 1755-56; the story of the Angres and Marakkars is similar and both were defeated in the ultimate analysis by an Indo-European Alliance.⁶ When we look at the maritime accounts of the mercantilist age we realize not only the omnipresence of piracy but also the fact that its description is always discursive with the kettle calling the pot black. Thus, anyone who resisted European naval and mercantile intervention in the Arabian Sea became a pirate in European accounts. These accounts passed into history books written by European soldiers, diplomats and scholars and comprised the foundation of the Eurocentric bias central to modern education in European countries. Much has changed in the 20th century but general ignorance of local Asian histories continues to do its bit for the sustenance of Euro centrism in the military and naval histories written in the West. The naval history of India goes back at least to the Tamil Cholas of the 10th and 11th centuries CE. The Chola kings used naval power to conquer Sri Lanka and parts of the Malay Peninsula and Indonesia. This was no mean feat for its time. In general, the practice of maintaining fleets of warships to protect and raid merchant ships seems persisted over time. Travelers noticed this. On the southern part of the west Indian coast, in Barkur, the Moroccan visitor Ibn Battuta encountered a Hindu ruler 'with a fleet of thirty warships, engaged in raids on merchant ships' in the fourteenth century.⁷

India, the largest peninsula in the world, remained the pivot of the Indian ocean world trade and commerce for several centuries. India bisects the Indian Ocean into two almost equal parts; the Arabian Sea connects to the Atlantic Ocean and Bay of Bengal to the Pacific Ocean. This unique geographical location of India and its diverse pre-colonial manufactures and production of cotton, silks and spices made it the most significant point of intersection of the Indian Ocean cultures, trade and travel for the greater part of its history.⁸ While the richness of the commercial history of this region is well established in historiography not much is known of its naval history. India, till the late 18th Century, was a large exporter of spices, cotton, silk and other luxury goods high in demand in Europe. It was a larger importer of bullion and selected commodities from Europe and this bullion made India the sink of precious metals till 1750. This accumulation of precious metals in India created the fame and glory of the Mughal Empire. *These two dominant economic trends of the period of capitalist mercantilism*

underscored the absence of the historical need for India to develop an ocean going blue water navy. In contrast the European powers needed strong blue water navies to secure their supplies of bullion and wage naval wars against competitors. The Anglo-Spanish, Anglo-Dutch and Anglo-French commercial-naval wars, which were inter-continental, between 1550 and 1760 should be studied in this context. We must also remember the naval history of the Mediterranean where the Italian City States, Ottoman Turkey and Egypt clashed at sea to control the rich Asian trade which passed through the region making the Italian states rich and opulent. The Arabian Sea, Red Sea and the Mediterranean were significant constituents of the Indian Ocean World trade network which connected Asia to Europe carried on by Arabs and Jews. The *Geniza* records, especially the spectacular *Cairo Geniza*, deal with the economic, cultural and commercial history of the Jews in medieval and early modern centuries in Asia, Africa and the middle-east and have been used by historians to reconstruct new histories of the mercantilist period.

India has a politically intriguing and socially rich naval past. So obscured by commerce is this naval past of the Indian Ocean that a lay reader of its history may be tempted to ask *whether India has a naval history?* Interested historians have periodically visited the naval history of the Indian Ocean Region though its local history plays a minor role in the Eurocentric narratives which characterize world military and naval history. We must not underestimate the scale and commercial value of early modern coastal trade into which the Europeans began to tap from the time of their arrival in India. The strategic importance of the brown water navies must be seen in this lucrative coastal trading context.⁹ This paper attempts a course correction from a perspective located outside the *military revolution* paradigm.¹⁰ Our work does not disprove the emergence of global Western military hegemony during 1500 to 1800 CE but makes the story *more interesting* and *less disrespectful* of the indigenous naval and military traditions of the Indian Ocean World in the same period. The rediscovery of this lost past has contemporary lessons. What, we may ask, was the nature of indigenous resistance to rising European naval power in the Indian Ocean World? Why and how did the Marakkars on the Malabar and Angres on the Konkan successfully challenge European naval power for several decades in the 16th and 18th Centuries CE? Finally, what caused their eventual defeat and what conclusions can we draw about the nature of the land based polities which colluded with the Europeans against them?

A description of the character and activities of the Maratha Navy is given by Sir Jadunath Sarkar in *Shivaji and his Times*. 'In picturing Shivaji's

navy’, the historian wrote, ‘we must banish from our minds the idea derived from Europe of a line of men-of-war boldly sailing into the boundless open sea and defeating an opposing fleet by superior maneuvering and gunfire. The Maratha fighting vessels were meant for work in the coastal waters only; their tasks were to escort his merchant ships from port to port, or sadly out of their shelter in some land locked harbour, swoop down upon an enemy trading vessel or small fighting craft, and after dismasting capture it by boarding and hand to hand fight. For serving this end, their cumbrous gun-boats called ghurabs had to be towed at sea by row-boats so as to overtake the enemy, shoot off his masts and finally send a boarding party in the row-boats to capture the prize. In fact, Shivaji’s sea-battles merely followed the tactics of land-fighting. Even in gun-power, his largest vessels were inferior to third-rate English or Portuguese fighting ships. He mounted only a few and small guns and the marksmanship of his gunners was poor and slow’.¹¹

This sobering view of Maratha naval prowess has been modified by developments in Indian historiography over time but, in general, conforms to the popular military history perspective on the subject. Without using the term ‘brown water navy’ Sarkar defined its historical character for us early in the development of modern Maratha historiography. His conclusions were based on meticulous research, later borne out by the researches of the preeminent nationalist historian S. N. Sen, and inveigh against the contemporary tendency to exaggerate the achievements of Indian [read *Hindu* in media parlance] military and naval forces in medieval or early modern Indian history.¹² Indian positivist historians of the colonial era were dedicated to searching for the weaknesses in the pre colonial Indian or Maratha ‘nation’ in order to explain the rise of British power in India *better* in military terms. Further, to understand the naval activities of the early modern Indian indigenous coastal powers perhaps boils down to comprehending the historical peculiarities of the age of sail.

Let us turn to the view of *the* politically influential expert, Mahan, on naval history and doctrine to get an idea of what a ‘brown water’ and ‘blue water’ navy meant in the age of sail. Mahan’s work should always be taken seriously. After all, his *magnumopus* influenced naval construction and doctrine in Germany from across the Atlantic in early 20th Century. What did naval power mean in the age of sail? Or, what was naval power just before the ironclad steamer replaced sail in modern history? ‘The galley’, he wrote, ‘has one striking resemblance to the steamer, but differs in other important features which are not so immediately apparent and are therefore less accounted of. In the sailing-ship, on the contrary, the striking feature is the difference between it and the more modern vessel; the points of resemblance, though existing and easy to find and

not so obvious, and therefore are less heeded. This impression is enhanced by the sense of utter weakness in the sailing-ship as compared with the steamer, owing to its dependence upon the wind; forgetting that, as the former fought with its equals, the tactical lessons are valid. *The galley was never reduced to impotence by a calm*, and hence receives more respect in our day than the sailing-ship; yet the latter displaced it and remained supreme until the utilization of steam' [emphasis added]. So why did the sailing ship ultimately win against the galley in the long run? The answer is prescient: 'The powers to injure an enemy from a great distance, to maneuver for an unlimited length of time without wearing out the men, to devote the greater part of the crew to the offensive weapons instead of to the oar, are common to the sailing vessel and the steamer as the power of the galley to move in a calm or against the wind'. In sum, if the 'blue water' navy deploying firepower aboard the purpose built man-of-war was unbeatable by the galley on the high seas, a 'brown water' navy reliant chiefly on rowing in the calm had its own tactical strengths. Rowing in the well known shallows was tactically possible for a limited amount of time. On the high seas the galley would have proved useless in any case.¹³ Seen in this perspective the achievements of the Angre navy which often comprised a large number of galleys, the *galbats* which were usually smaller than the bigger masted *gurabs*, appear outstanding. We can easily imagine the enormous hard work done by the lascars at the oars in these ships in tropical weather. This explains why the Portuguese and English employed the native lascars known for their energy and resilience in the tropics on their ships in large numbers. The issue was not only the increased expense incurred in recruiting Europeans ill suited to the tropics but also the efficiency of the lascars, an observation made by the survey veteran Clements Markham later in the 19th century.¹⁴

The third important aspect Indian naval history is technology. Revision in historiography suggests that medieval India was *not* a 'dark age'. The 'dark age' hypothesis regarding 'Muslim India' is a colonialist figment. India is a sub-continent and generalizations about one of its regions may not *fit* other areas. The traditional view of the stasis in military technology attained in medieval India is best expressed in the words of a respected historian known for his work in the area. According to I. A. Khan, 'The nature of firearms and manner of their use, remained largely unaltered from the death of Akbar (1605) to the time of Nadir Shah's sack of Delhi (1739). This particularly applied to heavy mortars. The light artillery was also not immune to the general trend of technological stagnation, a few noteworthy

innovations in it notwithstanding. Several new techniques relating to firearms came from Europe during this period but, with a few exceptions, did not find ready acceptance in Mughal India. The inability of the Indians to copy European cast-iron cannons and adopt more efficient flint-locks as standard military muskets were perhaps the two most conspicuous Indian failures in the field of firearms during the seventeenth century'.¹⁵ This is a narrative of stagnation till the advent of the European companies whose native armies were led by Europeans and trained in the European way of war. Following the success of the European trained native battalions in the 18th century, modernization was initiated by many Indian politics. Without this modernization the British conquest of India would not have become a long drawn affair. Randolph Cooper, an admirer of Mughal and Maratha militaries, presents a case against the 'cultural imperialism' espoused by colonialist historiography.¹⁶ Evidently, there was much more to the military success of the Marathas which must be recovered by a different reading of Maratha history. Technological weakness is marginal to the best history of the Marathas written after World War II.¹⁷ In sum, the topics of naval manpower and technology remain interesting because *all navies in the early modern period were hybrid*. What are known as the English, Dutch or Portuguese warships of the time were products of a multi ethnic synergetic shipbuilding technology.¹⁸ The military technology, especially the use of cannons on sea, which underwrote European colonial conquest in the age of mercantilism also resulted from the European states borrowing bombardier and foundry expertise from various distant regions.¹⁹ The Portuguese 'military supremacy was based on the great quality of their bombardiers, recruited from the main European weapon manufacturing centres, such as Flanders, Germany, Italy and France'.²⁰

The conclusion may assert the following. First, the Eurocentric perspective on Indian naval history must be challenged to place 'brown water' Indian navies in their historical context. India misses a naval history with a capital N, but its coastal people have demonstrated their naval prowess in ample measure. This naval activity and its periodic demise because of opposition from Indian land powers and their alliances with the Europeans is a subject of research. The limitations of the Europeans in the shallows of India and the technological innovation of the Indian powers like the Angres of the Konkan and Marakkars of the Malabar are interesting subjects. In the last thirty years much revision in Indian military and political history has occurred. Scholars should pay attention to this revolution in Indian historiography while researching themes related to Indian 'brown water' navies.

Notes and References

¹Charles Rathbone Low, *History of The Indian Navy (1613-1863)*, Vols. I & II, originally published in London in 1877, reprinted and published by Manas Publication, Delhi, 1985.

²*ibid.*

³IqtidarAlam Khan, *Gunpowder and Firearms: Warfare in Medieval India*, OUP, 2004.

⁴D. R. Banaji, *Bombay And The Sidis*, Macmillan & Co., London & Calcutta, 1932.

⁵The best book on the Admiral Marakkars is K K N Kurup, *India's Naval Traditions: The Role of the KunhaliMarakkars*, Northern Book Centre, New Delhi, 1997. So far two National award winning films on the KunhaliMarakkars have been made, one in 1967 and another in 2021 with a budget of 100 crore rupees-the most expensive Malyalam film ever made starring the brilliant MohanlalVishwanathan as Mohammad Ali, KunajliMarakkar IV. The super hit film is called *Marakkar: Lion of the Arabian Sea*. A popular Malayalam tele series has also been made on the Marakkars.

⁶Anirudh Deshpande & Muphid Mujawar, *The Rise and Fall of Brown Water Navy: SarkhelKanhojiAngre and Maratha Seapower on the Arabian Sea in the 17th and 18th Centuries*, Aakar Books, New Delhi, 2021.

⁷Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *The Career and Legend of Vasco da Gama*, CUP, 1997, p. 108.

⁸Edward A. Alpers, *The Indian Ocean in World History*, OUP, 2014. Though this point has been underscored by numerous scholars of the Indian Ocean World, Alpers, a veteran historian of this region, has provided us a concise and succinct account of the multifaceted hybridity characteristic of the regions in Africa and South East Asia bordering the Indian Ocean. Other recent works which have highlighted the syncretic history of the Indian Ocean World from a variety of perspectives would include Yogesh Sharma (ed.), *Coastal Histories: Society and Ecology in pre-Modern India*, Primus Books, New Delhi, 2010; RadhikaSeshan (ed), *Narratives, Routes and Intersections in Premodern Asia*, Routledge, 2016; Malekandathil, LotikaVardarajan& Amar Farooqui (eds.), *India, The Portuguese and Maritime Interactions Volumes I& II*, Primus Books, Delhi, 2019.

⁹For more on local trade and its importance to the mercantile activities of the European trading companies see Om Prakash, *On the Economic Encounter Between Asia and Europe, 1500-1800*, Ashgate Variorum, Surrey, 2014.

¹⁰The words Angre and Marakkar are absent from Parker, Geoffrey, *The Military Revolution*, CUP, Cambridge, 1988.

¹¹Jadunath Sarkar, *Shivaji and his Times*, Orient BlackSwan, New Delhi, 2010, first Edition 1919, pp.196-97.

¹²For details see, S. N. Sen, *The Military System of the Marathas*, Orient Longmans, New Delhi, 1928, pp.152-208. Sen describes in some detail the history of the Maratha Navy from Shivaji's times to the late 18th Century when several smaller navies replaced the navy once led by the famous Maratha admiral KanhojiAngre and his successors.

¹³A.T. Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History 1660-1783*, first Published 1918, The Project Gutenberg e-book, 2007. p. 66.

- ¹⁴The reference to 'native craft with Arab crews' which made possible the surveys on the Red Sea coasts is to be found in Clements Markham, *A Memoir of Indian Surveys*, London, 1871. Local vessels were excellent in the shallows and manned by the lascars.
- ¹⁵IqtidarAlam Khan, *Gunpowder and Firearms: Warfare in Medieval India*, OUP, p.195.
- ¹⁶Randolf G.S.Cooper, *The Anglo-Maratha Campaigns and the Contest for India: The Struggle for control of the South Asian Military Economy*, CUP, 2005.
- ¹⁷Stewart Gordon, *The Marathas 1600-1818*, CUP, 1993.
- ¹⁸The Eastern, Arab and Normand influences on late medieval Portuguese shipbuilding is noted by Jose Manuel Malhao Pereira, 'Portuguese Shipbuilding Prior to the Voyage of Vasco da Gama and Future Interactions in India', in Pius Malekandathil et al (eds.), *India, The Portuguese and Maritime Interactions, Vol. I*, Primus Books, Delhi, 2019, pp.190-204.
- ¹⁹Vitor Luis Gaspar Rodrigues, 'Bombardiers and Gun-Foundries in 'Estado da India' in the First Half of the Sixteenth Century' in Pius Malekandathil et.al(eds.), *India, The Portuguese and Maritime Interactions, Vol.I*, Primus Books, Delhi, 2019, pp. 205-219.
- ²⁰*ibid.*, p. 206.

Babu Jagjivan Ram as a Saviour and Liberator of the Indian Working Class

Dr. Anil Kumar Sarkar
Babu Jagjivan Ram Chair Professor
University of Calcutta
Email : anilcob.2012@gmail.com

Abstract

Babu Jagjivan Ram was a freedom fighter as well as a leader of downtrodden people. He also came from a Dalit family. Jagjivan Ram said the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi and not Communist or Socialism would lead us to the goal of a classless society. He believed the Government have so far benefited labour to the labour class. Babu Jagjivan Ram knows the reality of the Dalits and their socio-political situation Gradually Jagjivan Ram prepared the ground to fight for Harijan, the working class etc. M.C. Saksena precisely interprets Babu Jagjivan Ram, Shri Jagjivan Ram is known as the political leader of our country. But the fact that he is also a Trade Union Leader of our country is not so well known. The epic struggle of the working classes in Bihar started under his leadership. He came into the limelight as a labour leader in 1940 when he was elected the Vice-President of the Bihar Trade Union Congress. From the very beginning, Ram has an abiding faith in the Gandhian way of life. Hence, he encouraged the working classes to achieve their just demand through dignified methods peculiar to the Indian traditions and genius.

Keywords: Downtrodden, Classless society, Harijan, Struggle, working class.

Babu Jagjivan Ram is called the messiah of the labour class. Before going to discuss in detail Jagjivan Ram we are trying to understand the real situation of the labour class and their problems under colonial rule. In the nineteenth century, it was the time to originate the modern labour class in India. It was possible due to the establishment of modern factories, railways, dockyards, tea and coffee plantation and construction activities relating to roads and buildings. The workers' living and working conditions were very bad then. The working time was probably 12 to 16 hours, poor wages, unhygienic working places, employed of children, women workers discrimination, unsanitary and poor housing, extreme levels of indebtedness, and there was no guarantee of the accident, sickness or old age created a situation. As a result death rate was very

high among workers. It was seen that there were not as accessible as in some other countries which were free from colonial rule. The British Colonial Government passed Factory Acts in 1881 and 1891 but it was executed for children and women. This act was not implemented for male adult labourers. The machinery to execute the various provisions of the Factory Acts was weaker. The Factory Act of 1911 reduced the working hours of adult males to 12 hours on any one working day and it was further amended by this Act of 1922 and the working hours reduced and it was 11 hours. The security of jobs and the rise in wages slowly improved but it was not satisfied the labourers and the situation was not equal in all sectors and all places.

The social reformers came forward and extend their interest to the welfare of the workers or labours. The Brahma social reformer came forward to work among the workers. Sasipada Banerjee was one of them to establish the organization 'Workingmen's Club' in 1870 to act for the development of the working class of the Bengal Province. He also published a journal entitled *Bharat Sramjeebi* for spreading education among the working class. In Bombay, N.M. Lokhanday published an Anglo-Marathi weekly newspaper *Dinbandhu* in 1880. He also established the organization 'Bombay Millhands' Association' in 1890. Other organizations, Bombay workers established 'Kamgar Hitwardhak Sabha' in 1909, and the 'Social Service League' was established in 1911. They tried to lure the Britishers to discuss the working class in legislation to develop the conditions of the workers and continue welfare activities among them. After 1885, the strategy of the freedom movement changed its direction though Congress did not take any favourable decision for the labour class. When the working class protested against such long hours, nationalist paper *Kalpataru* wrote in September 1905, 'We have to build a nation and it matters not if all the mill hands are placed at the altar of martyrdom'.¹ G.S. Agarkar, B. C. Pal, C.R. Das and G. Subramania Iyer were the pro-labour reformer. Iyer highlighted the problem for the labourers to establish their organizations to struggle for their rights and problems. Dadabhai Naoroji clearly said in the second session of the Indian National Congress that it 'must confine itself to questions in which the entire nation has a direct participation, and it must leave the adjustment of social reforms and other class questions to class Congresses'.²

Before 1905, the nationalist leadership was very much concentrated on legislative steps by the British Government, and implement for the betterment of working conditions of the labourers. After the First World war, the World situation radically changed particularly for workers. The mass nationalists came forward and attended the nationalist movement and shouted their voices against economic

distress. The Russian Revolution and the formation of the International Labour Organization (ILO) made the situation for greater politicization of labour and the formation of labour organisations. Another important change had come in India because Mohan das Karam Chand Gandhi's return to India and involvement in the freedom movement and Gandhi's joining into the Indian National Congress was a turning point in the history of the Indian freedom movement. It has seen after 1918 as a much larger, more intense and better-organized labour movement organized in various parts of India. The various labour organizations established the All India Federation, which was AITUC (All India Trade Union Congress). In the meantime, Congress played a vital role to unite the various organization and all individuals in favour of the national movement. The middle-class leadership was also interested in the matter of workers. So, the overall national movement had deeply influenced the labour class.

During the time of *Khilafat* days, Gandhi had entered into politics, the Jallianwala Bagh massacre took place. The Khilafat movement began and with this began the honeymoon of Hindu-Muslim friendship. When both the powerful communities were seething with discontent, Gandhi found a way out. The new path was a non-cooperation. Jagjivan Ram was highly influenced by this politics though he was a high school student at that time. When Jagjivan Ram did his ISC at Banaras University and Jagjivan Ram under the great influence of Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya. Another personality who influenced Jagjivan Ram was Principal Dhruva, who had egged him on to join Banaras University in the hope that one day he may be able to secure the Birla scholarship.³ Afterwards, Jagjivan Ram completed his B.Sc. from Calcutta University in 1931. He always gave priority to Calcutta because he started his political career in this place. Jagjivan Ram came from the Dalit community so he knows how inhuman treatment continued to the caste people for centuries. He also knows the socio-economic oppression continued to the labour class under colonial rule. We all are very much aware that India is an agricultural-based country. How can land which refuses to respect labour prosper? Jagjivan Ram found it true to organize the landless labourers to improve their condition. Jagjivan Ram said, 'Ninety percent of our people are agricultural labourers-rather agricultural serfs. If you have to see remnants of slavery you go to a village and see a *Halwaha*. For a few rupees, he is forced to mortgage himself to a *Kisan* and serve him on mere subsistence allowance. For his hard physical labour in the fields in scorching heat or torrential rains, a *Halwaha* gets two and a half seers of coarse grains and that too during the sowing season, when there is a great demand for labour. These *Halwahas* and other field labourers, practically belonging to the depressed classes, are not free to go over to other villages on higher wages'.⁴

Babu Jagjivan Ram knows the reality of the Dalits and their socio-political situation. In 1937, Bihar Provincial Depressed Classes Conference at Gopal Ganj, Jagjivan Ram in his Presidential Address to the Second session said, 'Let us organize the agricultural labourers on this basis. We shall have to face heavy odds. We shall see many who profess to serve the masses ranged against us. But never mind we will have to do this at all costs. During my tour of the villages, I noticed discontent in the heart of the labourers. We are only to organize them and carry on a constant agitation for the amelioration of their condition. Our slogan should be Land to the actual tiller of the soil'.⁵ He also said, 'In rural areas, there were restrictions in certain parts of the country on scheduled castes acquiring agricultural land. The most astonishing feature of this restriction was that such castes without whom agricultural operations were not possible at all, were treated as non-agriculturists. These restrictions were removed after the Constitution came into force, but now it is found that even arable wasted land is not available for them. Hence they have to eke out their livelihood as agricultural workers'.⁶

In 1937, Jagjivan Ram founded *Khetihar Mazdoor Sabha*, a farm labourer's Organization in Bihar. The main objective to form this organisation was to protest against evil practices like beggar labour (working without payment for the upper castes), low wages and carnages. *Khetihar Mazdoor Sabha* demonstrated against these evil customs (coming from generation to generation for a long time) before the Bihar Assembly. The members of this organisation also were demonstrated in the Haripur Congress session. 'The people of Gujarat did not like this. Sardar Patel also opposed this. He was afraid that his organization of farmers, the Kisan Sabha, would be affected by this. He argued that this would divide the farmers and the farm workers. It was true that the interests of farmers and the labourers who worked for them were different, but Sardar Patel's Kisan Sabha at that time was engaged in fighting big landowners, the zamindars, and wanted to end the zamindari system'.⁷ The *Khetihar Mazdoor Sabha* wanted proper wages and freedom from atrocities. Babu Jagjivan Ram was the chief architect and hoped and aspirations to all. In 1938, during the Haripura Congress session, Jagjivan Ram became one important Congress leader and came into the forefront. In 1940, Jagjivan Ram contested and was elected Secretary, Bihar Provincial Congress Committee and he continued this post in 1946.

Gradually Jagjivan Ram prepared the ground to fight for Harijan, the working class etc. M.C. Saksena precisely interprets Babu Jagjivan Ram, 'Shri Jagjivan Ram is known as the political leader of our country. But the fact that he is also a Trade Union Leader of our country is not so well known. The epic

struggle of the working classes in Bihar started under his leadership. He came into the limelight as a labour leader in 1940 when he was elected the Vice-President of the Bihar Trade Union Congress. From the very beginning, Mr. Ram has an abiding faith in the Gandhian way of life. Hence, he encouraged the working classes to achieve their just demand through dignified methods peculiar to the Indian traditions and genius. On Mahatma's call, at the time of 'The Quit India Movement. Mr. Jagjivan Ram mobilised Bihar's labour force to strengthen the national liberation front. Workers in Bihar joined the 'Quit India Movement' and rallied around his leadership. He was imprisoned with all leading Congressmen who were active in Trade Unionism and participated in this movement. Agricultural workers in Bihar also owe to Babu Jagjivan Ram as he initiated several improvements and changed their working conditions by cracking the monolithic structure of feudalism in his home state'.⁸

Jagjivan Ram realised and suggested the measures for the reorganization of society by giving important changes in the rural economy in the following way, 'What is to be done? Let us begin from the root – the reorganization of agriculture and our rural economy. The method of production indeed determines the method of distribution. If there has to be an equalization of economic power in rural areas, a new method of production must be adopted. Village leadership today consists of the substantial and middle farmers, and the small farmer and the landless labourer still have no place. It is still the old zamindars who turned into substantial farmers who rule the village. It is still the old dominant castes which continue to dominate the village life. The governmental machinery reflects the caste and class structure in the village and plays a supporting, if not subservient role in perpetuating the existing order. All this has to change. New leadership has to emerge and reliable agencies at the village level have to be created. These agencies must consist of local people who have a stake in the development and who are dedicated. Such an agency must consist of all those who have hungry stomachs and willing hands, meagre or no land and no means of production. The agency must emerge in this manner, as it were, from the soil of the village'.⁹

The Hon. Mr. Jagjivan Ram, Labour Member in an Interim Government, addressing a meeting at Bezwada, on his way to Madras, said, 'We have now reached the threshold of our goal of Purna Swaraj by the message of *Ahimsa*, given by our great leader and patriot Mahatma Gandhi. He probably added that we may have to up the last fight to achieve our cherished goal. We must keep ourselves ready for the fight and should not mind the number of lives which we may have to lay down for achieving the freedom of our country, because nothing is costlier than freedom'.¹⁰ Continuing he said that there was no power on earth

which could stop Indians from, achieving complete independence. 'Turning to the Harijans, the Labour Member said that they stood to a greater need for freedom than others because they were downtrodden and the exploited and only freedom could bring them salvation. He exhorted them not to lag behind others in the coming struggle'.¹¹

Jagjivan Ram was the true leader and he sacrificed his life to serve the nation. Jagjivan Ram had an abiding faith in the Gandhian way of life. On calling of Mahatma Gandhi Jagjivan Ram joined Quit India Movement and he fully mobilized the labour force in Bihar under his leadership. He was imprisoned with all leading Congressmen. The most active in Trade Unionism and participated in this movement. So, Jagjivan Ram had the experience to do the work with the labour class. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was very much impressed with the invaluable services Jagjivan Ram, rendered to the working classes in Bihar. In September 1946 when an interim government was formed Jawaharlal Nehru called Babuji to take charge of the portfolio of the labour Ministry. After independence too he continued this position up to 1952. Babu Jagjivan Ram remembered that 'peasants and labours are the backbones of the Nation' and he also asserted that 'Real Swaraj lies in the installing then a worker in the field and factory to his rightful place in society. Let us work for that and build the India of our dream'.¹²

Jagjivan Ram always used power for the benefit of the people in general and the downtrodden in particular and evolved his unique ways of achieving his goals. His main aim was only for serving his people or nation. Brindaban Das writes, 'Babu Jagjivan Ram is essentially a man of the masses. Whatever portfolio he had, he served the best interests of workers, agriculturists and the downtrodden. He filled every post with utmost success and distinction and due to his vast knowledge and experience of men and matters no honour is too big for him'.¹³ When he became labour minister, he has taken many historical and progressive measures which proved to be a milestone in the lives of the Indian labour class. With the upliftment of the labour class and socio-economic security, Jagjivan Ram brought many laws passed in favour of the working class. He was called the Messiah of the working class.

After becoming the Labour Minister in the interim cabinet, Jagjivan Ram said, 'political freedom having been achieved, the Congress must engage itself to the next great task, namely, the establishment of real democracy in the country and a society based on social justice and equality'.¹⁴ He also said, 'In the case of industries, which in their nature must be run on large-scale and on a centralized basis, they should be so organized that workers become not only co-sharers in

the profits but are also increasingly associated with the management and administration of the industry'.¹⁵ Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said in a Nagpur convocation, 'we never envisaged freedom as something legal...we thought always in terms of raising the standard of living of hundreds and millions of our people and of giving them the necessities of life as well as those other equalities and opportunities that should be provided to every human being'.¹⁶ Mahatma Gandhi knew that Jagjivan Ram was the fittest for this post and Ram was also familiar with the suffering of the poor workers and the oppressed masses of India at that time. Gandhiji blessed and instructed him to take good care of those workers who were mostly neglected. Jagjivan Ram has founded Associations and Unions of landless labour, village artisans, depressed classes, and industrial as well as factory workers. So, he can be called the saviour and liberator of the Indian working class. Jagjivan Ram was very much conscious of the welfare of the working class. He observed, 'although on 15 August 1947 we have gained political freedom we have still been unable to obtain economic liberation. Eradicating poverty and illiteracy is actual freedom but it is also implicit that the millions of labourers in the country be provided suitable shelter, a healthy environment and at least two meals daily. This can only be possible when industrialists and labourers, like brothers, behave and appreciate the difficulties of the labourers, the industrialists will check accumulation of capital is merely a few hands'.¹⁷ He also said, 'we can not ignore the labourers who are not in a position to place their demands and apprehensions before the industrialists, public and the government. The government has to come forward to assist them and take steps to improve their work conditions while there is a conflict between the labour class and the capitalists. If I have to explain more clearly then I will say that a large number of labourers are engaged in mines, plantations and villages in the country. Their conditions, given their illiteracy, lack of information and helplessness is quite unsatisfactory'.¹⁸ Jagjivan Ram was thinking logically to solve the problems of any disputes relating to employers and employees by talking and agreements.

The Bombay Chronicle published news on 13th April 1947 with the headline of better working conditions for all categories of labour and Jagjivan Ram clearly explained the policy of the Central government. Jagjivan Ram Labour Member of the Government of India declared at a press conference 'the working conditions of all categories of labour were engaging the serious attention of the Central Government. He stated that he was shortly introducing in the Central Assembly a bill to improve the conditions of commercial workers'.¹⁹

The Industrial Dispute Act, 1947

Jagjivan Ram presided over the Tripartite Indian Labour Conference, he stated that a wave of industrial unrest had been sweeping through the country. This was not an isolated Indian phenomenon, but a part of the general and industrial unrest. He advocated that the labourer had a genuine cause and had a background. He always preferred to solve any employer and labour problem to discuss openly.

The Bombay Chronicle published the news that Joshi's Amendments Thrownout, Central Assembly Discusses Industrial Disputes Bill. The Defence Secretary, Mr. G. S. Bhalja, introduced in the Central Assembly today a bill to enable duties in connection with vital services to be imposed in any emergency on the armed forces of the Crown. During the war, says the Statement of Objects and Reasons, Defence of India Rule 81(3) empowered the Central Government to direct the employment of persons subject to the Indian Army Act or the Indian Air Force Act in any undertaking essential to the life of the community. The Defence of India Rules has now expired. This Bill provides that in any emergency the Central Government may by notification declare that any specified service is a service of vital importance to the community and that commands to members of the armed forces about employment in that service shall then be lawful. The Bill includes a clause to make valid commands of this nature given under the orders of the Government between the expiry of the D. I. R. and the passing of this Bill.²⁰ The House resumed discussion clause by clause of the Bill. The Provision was open for Investigation and Settlement of Industrial Disputes and agreed to an amendment moved by Mr. Vadilal Lalubhal regarding the personnel of the Industrial Tribunal. The relevant clause in the Bill provided that every member of the Tribunal 'shall be an independent person who is or has been a Judge of a High Court or who possesses qualifications required for appointment as a Judge of a High Court'.²¹ Mr. Vadilal's amendment prescribed that every member of the Tribunal should be a Judge of the High Court or a District Judge or was qualified for appointment as a Judge of a High Court and further provided that in the absence of a Judge or District Judge, appointment to a Tribunal should be made in consultation with the High Court of the Province in which the Tribunal was intended to have our usual place of sitting. The House rejected Mr. N. M. Joshi's amendment to the same clause when he wanted that every member of the Tribunal should be paid the salary of a Judge of a High Court. The House discussed at length and rejected another amendment moved by Mr. N. M. Joshi, which wanted that an industrial dispute might be referred to a Tribunal for Adjudication 'on the joint application of the

parties to an Industrial dispute'.²² Mr. Joshi was supported by Miss Maniben Kara and opposed by the Labour Member Mr. Jagjivan Ram, the Labour Commissioner Mr. S. C. Joshi, Diwan Chamanlal, Mr. S. S. Sanyal, Sir Cowasji Jehangir and Pandit Balkrishna Sharma. Mr. N. M. Joshi moved another amendment seeking to delete Sub-clause 3 of Clause X which says, 'Where an Industrial dispute has been referred to a Board or Tribunal under this Section, the appropriate Government may by order prohibit the continuance of any strike or lock-out in connection with such dispute which may be in existence on the date of the reference'.²³

Jagjivan Ram observed, 'the purpose of this Act is to establish cordial relations between the labourers and the employers. I do not want to give a speech on this. If need be, then later I will discuss such points as may surface during the debate. With these words, I present this bill for the house's consideration... Sir, the bill has come from a select committee... I would like to thank all the honourable members who have assisted the select committee. Sir, I have listened carefully to the arguments of my friends who claim to represent the labourers but I believe that all the arguments being given now are the ones given when I referred the draft of this bill to the select committee. I am afraid that if I try to reply to all the points then I will probably be repeating in general, those very arguments I have already put forth earlier. Therefore, Sir, I will not try to reply to all the points as have been raised... I do not claim to be a revolutionary, and neither do I claim this bill to be a revolutionary one. It is an ordinary measure and I think that it is more by labour-class interests than the employers. My friend, Shri Joshi who has spent a major part of his life amid a section of the labour class of the country... when I speak of a section of the labour class then I mean that he has worked labouriously, to a certain extent but only with the industrial labour... is not reassured. When he criticises the noteworthy measures, then I fear, Sir, that he thinks only from the perspective of the industrial labour to an extent, factory labour and that labour class which is organized... I want to make it clear that only factory workers do not represent all the labour classes in this country'.²⁴

The Industrial Disputes Act mentioned two ways of settlement of industrial disputes will be affected. The Works Committees and Industrial Tribunals will be the voluntary negotiation and adjudication. The Industrial Tribunal will lie to both parties to a dispute and also apply for such reference to the appropriate Government considering it, in the public interest, to make such a reference. Babu Jagjivan Ram firmly believed that the 'Voluntary negotiation is not only by far the most satisfactory method for settling the

differences between employers and workmen but, I am sure, you will agree should also be the normal method of settlement. As regards the other new mode of settlement of disputes, namely, adjudication, I venture to imagine that none in this House will raise controversy in so far as it is to be optional. But, as regards compulsory adjudication as a method of settlement of disputes, I apprehend that opinion in this House may well be divided. The issue involved is fundamental and that is whether, and if so to what extent, Government should intervene in industrial disputes. This, in turn, will raise further the question of whether industrial disputes are purely a matter of private law, the contract between the employer and his workmen. My answer, Sir, is that since the parties to the industrial dispute are no longer limited to the aggrieved workmen and the aggrieved employer, and insincere causes of the industrial dispute are not limited to breaches of the express or implied terms of the contracts of service, industrial disputes cannot be treated as matters purely within the confines of the private law of contract'.²⁵ Jagjivan Ram said about the trade dispute, 'in reality a recrudescence of the economic warfare between capital and labour, and in this warfare, the community at large is no less affected than the employer and workmen engaged in the industry. Though trade disputes are ostensibly bipartite engagements between capital and labour, the public at large is a necessary party to them, especially where they affect supplies and services essential to the community's well being. To put it concretely, Sir, a strike in a public utility service will involve not only loss of production and profit to the employer and loss of employment and wages to workmen but will also involve loss of services and supplies to the community. Government is responsible for the maintenance of services and supplies essential to the health, safety and welfare of the community and the maintenance of national the economy, it becomes imperative for Government to intervene in industrial disputes, especially where in consequence any severe hardship is entailed on the community. The case for Government's intervention in industrial disputes with a *veto* promotes interest is, I submit, incontrovertible'.²⁶

Jagjivan Ram mentioned 'whenever industrial relations are disturbed, the solution lies not in the imposition of artificial peace by prohibitive of strikes and lockouts, but in effecting a speedy readjustment of the relations between the employers and the workmen either by agreement between them or, where no agreement could be reached by compulsory adjudication. If, as I have submitted, Government must have power to the intervene in industrial disputes, it will hardly be contested that that power must extend to enabling enablement to authoritatively regulate industrial relations where the employers and workmen

concerned are unable to settle the disputes themselves. The principle underlying compulsory arbitration is, 'I submit, clear the unimpeachable. I may mention that more than anything else, the provisions of rule 81A of the Defence of India Rules, empowering the Central Government to refer disputes to adjudicators and to enforce their awards, have enabled Government to deal effectively with industrial disputes during the war. And what is more, the results of the adjudication proceedings have in most cases proved satisfactory both to the workers and employers. The present Bill embodies the principles of the rule of *BIA*, but in a more liberalised form. My submission, Sir, is that neither the employers nor workmen have an unrestricted right to wage trade disputes if in consequence public interests are jeopardised. And where public interests are jeopardised, I maintain that it is incumbent on Government to intervene with a *veto* securing of the relations between the employer and workmen, if possible, by private negotiation and conciliation and, if necessary compulsory adjudication'.²⁷ The main aim of the Industrial Disputes Act was to minimise industrial disputes. Jagjivan Ram firmly believed that employers and employees can develop the habit of collective bargaining and can be free from harassment from courts, tribunals, boards and committees. The Industrial Disputes Act of 1947 was practically our first effective venture in the field of labour-management relations, particularly, compulsory arbitration. The experience that we have gained by working on that Act has encouraged us to believe that a more systematic, if somewhat elaborate, approach to the problems of labour-management relations, will pay good dividends. He dealt briefly with the Bill'.²⁸

The Industrial Disputes Act is intended to regulate the relations between workers and employers and recognized the importance of associating workers in the administration of industry, especially in matters affecting their health and comfort. The Act provides for the setting up of the joint committee, either by agreement or under direction from the Government. This essential responsibility on the workers also in the matter of improving their lot. Works Committees promote measures for securing and preserving amity or good relations between employers and workers. Any members of the committee can propose changes in definite matters of industrial relations and the decisions of the joint committee on such a proposal have the binding force of an agreement entered into by both labour and employer. Babu Jagjivan Ram's period, the Industrial Disputes (Appellate Tribunal) Act, 1950, was passed and a provision for a central Appellate Authority was made.

Indian Trade Unions (Amendment)

Jagjivan Ram's policy was always the recognition of labour to be a partner in the industry. He has given more emphasis to promoting the trade union because he believed that trade unions can solve the labour problem. We have seen for the first time in history that plantation and agricultural labour have been brought under a union. Jagjivan Ram recognized that the exploitation of the worker by interested parties could only be checked by a genuine Trade Union.²⁹ I have already mentioned that the All India Trade Union Congress was established in 1920 as a central organization of labour. Though it was organized with the object of securing representation at the ILO Conference in Geneva, there was no doubt, a historical necessity for it. The All India Trade Union Congress indeed received numerous support from all corners. So, the trade union movement got a great impetus. Jagjivan Ram understood the necessity of trade unions in favour of the worker.

Jagjivan Ram commented that the Indian Trade Union Act 1926 has been completely ineffective. Under these circumstances, he has been presenting the Indian Trade Union (Amendment) Bill in Parliament on 29th October 1946. Jagjivan Ram said, 'the Bill provides for such a statutory recognition by the appropriate Government which in the case of Unions in the central sphere will be the Central Government and the Provincial Governments concerned regarding trade unions in the provincial spheres. The principal object of the Bill is that a trade union fulfilling the conditions provided in clause 28(d) will be entitled to recognition by the employer and one of the important conditions is that the Union should be a representative trade union. Another important condition is that the Union seeking recognition must have been registered under the Trade Unions Act for at least twelve months before they applied for recognition. This salutary provision will prevent too many trade unions from being formed hastily and applying for recognition straightaway. Opinions have been expressed that a trade union seeking recognition must contain not less than a prescribed percentage of workers in the undertaking or industry. In a Central Act which should meet the requirements both of the Central and the Provincial Governments, when conditions may be different in different areas, some elasticity is most desirable'.³⁰

He has also said, 'provision has been made in clause 28(g) of the Bill by which among others, the industrial court set up for the purpose will have the power to withdraw recognition of a trade union if satisfied that it has ceased to be a representative trade union. This provision along with that of clause 38(d) will give power to the appropriate Government to impose suitable conditions to ensure that a large number of rival trade unions do not spring up thereby damaging

the cause of workers instead of furthering it. The statutory provision is made for the recognition of trade unions and for giving such recognised unions certain rights and privileges, it is equally essential that such unions should also realise certain fundamental obligations. Therefore certain practices by the trade unions have been defined as unfair practices and any recognised trade union guilty of unfair practice will be liable to have its recognition withdrawn. The unfair practices will be for a majority of the members of the Union to take part in an irregular strike or for the executive of the Union to advise or actively support or instigate irregular strikes. It is not of course the intention to forbid the declaration of strikes regularly in conformity with rules made by the Union laying down the procedure for declaring a strike. Also, it will be an unfair practice if the officer of a recognised union submits any return containing false statements. It is realised that while some responsibility and obligations are put on the members and executives of recognised trade unions, some essential conditions should be imposed on the employers also regarding their dealing with such Union'.³¹

The employees can call a strike against the legal provisions but the announcement of a lock-out by the employers was considered a crime too. The Amendment of the Trade Union Act was such that while on one hand, there were fewer cases of violation of employees' rights by the employers, on the other hand, the employers understood, in-depth, their obligation to keep the industrial relations cordial in the industrial World. This can be called a revolutionary change in India.

Factories Act, 1948

With the passing of the Factories Act, of 1948, legislation was of far-reaching importance. The object of the Bill is not only to consolidate the law relating to working conditions in factories but also to introduce certain important new features. Babu Jagjivan Ram mentioned, 'the existing law applies only to industrial establishments where the manufacturing process is carried on with the aid of power and where 20 or more persons are working..... It is now proposed that the law relating to factories should be made applicable to all industrial establishments employing ten or more workers where power is used and 20 or more workers in all other cases. As a result of this change, the number of establishments subject to control is likely to be trebled. The number of workers to whom the protection of the Factories Act will extend will increase immediately from 25 to 35 lakhs. The country is now set upon an era of industrial expansion. We all agreed that as far as possible, this industrial expansion should not take the form of a limited number of big factories, but rather of a large number of small industrial establishments dotted all over the country. It, therefore, becomes

necessary that our law relating to factories should be made applicable to the smaller establishments also. It is with this view that the definition has been widened'.³²

Babu Jagjivan Ram especially focused on this bill and said, 'the present Act makes a distinction between seasonal and perennial factories. Because the seasonal factories work for only a part of the year, there is a tendency to be somewhat lenient in the enforcement of standards relating to safety and health. This is not a satisfactory state of affairs. Whether a factory works for a part of the year or the whole year, provisions relating to safety, health and welfare should be equally applicable. We have, therefore, done away with the distinction between perennial and seasonal factories'.³³ This Amendment included more provisions in support of workers.

He also discussed, 'I am sure the Honourable Members will agree with me that regulations relating to cleanliness, ventilation, lighting, supply of drinking water, the provision of sanitary conveniences, fencing of machinery, hours of work, the weekly day of rest, prohibition of the employment of children, reduced hours of work for adolescents should be applied to all workplaces, irrespective of the number of people employed. The difficulty in extending these essential provisions is mainly an administrative one.....To enable them to do so, a provision (Section 86) has been added giving power to provincial governments to apply these provisions to any premises where a manufacturing process is carried on, with or without the aid of power, except where the work is done by the worker solely with the aid of his family'.³⁴ This act brought within its domain establishment 10 workmen where power was used and 20 workmen where power was not used.

Minimum Wages Act, 1948

The Minimum Wages Bill is a revolutionary step taken by Babu Jagjivan Ram immediate after independence. It is for the first time something concrete is conceived in this bill for the welfare of the agricultural labourer and also an industrial labourer. According to Babu Jagjivan Ram, this Bill was a revolutionary one not because it conceived something which will contribute to the betterment of a lot of the agricultural labourers but it is a revolutionary one because it conceives of a situation in which India may be made self-sufficient in the matter of food grains.³⁵ When Jagjivan Ram was presenting the bill and said, 'it was introduced by my predecessor, honourable Dr. Ambedkar, in the old Legislative Assembly in 'the year 1946. It was referred to a Select Committee the same year, but in the meantime, the old Legislative Assembly ceased functioning and the Bill had again to be referred to a Select Committee or rather the Select

Committee had to be reconstituted in November last. The Select Committee since then has considered the Bill and reported as I presented on 28 January 1948. The necessity for a piece of legislation of this nature is paramount in our country, especially in those employments where the workers are not in a position to organize themselves and get their grievances removed and their legitimate demands fulfilled by the employers. In those industries where a large number of workers are employed or where there are facilities and conveniences for trade union workers to organize the labourers in those concerns, it is not so desirable as in the case of those workers who are scattered mostly in the rural areas where the trade union workers do not find it convenient to go and organize them and do something tangible for them. The inevitable result of all this has been that the workers in a very large number of industries, mostly situated in rural areas or small towns, get wages which are not at all consistent with the labour that is put in the operation of their work, and these industries are popularly known as sweated industries. The Bill provides that something might be done to improve the lot of the work in these sweated industries. The Schedule in which certain industries have been enumerated is not exhaustive. I would say the Schedule is simply illustrative. But while including the various industries in the Schedule, we had to take into consideration the factor that many of the provincial governments will not be in a position to take many industries at the same time, more so when we are limiting the period for the provisions of this Act to be put into execution only to two years in respect of Schedule I and to three years in respect of Schedule II. But there is a provision that the Provincial Government concerned, if they so choose, may include in the schedule any number of industries which they may find they are in a position to take into their hands as early as possible. The provisions of this Bill are not so complicated and there have been definite improvements made in the Select Committee over the original Bill. The Provincial Governments will set up Advisory Committees which, after making investigations, will make recommendations to Provincial Governments for the fixation of minimum wages in the industries given in the Schedule. The Provincial Governments may, on their initiative, also fix the minimum wages. This piece of legislation is very necessary. Sir, this should have been on the statute book long before. I hope that the House will unanimously adopt this legislation'.³⁶

The Minimum Wages Act was passed in March 1948 and it is a very important act to safeguard workers. Here Babu Jagjivan Ram is a unique character from others and he is always remembered for the downtrodden people. This act shaped statutory provisions and vested in the appropriate state

government a right to fix, review and revised the minimum rates of wages payable to workmen in specific industries. This was an extraordinary step to help the disorganized labour class in the industries. Agricultural labour was also covered by this act.

Employees State Insurance Act, 1948

The Dominion Parliament today passed the Employees State Insurance Bill, which provides for certain benefits to employees in case of sickness, maternity and employment injury. The Labour Minister, Mr. Jagjivan Ram said that the bill opened a new chapter in the history of labour legislation in this country. It was the beginning of social security measures. Its scope was hunched but the benefits might be expanded and extended to any extent in order to cover the various categories of the working classes in this country. I am sure and quote, he said amidst cheers, and quote; that the corporation, the Provincial Governments and the Central Government will take the earliest opportunity to extend the scope of this bill as soon as conditions permit. Resuming discussion on the Employees State Insurance Bill, the Dominion Parliament to-day quickly finished the clause-by-clause consideration of the Bill.³⁷

Mr. Naziruddin Ahmed forced a division on his amendment which sought to extend the benefits accruing to families and dependents of employees to illegitimate children dependent upon the employee. He pointed out that in considering his amendment the House should not mix up the question of morality or ethics with the benefits sought to be conferred on employees' dependents. If a worker himself was giving protection to illegitimate progeny, there was no reason why the scheme envisaged in the Bill should not extend help to such children. Mr. Thakurdas Bhargava, Babu Ram Narain Singh, Mr. T. A. Ramalingam Chettiar and Mr. Hoosam Imam supported the amendment. The Labour Minister Mr. Jagjivan Ram, however, opposed the amendment pointing out that normally in the industrial areas, the workers came along leaving their legitimate families behind in their villages. Such workers might contract some kind of intimacy with women in industrial areas and have illegitimate children. Surely the House did not want that the legitimate families of such workers should be disintegrated. If the amendment was accepted, the result would be that illegitimate children might deprive the legitimate children of the worker staying behind in their villages. He did not want to encourage this. Mr. K. Santanam also opposed the amendment which was lost. The House also agreed to widen the definition of the term family for purposes of conferring medical benefits to include, in the case of men workers, their dependent parents. This clause had been left over yesterday for further scrutiny and Mr. Anantasayanam Ayyangar moved the agreed amendment which was

accepted. During the third reading, the Labour Minister was congratulated by members from all parts of the House for his zeal and enthusiasm in piloting the bill which was so beneficial to the workers in the country.³⁸

Mr. Anantasayanam Ayyangar, who was the first speaker, urged the Labour Minister to follow up the bill with other schemes of social insurances such as, for instance, compulsory State Insurance for all Government-employees, especially the low-paid employees getting below Rs.400 per month. The contributions might be made in full or in part by the insured person. The Labour Minister should also try to extend such a scheme progressively to all other employees, not in Government service. Mr. Bishwanath Das while congratulating Mr. Jagjiwan Ram pointed out that the measure had only touched the fringe of the population. Only some three million people in industrial labour stood to benefit under the scheme, but he reminded the House that in the five lakhs of villages in the country over 150 million agricultural workers were clamouring for elementary medical aid. Mr. B. Shiva Rao endorsed the suggestions made by Mia Ray yesterday that the mere passing of the bill would be useless unless steps were taken to see that the provisions were implemented by the Provincial government. Quoting from experience, he recalled how in Madras in the Workmen's Compensation Act remained a dead letter for a long time. Trade Union leaders took pains to translate the provisions of the bill into simple language and distributed it among the workers. It was only then that the workers became aware of their rights and the bill was implemented. He looked forward to the Labour Minister announcing at an early date his scheme for industrial housing. Prof. Ranga joining issue with Mrs. Ray and Mr. Shiva Rao claimed that the Provincial Governments were not indifferent to the implantation of such schemes. Along with the change in the centre, had the house forgotten that the provincial governments had also changed. Much more than this, he recalled, how provinces like Madras, Bengal and Bombay had even during the days of the former Congress Ministry taken up the cause of labour uplift zealously. It could not be maintained that the provincial governments today were less progressive than the Central government. In the provincial Legislatures, as many people were interested in the cause of labour as there were in the Central Legislature. He appealed, therefore, for confidence in the Provincial governments and Legislatures and urged the House to trust them to give early, effective and satisfactory effect to the provisions of the Bill. Mrs Renuka Ray pointed out that she was quite aware of the change in the Provincial sphere also but had only wanted to stress yesterday that there was no uniformity among them in the degree

to of implementing the various schemes could be argued. She asked, that the Congress Ministries all function with the same degree of zeal and vigilance regarding Labour uplift. She hoped that the bill would be implemented by all the Provinces uniformly and without much delay. Mr. K. Bhatt said that now Labour was the rising force in the country. The Government and Labour policy must be laid down with care. At present many new parties were trying to exploit Labour for getting into power and the Congress Governments should give proper publicity to measures like the one under discussion and let the people know what was being done for their benefit. Baba Ramnarain Singh said that the Government should realize the importance of propaganda and approach the masses in Indian villages and tell them to bow to the National Government was working in their interests. Labour was the only wealth-producing section of the Indian population and the highest priority should be given to its needs and requirements. Mr. Kuladhan Chaltha said that this bill would bring relief to nearly sixteen lakhs of workers in the country. Mr. R. K. Sidhwa did not agree with Mr. Hariharnath Shastri that the establishment of special hospitals for the labours would sharpen the class distinction. Special hospitals for the labourers, he said, were essentially necessary because they would hardly get proper treatment in General Hospital.³⁹

Mr. K. R. Namurthi Rao said that the Government had a great responsibility to the States and should exercise their influence to bring into operation similar beneficial social insurance for the labourers in the states. The Labour Minister, Mr. Jagjivan Ram, replying to the debate, pointed out the constitutional position was such that they had mostly to depend upon the Provincial Governments for the implementation of the measures passed by the House. The Central Government did take utmost care to see that there was uniformity in the Provinces and that the Provincial Governments made honest efforts to give effect to the various measures adopted by the House to the best of their ability. Capacity and resources. Most Provincial Governments welcomed the measures under discussion and promised to give effect to them to the best of their resources. In this matter, the times had changed and the Provincial Governments had begun to take more and more interest in labour welfare and Labour Legislation. There was no cause for mistrust of the Provincial Governments.⁴⁰

As regards propaganda, the Labour Minister said that in India, where most of the workers are ignorant, illiterate and unsophisticated. It is very easy to exploit them for reasons other than economic and this is the reason why interested parties keep the workers unaware of very useful and beneficial measures by the

Central or Provincial Governments so that they can go on creating dissatisfaction among the workers and exploit them for their own political and party purposes. It rests with members of the House and other public workers to acquaint them with all our measures so that they may take advantage of them. If he had been able to do anything substantial for the working class, he had been able to do it most for the workers in the coal fields. If there were still strikes, the working condition was not responsible for them, but a struggle for supremacy over the workers in the coal fields by the various political parties. Various parties and groups, knowing that coal was basic to the country's economy, wanted to have full control of the workers in the coal fields so that they might paralyse the Government of the country at any moment. It was up to the public workers to counter this. We have created conditions very satisfactory to the coalfield. The Labour Minister said, 'still you see there are troubles not on account of economic centres but an account of a political cause.' He was opposed to the establishment of hospitals exclusively for the workers but certainly, Government would ensure better facilities for them. The needs of the agricultural population were constantly before the Government. The government were anxious to find avenues of suitable employment for every able-bodied man and woman but that depended upon the development of the country, which would take time. As regards the implementation of measures in the States, he pointed out that soon there would be popular assemblies and ministries in the States. He was sure that they would not lag behind the Provinces or the Centre in respect of labour Legislation.⁴¹ The Bill was passed.

Employees Provident Fund Act, 1952

Babu Jagjivan Ram was aware that the working class needs social and economic security. So, he presented a bill for a Coal Mines worker Provident fund and Bonus. The debate was going on on a particular bill in 1948. But Jagjivan Ram was firmly determined that this bill if passed workers will be benefitted. Jagjivan Ram always thinks about the social and economic security of the working class people. So, during the time of Shri Jagjivan Ram was the enactment of the Employees Provident Fund Act of 1952. This Act also protected the labourer in his old age. The scheme calls for compulsory and equal contributions both by employers and employees to a Fund which is invested in Central Government securities and the earnings so made are also credited to this Fund. The total amount is payable to the employee after he attains the age of retirement or to his heir or nominee in the event of premature death.

Labour Minister Jagjivan Ram took initiatives social security of the labour class and established Welfare Funds for Coal Mines and Mica workers under

the Coal Mines Labour Welfare Fund and Mica Mine Labour Welfare Fund Act of 1946 for providing medical, recreational, educational and housing facilities to the workers. Later Coal Mine Provident Fund and Bonus Scheme Acts of 1948 were passed. Jagjivan Ram also passed the Dock Workers (Regulation of Employment) act of 1948. It focuses on recruitment, training, health and safety measures and pays minimum pay for periods during which the labourers were unable to find employment or partly employed.

Babu Jagjivan Ram was one the great achievements to pass the plantation industry bill for the first time in India when he was Labour Minister. It was the foresight of Jagjivan Ram who thought of regulating the working conditions of tea and coffee workers. Mr. Jagjivan Ram said, 'A fundamental change has taken place in our conception of the role of labour in industry. After the first World War, it was recognized that labour was not to be regarded as a commodity of commerce and that it was entitled to humane conditions of employment. We have now advanced a little further. Labour is not only entitled to fair terms and conditions of employment but also becomes a partner in the industry in which he works. As partner labour is entitled to the benefits accruing from the partnership, but it must also learn to realise its responsibilities'.⁴² This conception, the Labour Minister continued, was emphasized in the industrial truce resolution adopted last December by the industries Conference which included representatives of Governments, Central, Provincial and States-employers and workers.

Mr. Jagjivan Ram pointed out that 'the Tripartite Committee would have to assume new factories as a result of the industrial truce resolution. It will be the central machinery for the study and determination of fair wages and conditions of labour and fair remuneration for capital. In addition, it will have to devise ways and means for the association of labour in all matters concerning industrial production. I realise that plantation labour is less sophisticated than other industrial labour but it is neither possible nor permissible on that account on that account to withhold the right to the partnership which is the keystone of future industrial policy. I hope that in this matter Government will have the fullest cooperation of the planters throughout India. For the proper implementation of the industrial truce resolution, we feel that it would be desirable to set up a smaller committee which will meet at more frequent intervals'.⁴³

Referring to the question of wages, the Labour Minister said that 'the committee set up to go into this matter would be able to arrive at an agreement which would do justice to the worker and credit to the industry. Mr. Jagjivan Ram also said that on the question of the medical care and treatment of plantation

workers the industry agreed that Government might prescribe reasonable standards for plantations. Speaking on the proposals before the Committee in respect of legislation the Labour Minister maintained that although most employers might be ready to observe such standards as might be generally accepted as fair and reasonable, they had always to reckon with the few black sheep who gave a bad name to the industry. They must, therefore, be armed with legislative power to enable them to assume control where it was necessary'.⁴⁴

Expressing the hope that the tripartite machinery for the plantations would become permanent and would assume its new and important functions, Mr. Jagjivan Ram remarked, 'As time marches we can see more clearly the almost revolutionary changes in the wake of the second world war, which are silently but surely overtaking us. The old order is giving way to the new, requiring all round readjustment and re-orientation. The changes may be liked or disliked but they are inevitable. It would be folly to resist all changes and to hope for the continuance of the old social and economic order. Wisdom demands that inevitable changes should be so directed as to bring about the greatest happiness for the greatest number. The common man is gradually coming into his own and it is our duty to help him in every possible way. He will need guidance and help'.⁴⁵

Babu Jagjivan Ram always thought of the working class when he was Labour Minister because he was aware of the condition of labour, so he tried to the all-round development of the workers. Babu Jagjivan Ram appointed a National Commission on Labour to review the whole matters of labour welfare and suggest improvements. Babuji wanted to evaluate the welfare measures of the labour without bias or better-called fairness. It was his firm conviction that unless labour got its due share and was kept in a mood of willingness to give its best, exercises at increasing industrial production would be all in vain. His pioneering work in this direction laid a solid and sound foundation for further legislation and for creating a new consciousness amongst the labour. The labour class will always be grateful for his bold and courageous stands taken for their cause.

Notes and References

¹S.B. Upadhyay, *Historiography in the Modern World: Western and Indian Perspectives*, Oxford University press, 2004, p.149.

² Bipan Chandra et al, *India's Struggle for Independence 1857-1947*, New Delhi, Penguin Books, 2016, p. 211.

³Dr. Sanjay Paswan and Dr. Pramanshi Jaideva, *Encyclopaedia of Dalits in India*, Vol. 11, Delhi, Kalpaz Publications, 2002, p. 81.

⁴*ibid*, p. 83.

⁵*ibid*.

⁶*ibid*.

⁷Indrani Devi Jagjivan Ram, *Milestones-A Memoir*, New Delhi, Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd., 2010, p. 66.

⁸M.C. Saksena, *Struggle and Achievements*, New Delhi:,Alka Publication, 1973, p. 305.

⁹B.M.Turadagi, *Dr. Jagjivan Ram's life and Achievements: A Critical Analysis*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis of Karnataka University, 2018, p. 87.

¹⁰The Bombay Chronicle, 28 December, 1946, VOL. XXXIV, No. 298, p. 4.

¹¹*ibid*.

¹²A.C.Sinha,K.L.Chanchreek,B.K.Tiwari andR.C.Shukla (eds.), *Struggle and Achivements: Babu Jagjivan Ram Commomoration Volume*, New Delhi, Alka Prakashan,1973, p.142.

¹³S.R.Bashi, *Jagjivan Ram-The Harijan Leader*, New Delhi,Anmol Publications, 1992, p.171.

¹⁴D.K.Jain, *Babu Jagjivan Ram and Indian Labour*, in A.C. Sinha (ed.), *op.cit.*, p. 560.

¹⁵*ibid*.

¹⁶*ibid.*, pp. 560-561.

¹⁷Shachirani Guru, *Jagjivan Ram on Labour Problems*, Delhi, Atma Ram & Sons, 1951, p. 11.

¹⁸*ibid.*, p. 12.

¹⁹*ibid.*, 13 April, 1947.

²⁰The Bombay Chronicle, 14 February, 1947, p. 4.

²¹*ibid*.

²²*ibid*.

²³*ibid*.

²⁴Om Prakash Maurya, *Babu Jagjivan Ram*, New Delhi: Publication Division, Govt. of India, 2010, p.110.

²⁵*ibid*.

²⁶Babu Jagjivan Ram in Parliament: A Commemorative Volume, Lok Sabha Secretariate, New Delhi, 2010, p.95.

²⁷*ibid.*, p.96.

²⁸Dr. Nannihal Sing,*Jagjivan Ram: Symbol of Social Change*, New Delhi, Sandeep Prakash, 1977, p. 61.

²⁹Shachirani Guru, *op.cit.*, p. 9.

³⁰Babu Jagjivan Ram in Parliament: A Commemorative Volume, Lok Sabha Secretariate, New Delhi, 2010, p. 86.

³¹*ibid.*, pp. 86-87.

³²The Constituent Assembly of India (Legislative) Debates, Official Report, Volume I, 1948, pp. 74-75.

³³*ibid.*

³⁴*ibid.*, p.75.

³⁵Babu Jagjivan Ram in Parliament: A Commemorative Volume, Lok Sabha Secretariate, New Delhi, 2010, p.115.

³⁶The Constituent Assembly of India (Legislative) Debates, Official Report, Volume I, 1948, pp. 339.

³⁷The Bombay Chronicle, April 2, 1948.

³⁸*ibid.*

³⁹*ibid.*

⁴⁰*ibid.*

⁴¹*ibid.*

⁴²Amrita Bazar Patrika, Friday, April 2, 1948.

⁴³*ibid.*

⁴⁴*ibid.*

⁴⁵*ibid.*

Kesaria

A Stupa of Declivity and a milieu of the Kalama Sutta in Lichhavi Kingdom

Dr. Ranjana Mishra
Former Professor and Head
Department of History
Shri M.D. Shah Mahila College of
Arts and Commerce, Mumbai
Presently visiting faculty, Lucknow University
Email:ranjanamishra10@gmail.com

Abstract

Kesaria Stupa is one of the most famous and biggest Buddhist sites in Bihar. The historians and the archaeologists consider Kesaria as the most conspicuous structure in existing time and claimed to be bigger than Borobudur. This stupa has been built in Sankasya style i.e., foremost design at each side surrounding a tripartite ladder or steps, to honor the event of descent. It is also known for its striking, architectural construction as compared to other remains of ancient India. Ancient Kesaria, a republican state, known as Kesaputta was ruled by Kalamas. In later years, it got annexed by monarchical kingdom of Kosala, Maurya's and the Lichhavis. It is situated at East Champaran, on the eastern banks of the river Gandak (or Narayani) and has been declared as the tallest ever-excavated Stupa in the world by ASI. It is averred by archaeologists that Kesaria stupa height was 123 ft., which immersed into earth after 1934 earthquake and now in its crumbled state also its height is 105 ft which is one foot more than Borobudur, in Java, supposedly world's biggest stupa in the list of World Heritage Monument. The Director of K.P. Jaiswal Research Institute, Patna Mr. Bijoy Kumar Chaudhary during excavation uncovered that the artefact tope was refurbished three times between the 4th century BCE and the 1st century CE, during the reigns of Mauryan, Shunga and Kushan dynasties. In the realm of Buddhism, it has acquired a special position. Hiuen Tsang, the great Chinese traveler of the 7th Century has provided a graphic account of the Stupa. The uniqueness of the stupa is that it became model for the large number of stupas in Kashmir, Bhutan, Tibet and Myanmar. However, the final culmination of the inspiration of Kesaria is Borobudur in Java constructed in 800 CE, so many years after Kesaria. This paper is based on empirical studies and the author has made an attempt to examine a series of historical facts that led to the

evolution of Kesaria. It focuses on how the restoration and preservation of Kesaria would not only be the treasure trove of heritage and monumental legacy of the past but it would be an important site for Buddhist circuit for a large number of national and international Buddhist visitors. The research monologue would also focus on the similarities and difference between the world's two greatest monuments i.e., Kesaria and Borobudur. The volleys of literary sources written in books and journals helped as secondary sources. The travelers accounts of Fa-Hian, Hiuen Tsang, Chu-Si-Hing, have provided ample information to corroborate the hypothesis that it was the stupa of declivity and place of Kamal sutta. The archaeological sources like coins, bricks and bowls retrieved from stupa, available in the Vaishali museum gave insight about historical, religious and cultural importance of the stupa. The research work is based on the report of Patna Circle of the Survey excavation at Kesaria under the guidance of retired K.K Muhammed and his team. An interview with Dr. Prakash Kumar, Asst. Archaeologist of Archaeological Survey of Patna Circle gave concentrated perception to author about comparison between Borobudur and Kesaria.

Key words: Stupa, Declivity, Lofty, engineering marvel, commemorate, shamble, Borobudur.

Kesaria Stupa is one of the most famous and biggest Buddhist sites in Bihar. The historians and the archaeologists consider Kesaria as the most conspicuous structure in existing time and claimed to be bigger than Borobudur stupa of Java which is till now considered as the biggest in the world.¹ It is also known for its striking, architectural construction as compared to another Buddhist remains of ancient India. The archaeological Survey of India has declared Kesaria as protected monument of national importance. Kesaria, known as Kesaputta in ancient times, was a republic ruled by Kalama.² In later years, it came under monarchical rule when the king of Kosala Janpada (kingdom), annexed it into its empire. The initial Buddhist manuscripts record that Buddha stated his impending nirvana to the monastics at Vaishali.³ According to historical traditions, religious followers followed him after his last sermon. Buddha persuaded them to return back after presenting his alms-bowl in memory. In the realm of Buddhism, Kesaria has acquired a special position because of innumerable reasons. First it was the place where Buddha spent a night before his parinirvana (death). Secondly Lord Buddha delivered Kalama Sutta or Kesamutti Sutta in Pâli, which was known as Buddha's charter of free

inquiry to his followers.⁴ Thirdly, it was situated on important trading center as it was here that road from Pataliputra forked to Lumbini and Kushinagara. Fourthly, AlaraKalama, one of the teachers of Buddha, before his enlightenment, was from this place.⁵ Fifthly, according to Jataka stories Buddha ruled this place as a Chakravarty Raja in his previous birth.⁶ Sixthly, he bequeathed his alms bowl to Lichhavis, who were overwhelmed with emotion at the news of his parinirvana. It was here he consoled them and requested them not to come along with him to Kusinagar. Kesaria Stupa was at east Champaran on the eastern banks of the river Gandak (or Narayani). Its glorious past spans several centuries and was visited by two foreign travelers from China, Fa-Hiuen and Hiuen-Tsang respectively. In the previous epochs this stupa was assumed to be 150 feet, much higher than Borobudur stupa, in Java, a world heritage site, of 138 feet.⁷ It is acclaimed by archaeologists that Kesaria stupa got immersed into earth after 1934 earthquake and that is why its height became less. In 1998, when it got excavated, its height is 104 feet and has a circumference of almost 400 feet which is still one foot bigger than Borobudur. The Director of K.P. Jayaswal Research Institute Patna, Mr. Bijoy Kumar Chaudhary had averred that it is one of the most striking, architectural remains of ancient India as Sanchi, another world heritage monument in India is only 77.50 feet which is nearly half of the size of Kesaria stupa. The excavations are not yet complete and so no report of the sightings at Kesaria have yet been fully published. The most outstanding feature of this stupa is that it does not look big, but because of its engineering genius, it appears gargantuan as soon as one walks nearer to it. The excavations carried out by the K.P. Jayaswal Research Institute, had revealed that the Lichhavis built this mud stupa which got evolved in its present structure in the Maurya, Sunga Kushana, Gupta and Pala period between the 4th century BCE and the 7th century CE.

Methodology

This paper has made an effort to examine a series of historical, social and religious milieus that contributed to the evolution of Kesaria and its unique features. The paper accentuates on as how the refurbishment and preservation of Kesaria stupa will be an important Buddhist circuit for a large number of national and international Buddhist visitors. It also focuses on the similarity and the differences between Kesaria and Borobudur and how unlike Borobudur despite its being important treasure trove of heritage and monumental legacy of

the past, it is in shamble. This research monologue also energizes on the various ways for preservation and conservation. The travelers accounts of Fa-Hiuen *i.e.* Fo-Kyo-Ki translated by M. Abel Remusat, Samuel Beal translation of Hiuen Tsang's book Si-Yu-Ki and translation of travelogue of Chinese pilgrim Chu-Si-Hing, who visited Khotan in 290 C.E., provide the first-hand information about this stupa. The Buddhist scriptures like Mahapari Nibbana Sutta, Majjhim Nikaya etc. served as primary sources for this research work. The archaeological sources like coins, bricks and bowls retrieved from stupa speak volume of the historical, religious and cultural importance of the stupa. The volleys of literary sources written by various authors in books and journals on the subject served as secondary sources. The visit of Kesaria Stupa, Vaishali's lion capital of Asoka and Nalanda Museum by the author, gave a clear insight about the stucco sculptures, bas reliefs and various artifacts found in the excavation. The recent book entitled *The excavated Buddhist stupa* by Mr. Ajit Kumar and the excavation reports provided by Mr. Prakash Kumar Assistant Archaeologist of Archaeological survey of India Patna Circle provided the author of this paper comprehensive information about the stupa which formulated corroborating the hypothesis that it is marvel of stupa architecture.

Historical Background

The Kesaria stupa stands lofty as an aide-mémoire of the last days of Lord Buddha and his compassionate and gentle approach towards people of Lichhavis, whom he taught the seven principles of good governance or satta aparihaniya dhamma.⁸ Previous to excavations, the only noticeable edifice was the cylinder-shaped turret on the mound. The rest of the constructions was covered beneath the knoll which was for the first time seen on a drawing published in 1835 by B.H. Hodgson.⁹ The first invasive examination was excavation of a corridor on the east side of cylinder which was done by Kashi Nath Babu possibly under instructions from Lt. Col. Mackenzie of Madras Engineers around 1814.¹⁰ It was just a treasure hunt as no historical facts came into light. In 1861-62, Alexander Cunningham did excavation of a limited area of a mound known as Raniwas which was later on, taken to be a monastery site.¹¹ The scrupulous excavation of the stupa mound was done by Archaeological Survey of India of Patna Circle in 1997-98 and later on the excavation work was taken over by its Patna Excavation Branch in 2018-19 which is ongoing till today. Archaeologist K. K Muhammed of Patna Circle of the ASI aided by D.P. Sinha, M.K. Dwivedi, S.K. Arora, M.P. Singh and Avinash Kumar took up diggings work at the lofty mound of Kesaria.¹² So far only half of the structure has been exposed which has given a distinct image of the elevation. Undoubtedly it is one of the highest,

utmost capacious and decorative stupas in India. One could see regional features of Kesaria stupa in stupas of Nalanda and Bodhgaya.¹³ The evidence of Kesaria stupa could be found in various literary sources of the past. Even Chinese traveler Fa Xian in 5th C. B.C.E. has stated in his travelogue that there was a stupa built on the begging bowl of Buddha.¹⁴ In his account he has not mentioned the name of Kesaria but historians have taken it to be the Kesaria stupa. Another Chinese traveler, who visited India in 7th C.C.E. Xuan Zang in his travelogue has written that nearly 50 kilometers of north east of Vaishali there was an important place and a congregation had taken place under the aegis of Buddha.¹⁵ Today the distance of Kesaria is similar to that. Another interpretation that emerges from this travel account is that Kesaria was an abandoned place in 7th century C.E. This is in toeing the line with the sequence of last construction of stupa in 7th century C.E. that has been determined by Carbon 14 test. Another example that determines the existence of Kesaria is that before its exposure as a Buddhist stupa by archaeological site, the Kesaria was earlier known as Raja Ben ka Deora that implies that it was a fortress or shrine of King Bena. According to lore Raja Ben was supposed to be a liberal Chakrabarti raja or universal emperor with mystic powers. Alexander Cunningham has written in his record that even Xuan Zang had mentioned similar story about a king named Mahadeva, who was a great ruler but donated his empire to become a Buddhist Bhikshu.¹⁶ Similar story had been found in Jataka story also. In the Buddhist scripture it is mentioned that once Buddha had told his favorite disciple Anand that the great Chakravarty Raja had built the stupa where four principal road meet.¹⁷ Today, Kesaria stupa is positioned at the cross roads of two principal roads. One road connects Chhapra to Motihari and the other from Patna to Bettiah and Nepal. Kesaria falls on a well-known route from Vaishali to Kushinagar. This place has been tentatively identified as Kesaputtanigam in the ancient Buddhist text, MajjhimNikaya.¹⁸ An inscription of Dasavatar sculpture has been found near the foothill which verify the ancient times of the place which was first read by J.B.E. Elliot.¹⁹

The whole splendors of Kesaria went into forgetfulness till it was unearthed in 1998. The recent discovery of a large number of artefacts like arrow heads, copper and terracotta items, earthen lamps, decorated bricks have thrown light on the significance of Kesaria. A number of images of Buddha, in Bhoomi Sparsh Mudra and other sitting postures, and gold coins embossed with the seal of Kushan dynasty have been unearthed which have brought back Kesaria in limelight.²⁰

Important features of Kesaria stupa

The stupa is 104 feet high and has 1400 feet of circumference. Relying upon the history, Kesaria stupa is considered to be a memorial i.e. paribhogik stupa and not a relic stupa.²¹ Each country has its own nature of stupa style and even within its regional parameters, there are large local differences. There is paradigm shift in the design of Kesaria stupa architecture as there is emphasis on the placement of sculptures in the mandala style and life size Buddha's statue in the external niches of monuments. But it is amply clear after excavation that it has its own typical architecture which unique in its own right. It is further distinguished for its inimitable architectural structures apparent in the high number of verandas, existence of many cubicle monuments on each porch, diverse geometric decorations between group of compartments, stucco images in all cubicles, etc. The Kesaria stupa is a 31.5 meter's high stepped circular stupa. It rises up in six promenades with a cylinder shaped structure on the top made of solid bricks which is 10 meters in height and has a diameter of about 22 meters.²² The 2018-19 excavation has now exposed a 4-meter-thick wall running along the circular base of stupa So, if it is accepted by historians and archaeologist then the thickness of stupa gets reviewed to about 167 meters. At present the wall has been visible to a depth of about one meter. Likewise, as a consequence of present year's excavation 2021 there is an amendment in the quantity of promenades bringing it up to seven. There is likelihood that the afresh emergent spherical fence may be an afterthought for expansion or building of suitable circumambulatory path which may be added to the original construction. A similar structure can be seen at Lauriya Nandangarh stupa, which is 100 kms. north west to Kesaria.²³ The cylinder and higher two sidewalks have been found which has shown 80 cms. extensive staircase on the south west corner linking the high two boulevards. This stairway is concealed by the many-sided plans amid the group of compartments and is not prominently visible in the stupa.

On the same design, each of the six walkways is connected to the next higher or junior walkway through small stairways which are situated at different positions for different paths. Such three-dimensional distribution of stairways, their partial magnitudes and hidden locations support in retaining artistic impression of the memorial. The stupa is constructed of bricks put in a thin coating of mud plaster. As the stupa increases from the ground, there is an only line of plain shaped bricks with stricken mud plaster round it although only small layer of this covering has been found. The stupa increases up in a wavy fashion with the brick sequences leaving a declining balance of about 5 cms. after every two sequences. It is built on the same design. Each ladder is connected

to the upper and lower ladder through tiny staircases which gives a very artistic view of the monument. The back wall of the cells and niches of the first terrace rise to meet the floor of the second terrace. Similarly, the back wall of the cells and decorative pattern of the second terrace meet the floor of the third terrace. The second terrace has serrated design to fill up the gap in between the two rows of cells. Each terrace, up to the third, contains rows of three cells at regular intervals. On the fourth terrace cells are smaller than on the lower terraces flank the central cell. On the fifth terrace, the number of cells is reduced to one due to paucity of space on the reduced perimeter.

On the upper most terrace there is no cell with no statue. The solid drum has a deep resemblance with Dhamekh stupa at Sarnath in Uttar Pradesh and Giryek stupa at Rajgir in Bihar.²⁴ The cells of Kesaria has a special characteristics. All the cells have an average size of 2.20 x 1.80 meters and its entrance height is of 70 to 90 meters. The full elevation of the cubicles is not present at any place now but they must have been of low altitude as the next higher walkway which can reasonably be taken to be in link with the roof of cubicles, leaves a perpendicular space of 2.25 meters only for the rise of cells. The outer look of the compartments comprises the kumbha type decoration and ornamental niches, which seems to be of Gupta period. Each cubicle comprises a statue of Buddha in padmasana posture situated over a low level base which is closed to the posterior hedge of the cell.²⁵ The plinth measures 1.80 x 1.0 x 0.25 meters is covered with lime plaster.²⁶ There are places on either side of the escalation of base sometimes have statue of lion which historians claim to be added during Gupta period. In some cubicles there are other clay images, seated or standing, one each close to the two cross walls. In the central brick platform three headless statues of Buddhas are there one in Dhyana mudra and the other two in Bhumisparsh Mudras but quite a few statues are in lotus position *i.e.* Padmasana position. Today there are only 11 life-sized stucco statues of Buddha.²⁷ The core of the image is made up of clay mixed with lime and brick jelly to provide a smooth surface. Unfortunately, these statues are either headless or broken from the waist. All the imageries have been found in severely injured condition which is due to the materials used for these sculptures. The clay medium was mainly of lime, brick jelly, husks and sand. Sometimes there is also evidence of a renew of lime plaster representing a phase of repair. The ingredients used in making the main Buddha image is comparatively sturdier and better balanced as related to the extremely delicate materials in the side images. For these reasons, the adjacent imageries have almost lost with terrace. Chronologically the Kesaria imageries are later than the Gupta period imageries

of Nalanda stupa shrines but they are prior to the Pala dynasty statues of Vikramshila. But similar types of statues in the nearby areas of Kesaria advocates that the art of making stucco sculptures must be on its pinnacle from 5th to 10th Century CE.

Even the bricks that have been used in Kesaria have evolved over the period. The first stage of plain sphere-shaped bricks has been used which are mostly of Sunga period. The Kushana period brick is visible on the first promenade level underneath the over lying Gupta structures and shrines. The Gupta period bricks are 32x16x5cms. in size, somewhat lesser in dimension related to the preceding stage but are more ornamental and decorative. The repair of the cylindrical drum at the top during British period where bricks of 20x10x5 cms. size was used which archaeologically insignificant.

Three phases of construction have been noticed so far. The first phase represents the simple circular terrace filled with veneering bricks in eight to ten courses. In the second phase, the cells and polygonal decorative patterns have been added to the circular terraces and the third phase is a phase of major repairs during the British period, have been exposed in three cells. Besides the stucco images, the earthen lamps, a nut shaped terracotta beads, shreds of vases and bowls in red ware, fragment of huge thick jars and two miniature pots associated with rituals have been recovered from the site. On the basis of potteries, images and architectural pattern, the stupa flourished till 7th century common era.

Discoveries of BRW(Black and Red Ware)in Kesaria

According to Northern Indian Subcontinent archaeologists the BRW was popular in the Northern India since post Vedic period and they claim that in Kesaria stupa bricks belong to BRW culture.²⁸ The bricks used in Stupa are of four phases. The first three phases of bricks represent Sunga, Kushan and the late Gupta ages and the fourth type of bricks, which is on the outer surface is from the British period, which must have been used for repairing. These bricks help archaeologists in decoding the construction period and the reformation period of the stupa. Kesaria bricks have geometric pattern with floral designs. Some bricks are kriti Mukhas, which represent typical of Gupta designs.²⁹ While assessing the distribution of Chalcolithic BRW (Black and Red Ware) sites in Bihar, archaeologists are faced with a distributional problem. The BRW in North Bihar has been excavated primarily at Chirand and Kutubpur. But in Vaishali NBP (Northern Black Polished Ware) and BRW both have been found. The BRW are abundant in Muzaffarpur and Madhubani. But according to a renowned archaeologist Dr. B.S. Verma of Bihar, BRW is commonly found with NBW

(Northern Black Ware). He claims that beyond the Ganga bank is only BRW and that is how the brick of Kesaria is BRW. He avers that in historic sites such as Rampur, LauriyaNandangarh and LauriyaAreraj there is no rock structures and fortified city in the north Bihar and majority of the pot shreds are BRW.³⁰

Comparison and similarities between Kesaria and Borobudur

The diameter of Kesaria could turn out to be larger than Borobudur as several of its parts are still buried under earth, and waiting to be excavated. In the 6th century during the Gupta period, the Kesaria stupa was further enlarged and got embellished with hundreds of sculptures. Kesaria became a model stupa for future stupas. Borobudur, which does not have any predecessor in its surrounding region, may have borrowed these features from India, particularly Kesaria with which it has a relatively closer resemblance. There is no denying a fact that in ancient times we had close relations with South East Asian countries.³¹ Historians and archaeologists are debating over it but have an opinion that the basic architecture of Borobudur is possibly an inspiration from Kesaria.³² The excavated chambers at Kesaria have mixture of statues of Akshobhay Buddha in Bhumisparsh mudra and Amitabha Buddha in dhyanamudra on the one side only but as against Kesaria in Borobudur on all the four sides of the monuments four Jina Buddhas have their mudras. It is assumed that the life size Buddha figures in at Kesaria must have inspired Borobudur artists to go for more ornate and bigger Buddha.

There are some differences and historians claim that they are because of regional variations. Unlike Kesaria Stupa Borobudur base structure instead of round is based on square plan but like Kesaria has a circular mounting passage. Incidentally the heights and diameter are remarkably close to each other. The further research is required to find out that what social, religious, political and economic factors were there which inspired them to construct stupa like Kesaria. Historically it has already been accepted that Srivijaya erstwhile Java had close contact with Pala rulers of India and it has been substantiated with the fact that Pala rulers were on their pinnacle during 9th century and Borobudur got constructed during the period when Shailendra dynasty had been ruling Borobudur. This fact has been substantiated with the Nalanda inscription dated 860 C.E. that Maharaja Balaputra of Java had dedicated a monastery at the Nalanda University in the Pala territory. This research should not be limited only to India but their cultural mutual interaction with other countries also. There is another fact by historian of South East Asia Diaigoro Chihara who claims that the early segment of Indonisation of Malay peninsula took place during 5th and 6th centuries. It reinforces the linkage between India and the South east peninsula

.In one of the inscriptions of Java says that one of the kings of Shailendra dynasty king Maravijayattungavarman, had raised the Chudamani Vihara in the port town of Nagapattinam in South India. This also substantiates the fact that there existed close bonding between India and South East Asian countries. In a huge slab of black stone of Pala period of 10th and 12th century written in Siddham script which has evolved from the Gupta Brahmi script in 6th century in Kesaria establishes the close connection of Pala with Kesaria.³³ This establishes the assumption that through Pala connection the people of Java must be in touch with Kesaria. Like Kesaria stupa, Borobudur covers an enormous area and like Kesaria there are uncountable relief plates and quite a few Buddha statues are there. The Borobudur structure is based on the same technologies like Kesaria. There are gigantic interwoven blocks which have no cements or mortar or adhesive materials. As Borobudur got constricted in later periods than Kesaria so it has 2672 relief panels and 504 Buddha statues unlike Kesaria which have a few panels and few statues.

Both are six-terraced stupas on a natural hill. Even their width and diameter are same. The lower four terraces out of concentric six terraces of Kesaria are more circular than those of Borobudur but close examination reveals two square terraces on top level resembles the square and upper circular terraces of Borobudur. Both monuments present themselves to the viewer as horizontally flattened and top of both the stupas cannot be seen from below.³⁴ Both the stupas have certain numerological configuration of chambers on each terrace at short intervals, with life size Buddha statue positioned in them. Atop the fifth terrace in both stupas there is a stupa to a height of 9.38 meter and 22 meters in diameters. The ruins around Kesaria stupa gives the impression of its being a Vihara or temple monastery, where daily rituals must had been performed by senior monks. Borobudur stupa also indicates a monastic complex. Borobudur is precisely aligned with the fire temple called Candi Pawan, clearly forming ceremonial centre of Shailendra kings.

In Kesaria brick niche detail show Akshaya, Amitabha and some unknown busts' in Bhumisparsha mudra. In both the places Buddhas have six different hand positions. The important disparities are first, Kesaria is built of bricks while Borobudur of rocks. In Kesaria only 11 Buddha images have survived but in Borobudur 504 images of Buddha have been found. In Kesaria it is assumed by archaeologists that the entire monument from 5th terrace to the lowermost terrace had housed $4+4+8+8+8=32$ chambers and had contained $4 \times 1, 4 \times 3, 8 \times 3, 8 \times 3, 8 \times 3=88$ Buddha statues while in Borobudur more than 500 Buddha statues are there. Borobudur temple is divided into three major zones

of Buddhist cosmology *i.e.* Kadhatu,(worldly), Rupadhatu (transition), and Arupdhatu,(above world), which archaeologists are not sure about Kesaria as full excavation has not been completed.

Buddhist circuit

Kesaria is significant and revered for all Buddhists. If it is encompassed in Buddhist Tour,it will be asignificantjourney destination for the 450 million enthusiastic Buddhist. Now travelers are very much keen on knowing history, culture or religion.This destination hasopportunity of a large number of sightseers, pilgrims and travellers. This place can generate a large amount of revenue. Though this stupa is in its ruined state but it is tremendously remarkable sight. In Bihar though the action plan for the expansion of the Buddhist Circuit had been in pipe line since 1986but very little efforts have been taken to implement it. It is because of patchylaborsof politicians and bureaucrats it has been failure to generate Various tourism master plans, investment projects by the states and the Government of India, and donors have targeted this important historic and living heritage but so far nothing constructive has been done.

Kesaria in shambles

Earlier professor of ancient Indian history and archaeology, Patna University, O. P. Jayaswal avers that numerous Buddhist spots, principally in Vaishali and West Champaran, required appropriate fortification. He averred that here is a vital necessity to archaeologically validate the footprints of Lord Buddha in Bihar and change them accordingly. Despite being one of the most esteemed spots for Buddhists and an endangered and important site for Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), quite a few safety and managing matters are creating threat to this stupa.³⁵ There is no security watch and web camera over here. The place is littered with Left-over material especially plastic bags, food wrappers and plastic bottles which is very detrimental to the ancient stupa. Another reason of its dilapidation is that Kesaria being located close to the river Gandak which flows at a distance of only about six km and also being close to the Himalayan Mountain range, it also registers a high rainfall and moderate humidity during monsoon months which causes water logging during rainy season which poses threat to structural damage. Arvind Alok, chairman, Buddhist Monuments Development Council (BMDC) also agreed on the ecological causes as a prime reason of its devastation and agreed that low line and flood prone area around the stupa is very much under ecological risk. According to him the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has been ineffective to protect and preserve this world biggest Buddhist sites.

Noted archaeologist K. K. Mohammed held a similar view. He in his interview to Times of India averred that quite a few sites in Bihar needed urgent attention, particularly at Jwafardih (near Nalanda ruins), Jagdishpur (3km from Nalanda site) Kesaria and Rajgir Stupa.³⁶ He averred that a boundary wall is a must around Kesaria stupa. A Former professor of ancient Indian history and archaeology, Patna University, O P Jayaswal also said that several Buddhist sites, particularly in Vaishali and Kesaria in East Champaran, need special attention and proper protection. Rajiva Kumar Sinha, Professor of ancient Indian history at TilkaManjhi Bhagalpur University also feels that there is an urgent need to protect these sites as Bodh Gaya and many Buddhist sites in Bihar don't attract many tourists as they deserve.³⁷

Conclusion

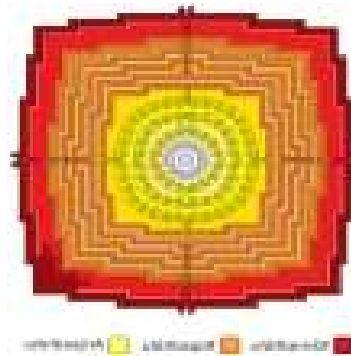
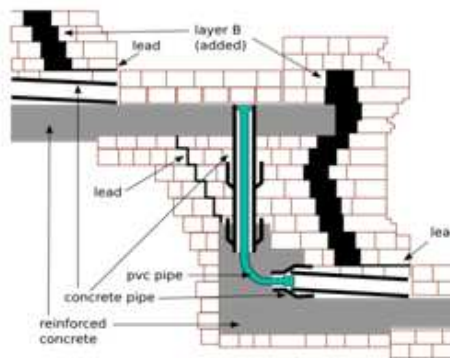
The places around Kesaria like, Vaishali, Rampurva, Lauriya Nandan Garh, LauriyaAreraj, JwafardihJagdishpur, have a rich heritage of the Buddhist architecture of the ancient times and can be one of the biggest Buddhist circuits. Kesaria will have profound cultural benefits as it is a direct and substantial representation of history and place. Apart from solidifying a community's past, it would help to create vibrant, cultural downtowns that would develop tourism, art, festivals and cultural and economic lucrative activities and which would draw investment, revenue, and economic growth. Kesaria because of its strategic location has potential of dynamic historic downtown and can be a place to shop, invest, create and live and can be a tool to boost economy and quality of life. The local people will be benefited with historic site's didactic offerings. Needless to say, the recent unraveling of Kesaria has opened a vista of new areas of research.



The author is seen her visit at Kesaria in 2016



The author is seen in the entrance gate of Kesaria



Notes and References

¹<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/travel/destinations/the-largest-buddhist-temple-in-the-world-was-once-buried-in-java/articleshow/75293574.cms>.

²Bhikkhu Bodhi , A Look at the Kalama Sutta , Buddhist Publication Society,1988.

³<https://www.livehistoryindia.com/story/monuments/kesariya-stupa>.

⁴Kalama Sutta (Anguttara Nikaya 3:66) translated by Soma Thera, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kesamutti_Sutta.

⁵https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C4%80%E1%B8%B7%C4%81ra_K%C4%81%C4%81ma.

⁶https://www.researchgate.net/publication/348944692_Buddhist_theory_of_creation_of_Ikshvaku_connection_with_Licchavi_Clans_of_Mahavira_of_Jainism_and_kings_of_his_time.

⁷Paul Michel Munoz, Early Kingdoms of the Indonesian Archipelago and the Malay Peninsula, Singapore, Didier Millet.2007, p. 143.

⁸Shuja K Gandhion, kesaria buddha stupa – an age-old monument, that defies age, 2020, pp.1-2.

- ⁹Hodgson, B. H. Synoptical description of sundry new animals, enumerated in the Catalogue of Nepalese Mammals, Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. 5, 1836, pp.231-238.
- ¹⁰<https://www.bihar.world/home/buddhist-sites/champaran/kesaria/>.
- ¹¹Alexander Cunningham, Archaeological Survey of India Report, Vol.I, 1861-62, Delhi, 1994, p. 66.
- ¹²Indian archaeology 1999-2000-a review, published by the director general archaeological survey of India Janpath, new Delhi, 2005.
- ¹³Muhammad K.K., Excavations at Kesariya, Purabharati: Studies in Early Historical Archaeology and Buddhism, Vol. II, Varanasi, 2001, pp.12-18.
- ¹⁴<https://factsanddetails.com/china/cat2/4sub8/entry-5447.html>.
- ¹⁵<https://www.livehistoryindia.com/story/monuments/kesariya-stupa>.
- ¹⁶<https://artsandculture.google.com/story/7wWBL03OYLgIg?hl=th>.
- ¹⁷https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_Cunningham.
- ¹⁸Rahul Sankrityayan & Jagdish Kashyap (Tr.), Digha Nikaya Mahaparinibban Sutta, Delhi, 2010, pp. 225-226.
- ¹⁹https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Majjhima_Nik%C4%81ya.
- ²⁰<http://www.igntu.ac.in/eContent/MA-AIHC-04Sem-DrJitendraJain-%20Ancient%20Indian%20Coinage-Unit1-4.pdf>.
- ²¹Ishani Sinha kesariya stupa: recently excavated architectural marvel, Proceeding of the International Conference on Archaeology, History and Heritage, Vol. 1, 2019, pp.27-31.
- ²²<https://tiikmpublishing.com/data/conferences/doi/icahh/26510243.2019.1103.pdf>.
- ²³D.R. Patil, The Antiquarian Remains in Bihar, Patna, 1963, p. 201.
- ²⁴<https://www.tripoto.com/india/trips/a-history-lover-s-guide-to-the-most-beautiful-buddhist-stupas-in-india-5addb21b35042>.
- ²⁵Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (1835), p. 121 and plate VII.
Indian Archaeology-A Review for 1997-98, 1998-99, 1999-2000 and 2000-2001.
- ²⁶<https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1755-1315/778/1/012036/pdf>.
- ²⁷D.N. Sinha, Recently Excavated Stupa at Kesariya, Journal of Bihar Puravid Parishad, Vol.XV-XVI, Patna, 2000.
- ²⁸<https://www.nextias.com/current-affairs/12-07-2021/kesariya-buddha-stupa>.
- ²⁹I Sinha and K P Tucunan, Evidences in resemblance of archaeological structures of Kesariya and Borobudur Stupa, IOP Conf. Series: Earth and Environmental Science 778 (2021) 012036, 2020, pp.3-6.
- ³⁰https://www.wikiwand.com/en/List_of_Monuments_of_National_Importance_in_Bihar.
- ³¹C.P. Sinha, Forms of Buddhist stupas in Bihar, Journal of the Bihar Puravid Parishad, Vol.VI., 2003.
- ³²G.K.Lama, Cultural Heritage of South East Asia, Varanasi, 2009.
- ³³Kumar Anand, Buddhist stupa at Kesariya in Bihar, Proceedings of the 13th session of Indian Art History Congress Guwahati, 2005, p.5.

- ³⁴Swati Chemburkar, Stupa to Mandala: Tracing a Buddhist Architectural Development from Kesaria to Borobudur to Tabo, *Pacific World*, 3rd Ser., No.20, 2018, pp.4-5.
- ³⁵M.A.H. Kuraishi, List of Ancient Monuments Protected under Act VII of 1904 in the Bihar and Orissa Province, Calcutta, 1931, p. 4.
- ³⁶<https://maverickyogic.com.wordpress.com/2020/10/18/the-man-in-whom-monuments-confide-in/>.
- ³⁷https://archive.org/stream/in.ernet.dli.2015.283326/2015.283326.The-Journal_djvu.txt.

References

- Rahul Sankrityayan & Jagdish Kashyap (Tr.), *Digha Nikaya Mahaparinibban Sutta*, Delhi, 2010.
- D.R. Patil, *The Antiquarian Remains in Bihar*, Patna, 1963.
- M.A.H. Kuraishi, *List of Ancient Monuments Protected under Act VII of 1904 in the Bihar and Orissa Province*, Calcutta, 1931.
- Thomas Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India*, Vol. II, Delhi, 1996.
- Alexander Cunningham, *Archaeological Survey of India Report*, Vol.I, 1861-62, Delhi, 1994.
- Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (1835)*, p. 121 and plate VII
- Indian Archaeology - A Review for 1997-98, 1998-99, 1999-2000 and 2000-2001.
- Swati Chemburkar, 'Stupa to Mandala: Tracing a Buddhist Architectural Development from Kesaria to Borobudur to Tabo', *Pacific World*, 3rd Ser., No.20, 2018.
- Jayanto K. Sen, 'The Colossal Stupa at Nandangarh; Its reconstruction and significance', *Antibus Asiae*, Vol. LXXV, No.2 Museum rieberg Zurich, 2018.
- D.N. Sinha, 'Recently Excavated Stupa at Kesariya', *Journal of Bihar Puravid Parishad*, Vol.XV-XVI, Patna, 2000.
- K.K., Muhammad *Excavations at Kesariya, Purabharati: Studies in Early Historical Archaeology and Buddhism*, Vol. II, Varanasi, 2001.
- Anand Kumar, 'Buddhist stupa at Kesariya in Bihar' in *Proceedings of the 13th session of Indian Art History Congress*, Guwahati, 2005.
- James Legge (Tr.), *Record of Buddhist Kingdoms by Chinese Monk Fa-Hien*, Oxford, 1886.
- C.P. Sinha, 'Forms of Buddhist stupas in Bihar' in *Journal of the Bihar Puravid Parishad*, Vol. VI., 2003.
- Amar Nath Khanna, *Hindu and Buddhist Monuments and remains in South East Asia*, New Delhi, 2008.
- G.K. Lama, *Cultural Heritage of South East Asia*, Varanasi, 2009
- Ishani Sinha, *Kesariya Stupa a Landmark in Buddhist Architecture*, Unpublished M.Phil. dissertation, Deccan College Post Graduate and Research Institute, Pune, 2019.

Jurisprudential Dimensions of Juvenile Laws Some Critical Aspects

Dr. Rupam Saikia
Inspector of Colleges
Dibrugarh University
Dibrugarh, Assam
Email :rupamsaikia06@gmail.com

Abstract

Criminal Liability of a young offender in Indian Juvenile Justice System is required to be dealt with remedial perspectives and the traditional theory of awarding punishments for commission of crimes is not insisted upon such an offender after determination of his liability by the Juvenile Justice Board or Children Court. The Juvenile Justice Act was amended in 2015 and a separate provision was incorporated as regards to dealing with a young offender of the age group of 16 to 18 years, if found to be guilty of committing a heinous/ serious crime. Definition of heinous crime In the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection Act, 2015) under definition section 2(33) created some ambiguity as the minimum term of punishment is not mentioned in the Indian Penal Code in some sections dealing with very serious offences. Only maximum period of imprisonment for 7 years or more is found in Indian Penal Code to award punishments on commission of very serious offences, i.e. section 304 of the Code. As the definition of the term, 'heinous' is defined in the said Act under section 2(33) with reference to minimum term of punishment as being 7 years or more in IPC or any other law in force, functional application of the same was critically viewed by the Supreme Court of India on 9th January 2020 while disposing of a criminal appeal in Shilpa Mittal vs State Of Delhi and recorded its observations within the mandates of the Article 142 of the Constitution Of India. The Apex Court also viewed that, in case of an offence which is neither heinous, but more than serious and not specifically mentioned in the said Act, same should be considered as serious offence. As stated in the aforesaid Act of 2015 under section 2(54), an offence will be considered as serious if the punishment for the offence is in between 3 to 7 years as mentioned in the IPC or any other law for the time being in force and the definition also could not iron out the creases in the section 2(33) in view of such limitations and finally the Apex Court ruled that an offence like culpable homicide not amounting to murder

should be considered as a serious offence as minimum term of the sentence is not included in the section 304 of the IPC. As the juvenile laws are considered to be reformatory in spirit and the trial procedure is different, scope of sending of a juvenile to jail after completion of 21 years in a special home for therapeutic treatment within the purview of the section 20 of the Act of 2015 for completion of remaining period of the term of sentence appears to have marginalized the spirit of the Act and misuse of the same cannot be brushed aside by overdose of subjectivity while exercising discretionary power. Even an illustrious jurist and former judge of the Supreme Court of India, Justice V R Krishna Iyer, quoting the father of the nation, Mahatma Gandhi in some landmark judgments viewed that our jails are not correctional centres for criminals and incarceration would lacerate a young offender, if allowed to spend time in the company of hardened adult prisoners in the jails. Further any sentence should be awarded on a juvenile in conflict with law by taking in to consideration the age of the juvenile at the time of commission of the offence within the scope of the Article 20(3) of the Constitution Of India and critical judicial review is necessary on the point, since scope of sending a juvenile offender to jail by the children court after attaining 21 years by that person while staying in a special home after conclusion of a trial of a heinous/serious offence as provided under section 20(2) (i&ii) of the JJ Act of 2015 appears to be antithetical to the basic postulates of remedial jurisprudence..Maintenance of equilibrium of jurisprudential objectivity with subjective dynamics of its applications is an onerous responsibility and undefined parameters of the same are likely to open the flood gates of arbitrariness in the judicial process. In this paper we have tried to identify such critical aspects so that remedial dimensions of the Juvenile Laws may be given primacy while disposing of the cases involving juveniles in conflict with law and of children who are in need of care and protection of the state and the society.

Keywords :*Ipse dixit(unproven Statement), Restorative Justice (Offender Centric approach to prevent his/her segregation from Society), Remedial Justice (Justice that envisages curative approach towards offenders for reforming them), In terrore (Latin term which means 'in fear'), Surplusage Excessive or Non (essential Matters in legal pleadings and not relevant in the case), Juvenile Justice Board (It means the Board constituted under section '4' of the Juvenile*

Justice (Care & protection) Act 2015), Child (means a person having not completed 18 years of age), Child in conflict with Law (It means a child who is alleged or found to have committed an offence and who has not completed 18 years of age on the date of Commission of such offences), Child in need of Care & Protection (It means a Child without home or settled place of abode and without ostensible means of subsistence who is found working in contravention of labour laws for the time being in force or is found begging or living on the street or/and as defined in the Section 2(14) of the Act of 2015), Place of Safety (Means any place or institution not being a police lock up or jail established separately or attached to observation home or special home as the case may be. The definition is available under section 2 (45) of the Act of 2015 in details). Children Court(It means as referred to Section 27 of CrPC that, in case of a juvenile under age of 16 years on committing an offence not punishable with death or imprisonment for life and if at the time of his production before the court, his is found to be less than 16years ,he may be tried by the Court of a Chief Judicial Magistrate or by any court specially empowered under the Children Act, 1960 or any other law for the time being in force providing for the treatment, training and rehabilitation of youthful offenders) and Juvenile Court(As defined in section 27.1 of the CrPc , earlier Juvenile Justice Act, 1986 laid that offenders below 16 years of age ,if male and 18 years in case of a female shall be treated a juvenile in conflict with law. After amendment of the JJ Act in 2000 the age was made uniform, 18 years irrespective of gender. In 2015, the Act was further amended and the juvenile between the age group of 16-18 years, if alleged to have committed heinous/ serious offences shall be treated as adults).

Criminal Liability of a person is *interalia* considered to be of substantive importance for justifying punishment for commission of a legal wrong which may require critical scrutiny both from the point of view of penology as well as jurisprudential dimensions of administration criminal justice. In its situational dynamics the penal policy of a State as regards to offences, trials and pattern of sentencing by the courts of law may always be an interesting area for students of criminal law. The laws and legal institutions are construed not only as the integral components for bringing about socio-political changes, but also may act as propellants for giving effects to changes towards fulfilling the Constitutional mandates and also for harmonious existence of social values vis-à-vis ends of legal justice.

Perhaps the word Justice is not a complex connotation if intellectual freedom is exercised to understand the applied value of fairness, equity and exceptions. Delivery of justice within an institutionalized framework is substantive in spirit, rather than supplementing something which is *ipse dixit*. In the context of juvenile justice, deviations from traditional theories of penology have been recognized by various states including India. It is now accepted globally that a liberal and remedial approach is required to deal with young offenders below 18 years, when found to be in conflict with law and also in need of care and protection of the state as well as society under certain situations. The meaning of the word , 'punishment' in the said context is redefined and rather a therapeutic approach is envisaged to be applied for curing the young deviants and rehabilitation of young offenders who might be victims of some special circumstances as regards to commission of crimes. Juvenile Laws have been framed to address the specific needs of the young offenders because justice in remedial sense with rationalized correctional perceptions will not endorse incarceration for young offenders for offences committed by them, because the same will rather aggravate laceration of young minds.

Delivery of justice is also should address the cumulative effects of administration of justice in society, provided the independence of judiciary is not manacled by a hidden and untrammled popular sentiments coupled with volatile equations of vote bank politics. In this paper we have tried to highlight some critical aspects of the existing juvenile laws of India and limitations in fulfilling the aims and objectives of such laws and suggestions have also been recorded in consultation with some relevant judgments of the Supreme Court and various High Courts. Acculturation of peripheral elements in to mainstream of socio- cultural life may add enriching and permanent values, if the process is participatory, spontaneous and motivating. Segregation of young offenders from the mainstream by following hardcore retributive theories of penology may trigger social unrest and therefore the issue should merit attention of the students of social history, criminology, sociology, psychology and other branches of social sciences with law.

Though skills of advocacy play a predominant role in delivery of legal justice in the adversarial system as being followed in administration of justice in India, resultant effects of non adherence to principles of remedial justice by the agencies entrusted to administer the juvenile justice will not only eclipse the mandates of the Constitution of India, but also frustrate the very objectives of Juvenile justice being institutionalized over the decades through a systemic and holistic approach. Therefore harmonious construction of the values of correctional

and remedial jurisprudence will be necessary to rationalize the approach of Juvenile Justice Board and Children Courts for implementation of juvenile laws in an efficacious manner.

Restorative and remedial justice if accepted as two branches of the same tree, an insightful juridical approach is *sine qua non* to extract pulp from its jurisprudential interpretations. In this context, liability of a person for commission of an offence within traditional strait jacket approach of penologists' *i.e* 'one size fits all, if accepted, the generic foundation of the restorative and remedial justice as an efficacious alternative to deal with commission of crimes and effects will shatter.

Punishment to the offenders may not satisfy the victims of a crime always and therefore justice in this context may require to be interpreted for eradication of crimes, reforming the perpetrators of the Crimes and healing pains caused to the victims. Isolation and segregation of a criminal without taking into consideration his age, background, circumstances, social background and possibilities of exposure to the world of hardened criminals may be relevant for determining the patterns of sentence. Justice lives in undoing the harms, repairing the loss or helping the victims in regaining his lost sense of security and imparting a closure to the unfortunate event. Gandhiji as the firm believer in 'Ahimsa' and truth clearly emphasized an resolution of conflicts by a methodical and humanistic and value based approach for purification of mind as solution to conflicts. Having said 'Be the change that you want to see in the world' the father of the nation gave the Clarian call to the administration of the criminal justice system to be more pragmatic and dynamic instead of primarily concentrating on criminals or offenders and punishments for violating the laws of the state. Under restorative justice, private dimensions of a public wrong are focused coupled with the role of the state as a facilitator for bridging the gap between the offenders and victims by expediting meaningful re- integration of both with community in a holistic way. The victims should get the opportunity to overcome the traumatic experience, minimize the effects of crime on him and for regaining confidence with community support and the offender should also be provided space to amend his views, perceptions and predispositions to crime.¹

Reformative spirit of justice being instilled into the juvenile justice system of India, is focused on reforming the young offenders by institutionalizing a soft approach to them. Instead of incarcerating them on convictions, juvenile justice system has adopted the reformatory approach to reform them, taking

into consideration their age, up-bringing, parenting, socio-economic background relevant neurotic and psychotic issue.

Use of non stigmatizing terminology *e.g.*, **no arrest only apprehension**, no trial only inquiry, erasure of records, privacy and confidentiality of children in conflict with law, no disqualifications from employment or education, no First Information Report, against a juvenile for petty offence, bar on joint proceeding of a juvenile with an adult, with dispositional alternative like release of a child on advice, admonition directing him to perform community service, putting him through counseling process, directing him to pay fine if the child is above 14 years and if employed, detention for a period of maximum period of 3 years, no death sentence or life imprisonment were provided in the section 15(i) of the Juvenile justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2000. These proviso reflected the spirit of positive leniency to a Juvenile in conflict with law by law enforcing agencies. Any offence committed by a Juvenile (a person having not completed 18 years at the time of commission of an offence, within the meaning of the section 40 of the (IPC) including heinous offences punishable with the death sentence or life imprisonment are required to be dealt with special provisions of the Act. Further, section 16 (i) of the said Act barred his commitment to the prison in default of payment of fine or furnishing security. A Juvenile should not be treated as a habitual offender and compelled to furnish security for good behavior under section 110 of the CrPC, 1973. Even the commission of heinous offences like murder or rape by a Juvenile would not entail his imprisonment and only would be kept in safe custody and at a place ordered by the State Government. But if the offence has been a continuing one, then the age of the Juvenile in delinquency should be determined with reference to the date on which the offence is said to have been committed by the accused.²

In *Armit Das vs State of Bihar*³, the Supreme Court upheld that a Juvenile in conflict with law or a child in need of care and protection during the course of inquiry would be deemed to be treated as a Juvenile child for the purpose of inquiry even through the person ceases to be so and the Apex Court having extended the scope of beneficial interpretation set in motion the spirit of liberal application of law to fulfill the objectives of the statute in the context of Juvenile Justice.

The Section 4(i) of the Act also provides that the State Governments within one year from the date of commencement of Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Amendment Act, 2006 will notify the constitution of Juvenile Justice Board in every district for exercising the powers and discharging

the duties conferred on Board, notwithstanding anything contained in the code of criminal Procedure, 1973.

The Act of 2000 was passed for implementation of the spirit of the Beijing Rules (United Nation Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice, 1985) and the United Nation Rules, for protection of Juvenile deprived of their Liberty (1990). The Section 7 (A) (1) and 7 (A) (2) of the Act of 2000, also state that for the purpose of inquiry as to the age of the Juvenile by the court, the proceeding will continue for examination of evidence for the determination of the age (except on affidavit) and record the findings on the point.

It was also stated that claim of Juvenility would be entertained at any stage even after disposal of the case and should be determined in terms of the provision of the Act, and Rules made there under, even the Juvenile cease to be so on or before the commencement of the Act. Upon determination of the age of the Juvenile as under 18 years on the date of commission of an offence, the court shall forward the matter to the Juvenile Justice Board for passing appropriate order and sentence and if any order were passed by the Court, same would have no effect on the outcome [Section 17 (A) (2)].

The Section 12 & 13 of the Juvenile Justice Act, 1986 and section 18 & 19 having contained elaborate provisions to deal with the neglected Juveniles and Juvenile delinquents also provided under section 33 the legal framework for giving speedy treatment by taking into consideration the age of the offender, the state of physical and mental health, living conditions, reports of the protection officers, religious persuasion of the Juveniles and other factors for recording the finding by the Juvenile court dealing with a delinquent Juvenile as regards to commission of an offence by a Juvenile delinquent.

The special care and protection to a neglected Juvenile was the focal point of the Act of 1986, under sections 13, 14, 15 and 16, which also indicated incorporation of spirit of remedial jurisprudence to the Juvenile Justice System for transformation of Constitutional mandates under which 15, 24, 39(e), (f), 45, 46 and 47 into reality. The Juvenile Court by sending a neglected Juvenile to the Juvenile observation home during the course inquiry may save his childhood being infected by the company of habitual criminals, as in most of the cases poor parenting or negligence were considered by the criminologists as the leading factors for Juvenile delinquent.

The section 18 of the Act also states that, whenever any person accused of a bailable or non bailable offence and apparently a Juvenile is arrested or detained or appears to be brought before a Juvenile court, such person shall not

withstanding anything contained in the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (2 of 1974) or in any other law for the time being in force, be released on bail with or without security, but shall be not released if there appears reasonable grounds for believing that, the release is likely to bring him into association with any known criminals or expose him to moral danger or that his release would defeat the ends of Justice. The sub sections (2 & 3) also state that, the Juvenile should be committed to observation home or a place of safety during the pendency of the inquiry. The Section 21 & 22 of the Act having contained the list of the order to be passed by the Juvenile court after ascertaining the facts as regards to commission of an offence by a Juvenile. The Act also stipulates that a Juvenile (in case of boy of above 14 years or 16 years in case of a girl) should be sent to a special home and in case of any other Juvenile(s) for a period until he ceases to be a Juvenile.

However, the Juvenile court may, if it is satisfied having regard to the nature of the offence and circumstances preceding the commission of the offence may reduce the period of stay and also stipulated that under special circumstances the period of stay should be extended beyond the time taken the Juvenile attains the age of 18 years (boy) and the girl 20 years.

The Section 2 states that notwithstanding anything to the contrary is contained in any other law for the time being in force, a Juvenile delinquent shall not be sentenced to death or imprisonment or committed to prison in default of payment of fine or in default of furnishing security provided that, when the Juvenile having attained the age of 14 years committed an offence and the court is satisfied that, the offence committed is of so serious or that his conduct and behavior have been such that, it would not be in the interests of other Juveniles in a special home, to send him to such special home and that none of the other measures provided in the Act would be suitable or sufficient, the juvenile court may order Juvenile(s) to be kept in safe custody in such place as it thinks fit, and shall report the case for necessary orders of the state Government.

On receipt of a report from the Juvenile court under sub-section (1) of the section (22) the state Government may make such arrangement in respect of the Juvenile as it deems proper. It may also order that the period of detention of such delinquent Juveniles shall not exceed the maximum period of imprisonment to which the Juvenile could have been sentenced for the offence committed and may also impose such other conditions as thinks proper subject to the condition already stated.

So far as the section 22 (i), sub section clause (a) (b) (c) are concerned, the Juvenile delinquents should be released after advice or admonition, probation

of good conduct and placed under the care of any fit institution for good behavior and well being and sending of them to special homes is an exception.

The word 'arrest' was replaced by the section 10 (1) of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2000 by 'apprehension' and was included to eclipse possible mental adverse effects associated with the word 'arrest' on a young person in conflict with law. The expression, 'conflict with law' used by the Act of 2000, in place of 'Juvenile delinquent' and a child in need of care and protection in place of 'neglected Juvenile' used in the Act of 2000 represent the attitudinal change of the state in dealing with Juvenile delinquency, rights and deprivations from the necessities of life, both material and socio-cultural.

Rehabilitation and re-integration of either a Juvenile in conflict with law or child in need of care and protection within the purview the Act of 2000, (as amended in 2006) was given due importance. The section 10(i) states that, a Juvenile in conflict should be kept in a police lock-up or lodged in a jail and immediately after apprehension within 24 hours should be produced before the Juvenile Justice Board.

The section 20 of the Act, 2000 states that, in case of proceedings pending against a Juvenile in conflict with law on the date of commencement of the Act 2000, the proceedings will continue as if the Act of 2000 were not passed and in case the Juvenile were found guilty of an offence, the court will record the findings and forward the same to the Juvenile Justice Board and will pass necessary order after an inquiry as to the commission of the said offence and also will exercise the power to review the order if necessary after recording special reasons in the orders.

In *Jyoti Prakash Rai Vs State of Bihar*⁴ the Supreme Court on unequivocal terms viewed that, benefit of age of extended by the Act of 2000 for determination of Juvenile would not be applicable to the pending cases. Where the Juvenile had crossed the age of Juvenility but not 18 years on the date of the commencement of the Act 2000, and if the Juvenile were found guilty of an offence, then the same would sent to the Juvenile Justice Board which would pass necessary order on it and the continuation of the pending cases as per the laws in force was allowed to continue prior to the commencement of the Act of 2000, subject to above conditions.

In *Vihoy Singhvs State of U.P*⁵ 1986(Cv.LJ) 2016(cal), it was held that trial of Juvenile accused under 18 year of an offence of murder with an adult would be not admissible and the only Juvenile Court was competent to try such an offence.

In *Sejmal Purnamchand vs Emperor*⁶, It was also clarified that, if they were animated by the purpose and there was continuity in action, then surely that would be one transaction so far as they are concerned.. The section 17 of the Juvenile Justice Act. of 2000, states that no proceedings shall be initiated and order under the chapter viii of the Cr PC, 1973 shall be passed against a Juvenile and the section 18(1) put ban on trial of a Juvenile with another person who is not a Juvenile and the Juvenile Justice Board will after taking cognizance of the fact should pass necessary order for separate trial of the Juvenile notwithstanding the scope of Juvenile trial under the proviso of the section 223 of the CrPC or any other law is available.

In *Lakhimikant Pandey vs. Union of India Lakhmikant Pandey vs UOI*, 1984, AIR, 1984, SC469⁷, the supreme court of India viewed that every child has the right to be loved and grown in an atmosphere of love and affection which will be possible if the child is natured with parental care, love and affection. The court therefore categorically stated that, where the child is deprived of care, love and affection from his biological parents, his adoption should be encouraged for proper care and parental love. The concept of foster care (section 42 of the Act of 2000) and preparation of a child for adoption through foster care under section (43), represented innovative and creative aspects of the Act . Even the scope for the establishment of Aftercare Institution as per the section 44 of the Act was in continuation of the remedial jurisprudence as the corner stone for re-habilitation and re –integration of the Juveniles after completion of stay in special homes and children homes for counseling, guidance , skilling and empowering them. The Act also stipulates that critical assessment of the kind of therapeutic exercise required to be applied for the purpose should precede the application of the same. Even the Juvenile or a child of above 17 years of age, but who have not completed 20 years of could stay in such institutions till completion of the age of 20 years.

The incarceration of a Juvenile delinquent was presumed as remedy with propensity to aggregate the malady as was viewed by the Supreme court in *Phool Singh vs State of Haryana*⁸ and the court viewed that family tie should be allowed to be maintained by such persons in prisons so as to serve as shambling blocks against possible degeneration of the imprisoned person into non entities.

Such an observation of the Apex Court would be more relevant in the context of a Juvenile delinquent who is vulnerable to social disapprobation and reprehension for commission of an offence relatively at young age. When we advocate for therapeutic or reformatory treatment to a Juvenile delinquent, we should be equally more cautions and careful as the use of certain words like

‘imprisonment’ or prison in the statute, specially framed for dealing with Juvenile delinquents and a child in need of care and protection.

The sub section (2) of the section (22) of the Juvenile Justice Act, 1986, having stated under the proviso-‘provided that the period of detention so achieved shall not exceed the maximum period of imprisonment to which the Juvenile could have been sentenced for the offence committed’ failed to translate the purpose of the said special statue by retaining the words, *i.e.* detention and imprisonment.

But the same Act used the word ‘inquiry’ as well as the Juvenile Justice Act of (2000) as regards to conduct of proceedings relating to Juvenile delinquents instead of trial and attempted to seal the possibility of sending him to a prison as punishment with the provision him of sending to a special Home during the process of determination of his liability for commission of an offence, can a special home may be treated as an alternative of prison?

Perhaps if we accept the special Home as the alternative of a prison it would be anathema to remedial and restorative Jurisprudence of Juvenile Justice specially designed for Juvenile delinquents. Determination of culpable liability of an offender during trial and punishment for commission of an offence on the bedrock of criminal Jurisprudence usually steer our actions in dealing with the offenders and on many occasions even we fail to assess the mental faculties of the accused to understand the natural consequences of acts or omissions. If we simply change the shell of the legal framework of dispensation of justice for the Juvenile by keeping the pulp almost same, it will hardly implement the campaign of the higher judiciary as ‘*Parens Patriae*’ while dealing with the issues of Juvenile delinquents as well as neglected children in India.

Perhaps ambiguity as to whether the reformatory measures may be punishment in soft mode or not, if not erased from our mind, same will be baneful for the dispensation of juvenile justice. The Supreme Court of India in *Munna vs State of UP*⁹ straitened the point by viewing punishment as to be reformatory and also held that, sound objectives for eradication of Juvenile delinquency would not be achieved by sending the Juvenile delinquents to jails where they would come in to contact with hardened criminals. A nation which is not concerned with the welfare of its children, could not look forward to a bright future. The Apex Court in another landmark judgment delivered in *Sheila Barse vs Union of India*¹⁰ categorically expressed its displeasure on sending children of below 16 years to jails for detention.

Throwing light on the Preamble of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children Act) Mamta Rao, viewed that, state should shoulder

the responsibility of ensuring all need of the children including protection of their human rights. The Act of 2000 was passed to consolidate and use the law relating to Juvenile by providing proper care, protection and treatment by catering to their developmental needs and adopting a child friendly approach in adjudication and disposition of matters of juvenile delinquency in the best interests of children and for their ultimate rehabilitation through various institutions established under the enactment. A Juvenile will be treated as 'in conflict with law' under the amended Act of 2006 if he has not attained the age of 18 years on the date of commission of such offence.¹¹

The Section 64 of the Act of 2000, states that the State Government shall take necessary steps to send a Juvenile in conflict with law undergoing the sentence of imprisonment at the commencement of the Act, and shall send him to a special home or shall be kept in a fit institution for the remaining part of the sentence. The amended Act of 2006 and the provision of the Act shall apply as if the sentence had been passed by the Juvenile Board under the section 16(2) of the Act. The amendment of the Act in 2006 having inserted a provision to the states that the state Government or the Board by recording adequate and special reasons in writing may review a case of a Juvenile in conflict with undergoing a sentence of imprisonment who even ceased to be so on or before commencement of the Act and pass necessary action. Also having inserted the explanation to the section 64 of the Act, by the amendment in 2006 all cases of Juvenile in conflict with law and undergoing sentences of imprisonment at any stage on the date of commencement of the Act, it was clarified that his case including the issues of Juvenility shall be deemed to be decided in terms of the clause (1) of the Act and rules made for the same irrespective of the fact that he ceased to be Juvenile or before the commencement of the Act and shall be sent accordingly to the special Home or fit institution as the case may be for the remaining part of the sentence but not exceeding the maximum period provided in the section 15 of the Act of 2000.¹²

By extending the retrospective effect to include the delinquent Juveniles who had completed 16 years but not 18 years on the date of commission of an offence and who was subjected to regular trial and rules sentencing for imprisonment due to the statutory compulsions under the Act of 1986 (as it restricted the age of Juvenile to 16 years in case of a boy and 18 years in case of a girl), the enactment of 2006¹³ imparted liberal approach and sealed the scope of application of hair splitting technicalities for the purpose of interpretation.

In Hari Ram vs State of Rajasthan & Another¹³ the bench of Justice Altamas Kabir and Cyriac Joseph by relying on the sections, 2(k), 2(e), 7(A) 20 and 49 also read with the rules 12 and 98, of the Rules of, 2007 of Act of 2000, categorically stated that the provision of the Act would be applicable to the appellant, since he was below 18 years on the date of commission of the offence and the remitted the matter to the Juvenile Justice Board, Ajmer for disposal in accordance with law within three months from the date of receipt of the order having read the fact that the offence was alleged to have been committed more than ten years ago. The court further advised release of the appellant if he was in detention exceeding the maximum period for which a Juvenile may be confined to a Special Home.

The Hon'ble Supreme Court in Hari Ram case having perspicaciously assessed the proposition of 'limited application' of the Act of 2000 to the pending cases under the Act of 1986, neutralized the same after interpreting the law inserted by the section 7 (A) to the Act by its amendment of 2006 which allowed the application of the said provision to all Juvenile who had not completed the age of 18 years on the date of Commission of offence. The learned Court also opined that, co-joint reading of the Juvenile Justice Act of 2000 as amended by the amendment Act of 2006 and Juvenile Justice Rules 2007 should not trigger any ambiguity to understand the scheme of the Act. The Act would give scope to the children who have for some reasons or the other become deviants to realize on any day their mistakes, rehabilitate themselves and rebuild their lives for becoming responsible citizens of the country instead of degenerating into contacts of the hardened criminals.

As the higher judiciary in our country through series of judgments softened its attitude on the point of punishing the Juveniles found to be in conflict with law for the purpose of reforming them, the clash of interests with strong public opinions against the same also came to the forefront more severely after Delhi gang rape incident (Known as Nirbhaya incident) in December 2012. The involvement of a Juvenile who was more than 16 years of age in committing the heinous offence in league with a few other adults, shocked the entire world. Diabolic act of the Juvenile and rising incidents of sexual assault on women by the Juveniles tilted the public opinion for award of severe form of punishment even on the Juvenile who had committed such gruesome offence. The committee headed by the Justice J.S Verma in its report to the Government of India on 23rd January, 2013 recommended series of amendments in the criminals laws of the country for prevention of crimes like rape, sexual harassment trafficking, child sexual abuse medical examination of victims, police, electoral and educational reforms.¹⁴

As the public sentiment was very strong against the brutal gang rape of young woman in the heart of the capital of the Country, public interest litigation was also filed in the Supreme Court demanding the trial of the Juvenile involved in the commission of the offence, as an adult in the court and the Apex Court there after passed a Mandamus to the Juvenile Court to delay the verdict and the boy was later sentenced to three years in a reform home on 31.08.2013.¹⁵

The Juvenile Justice (care and protection of Children Act) was published (Act no 2, 2016) in the Gazette of India, extra Ordinary Part ii section 1, dated 1st January 2016 and the amended Act, having repealed and replaced the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) Act of 2000 *inter alia* provides that ,the Juvenile in the age group of 16 to 18 years may be tried as an adult for commission of a heinous offence.

Co joint reading of the section 14, 15, 17,18, 19 and 20 of the Act of 2015, will indicate the intention of the legislature as regards to two separate methods for dealing with the Juvenile in conflict with Law. The Juvenile below the age group of 16 years will be treated leniently irrespective of their involvement in heinous offence as per the section 14(f) (i) of the Act. Inquiry of a heinous offence alleged to be committed by the Juvenile below 16 years will be conducted by the Juvenile Justice Board as stated in the said section while for the Juveniles who have completed above 16 years of age as on date of commission of an offence shall be draft within the maximum prescribed under section (15) of the Act.

The explanation added to the section 15(1) states that after a preliminary assessment conducted with regard to the mental and physical capacity to council such an offence ability to understand the consequences of the offence and the circumstances in which he allegedly committed the same and the Board may decide under section 18(3) that, the Juvenile should be treated as an adult for the purpose of the trial and by passing necessary order to the effect, may order the transfer of the trial of the case to the children's court having jurisdiction to try such offences.

The explanation added to the section,15(1) states that, for the purpose of the Act, preliminary assessment is not a trial but an exercise to assess the capacity of such child to understand the consequences of the alleged offence. The section 15(2) also states that after preliminary assessment, if the Board is satisfied that the matter should be disposed by the Board, then the Board shall follow the procedure as far as may be for the trials in summons case, under the code of criminal procedure, 1973.

The Section 18(1) states that, on satisfaction of the Board upon inquiry irrespective of the age of the child, that he has committed a petty offence or a serious offence, or a child below 16 years of age has committed a heinous offence, then notwithstanding anything contained in any other law for the time being in force and based on nature of offence, specific need for supervision or intervention circumstances as brought out in the social investigation report and past conduct of the child, the Board may allow the child to go home after advice or admonition following appropriate inquiry and counseling such child and to his parents or the guardian, direct the child to participate in group consulting and similar activities and may order the child to perform community service under supervision of an organization or institution or specific person or order the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the child to pay fine.

Further under section 18 (i) (f) and (g), the Board may release the child on probation of good conduct and place under the care of a guardian or fit person with or without surety and the Board may also decide to release the child on probation of good conduct placing him under the care and supervision of any fit person for the well being of the child for a period not exceeding three years. The Board may also send the child to the special home for a period not exceeding three years for providing reformatory service including education skill, development, counseling, behavior modification and psychiatric support during the period of stay at the special home provided that, if the conduct and behavior of the child has been such that, it would not be in the child's interest or in the interest of other children housed in a special home, the Board may send such child to the place of safety.

The Board in addition to the order passes under clause (a) to (g) of the sub section (1) of the section (18) may also pass order to attend school or vocational training centre or therapeutic centre by the child or prohibit the child from visiting frequenting or appearing in specific place and to undergo de addiction programme.

Having included the powers of the Children Court under section (19) and (20) of the JJ Act of 2015 Act that, the children court after receipt of the preliminary assessment from the Board under the section (15) may decide under the section 19(1) (i) the conduct of the trial of the child as an adult under the CrPC 1973 and subject the this section and 21 and pass appropriate orders after trial considering the special needs of the child, the tenets of fair trial and maintain child friendly atmosphere but shall not award death sentence or life imprisonment without possibility of release for any such offence, either under provision of the Act or any other penal laws for the time being in force.

The Children court under section 19 (1) (ii) may also conduct inquiry on the decision of the Board as regards to necessity of trial of the child and pass appropriate order in accordance with the provision of the section (18), if satisfied that no trial is necessary.

The section 19(2) states that, the children's court shall ensure that, the final order with regard to a child in conflict with law, shall include an individual care plan for the rehabilitation of the child, including follow up by the probation officer or the district child protection unit or a social waken. The section 19 (3) states that, the children's court shall ensure that, the child who is found to be in conflict with law is sent to a place of safety till he attains the age of twenty one years and there after the person shall be transferred to a jail provided that the reformative services including education services, skill development, alternative therapy such as counseling, behavior modification therapy and psychiatric support shall be provided to the child during the period of stay in the place of safety.

The sub section (4) of the children court shall ensure that, there is a periodic follow up report every year by the publication officer or the district child protection unit or a social worker as necessary to evaluate the progress of the child in the place of safety and to ensure that there is no ill-treatment to the child in any form and the sub section(5) states that the report shall be forwarded to the children's court for record and follow up or as may be required.

The section 20(1) states that, when the child in conflict with law, attains the age of 21 years and is yet to complete the term of stay, the children court shall provide for a follow up by the protection unit, a social waken, or by itself as required to evaluate if such child has undergone reformative changes and if the child can be a contributing member of the society and for the purpose the progress records of the section (19) along with evaluation of the relevant experts are to be taken into consideration.

After completion of the procedure specified under sub section (1) other children court may decide to release the child on such conditions as it fit which includes appointment of a monitoring agency for remainder of his term in jail (ii) decide that, the child shall complete the remainder of his term in a jail, provided that, the state Government shall maintain list of monitoring authorities and monitoring procedures as may be prescribed.

The Juvenile Justice Act (Care and protection of Children) Act 2015 having stated in the sub section 4 of the section (1) that notwithstanding any contained in any other laws for the time being in force the provisions of the Act, shall apply to all matter, concerning children in need of care and protection, and

children in conflict with law including-(a)Apprehending detention prosecution penalty or imprisonment, rehabilitation and social integration of children in conflict with law.(b)Procedure and decisions or orders relating to rehabilitation, adoption, re-integration and restoration of children in need of care and protections.

The Act having incorporated the proposition that, the children committing heinous offences (minimum period of imprisonment as punishment of which should be not less than 7 years or more under Indian Penal Code or any other law for the time being in force, as per section 2 (33) of the Act), should be subjected to a trial procedure as per the Code criminal procedure, that component is required to be re classified within the generic definition of 'child in conflict with law' under section 2(13) of the Act as a proviso.

As we have accepted the scheme of Juvenile Justice as dynamic and liberal approach endowed with values of remedial jurisprudence, without subjecting the administration of Justice to procedural technicalities of adversarial trial the reclassification of offences as heinous with separate trial procedure as envisaged in the Act of 2015, has afforded scope to question the non existence of harmonious consistency in purpose and practice. The preamble of the Act states 'An Act to consolidate and amend law relating to children alleged and found to be conflict with law and children in need of care and protection by catering to their basic needs through proper care, protection, development, treatment social re- integration by adopting child friendly approach in the adjudication and disposal of matters in the best interests of children and for their rehabilitation through processes provided and institutions and bodies established herein under and for matters connected there with or incidental there too...'

Now, it is a pertinent or legally substantive point to be reckoned with, as to how the child friendly atmosphere will be maintained by trying a child in the age or (in between 16-18 years) like an adult by a children court excising its discretion on the *modus operandi* of trial to be adopted based on a preliminary assessment report under section (15) of the Act which is to be prepared by the Juvenile Justice Board within three months or extended time frame as stipulated under sub section (3) & (4) of the section 14 of the Act.

Further, the section18(3) states that, based on the preliminary assessment the Board may decide as to the need of trial of the child in conflict with law and in case of above 16 years as an adult and transfer the case to the children court. As the section 4(1) of the Act interaction has used the word 'Penalty and imprisonment' along with the prosecution of a child in conflict with law, the trial of a child in conflict with law on completion of 16 years on the date of

commission of heinous offence like an adult, the reformatory spirit of the Juvenile Justice will stand marginalized in that context. Further punishment as the only solution against an offence may animate the court and jurisprudential objectivity may be maimed by presumptions of law of evidence and cavalier subjectivity.

It seems that, the section 19(1) with subsections, (i) and (ii) are also not based on consistent material logic for carving out exceptions as regards to trial of a juvenile by the children court. As stated in the section 19 (1) (ii) of the Act, when the children court may decide that, trial of a juvenile by a children court as an adult may not be required, what is the *raison d'être* of allowing the conduct of inquiry by the children court instead of the Juvenile Justice Board? Why the proviso for remitting the case to the Juvenile Justice Board with recording reasons has been not provided in that subsection of section 19(1)?

Further the section 19(3) having stated that the children court shall ensure that the child found to be in conflict with law, is sent to the place of safety till he attains the 21 years and thereafter the person shall be transferred to the jail and reformatory services including educational services, skill development alternative therapy such a counseling behavior modification therapy and psychiatric treatment shall be provided during the period of his stay in the place of safety, also failed to substantiate with reasons the necessity of sending a juvenile in conflict with law to the jail merely on the ground of attaining age of 21 years. Should it not be termed as ridiculous deviation from the orbit of remedial jurisprudence being championed as the corner stone of the Juvenile Justice System in India by the law makers?

The discretionary power of the children court to decide as whether the child found to be conflict with law will be sent to jail or not based on the periodic report of the probation officer as incorporated in section 19(4) read with section 20(i) and 20(2) (i) & (ii) on completion of 21 years of age may rupture the very tenets of fair decision making, if the court nictitates at the crucial point of judging personality of the juvenile in conflict with law and is infected by the retributive temperament to order for incarceration for remainder period of the sentence.

The section 23 of the Act has barred the joint trial of a child found to be in conflict with law with an adult notwithstanding anything contained in the Section 223 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973, but the same Act under section 19 (3) and 20 (2)(ii) have paved the way ridiculously for frustrating all positive effects of reformatory or therapeutic treatment, which a child in conflict with law would receive during his stay in a correctional home or special home. As our prison are not rehabilitation centres and winds of remedial justice

will be not found blowing in the barracks of the Indian jails and therefore subsection 2(ii) of section 20 of the J J Act of 2015 has anathematized the aims and perceptions of Juvenile Justice.

Perhaps the observations of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in Mohammad Gizsuddin vs State of Andhra Pradesh¹⁶ will be relevant to substantiate the above view:

'It is thus plain that crime is a pathological aberration, that the criminals can ordinarily be redeemed, that the state has to rehabilitate rather than avenge. The sub- culture that leads to anti social behavior has to be countered not by undue cruelty but by re-culturisation. Therefore the focus of interest in penology is the individual and goal is to salvage him for society. The infliction of harsh and savage punishment is thus relic of past and regressive times. The human today views sentencing as a process of reshaping a person who has deteriorated into criminality and modern community has a primary stake in the rehabilitation of the offender as a means of social defense. We therefore consider a therapeutic, rather than an 'in- terrorem' outlook should prevail in our criminal courts, since brutal incarceration only produces laceration of his mind. In the word of George Bernard Shaw 'If you are to punish a man retributively, you must injure him. If you are to reform him, you must improve him, and men are not improved by injuries'.

Progressive Penological approach will envisage for rationalization of sentencing pattern for curing a child deviant and by sending a child in conflict with law to the contact of hardened criminals by incarceration even as an exception, will be an aberration of the very objective of Juvenile Justice.

Further re-categorization of the children of above 16 years found to be in conflict with law for commission of heinous offences for the purpose of trial in the court of law will also render nugatory the requirement of soft handling of young offenders as the fundamental principle of juvenile justice. Since in many cases minimum sentencing period have been not prescribed, the complexity wrapped in uncertainty is faced during award of sentences which may also trivialize the spirit of remedial justice. It was raised in the case of Shilpa Mittal vs State of Delhi & other¹⁷ before the Bench of Justice Deepak Gupta and Aniruddha Bose in the Supreme Court of India. The Court had to decide whether an offence prescribing a maximum sentence of more than 7 years imprisonment but not providing any minimum sentence of less than 7 years can be considered to be a heinous offence within the meaning of the section 2(33) of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2015. The section 2(54) states that, an offence will be termed as serious, if the term of imprisonment

for the offence under the India Penal Code (45 of 1960) or any other law for the time being in force is imprisonment between 3 to 7 years. The retributive outlook and inclination to endorse sentences of imprisonment as the remedy for a malady involving a juvenile in conflict with law, perhaps encouraged the Juvenile Justice Board Juvenile to treat an accused alleged to have committed a heinous offence charged under the section of 304 of the IPC, who at the time of commission of the offence was of above 16 years and below 18 years without examining the intent of the definition of heinous offence within section 2 (33) of the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015. As the minimum sentence as punishment has not been prescribed in the IPC under section 304, the Delhi High Court in its order, dated 01/05/2019 held that, since no minimum sentence is prescribed for the offence in question, the same had fallen under purview of section of 2(33) of J J Act, 2015 while examining the decision of the Juvenile Justice Board and Children Court in appeal, which had considered the offence alleged to have been committed as 'heinous'.

In the appeal, the Apex Court considered the category of offences, where the maximum sentence as punishment is more than 7 years but without minimum period of sentence being mentioned, while examining the issue. During hearing the learned counsel of the appellant viewed that, the legislature had not intended to exclude the offence like under section 122-A, 122 of IPC, offences relating to counterfeiting of currency, culpable homicide amounting not to murder (as in the present case) abetment to suicide of a child or innocent person and may others from the category of offence, as it would lead to absurdity and argued to consider the same as heinous offence replying on the doctrine of surplusage.

The Apex Court however viewed that, the offence for which minimum period of sentence are not prescribed should be categorized as 'serious offence' by dispelling ambiguity and setting a guiding principle for the Juvenile Justice Board, so as to deal with the children who have committed such offences which are definitely serious or may be more serious, but less than heinous offences. In exercise of the power conferred by the Article 142 of the constitution of India, the Apex Court held that the offences committed by the children belonging to the 4th category (neither heinous but more than serious) and (not specifically mentioned in the Act), be treated as serious offence from the date of commencement of the Act of 2015.

Spark of Judicial creativity found place in plugging off such hair splitting technical loop hole, which if remained unaddressed, will encourage entry of

retributive tentacle of penology into the proceedings involving the young offenders alleged to be in conflict with law.

The curative and reformatory spirit of Juvenile Justice will require harmonious and constructive institutionalized as well as personalized approach for cementing the applied version of remedial jurisprudence. By sending a young offender to a jail so as to spend time in the company of the hardened criminals will aggravate negativity or criminality in him rather than refreshing him and curing his deviant dispositions.

Retributive elements of penal law coupled with retrograde outlook for infliction of deterrence on the young offenders are still dominant in our sentencing pattern inspite of ordering an institutionalized mechanism to shelve it. Since bullying of prisoners and subsequent victimization are two main issues inside the prisons, even in the advanced countries like the United States and United Kingdom. Rehabilitative process as a means for re-socialization will receive a jolt, if the prison is allowed to be ultimate goal for the young offenders. A study found that, in UK female prisoners, almost one third population has been suffering from short term psychiatric disorder. Among the prisoners in the age group of (16-21) years, over fifteen percent suffered from depression and 38% showed clinically high level of helplessness. In prisons of US prisoners experienced more sexual violence in comparison to their counterparts in the UK. Probably difference might have been caused due to higher incidence of lethal violence in the US Society, racial tensions on them the US prisons and prison staff's supportive attitudes to prison rape. Researchers have found that, in UK 45% of their male adult and young offenders are involved in bullying others and 40% reported experiencing such behaviors. Research being conducted by the Susie Grennan and Jessica Woodhams with their sample of young offender's confirmed the same. Even using a different definition and different approach researchers in the US found that on average their inmates were victimized once a month and it seems that being imprisoned brings with it a substantial risk of being victimized. Further some prisoners found loss of autonomy unbearable in their prisons and for many prisoners the experience of imprisonment had a significant detrimental impact on their psychological well being with some having committed suicide in prisons. In 1997, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prison after interviewing numerous female prisoners reported that, majority of the prisoners had shared experience of negative impact of imprisonment and some explained that the prisons had merely taught them to be better criminal and increased their knowledge of committing crimes whereas other referred to their emotional feelings.¹⁸

Even in India also our prison system has not implemented the Gandhian humanist approach for re-shaping a criminal mind, by encouraging him to discover divinity in him with the help of criminal psychologists and socialists. Justice V.R Krishna Iyer recorded his observations in the case of Md. Giasuddin Vs State of Andhra Pradesh (Supra) by stating that there is divinity in every man which has been translated into the constitutional essence of the dignity and worth of human person. Having envisaged on adoption of the Gandhian diagnosis of offenders as patients and his conception of prisons as hospital-mental and moral, as an effective alternative for curing criminal mind, he also termed the said approach as the key to the pathology of delinquency and therapeutic role of punishment. As whole man is healthy man and every man is born good, criminality was considered by him as a curable deviance. The learned judge also stated that, morality in law may vary, but is real and basic goodness of all human beings is a spiritual axiom, a fall-out of the *advaita* of cosmic creation and spring of all correctional thoughts in criminology.

Perhaps what was sounded by the legendary jurist of the country at that point of time is the clarion call of the day for curing the deviant behaviors of young offenders. Correction of a young offender should be goal of criminal justice system and not his incarceration, that too for remainder part of his life merely on completion of 21 years as being incorporated in the section 19(3) and 20(2)-(ii) of the Juvenile Justice (Care and protection of Children) Act, 2015.

Have we endorsed the principle that, a student if not responding to the lessons or not performing well in study because of some extenuating situations should be dismissed from the institution of learning?

We believe that the logical answer to the same will be in the negative and similarly a child in conflict with law who did not respond to the reformatory programmes should not be deprived of the same without application of logical mind and reading the preceding or mitigating circumstances by merely relying on an absurd proposition that, 'he has completed 21 years'.

The provisos of section 19(3) and 20(2)(ii) may be also assailed in judicial scrutiny even as an exceptional provision, if the doctrine of Double Jeopardy is pleaded reasonably against the provisos, which may also allow arbitrariness to permeate fairness in disposition of cases involving juveniles in conflict with law.

Justice, Altamas Kabir and Cyriac Joseph in Hari Ram vs State of Rajasthan (Supra) having extended a liberal and beneficial meaning to the purpose and scope of the section 2(k) 2(e), 7 (A) and 20 of the Juvenile Act, 2000 and

Rules 12 and 98 of the Juvenile Justice Rules 2007 remitted the case of a Juvenile alleged to be in conflict with law to the Juvenile Justice Board for disposal even after 10 years of the commission of the alleged offence under section 148, 302, 149, 325 read with Section 149 and section 323 of the Indian Penal Code. When the offence was alleged to have been committed on 30.10.1998 and the Rajasthan High Court clearly held that, he would not be governed by the provision of the Juvenile Justice Act, 1986, the learned Judges overwhelmed the literal approach with a constructive and liberal outlook within the scheme of the very enactment itself.

We should respect the sensitivity and responsiveness to the reformatory and progressive penological tenets shown by the Apex Court while dealing with a defiant child and also should learn to hate sin and not the sinner and also awaken public opinion by. The following statement of W.A Whartly will be a guiding phrase for our law makers,

‘If numerous laws were perfect, social control was automatic, legal scholarship like the State of the Marxists could be left to wither away. But laws are not perfect and final, and cannot be so, in a dynamic society; they are not always intelligible and if intelligible are not always intelligently made’.

Notes and References

¹Vegeshwari Deswal, Restorative Justice, ‘Incorporating Gandhian Ideals for a Catholic Approach Towards Punishment’ in [https://times of India.indiatime.com/blogs/legally-speaking](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/legally-speaking).

²Vimal Chadha vs Vikas Chaudhury and another, 2008 Cr. LJ 3190(S.C) as cited by SK Chatterjee in ‘Offences Against Children and Juvenile offence’ Central Law Publishing, Allahabad, 2019, p.414.

³Amit Das vs State of Bihar, AIR 2000, SC2264.

⁴Jyoti Prakash Rai Vs State of Bihar.

⁵Vihoy Singh vs State of U.P 1986(Cv.LJ) 2016(cal).

⁶Sejmal Purnamchand vs Emperor 1926, 29 Bom LR 1970, 171:51 Bom 310, AIR 1927 Bom 177.

⁷Lakhmikanth Pandey vs UOI, 1984, AIR, 1984, SC 469.

⁸(1979) 4 SCC 413 : 1980 SCC(Cri) 1 cited by Mamta Rao in Women and Children 4th Edition 2021, Lucknow, Eastern Book Company page no 647.

⁹1982, 1, SCC, 545.

¹⁰1986, 3, SCC, 596.

¹¹Mamta Rao, *op.cit.*, pp.628-630.

¹²Bijendra Singh Arjit Prasayat and S.H Kapadei (28.03.2005) Appeal (Cri) 448/2005, <https://indiankanoon.org>, S.K Chatterjee, *op.cit.*, pp.432-434.

¹³Date of Judgment 05.05.2009 criminal appeal no 907 of 2009 (arising of Slp (Cri) no 3336 of 2006 as reported in <https://indiankanoon.org>.

¹⁴<https://www.prisindia.org/report-summaries/justice-Verma-committee>

¹⁵Manta Rao, *op.cit.*, p.638.

¹⁶1977. AIR, 1926:1978, SCR (1) 153, available in <http://indian.kannon.org/doc>.

¹⁷Shilpa Mittal Vs State of Delhi 7 others, Supreme Court date of Judgement 9th January, 2020, Criminal Appeal no 34/2020 in <https://indiankanoon.org/doc>.

¹⁸Ray bull, Clair Cooke, et al's criminal psychology: Beginners Guides, London, One World Publication, reprint 2021, pp.1-162.

TALA-An Archaeological glory of Chhattisgarh

Dr. Devendra Kumar Singh

Assistant Professor

Department of History

Indira Gandhi National Tribal University

Amarkantak, Madhya Pradesh

Email: devendra.singh@igntu.ac.in

Abstract

Tala is located on the bank of the Maniyari river near the village of Ameri Kapa. Often identified as the Sangamagrama mentioned in the records of the Panduvamshis of Mekala. Tala is situated at the confluence of the Shivnath and Maniyari rivers. Most famous for its Devrani-Jethani Temples, Tala was discovered by Joseph Devid Begler in 1873-74. Historians have claimed that the Tala village dates back to the 7-8th century A.D. Tala is a land of precious archaeological excavations that have revealed excellent sculpture work. These exquisite excavations narrate the prosperity of Tala during the 6th to 10th century A.D. However, the various excavated ruins obtained and the sculpture style tell us the various dynasties that reigned Tala were Lord Shiva's devotees and propagators of the Shaiva religion. Devrani-Jethani Temple is a unique monument of architecture. Due to its incredible architectural craft, it is a matter of curiosity and attraction for archaeologists. The Devrani-Jethani Temple is very famous for Indian sculpture and art. The famous excavation at the Devrani temple during the year 1987-88 revealed a unique sculpture of Lord Shiva. The 'Rudra' image of Lord Shiva gives us a glimpse into different shades of the Lord's personality. Belonging to the Shaiva religion, this unique statue of Shiva is crafted using different creatures. Due to the lack of scientific depiction of any known form of Shiva, it is not universally accepted as a form of a special form of Shiva. Based on the construction style, the antiquities of the lock can be kept in the vicinity of the sixth century A.D.

Keywords- Tala, Shivnath, Maniyari, Chhattisgarh, Bilaspur, Devrani-Jethani, Rudra Shiva.

Tala (E 21° 50'–N 82° 05') is among one of the few exceptional architectural examples of ancient India. It is the ancient temple in the southern Kosala or the modern-day Chhattisgarh state of India. The temple ruins of twin temples –Jethani and Devrani; the site is branded as Tala. It is located on the left

bank of the Maniyari river near the village Amari Kapa, Bilaspur district. Tala has gained a significant position among historians, archaeologists, and world tourists as an exceptional example of architecture and iconography.

Situated at the bank of the Maniyari river, Tala provides a serene surrounding environment. Among the temples, Jethani is in complete ruins, while Devrani temple still has its Jangha in good condition. These temples were constructed during the 5th and 6th century C.E., the best-known examples of contemporary iconography and temple architecture. Based on the exceptional architectural ornamentation and iconographical examples, Tala has a special place among its peers. Neither contemporary nor later records of literature or epigraphy provide any light regarding the Tala site. Dated 5th-6th century C.E, Tala was an important Shaivite centre in south Kosala during the Sarabhapuriya dynasty.

Tala has located 29 km from the city of Bilaspur.¹ Tala is situated on the bank of the Maniyari river, 5 km from Bhojpuri village, located at the 24 km mark on the Bilaspur - Raipur highway. The village is connected through the concrete road from the main road. Situated on the Hawada - Mumbai railway line between Bilaspur and Bhatapra, 'Dagori' is the nearest railway station; Tala is 5 km from the place. Tala has situated 92 km from Raipur through the roadways. Tala is not directly connected through the main road or the highway; however, taxi and bus facilities are available in Bhojpuri village. Many hotels and lodges are available for tourist stay in Bilaspur and Raipur.

Both the temples in Tala-Devrani and Jethani are part of the same complex, making them easily accessible for tourists. The monument remains open from sunrise to sunset, free of cost for visitors. A small site museum is also present within the complex. Foreign tourists are allowed to take photographs after permission from A.S.I. and the cultural department of the state government.²

The archaeological site of Tala is located at the confluence point of the Shivnath and Maniyari rivers. Devrani - Jethani temple is situated on the left bank of the Maniyari river near the Basanti canal. The Maniyari river from Tala flows in a straight line in the north-south direction. The confluence points of Maniyari and Shivnath has located 4 km from the Tala site; being located nearby Tala would have had a great religious significance. The Maniyari has roots in Sanskrit, 'Mani Haravali', which means garland made from gems. It has received the name as it flows as the lifeline through the forested land of the area. Being located on a kacchappriesth, tortoise shell-shaped high platform, Devrani - Jethani temple has safer ground during the floods. The shape of the mound's tortoiseshell is associated with tantra and yoga meditation. The serenity of Maniyari, the lust

green forest surrounding Tala with a rural surrounding, provides tranquillity to the soul. Tala's antiquity goes back from the historical period to the middle stone age, of which ample stone tools are good examples. This includes scrapers, borers, and blades. Besides these, a good number of microliths were also obtained from the site.

Devrani-Jethani temple has stone masonry, although it appears that the Shikhara was constructed of bricks. Local stones from the Maniyaririver's bank were utilised to construct this temple.³ The area is known for its red sandstone, which has a less challenging surface that generally chips easily and erodes due to natural impact. In the construction of the Tala temple, this stone was primarily used, later styled in the form of sculptures which has impacted the strength of the structure. The outer wall of Devrani - Jethani temple is marked with a brick plaque. Based on the architectural evidence around the 8th -9th century C.E., many more brick plaques were placed around the temple up to the height of Vedibandha. According to another school, brick plaques were attached to the main structure in the later period to protect the temple from erosion due to natural calamities. Because of the protection provided by the plaques in Vedibandha, the original structure, its height, and architectural remains are still in good shape.⁴

In the vicinity of the site, contemporary habitational remains have also come to light. Located a kilometre from the temple complex, mount Unnath on the bank of the Maniyari river has yielded potteries and potsherds from its surface. Continuous farming has led to the depletion of the archaeological remains from the mound's surface. Marked as an ancient habitational site, these mounds can provide an unknown cultural history of the land if scientific excavations are conducted on the site.

Exploration and Conservation

The Tala was deserted and neglected until the seventh decade of the 20th century, firstly recorded by J.D. Beglar in his report of the Archaeological Survey of India (part 07) –1878. Along with other archaeological places, Tala was mentioned based on information received from the administrative officers of the Raipur, which included the name temples of Devrani-Jethani. The credit for discovering Tala's ancient pride and appealing consideration to its significance goes to Dr. Vishnu Singh Thakur of Raipur. Afterwards, a small group of archaeologists was drawn to this site in the eighth decade of the 20th century. Dr. Shyam Kumar Pandey, Department of ancient Indian history, culture, and archaeology, Sagar university, published detailed data on the site in an issue of PrachyaPratibha (Issue 5-Volume II) July 1977. Around the same time, an American research scholar, Donald M. Stadtner, University of Texas, Austin,

published an article, 'A six-century temple from Kosala', in archives of ancient art (part 35) 1980. In addition, french scholars Jonah Gafred Williams and Dr Vishnu Singh Thakur published a prologue on Tala.

Upon receipt of information about the archaeological property of Tala, the Government of Madhya Pradesh Culture Department immediately started legal action regarding the conservation of this site. It was declared a protected monument site in the year 1982⁵. After taking them under protection, special attention was paid to the sophistication and maintenance of the ruins. The site's security arrangements, drinking water facility, harvesting of shady trees, and collection and display of shady trees have been done to give an attractive appearance to the site's beauty. Archaeology and Museum Department, the first attempt to expose the original structure of the Devrani temple, Tala, was made in 1978. This work focused on clearing the debris in front of the Devrani temple. In this phase of work, the Chandrashila of the structure, steps along with plaques, Ardhmandapa and the entrance doorway were exposed. This work yielded miniatures Ganas and MeshamukhaGana placed on the frontal profile along the Sopana. Besides the above, many unique fractal statues and fragmented architectural elements were also found. These relics have been put on display at the site. Among other artefacts, Shiva, Surya, a fragmented pillar, a female statue, and a male statue are notable.

In 1986, the work of debris cleaning from the mound of the Jethani temple was started. This temple was completely demolished and converted into a debris-accumulated mound, and some obscure and eroded remains were visible on the top of the mound. A huge tamarind tree was grown at the northwest end of the mound. The size of the demolished mound of the Jethani temple was (30x 30 x 6)meters. On the mound's surface, the demolished fragmented architectural elements and eroded statues were in a chaotic condition. This mound obtained many rare artefacts during debris clearance work, out of which Kartikeya, Ardhanarishvara, Mahismardini, a male head, fragmented female statue, Bharwahaka, fragmented Shalabhanjika, and lion face are notable. A stamped embossed silver coin of Sharabhpuri ruler Prasannamatra obtained from here has been a significant achievement in the political history and chronology of the site. Apart from this, various miniature antiquities have also been collected from the debris of the Jethani temple. Different pottery bowls, lids, perforated spouts, lamps, lampstands, wheels, clay tablets, pounders, arrowheads, metal bars, etc., are particularly notable.

A distinctive and unique architectural style is known from the excavation of the mound of the Jethani temple. The ground plan, iconographic features,

and architectural ornamentation of this temple are the only evidence of extinct contemporary Indian architecture. The main entrance of the Jethani temple is in the south direction, with the entrance gate in the east and west direction. This temple indicates the extinct Shaivite sect's philosophy, ethics, principles, and worship method.

In 1978, only the structure's entrance and parts of staircases were exposed. Brick was collected on three sides of the structure for necessary maintenance work in 1988. The removal work was resumed. In 1988, although a small number of artefacts were from the rubble, this place became famous in the international art world due to a unique human-shaped statue of God. Known as Rudrashiva, this statue is eight feet high, and the combination of many animals has formed its body parts. Apart from this, a sizable number of shiva heads, Shivashirsha, a load bearer, BharwahakaGana, and a fragmented image of Shaivacharya recovered from the debris are also noteworthy. With this work, the structure of the ground plan, reconstruction in the later period, and the reinforcement of Vedibandhutilising the constructions resembling small internal pits made of bricks, could also be known. Under the maintenance work, works like assembling fragmented architectural elements, filling pits, chemical preservation, drainage, and strengthening by various measures have been done in this monument.⁵

Architecture and Sculpture

Devrani-Jethani Temple is a unique monument of architecture. Due to its incredible architectural craft, it is a matter of curiosity and attraction for archaeologists. In ancient VastuShastra and Shilpa Samhitas, there is no light on the architectural plan allied to the Tala. The pinnacle of this distinctive architectural style prevalent in South Kosala is initially visible in the Tala and dissolves here.⁶ The historicity of Tala as a monument of the Sharabhपुरiya period is attested in the early dynasties of this region. There is a gap of about a century between the Jethani temple and the Devrani temple. The temple architecture in pre-Nala of Bastar and Sharbhapuris in DakshinKosal is primarily unknown, so the origin and development of temple architecture in this region is not a basis for a factual analysis. A few years ago, a ruin in the Devrani temple tradition, Tala, was discovered at a site called Sisdevari, Raipur district. On this mound are visible fragmented pillar segments and some fractal statues along with embellishments resembling the doorjamb, Dwarashakha of the Devrani temple.

Devrani Temple (**Picture-1**) is a partially protected monument. Thejanga part of this temple is present in its original form. The roof and part of the shikhara have been completely demolished. Devrani Temple is a stone-built

temple. Its shikhara is made of a flat roof or bricks. Around the 8th century A.D., a brick wall structure strengthened this temple's adhishtanapart. Along with this, evidence and remains of new expansion work attached to the original structure are also available in its north and eastern part. There is a lack of consensus on this new expansion work, and some parts of the original form have been made underground. Devrani temple is an east-facing temple. The frontal part of this temple was covered with bricks, rubble, and boulders, from which most of the artefacts were found. In 1978, the cleaning work of the debris in the temple was executed by the Office of the Registration Officer (Archaeology and Museum), Bilaspur. As a result of this session, a new light has fallen over the art and architecture of this temple. In the session, the incredible artwork Rudra Shiva obtained here is particularly popular in the world art world. The architectural plan of the Devrani temple is also unique and is the only known temple of its style in the history of Indian architecture.⁷ Devrani temple is a rectangular structure facing east. The original idol installed in its sanctum is no longer present; however, this Shiva temple is confirmed based on other architectural evidence. For the construction of this temple, red sandstone slabs available from local quarries have been used. Dvaramandapa is of small size, with the frontal part devoid of any obstruction, while the north and south are covered with panels the front part has large pillars on both sides. The visible part of these pillars, from the root to the middle, is flat. The entrance gate of this temple is unique in Indian art in terms of ornamentation scheme and aims. A harmony of fantastic artistry and originality in the composition of the entrance is witnessed. In this, most of the area is intricately ornamented.

Jethani Temple (**Picture- 2**) is a demolished monument. This monument was converted into a mound, and debris cleaning work was done in 1986, due to which the residual part of the demolished structure was obtained till the installation of the Jethani temple as a stone-built temple. In the later period, its adhishtana part appears to have been strengthened by a brick wall. The ground plan for this temple is rectangular. The ground plan makes ardhamandapa, mandapa, and garbhagriha clear. The entrance gates to the temple are made in the east and west directions, with the main entrance facing south. The ardhamandapa is 4.15 metres wide and 8.25 metres high. Two enormous pillars and a pilaster serve as its establishment. The ardhamandapa has two pillars, only one of which is still standing. Pillar installation is done separately. Mandap 10.25 m. long and 6.40 m. wide. In the middle of the mandapa, two pillars of colossal size are the original remains. Visible from all four sides, sculptures were installed above the adhishtana. The temple has entrances from three directions. Of these,

the entrance gate in the south direction is prominent. The sanctum garbhagriha's; walls, pillars, and ceiling-vitana are completely fractured.

Similarly, parallel to the architectural decoration used in the extended Vedibandha part of the Devrani temple, the Tala snake and mouse are carved in architectural fragments, which have also been found in a place called Sirkatti of Panduka village. Although the additional expansion during the Somvanshi rule included this architectural section in the coil, it still represents an earlier tradition. The Deur temple of Malhar exhibits the expanded influence of the architectural style of Devrani Temple Tala (Bilaspur). In terms of art and architecture, the Devrani and Jethani temples belong to a specific category. Their ground plan and vertical layout are also different.⁸

Rudrashiva

This artwork obtained during the debris cleaning work of Devrani temple; is internationally famous and popular (**Picture-3**). It has been safely displayed at the memorial site. It is the only near-perfect statue among the idols recovered from Tala. Only the Adhithana part of it is fractured. This colossal statue is 2.54 meters high and 1.00 meters wide. Due to the formation of its features and elements from the face of various animals, the rage is transmitted in the statue. Due to the harmony of Shiva with Rudra or Aghor form, it has been named 'Rudrashiva' for convenience. The statue is seated and contains elements of the lion, snake, fish, crab, peacock, kuklas (chameleon), turtle, and fish in its body. The first instance of animal and human faces appearing in a motif on a statue can be found in Indian art history. It is captivating because it has limbs and animal and human facial features.⁹

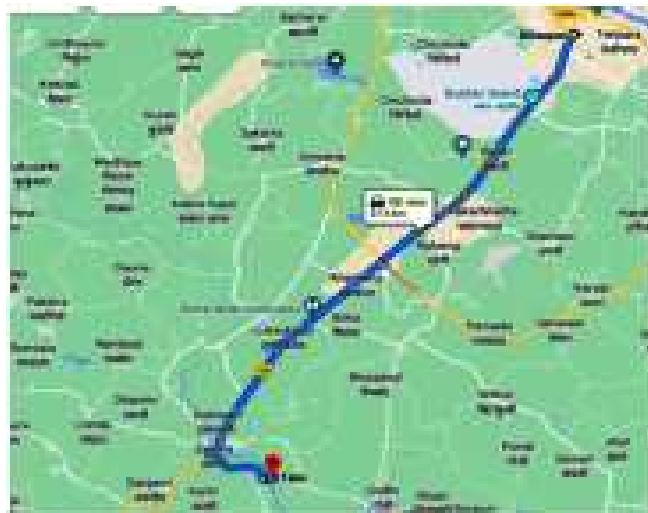
The two serpents are wrapped with their coil end, giving it a circular turban appearance. Facing downward, the nostrils are formed from the dorsal part of the Trikala's, the nostrils from the forelimbs, the nostrils from the head, and the eyebrows from the hind legs.¹⁰

Eyeballs are made from the dilated mouth of a giant frog, and the eyeballs are made from poultry eggs. The small size of the prosthesis is made up of a moustache, an upper lip from the fish, the chin from the stiff back of the crab, the hair of the beard from the lower legs, and the lower lip made up of the serrated stinger above. A sitting peacock shapes the ears.

The shoulder is made of Makarmukha. The arms are like an elephant's trunk, and the hand fingers are made of snake faces of different species and sizes. The human face is visible on both the breast and the abdominal part of the chest. The penis is formed from the mouth and back of the head, while the testicles are formed from the two front legs. Bell-like leeches are hanging on the

testicles. With folded hands on both the thighs, Vidyadhara and katiParshv have the face of a Gandharva on either side. Lion faces are inscribed on both knees. Gigantic weighty feet are like the front legs of an elephant. On both the shoulders of the main idol, two great snakes are situated with outstretched hoods resembling the lateral protectors and below the legs are visible in the form of a snake retainer with a hood embroidered on the side.

The statue's right hand still contains the standard fragment. The spiral portion of a serpent is used to represent the necklace, chest band, kankan, and katibandh-waistband in ornaments. A snake is next to the right leg of the person depicted. The Adhishthana part of the ayudha, the attribute, is broken. It is difficult to say whether the discernible Rudrashiva statue taken from the Devrani temple is the Devrani temple's original idol or was brought from the Jethani temple. This statue generally exhibits the coordination and influence of the occult principles of Tantra.



Physiography



Picture-1



Picture-2



Picture-3

Notes and References

¹G.L.Raikwar and Rahul Kumar Singh, *TalakaPuraVaibhav*, Directorate of Culture and Archaeology, Chhattisgarh, Raipur, 2015, p.01.

²*ibid.*, p.2.

³Kamta Prasad Verma, *SanskritiSaritaShivnath*, Directorate of Culture and Archaeology, Chhattisgarh, Raipur, 2012, pp.61-62.

⁴S.N.Manwani, *Evolution of Art and Architecture in Central India*, Agam Kala Prakashan, New Delhi, 1988, pp.30-31.

⁵G.L.Raikwar and Rahul Kumar Singh, *op.cit.*, p.9.

⁶S.N.Manwani, *op.cit.*, p.30.

⁷Verma, Kamta Prasad, *Chhattisgarh kiSthapatya Kala (Madhya Chhattisgarh keVisheshSandarbh me)* Vol-2, Directorate of Culture and Archaeology, Chhattisgarh, Raipur, 2014, p.20.

⁸Kamta PrasadVerma, *ibid.*, pp.19-21.

⁹G.L.Raikwar and Rahul Kumar Singh, *op.cit.*, pp.29-30.

¹⁰Kamta Prasad Verma, *Chhattisgarh kiSthapatya Kala (Madhya Chhattisgarh ke Vishesh Sandarbh me)* Vol-2, Directorate of Culture and Archaeology, Chhattisgarh, Raipur, 2014, pp.24-25.

The Men and the River
Visual Narratives of the Brahmaputra in *Bornodi Bhotiai* and
Ekhon Nedekha Nodir Xipare

Dr. Alankar Kaushik

Assistant Professor

Department of Journalism and Mass Communication

EFL University, Regional Campus, Shillong

Email :alankar@eflushc.ac.in

Abstract

*The river Brahmaputra is more than a geographical entity for the people of Assam valley. The daily lives of the people revolve around the river and its numerous tributaries and streams. The river enters the land through the eastern Himalayan foothills and flows down into the sea in the west; it reveals many stories to form a colourful identity. The river is loved, revered and feared in equal measure in shaping the cultural life of Assam. After all, it is the Burha Luit or old river Luit for the people of Assam. The Brahmaputra has been at the core of Assam's folklore, inspiring literature, films, art and music along with some of its famous tributaries. There is a distinction between horunodi and bornodi (small and big rivers). Human association with the rivers gets manifested in different art forms including visual media like films. The present paper is an attempt to explore the story of the relationship between the ordinary people and the river Brahmaputra as represented in Assamese films. Focusing on the bonding between the river and humans and the organic and inseparable link between nature and culture, the paper will discuss *Bornodi Bhotiai* and *Ekhon Nedekha Nodir Xipare*, two Assamese films produced after 2010.*

Keywords:*Brahmaputra, Assam, Cultural life, Cinema, representation.*

The Assamese film industry celebrated its golden jubilee in the year 2010. When Assamese cinema was on the verge of losing its identity as an art form, a group of young and passionate filmmakers emerged with new promises and possibilities.¹ Majority of them are mostly trained in National and International film and drama schools of repute from 2010 onwards. A close inspection of the long history of Assamese cinema in terms of a linear chronology since 1935 with the production and release of Jyotiprasad Agarwala's *Joymoti* clearly indicates its potential to engage in aesthetically sophisticated depictions of rural life of Assam. The depiction of the rural life in Assamese films is

always accompanied by panoramic shots of bornodi (big river). A river symbolizes the flow of life. If it dries up, the life depending on it evaporates with it. Allegorically this can be seen in an Assamese poem *Iyat Nadi Asil* (Here was a River) by Navakanta Barua. The poem is a warning of a gradual depletion of the riverbed. The renowned poet has visualized a magnificent river turning to rivulet and rivulets turning to empty rock-beds, eventually expanding into a desert. Such literary works suggest that water-related crises find semantic expression, but the image of water in cinema can be deceptive and often only add to the aesthetic sensibility. The pioneering Assamese films of earlier decades never attempted to depict water as a focal theme or as a metaphor. The first ever Assamese film *Joymoti* (1935) directed by Jyotiprasad Agarwala had shown the river Brahmaputra in the closing sequence with a heart-rendering background score *Lohitore Pani Jabi O Boi* (the waters of Lohit will flow on).² Interestingly the river exists in history and folklore not essentially for big rivers alone but because of the tributaries and the human life associated with the tributaries. There is a distinction between *horunodi* and *bornodi* (small and big rivers). Human association with the rivers gets manifested in different forms of art including visual medium like cinema.

We often do not register the presence of a river in our life unless faced with severe ecological events like flood and erosion. River as a living entity is deeply entrenched in our literary and cultural consciousness. Rivers in India have been a part of popular and folk cultures through songs and it comes to life through visual culture in cinema and documentaries.

The Brahmaputra is known as the 'lifeline of Assam', which also implies that the river not only provides the state with the necessities of life but also with a variety of opportunities.³ The Tsangpo has its origin in China, cuts across Tibet and flows into Assam as the Mahabahu Brahmaputra and finally merges with the Padma as Jamuna in Bangladesh in the vast Ganges Delta before ending its journey in the Bay of Bengal. The river cuts across three nations, several faiths, and numerous communities shaping the many stories of the people it meets along the way.⁴ This paper shall examine the inseparable relation of Nature with the everydayness of the people residing in the riverine areas of Assam. The article will further look at human bonding that exists with the river across civilization considering the river Brahmaputra at the center of the narrative structure. The article focuses on two fiction films produced from Assam post 2010 namely *Bornodi Bhotiai* and *Ekhon Nedekha Nodir Xipare*.

Landscape and Films

The relationship between landscape and films is a complex and multifaceted one that generates issues of ontology, epistemology, aesthetics, and forms of cultural representation.⁵ There are some film directors like David Lean, Andre Tarkovsky or Chen Kaige who have earned a justifiable reputation as filmmakers who mobilize the allegorical power of landscapes. Films such as *Yellow Earth (1984)*, Indian films directed by Ritwik Ghatak such as *Subarnarekha (1962)* exemplify this fact. Landscapes can operate in manifold ways in giving greater depth to the filmic experience as evidenced in the work of directors ranging from Orson Welles to Akira Kurosawa.⁶

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the term landscape was originally employed to signify a picture of natural land scenery, and later to mean a bird's-eye view, a plan, a sketch or a map. It also came to mean the depiction or description of something in words. The study of landscape became popular because of painting and photography, and later cinema. The interesting developments in these fields of creative communication have the salutary effect of forcing us to rethink the salience of landscapes in literature. Some of the most stimulating exegetical writings in this field have emerged in relation to Wordsworth's poetry,⁷ Landscapes establish a sense of time, place, and mood; they serve to punctuate the narrative and invest it with a more varied rhythm; they can intensify the pictoriality of films. They can enforce a sense of disjunction and an ironic juxtaposition; they can play on and manipulate our spatial consciousness while opening up new and interesting epistemological pathways to the meaning of a film. Landscapes often externalize the inner dramas of characters and act as visual analogies for complex psychologies of characters. These are but some of the ways in which landscapes function in cinema to forward the intentionalities of the director. Landscapes, therefore, constitute a vital segment of the representational strategies deployed by filmmakers to communicate their experiences with the maximum effect.⁸

The Symbolism of *Bornodi Bhotiai*

The two films *Bornodi Bhotiai* and *Ekhon Nedekha Nodir Xipare* chosen for the present study are river films. These two films are not entirely on the river Brahmaputra but their locale is Majuli, the river island where the films are set. The film *Bornodi Bhotiai: In Love, by the river* is directed by Anupam Kaushik Borah. Borah is an alumnus of National School of Drama and the founder of *Bhawariya* which is a Majuli based theatre group. This film is Borah's latest venture in Assamese cinema as a director. Majuli is the centre of action in the film. In his interview published in *The Indian Express* in 2018, he mentioned about the island of Majuli that, for outsiders, the island is this romanticised,

exotic place, with two narratives that oscillate between the tragedy of the floods and the celebration of its rich culture.... But through my film, I wanted to say that there is more to Majuli than Xattras (or the monastic orders that dot the island), the rains and the floods. That Majulians are as complicated as other, regular folk.⁹ Borah's statement is the testimony that he wants to go beyond the surface level and popular depiction of the river and the river island; his deeper endeavour is to explore the other side of the life in the river island. The film can be said to be a reflection and an external/ised extension of Borah's creative psyche as a director as he mentions that, 'before making *Bornodi*, I had ideas for about 10 films — and while they varied from a thriller to a love story — the common element in all of them was Majuli. It's the only place in the world I have imagined things'.¹⁰ In saying so, Borah becomes a representative of all the creative narrators who are influenced by the river's presence in their vicinity and narrate about the river. This also shows the centrality of the river Brahmaputra in the creative and recreative projects of various narrators in Assam that starts from the folklores and continues with the modern medium like films.

The film follows the lives of four youths pursuing not just the same dream, but also the same woman, and Majuli is the place and context. Like the four youth, hundreds in Majuli harbour similar aspirations and dreams — be personal or professional; they briefly flirt with the idea of stepping out into the real world, yet there is something that holds them back to the only place in the world they have known as home, that is Majuli. There is a lack of motivation that is inherent among many young people owing to the circumstances that they have been brought up with and accustomed to. One of the interesting facts about Majuli is that, many things depend on uncontrollable external factors. The ferries, something that excites an outsider, can often be just a burden for a resident of the river-island. They determine schedules for the entire day. Sometimes services are shut due to flood etc. and life comes to a standstill. By displaying the discreet metaphors of the people in Majuli, who have accepted floods and erosion as a part of their existence, the film brings us to the discourse of ecological imbalance and the bigger question of development, and threat by the erosion in the river island.¹¹

At its core, *Bornodi Bhotiai* has the story of the four young friends and their aspirations. After disappointing stints in the big cities, the young men return to the island and together open a goat-rearing farm. But a business interest is not all they have in common – the four of them are also in love with the same woman, whom they claim is the reason for their return to Majuli. 'She (Moukan) can get anyone back to Majuli', one of them dreamily says to another in the

film. The incorporation of a goat (animal husbandry business) in the narrative, is both peripheral and central, and has the symbolic significance of a recurrent motif. The plot follows the character Moukan, who earns a terrifying reputation in the village after a man died after she utters that he should be dead because of a fatal sneeze. Despite a number of men who are in love with her, she marries an animal welfare officer from across the river (who was honouring an old promise to his mother that he would marry a woman from Majuli). After a series of events, including a plan to maximise on a government subsidy for goat-rearing, a group of young boys prepare a plan to do insurance for the goats and earn money through it by asking suggestion from their LIC agent friend named *Luit* who also silently keep an interest about Moukon in his heart. As ill-fate would have it, Moukon's husband too passes away due to a fatal sneeze and subsequently one of Moukan's former lovers leave Majuli to become a famous music star, and the rest too follow their fate in search of livelihood.

Majuli cannot be separated from the river Brahmaputra. Brahmaputra is its creator, destroyer, and its destiny. In the visual narrative of the Brahmaputra, life unfolds with the flowing river that is very much a part of human existence in miseries and conflicts. The film *Bornodi Bhotiai* opens with a pleasant aerial shot of the river Brahmaputra with a ship ferrying that takes us to the river island Majuli. The breath-taking view reverberates through our minds that the story of the river Brahmaputra is intertwined with human condition unraveling different elements such as love, suffering, legends, belief systems, development or lack of it.

The moving shot towards the horizon showing the wide-spread river can be understood as a reflection of how the Brahmaputra connects the temporal and the eternal in its physical and symbolic depiction while the floating ferry shows the importance of the river in everyday life of the people of Majuli. Through the two mid shots, the film maker intensifies the flood fury caused by the river. These background shots establish an introduction of the character Luit who plays the role of an insurance agent. His role is ironically projected since the physical transformation of Majuli never guarantees any durability of life and things. As *Luit* is also another name for the river Brahmaputra, so, by incorporating a character with the same name, a significant parallel is drawn that whatever may come, the great river Luit would take care of Majuli. But it turns out that the insurer himself is unable to guarantee any security as his own future is in peril on many accounts.¹²

The character Luit also acquires an intense headache with running nose since he comes to know that the sly government animal husbandry officer,

Kushal Kakoti dies of one such attack of sneeze after an evening of revelry with the four local youths. Kushal Kakoti is the husband of the character Moukon who is loved by all the youths of the village. Post-marriage, when Moukon's husband passes away, her identity of being a woman of ill omen is reinforced. She is considered as a 'witch' in the local community's view. Finding no way out, Luit seeks all possible medical help and even takes help from traditional medicine men in the nearby towns. The physical predicament of the place, which is exacerbated by the perennially expanding Brahmaputra River, is percolated to the physiologies of the lead characters as they also get infected by an irresistible strange drive to sneeze along with intense headache which can be even fatal. Apparently plausible situations, thus, go the absurd way and make for a viewing experience in the tone of black humour in the movie.¹³

The image displayed above is a long shot of Luit and Brahmaputra Baba having a conversation about his prolonged cold of six months now while sitting on the embankment of the mighty river. Brahmaputra Baba is a traditional healer who heals certain diseases of the local people. Keeping the big river in their conversation, Brahmaputra Baba mentions about the sadness of the soul and questions Luit, 'Does a nose flow for six months'? He asks Luit to discover the deep sadness within him rather than taking medical help from physicians. The conversation ends with a question raised by Brahmaputra Baba asking Luit about his suppressed desire. The connection with naming is interesting here too. As the Brahmaputra is the care-giver to the river-island, Brahmaputra Baba too tries to heal the disease of the people. However, he too has limitations and fails to provide any remedy to Luit, just like Luit as an insurance agent is of not any help to the characters in the film. The trope of running nose is very significant. Luit connects with Moukon since their childhood and Moukon used to tease Luit as '*Xegunu Noka*' (in Assamese, meaning one who has a 'running nose'). This idiom is mostly used in the colloquial tongue of few communities in Majuli. In fact, as the character Luit symbolises a river here, his running nose symbolizes the 'yearly flood' of the river (in monsoon season). The only cure is the character Moukon for his runny nose who provides a special herb for the cure just like the only space available for the characters is the river-island surrounded by the ever-troubling mighty river.

Anupam Kaushik Baruah's *Bornodi Bhotiai* surpasses as a work of art as it successfully creates a postmodern narrative with magic realist elements while remaining anchored in the soil and water of a place it speaks about. In expressing its theme, the film juxtaposes techniques of the epic theatre (for example here the same person playing a doctor, a quack, a healer who treats

Luit's incessant sneezing disorder/cold) and that of avant-garde documentary filmmaking (viz. in the mid close-up shots, people of Majuli are shown looking at the audience where they have no connection with the basic plot). Anupam uses the avant-garde filmmaking style in the sense that he was trying to fuse the popular with the experimental, socio realism with the subjective (documentary with melodrama). He was able to extend, distort and subvert the dominant discourses. His shift from diegetic continuity to discontinuity, disruption of conventional transitional shots, disorientating shots through unmatched shots or a simultaneous representation of a multiplicity of perspectives make the filmmaking more interesting. Moreover, the ariel shots of Majuli with the river Brahmaputra at the centre catches the attention as nature and stories start evolving out of the relationship with the big river.

The Allegory of Death and Silencing in *Ekhon Nedekha Nodir Xipare*:

Ekhon Nedekha Nodir Xipare (2012) that translates as *On the other Bank of the Unseen River* was directed by Bidyut Kotoky. Kotoky has around 100 short films to his credit. His first feature film as a writer and a director is *Ekhon Nedekha Nadir Xipare*, which was released in Hindi with the title in English *As the River Flows*, is a socio-political thriller that narrates the story of a social activist Sanjoy Ghose. Ghose was reportedly killed in Majuli by the local militant group in 1997. The film narrates the politics of development in an underdeveloped riverine area of Assam and shows the anger and frustration among the unemployed youth. This film is produced by National Film Development Corporation (NFDC). The film won the best script and the best actor (Sanjay Suri) award in the 2013 at Washington DC South-Asian Film Festival winning critical acclaim. Mr. Kotoky also won the Best Script Award for the period 2010-2012 in the Assam State Film Festival for the same film.

The film *Ekhon Nedekha Nodir Xipare* begins with a panoramic shot followed by a pan and a tracking shot respectively of the river Brahmaputra picturing the landscape. In a panoramic shot the camera is made to pivot horizontally left or right (about its vertical axis) while filming. Pans are always described in terms of 'panning left' or 'panning right'. Panning is often used to follow an action such as a character moving from one spot to another. Panning shots are also used to establish locations, slowly revealing information about a place. Through this pan shot, the narrator tries to establish the vastness of the river Brahmaputra and how people of Majuli are dependent on the mighty river for their daily transactions.

The track shots with the river Brahmaputra and a ferry over it bring the lead actor Sanjay Suri (character of Abhijit in the film), who looks at a dead

body and enquires about the corpse to a tea seller. On enquiry, he gets to know that it was a local leader who died last night in the police encounter and he was taken in the ferry to Jorhat (the nearest town) for postmortem. The narrator brings back this sequence at the end of the film where the audience is made to comprehend the irony of death. The film picks up the narrative from this point and goes through a quick transition from the city of Mumbai to Majuli where Abhijit, a journalist by profession and a friend of Sridhar Ranjan, comes in search of the story of sudden disappearance of Sridhar. Sridhar was a social activist who disappeared from Majuli without any information. The grief of his disappearance is portrayed with many mid-close-up shots of Abhijit with the river as the big river is seen as someone whom you can speak to during the time of pain or grief.

The book *Sanjoy's Assam* is shown in the film that clearly underlines that the film is inspired by the disappearance of Sanjoy Ghose in 1997 from Majuli. The film is also about the apathy of news media towards the Northeastern region. It subtly touches on the aspects of the negligence of the island over the years and the dormant anger in every youth towards the negligence by the state. It also reveals the ideological battle of the underground outfits at one point of time, but over a period of time it has become another way of making money. The film has its unique narrative structure in juxtaposing the scene of offering a cup of Assam tea when the characters are discussing the exploitation of resources including tea and oil that do not get their actual value in the market. The narration draws upon the unfortunate condition of unemployment in the region and the state citing issues of harassment by police and students' agitation in the state during the 1980's when a large number of students had to leave their prospective careers and suffer. And probably for this reason, the mighty river has gone silent as described in the poem by Bhupen Hazarika in the film. The river is pictured in every important conversation between the characters at many different points of time. Most often, we tend to think of landscape in films as a provider of the requisite background for the unfolding of the narrative and as a giver of greater visual density and intensity. However, landscapes in cinema perform numerous other functions that are subtler and more complex that invest the filmic experience with greater meaning and significance as we witness in *Ekhon Nedekha Nodir Xipare*.

The story of the film is mostly guided through by the character of Abhijit who comes to Majuli to search of his friend where he meets Sudakshina. Sudakshina is a bilingual local girl who knows how to converse in English and Hindi and who happens to be a sister of a militant. Sudakshina was also the

local guide of Sridhar Ranjan. The character of the grandfather of Sudakshina gives an overview of the state and its socio-political situation to Abhijit. The grandfather is a freedom fighter who refused to take the pension offered by the government and lives with his ideology. Investigating the story of disappearance of his friend Sridhar, Abhijit also falls into trouble and gets a threat from the militant groups to leave Majuli as soon as possible. By arranging a meeting with the brother of Sudakshina, through a surrendered militant, Abhijit could not get into the actual reason behind the disappearance of Sridhar but he got enough clues that people lost their lives due to insurgency who remain mostly untraceable. The film displays data stating that there are around 30,000 people who died in extremist violence that makes hardly any difference to one more death. The river stands as witness to these events surrendered to silence as demonstrated in the above shot. In the film narrative, the river island Majuli becomes a central trope that underlines the centrality of the river Brahmaputra in the life of the characters as well as in the film itself.

Ekhon Nedekha Nodir Xipare begins with a poem composed by the director himself and recited by the noted bard of Assam — Bhupen Hazarika. It is perhaps the last poem recitation by Hazarika recorded in February 2010. The poem represents the voice of the river Brahmaputra through the recitation of the music maestro. Hazarika is known for his passion for the mighty river and is called the ‘Bard of Brahmaputra’. The director’s choice of Bhupen Hazarika’s rendition to begin the film is significant as Hazarika has composed a number of songs on the river and his river-songs are deeply concerned with humanitarian cause. Bhupen Hazarika and the river Brahmaputra are inseparable elements. He has penned down numerous songs about the river, sometimes overflowing with reverence for it and sometimes expressing his anger for its silence. It is not just the Brahmaputra but also its tributaries that have been mentioned in his numerous songs. The recitation goes as, ‘*I know-long ago, The River used to speak, But when he realized every drop of pain, Flows above the horizon of words, He surrendered to silence, People came to his bosom, creating to destroy, And named it civilization, People came to his bosom, Looking for the meaning in those destruction, And called it History, More the time flows, More the time remains still, More the things change, More the things remain the same, The drop of pain mounting on the bank, Will it overflow, as the River flows*’.

The visual narrative of both the films converges on a point related to the river Brahmaputra. In *Bornodi Bhotiai* four young men with dismal professional life return to Majuli — a place where floods ravage the island every monsoon. The social reality of this aspect is that there is an inherent attitude among many

young people caused by the circumstances that they have been brought up in. Most of the situations in Majuli are beyond human control. Any outsider, who gets excited by the exotic concept of going to the place through a ferry, can often be a burden for a resident of the particular place who depends for everything on the river. The films bring in the perennial constraints that people live with in the river-island. In the film *Ekhon Nedekha Nodir Xipare*, when the character Abhijit wishes to travel back from Majuli, Sudakshina asks him, 'How will you go? There is no ferry available now'. Abhijit who is mostly exposed to the 24-hour travelling format in a metro city, in return asks, 'can't I book a private boat'? in can be mentioned that even the private boats in Majuli need to be booked at least a day before. Transportation is a perennial problem for the people of Majuli. The weather, ferries and the river determine the schedule for the day. And if services of the ferry are shut, life comes to a standstill. The modern drive to change things around has not reached the residents of Majuli yet.

The character Luit of *Bornodi Bhotiai* alludes to the state's tackling of the frequent deluges, as metaphorically being used in the film with a 'killer sneeze', which can also become fatal if not treated on time. Similarly, annual natural disasters such as floods are never given much attention to be treated by the people. Even in *Ekhon Nedekha Nodir Xipare*, the disappeared character Sridhar Ranjan comes to Majuli despite the warnings from his friends and despite knowing that the river-island is the extremists' hotbed and the contractors' lobby is not tackling the erosion; this focuses the politics of development in the state. The use of the term 'untimely death' in this movie also provides an idea about the unpredictability of the situation in the state. Interestingly, the character of Luit as an insurance agent in *Bornodi Bhotiai*, narrates the irony of getting an insurance in a place where nothing is insured. Moreover, as pointed out in *Ekhon Nedekha Nodir Xipare*, most of the surrendered militants have become insurance agents in Majuli and are doing well with their business. Another aspect in *Bornodi Bhotiai* is the issues of grassroot corruption displayed in a sarcastic way when the four young men decide to fake the death of their goats to claim the insurance amount in a government sponsored scheme of loan for animal husbandry.

The river Brahmaputra is a silent character represented through the depiction of Majuli and its people. The landmass of Majuli recorded 1256 sq kms in 1951 and now counts only 515 sq kms.¹⁴ The erosion of Majuli projects the reality of the 'disconnect' in both the physical and emotional space. This sort of 'disconnect' also symbolizes the thoughts of young men who dream of

myriad things, but they don't have the strategy or means to achieve any of their plans. In the same manner, Majuli is also disconnected from the mainland. This physical 'disconnectedness' of Majuli with the rest of the world is in its dependency on the river for its existence and also dependency on the ferry in the everyday life of people living there.

Conclusion

The framing of a cinematic landscape involves a complex combination of certain chosen features that include visual, aural, activities of people, emotional conflicts, and ideological contractions. The variety of interrelations between these features is infinite, and dependent not only on individual creativity or individual interpretation, but also on group or cultural comprehension. Framing the cinematic landscape is both formal and conceptual and our reading of cinematic landscapes asks us to be complicit with both the filmmakers as well as our fellow film viewers.¹⁵ Some filmmakers' work possesses such vitality in projecting landscapes that their creations have a hypnotic effect of transporting the viewers beyond the boundaries of cinematic framing.

Anupam Kaushik Borah's *Bornodi Bhotiai: In Love, By the River* presents a vision that creates a speculative freedom for the viewer. The inclusion of a number of sub-plots within the framework gives the film the shape of a modern folklore of rural Assam. The film also brings in the abstract and satirical presentation of Majuli's sad existence and pain through its characters and their aspirations. Life moves on at its own pace on the island, and with the changing seasons, it brings in flood and many other disasters. Films such as *Ekhon Nedekha Nodir Xipare* and its portrayal of the issues of insurgency and the politics of development is initiated through dialogues such as 'When gun speaks, others get silenced'. Bhupen Hazarika's song at the beginning of the film has also described this 'silence' that underlines a collective pain and keeps on reoccurring with the passage of time.

Through the lens of these two Assamese films, one can explore the human bonding that exists with the river across social issues being related to livelihood, employment, devastation by flood, disease, erosion, lack of medical facilities, insurgency, witch hunt, and issues pertaining to the lives of ordinary women. A particular scene in *Ekhon Nedekha Nodir Xipare*, the character of Bhumidhar Bora, an assistant in the guest house where Abhijit stays is remarkable for, he says, 'We can manage and tackle flood, but erosion is a problem'. He added that every child here knows how to swim and to row a boat. Keeping in mind the inseparable relation of Nature with the everydayness of the people residing in the riverine areas of Assam, this portrays the unpredictability of the

Brahmaputra that flows past their doorsteps, taking houses and land at will. Yet people continue to stay on, for their ties to the land are primeval. They have a relationship with the river and with the land. People seem to have lost most of what they had, but the river also provides them the fish and the firewood. The artisan communities residing in the riverine area also depend on the river for the sale of the pots and boats. As the economy of Assam is largely dependent on natural resources, what happens with agriculture and forests has direct effects on the livelihood of its people. Compounding the issue of the unpredictable Brahmaputra, are the effects of climate change. 'Climate change will result in more frequent and severe floods, which will increase the costs of reconstruction and maintenance of state infrastructure, including roads, irrigation, water, and sanitation,' says a report on climate change published by the Assam government.¹⁶ According to the study, by 2050, the average annual runoff of the river Brahmaputra will decline by 14 per cent. However, there is a risk of glaciers melting leading to flash floods.¹⁷

There is portrayal of culture, ethnicity, notion of unpredictability, the concept of disconnect, xenophobia, and the larger issues related to socio-political dimension of the state in the films but the single thing that connects the threads of every relationship in both films is the existence of the physical 'river'. A careful and systematic description of the relationship of ordinary people with the river and its larger articulation in Assamese Cinema through various case studies, as in the case of *Bornodi Bhortai* and *Ekhon Nedekha Nodir Xipare* would strengthen our understanding of everyday transaction of humans with the environment that creates a strong sense of identity and belonging.



Figure -1:Establishing shot of the River Brahmaputra with a ferry in *Bornodi Bhortai*.



Figure-2 : Brahamaputra Baba and Luit having a conversation in *Bornodi Bhortai*.



Figure -3: Aerial shot of the Big River in *Bornodi Bhotiai*.



Figure-4 : Establishing shot of the river Brahmaputra in *Bornodi Bhotiai*



Figure -5: Introducing the character Ahhijit through the pan shot along the river in *Ekhon Nedekha Nodir Xipare*.



Figure-6 : Mid long shot of the character Ahhijit grieving over the disappearance of his friend along the river in *Ekhon Nedekha Nodir Xipare*.



Figure-7: A mid long shot in the dark evening when Ahhijit was kidnapped by the extremist Group in *Ekhon Nedekha Nodir Xipare*.

Notes and References

- ¹P. Baruah, November 04 'Ripples in the Brahmaputra' in *The Hindu*, November, 04,2016,<https://www.thehindu.com/features/friday-review/Ripples-in-the-Brahmaputra/article16091786.ece>, accessed on 05/04/2022.
- ²M.Barpujari, 'A Regional Perspective: Politics of Cinema and Images of Water' in *Filmbuff*, Volume 3, May, 2013/ISSN: 2582-2497. <http://www.filmbuff.co.in/manoj-barpujari/a-regional-perspective-politics-of-cinema-and-images-of-water/>, accessed on 05/04/2022.
- ³K.A. Gomes, 'Celebrating Assamese life & culture with the biggest river festival in India' in *The Sunday Guardian*, April 01, 2017.<https://www.sundayguardianlive.com/culture/8888-celebrating-assamese-life-culture-biggest-river-festival-india>, accessed on 02/03/2022.
- ⁴'The School Water Portal'. *The Story of the River Brahmaputra*, July 24, 2012. Retrieved from <http://www.teachersofindia.org/en/article/story-river-brahmaputra>, accessed on 08/06/2022.
- ⁵G Harper, G & J. R.Rayner(eds.), *Cinema and Landscape*, UK, Intellect Books, 2010.
- ⁶*ibid.*
- ⁷*ibid.*
- ⁸*ibid.*
- ⁹T. Agarwala, 'My idea was to... look at Majuli from within', says director Anupam Kaushik Borah.. *The Indian Express*, November 13,b, 2018. <https://indianexpress.com/article/lifestyle/my-idea-was-to-look-at-majuli-from-within-says-director-anupam-kaushik-borah/>, accessed on 07/05/2022.
- ¹⁰*ibid.*
- ¹¹T.Agarwala, 'In Assamese film Bornodi Bhotiai, find a Majuli that no one knows of.' *The Indian Express*, November 13,a,2018. <https://indianexpress.com/article/north-east-india/assam/assamese-film-borndodi-Bhotiai-tells-the-tale-of-a-majuli-that-no-one-has-heard-of-5439597/>, accessed on 07/05/2022.
- ¹²A.Rajkumar, 'Bornodi Bhotiai: A boisterous love letter to Majuli', *Northeast Now*, October 15, 2019.
- ¹³*ibid.*
- ¹⁴'Down to Earth:Disappearing Majuli, India's first river island district', *Down to Earth*, June 28, 2016. <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/environment/disappearing-majuli-india-s-first-river-island-district-54610>, accessed on 09/06/2022.
- ¹⁵GHarper, G & J. R.Rayner, (eds.), *Cinema and Landscape*, UK, Intellect Books, p.20, 2010.
- ¹⁶Department of Environment, Government of Assam, India. (September 2015), Assam State Action Plan On Climate Change,2015,2020. <http://www.indiaenvironmentportal.org.in/files/file/Final%20draft%20ASAPCC%20document.pdf>.
- ¹⁷D.Purkayastha, 'Understanding the Brahmaputra and the annual flooding in Assam' in *The Hindu*, November 27, 2017. <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/in-the-hands-of-the-brahmaputra-understanding-the-annual-flooding-in-assam/article20948196.ece>, accessed on 07/09/2022.

From the Whites to the Browns: The *Adivasi* Tea-labourers in the Historical Context of Assam

Dr. Prashanta Puzari

Assistant Professor

Department of English

Assam Women's University, Jorhat, Assam

Email:jorhatprashanta@gmail.com

Abstract

History is often considered as the socio-political narrative constructed by the colonisers for the colonised, the rulers for the ruled and the masters for their slaves, the bourgeoisie for the proletariats, the mainstream for the marginalized. If we study the Adivasis in Indian national perspective, we find mixed responses towards creating historical and socio-cultural spaces for these aboriginals of India. The colonial discourses remained at the very core of constructing narratives around the lives of these Adivasis even after Independence. The research paper examines the contexts behind construction of the terminology called Adivasi as well as the chapter of historical migration and assimilation of the Adivasis, especially the Adivasi tea-labourers in the socio-historical perspective of the state in the colonial as well as post-colonial era. It furthers to establish the fact that the history of Adivasi Tea-labourers in Assam is associated with their struggle and sufferings in the tea-gardens of Assam which is a part of their identity conflict in contemporary times as well.

Keywords: Adivasi, Colonial discourses, migration, assimilation, identity conflict.

The terminological explanation of *Adivasi* designates the meaning communicated by means of *Adi* meaning primitive and *vasi* meaning descendants' and hence typifying the original descendents of the nation. The term *Adivasi* connotes several implications in relation to the larger socio-political and historical existence of the tribes in India. Collectively it refers to the people of India who are of indigenous origin in nature. It has been found that the colonial agencies running for the government frequently used the term *Adivasi* as alternative of Tribe. David Hardiman analyses the term in Indian colonial context and considers its origin as a means of resistance against the Britishers. He defines the *Adivasis*

as 'groups who have shared a common fate in the past century and from this have evolved a collective identity of being *Adivasi*'.¹

In the context of Assam, the term *Adivasi* is used to refer to those aboriginal people who were brought to Assam to work as labourers in the tea-gardens during nineteenth century. The central government identified the community comprising many tribes across the country as 'Other Backward Class' and in Assam they have been recognized as Tea-garden tribes, Ex-tea garden tribes, Tea-garden labourers, etc.² Robert Kerketta refers to those tribes migrated from Chotanagpur, Bihar, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and settled here permanently after working for long in the tea gardens as *Adivasis* in the context of Assam.³ To identify all the tea- labourers and the ex-tea labourers in Assam as *Adivasi* adheres to certain political and economic pressures. Under the major influence of *Adivasi* organisations like *Adivasi* Council of Assam (1968), *Adivasi* Social, Educational and Cultural Association (ASECA) and *Adivasi* People' Party of Assam etc., the term *Adivasi* has found to be in the trend for its accommodating nature.

The history of the *Adivasi* tea-labourers is associated largely with their migration to the state in nineteenth century. Their present state of survival is to be analysed not in isolation from their 19th century sufferings and nuances of assimilation with a different society and culture in a comparatively strange territory. Literature about these people mostly abounds in images of that era which are not easily forgettable from the imaginative constructs in the minds of these people as well. It refers to the period when with the continuous failure and resulted dissatisfaction amongst the Tea planters regarding the then working Kachari labourers and their increasing level of resistance and protest up to their tendencies of demand for maximum wages, the Tea-Industries decided to recruit labourers from states outside Assam. The demand was supplemented by the Tea Company's motif of expanding the tea territory in Assam. It forced the Company to consider procuring labour from the northern and eastern districts of Bengal- Santhal Parganas, Chotanagpur and Ranchi.⁴ As a consequence, large number of migrants from the tribal, aboriginal/semi-aboriginal and lower-caste communities of the agrarian districts of India arrived in abundant numbers in the soil of Assam. But the harshness of their travel experience, physical coercion, malnutrition, confinement in prison like tea estates for long and high rate of mortality created a serious state of chaos in the Company. Asley Eden, Secretary, Government of Bengal informed the Government of India regarding the 'serious and growing evil' of desertion with other symptoms of being careless indifference to the master followed by 'sullen idleness and apathy and constant

attempts to abscond the employer.⁵ Acts were implemented to prevent deserting of labourers which was later considered a criminal offence under the Labour Laws with provisions of punishment under section 492 of the Indian Penal Code. Even the newly established Act VI of 1865 empowered the Planters to arrest the absconding labourers without warrants. The local Tribals of Assam helped in the entire process by catching the labourers on run but many times killed them in brutally in the jungles. The *Adivasis* soon realized that they landed upon a world of confinement, supervision and repression which they were not used to.⁶

It is to be noted that apart from the Europeans, the Indian staff were also responsible for the exploitation of the Adivasi tea-labourers in the plantations. The European planters (Managers and Assistant Managers) were accompanied by other Indian Babus in hierarchical order including the garden *Babus* or, Clerks, *Zamadars*, *Chowkidars*, *Muhurirs* and *Kaya* or the Marwari Shopkeepers. Amongst the serious disturbances in the tea territory, the extortion of money by the Babus, short weight and poor quality of foods in the *Kaya* shops, extraction of bribes by the garden doctors and mostly the inadequacy of wages and the high prices of consumable commodities led to serious riots in the Emperor's garden. As reported in the *London Times*, serious outbreaks of riots took place in Doom Dooma, Pabhojan and Deodham Tea gardens where five Europeans were attacked, the bungalow of Deodam manager was destroyed, the shops of Marwari dealers were looted.⁷ Such kind of violence revealed the identity crisis of the Adivasi tea-garden labourers in Assam as penetrated by gross economic and socio-political subordination.

In this context it is also to be noted that the labourers' protest was considered a 'crime' by the planters and in most cases the labourers suffered more than the planters. They were the utmost victims of the entire conditions in all the cases. For example, in the Hukanpukhuri tea garden, the Assistant Manager Hennessy was found involved in striking a labourer for objection against inadequate wages.⁸ It was followed by a large assemblage in front of the bungalow of the Manager in protest and the bungalow was attacked but it did cause tremendous harm to the labourers themselves as fourteen labourers were sentenced to imprisonment up to five years whereas the Europeans and the Indian staff escaped freely from the situation. In most cases of riot caused mostly by sexual harassment, ill-treatment of labourers, physical assault for disobeying orders, casualties in work and inadequate supply of wages demanded etc. the labourers were sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for years which implied negotiation at the judicial level in the emperor's favour. In the later

years, exodus was used as a form of protest. It was a kind of advancement over the desertion technique and represented a collective unwillingness of the labourers to work and follow the rhythm of the plantation. But interestingly, it entailed indefinite sufferings for them failing to draw attention from the authorities. The Tongagaon Tea Estate' incident on 11th July, 1939 set an example for this. The Bombay labourers left the estate and met the Deputy Commissioner for repatriation. With a group of 54 labourers they started a long march to Gauhati where women and children in large numbers participated continuously reduced the attempts of the authorities to make them return to the gardens mere failures. Notwithstanding the fact remained that the authorities were less concerned about the sufferings of the aggrieved and frustrated teagarden labourers at that time.⁹

The Great Depression of 1930 was another major socio-economic attack upon the community of *Adivasi* tea-labourers in Assam. The decline in tea export resulted in great chaos in the tea management and as a consequence, heavy wage cuts of the labourers were observed. More than twenty strikes were observed in the Assam valley tea gardens. In the year 1939, the Labour unions emerged in numbers viz., Upper Assam Tea Co. Labour Union, Rajmai Tea Co. Labour Union, Greenwood Tea Co. Labour Union, Maku Tea Co. Labour Union were formed. In the year 1943, the labour struggles got a provincial form of organization in the form of APTUC (Assam Provincial Trade Union Congress). The communist leaders helped in strengthening the demands of APTUC. On 16th September, 1946, the world witnessed one of the most violent agitations in Assam when Warner, the manager of Suntok Tea-estate stabbed Bankuru Chaura, one amongst the 500-600 labourers in the assemblage and fled and his assistant manager Devendra Baruah, an Assamese fired upon many agitators.¹⁰ The incident united workers in other institutions and tea garden labourers for the first time in the history. But later on the government –sponsored Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC) turned to be hostile towards the AITUC and politicized the labour movements in Assam. At this point it is to be noted that beyond the institutionalized integrities of the labour organizations, a few individuals from the community took initiatives to raise voices for the people. P.M. Sarwan was one of them who founded the Assam Tea Labourers Association in 1943 at Jorhat and demanded education for the labourers for the first time. But the struggles of the labourers failed to produce a successive solution under till the end of the colonial rule for the dominating strategy of the planters to immobilize the migrant labourers. The end of colonial resistance and the kind of freedom the *Adivasi* tea-garden labourers obtained afterwards can be summarized with a note by social activist and thinker Omeo Kumar Das as referred to in Behal's

work, 'The freedom of movement of tea garden labourers is limited in a manner unheard of in any other in the industry...The impression had been created in the minds of the labourers that they have no right to go out of the gardens of their own will. The constant restraint on their right of free movement has reduced them to a state of slavery'.¹¹

This revealed the state of slavery and subjection of the labourers in the tea-estates of Assam in the colonial era which is still observable in the 21st century Assam. The alienated existence of the labourers far away from the mainstream world make them live in ignorance and sheer illiteracy. Their state of existence could easily be compared to that of the Negroes under the Atlantic Slave Trade Act.

Post-Colonial Era of Transition from the Whites to the Browns

After the Independence, the tea gardens have witnessed another era of exploitation and servitude in newer forms. The Assamese Middle-Class became the "Brown Sahibs" and acted as the sole operators of the tea gardens although the operational agencies existed the same. Jayeeta Sarma remarks, 'for many members of the Assamese middle classes, control of the Assam garden seemed to have moved almost seamlessly from a white Planter Raj to its brown counterparts from mainland India. In many cases the same managing agency houses still operated: only their managerial personnel had changed'.¹²

It shows that with the departure of the Britishers, the colonial forces did not go and as a consequence, it still prevails in the industry where the Adivasi tea-labourers work. Homen Borgohain writes about the economic and global forces of domination in the tea industry of Assam in his book *Axomor Chah Udyugar Akothito Kahini* (The Untold Stories of the Tea Industry in Assam) that the tea industry crystallized into new global forces of capitalism and imperialism and argues that after the departure of the European colonizers from Assam, the neo-colonial capitalistic Indian industrialists are considered to be responsible for the gross exploitative atmosphere in the Tea-Empire. He quotes Dr. Amalendu Guha thus, 'The imperialist domination over Assam's economy hardly slackened even after independence. Less than fifteen managing agency houses through their control of some two hundred joint-stock sterling and rupee companies and all of them with head offices outside the province, dominated the economy with control over one and a half million acres of land-only a third thereof was under tea plants- and half a million work-force, the planters' wielded financial power before which the provincial Government's own budgetary resources paled into insignificance'.¹³

Apart from such forces of economy the state has also witnessed a growing rise in the struggle for identity determination by the Adivasi tea-labourers in the state. To overcome the factors of marginalization, the communities started fighting on their own. As included in the memorandum sent to the then Prime Minister of India for inclusion of the tea tribes as Scheduled tribes by Assam Tea Tribes Students' Association (ATTSA) on 26th Dec., 1994, the status of education is considered as one important factor of marginalization of these people. The literacy is stated as 0.01% amongst the workers where in case of women it stands below this percentage. Deplorable economic conditions and the lack of educational environments and incentives are identified in the report as causes of the illiteracy amongst the people.¹⁴ Besides, the lack of representation of these people in government services, the state of landlessness, unemployment outside the tea-estates etc. trigger off the causes of suffering amongst the people. In a cross-sectional study on tea-garden population of Assam, G.K. Medhi and others explain the health status of the people. Problems such as underweight among children, presence of anaemia, worm infection, tuberculosis, filariasis, non-communicable diseases such as hypertension, stroke etc. are indicative of the existence of the poor hygienic environment, lack of health awareness, and the deplorable socio-economic condition of the *Adivasi* people working in the tea-gardens of the state.¹⁵

The socio-economic conditions of the *Adivasi* people are determined by their long sustained struggle for their rights to a greater extent. The proposal for the inclusion in the ST list of the state is such one of the demands asserting the rights of the *Adivasis*. But such proposals only meet quick dismissals as consequences of politicisation of the same. The long continued struggle for recognition seems of no meaning for the state's 'opportunist Assamese sycophants' as in the words of. Dr. Hiren Gohain, 'The All Assam *Adivasi* Students' Association along with Assam Tea Tribe Students' Association (strong in Sibsagar, Dibrugarh and Laximpur districts of upper Assam) have been agitating for years demanding recognition of tea tribals and *adivasis* as scheduled tribes. In West Bengal they already enjoy that status. The state Congress leaders periodically promise to gift them the status of st, but apparently fail to muster political will to fulfil that demand. They are accused of sending ambiguous and half-hearted proposals to the centre'.¹⁶

The protest of nearly 3000 *Adivasi* people in Dispur on 24th December, 2007 as an assertion of their demand for ST status meets an unexpected end with the interference of certain unruly elements which turns the non-violent act to a violent chapter in the history of Assam. It has left an imprint on the forefront

as a sign of consciousness arisen on their part towards the long betrayal. The *adivasis* have always been neglected by the state vested with a 'burning sense of betrayal and deception by the privileged and powerful'.¹⁷

The denunciation of such rights on the part of the people is taken as a sign of 'Assamese chauvinism'. It reflects the fact that the existence of these people matters in so far as they contribute to the formation of the larger Assamese identity whereas their rights remain unfulfilled. S. Bhattacharyya elucidates such a condition of the *Adivasi* tea-tribes people thus:

They reveal the nature of chauvinism in its ugliest aspect. The 'coolie bongal' or 'coolie foreigner' of long Assamese usage- are Assamese alone when it comes to Census enumeration ... but when it comes to their legitimate rights, don't give them anything. Instead take away even what the British imperialists were forced to concede.¹⁸

The ST status is the right of the *Adivasis* which is being taken away from them after the independence in the political interest. They enjoyed constitutional safeguards earlier but they were de-scheduled after 1950s and hence became outsiders in the state discourse. (Borah 74) On the contrary, they are designated as OBC (Other Backward Classes). Despite the ratio of population, they are deprived of their rights for the larger interest of the state identity formation process. Social thinker and writer Udayan Mishra analyzes the question of granting ST status to the *Adivasi* communities in Assam as a quite problematic issue as it is concerned about the political representation of the larger Assamese identity, 'The *Adivasis* are classified as other backward classes (OBC) in the central list which refers to them as 'tea garden labourers and tea garden tribes and ex-tea garden labour and ex-tea garden tribes' and they are divided into 96 ethnic groups. The total ST population of the state in the last census was 3.3 million and if one were to add some 2.5 to 3 million tea garden and ex tea garden labour, then the latter would come to constitute around 50 percent of the total st population, thereby making it the largest single group. This would bring about a major change in the existing power equations of the state and is bound to be resisted by those communities which are now listed as STs. At present out of the 126 assembly seats, 22 are reserved for STs and scheduled castes; in about a dozen seats *Adivasi* candidates win, while in about 36 constituencies minority voter' are the deciding factor. But if the *Adivasis* secure scheduled status, then there is the possibility that an additional 26 constituencies will become reserved'.¹⁹

On the contrary, Mishra necessitates the solution to the socio-economic conditions of the *Adivasi* population which is characterised by the deplorable health and sanitation condition, high rate of malnutrition, unemployment, high rate of female mortality, errant mismanagement etc. in the tea-gardens and these issues are always left undermined by the political leaders, which establishes this group of people marginalized to a great extent.²⁰ Apart from these issues mentioned here, the factor of low wages, deplorable housing system, denial of social mobilisation etc. indicate towards the kind of oppression of this class in state's economy.²¹

The socio-economic conditions are hereby responsible for the psychological as well as literary growth of the community. The limited accessibilities to the essential rights of human beings make them vulnerable to a greater extent. It may be said that the historical representation of these *Adivasi* tea-labourers in Assam is characterised by forced displacement, alienation issues and layers of marginalization. Across these yearlong challenges, they have been living on their own continuing their modes of protest.

Notes and References

¹Udayan Mishra, 'Adivasi Struggle in Assam' in *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol.42,no. 51,December, 22 - 28, 2007, p.12.

²R.Kerketta, 'Adivasis in Assam: Their Past, Present and Future' in T. Pulloppillil(ed.) *Identity of Adivasis in Assam*, Indian Publishers Distributors, Delhi, 1999.p.10.

³Rana P. Behal, *One Hundred Years of Solitude. Political Economy of Tea Plantations in Colonial Assam*, Tulika Books, New Delhi, 2014. p.269.

⁴*ibid.*,p.270.

⁵*ibid.*,p.273.

⁶*The Times*, London, 4th October,1920, The Sunday Times Archive.

⁷*Assam Labour Report*,1900. Pg.24.

⁸*ITA Report*,1931.

⁹Rana P. Behal, *One Hundred Years of Solitude. Political Economy of Tea Plantations in Colonial Assam*, *op.cit.* p. 304.

¹⁰*ibid.*,p.307.

¹¹Jayeeta Sharma, *Empire's Garden: Assam and the Making of India*, Permanent Black, Ranikhet, 2012, p.239.

¹²Homen Borgohain, *Axomor Chah udyugor Alikhito Kahini*, Students' Stores, Gauhati, 1980,p.42.

¹³Lohit Kumar Bora, *Axomor Chah Janagusthir Xamaj aru Xanskriti*, Kaustav Prakashan, Dibrugarh, 2006,p.173.

- ¹⁴G. K. Medhi(eds.), 'Study of Health Problems and Nutritional Status of Tea Garden Population of Assam,' in *Indian Journal of Medical Sciences*. vol.60, no.12, January, 2007, pg.500.
- ¹⁵Dr. Hiren Gohain, 'A Question of Identity: Adivasi Militancy in Assam' in *Economic and Political Weekly*. vol.42, no. 49, 2007, p.14.
- ¹⁶*ibid.*p.16.
- ¹⁷S.Bhattacharya, 'Some Little Known Aspects of Assamese Chauvinism' in *For A New Democracy*, Assam Special Issue, March, 1983, pp.64-65, Web. 3 Sep, 2017.
- ¹⁸Udayan Mishra, 'Adivasi Struggle in Assam' in *Economic and Political Weekly*, *op.cit.*,p.12.
- ¹⁹*ibid.*, pp.13-14.
- ²⁰Sanjoy Borbora, 'Struggle in the Tea Plantation of Assam: Then and Now' in *Revolutionary Democracy*. vol.1, April, 1999.
- ²¹Sanjoy Borbora, 'Struggle in the Tea Plantation of Assam: Then and Now' in *Revolutionary Democracy*. vol.1, April, 1999.

Social Legislations and Reforms in Modern India

Dr. Om Prakash

Faculty of Social Science and Humanities

Executive Director

Mahatma Gandhi Centre for Peace and Civilizational Studies

National Law University, Rajasthan

Email: omprakashnlu@gmail.com

Abstract

Intellectual movements in India during 18th and 19th century led to passing of several social legislations. These social legislations were significant because it gave the state legitimacy to take action in case of the person or groups involved in such evil practices. Although the state passed these legislations, however its intervention in the social affairs was limited due to the fear of revolts and uprising. As a result most of these practices continued. However, in the long run these legislations brought awareness among the people which gradually lessened these evil customs and practices. This paper has tried to look into such social legislation which were passed in colonial and post colonial India.

Key Words: Social legislation, sati, child marriage, social evil.

India is the oldest surviving civilization in the world. The idea of Dharma or rule of law flourished here since time immemorial. Most of the ancient legislations are recorded into Dharma Sutras and Dharma Sastras. The most significant among them are Gautam and Baudhayan Dharmasutra, Manu Smriti, Yajnavalkya Smriti, Narad Smriti, Brihaspati Smriti etc. Manu is known as the first law giver of India. The first codification of laws was done by him.¹The Vedas, epics Ramayan and Mahabharata and Arthasastra of Kautilya are also full of the legislations and norms to govern the society.

During Mughal period Emperor Akbar took measures through various legislations to remove social tension from the Indian society and purge the existing social evil such as: abolition of Jiziya tax, discouraged the child marriage, permitted widow remarriage. Restriction were also placed on infanticide and sati system was prohibited not only this but slave trade were abolished and practice of converting the prisoners of war into Islam was also abandoned.

By the time the British came to India, the socio-economic condition of women was pitiable. Several evil practices such as the practice of Sati, the Purdah system, child marriage, female infanticide, bride price, devdasi system and polygamy had made their life quite miserable. The place of women was confined to the four walls of her house. The doors of education had been shut for them. Economically also her status was miserable. There was no social and economic equality between a man and woman. A Hindu woman was not entitled to inherit any property. She was completely dependent on men. During the 19th and 20th centuries some laws were enacted with the sincere efforts of social reformers, humanists and some British administrators to improve the condition of women in Indian society.

Concept and Objectives of Social Legislations

Social legislations are the laws to protect the weak, unemployed, women, children disabled, elderly and other such vulnerable sections of the society. Social legislation aims to restrain the behavior of the individual and groups in the social structure. Due to the selfish motives and individualistic tendencies of the men they tend to clash with other for the sake of gains. Legislations tend to coerce the citizens to avoid clash with their fellow citizens. The fear of punishment can act effective deterrent against any unruly and violent behavior. It can ensure harmony in the social system and can provide opportunities to the netizens for fair play. India being a welfare state aims to ensure the fundamental rights and basic human rights to every member of the nation. The prime objective of social legislations are to provide better quality of life and to address various social problems like juvenile delinquency, child labour, infanticide/feticide, widow burning etc.

Social Legislations in Modern India

The British due to their mercantilist interest had no interest in the reforming Indian society. They had the fear that any interference in the matter of custom and religious issue may hamper their economic interest. So they followed a policy of indifference and caution in the social issues. However they were the great critic of Indian custom and tradition and wished to create an ideological hegemony on the Indian mind that Christian civilization of the occident is superior and orient is backward and wretched. The theory of Civilizing Mission, White Man's Burden and Oriental Despotism were created to justify their illegal rule over India.

The rise of social and religious movements in post 1857, draw the attention of the British administration towards the existing social evils. The propaganda carried out by the Christian missionaries also stirred the minds of

the educated Indians. Western thought and education and views expressed in different newspapers and magazines had their own impact. Some of the British administrators like Lord William Bentinck who was influenced by liberalism had taken personal interest in the matter. There were primarily two areas in which laws were enacted, laws pertaining to women emancipation and the caste system

Table : Prominent Colonial Legislations in India			
Social Legislations	Issue	Year	Reformer
Bengal Regulation XXI	Infanticide	1795	-
Bengal Regulation III	Infanticide	1804	-
Sati Regulation XVII	Sati Abolition	1829	Raja Ram Mohan Roy
Indian Slavery Act	Slavery	1843	-
Caste Disabilities Removal Act	Conversion	1850	-
Hindu Inheritance (Removal of Disabilities) Act	Caste discrimination	1928	
Hindu Widows Remarriage Act	Widow Remarriage	1856	Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar
Female Infanticide Prevention Act	Birth Registration & Infanticide	1870	-
Native Marriage Act	Child Marriage	1872	-
Age of Consent Act	Child Marriage	1891	B M Malabari
Special Marriage Amendment Act	Child Marriage	1923	-
Act of 1925	Devdasi System	1925	Dr. Muthalakshmi Reddi
Sharda Act	Child Marriage	1930	Har Bilas Sharda

Legislation for Sati Abolition

Burning widows on the funeral pyre of the deceased is an age old evil practice in India. It was more prevalent among the ruling class. But subsequently it became a common practice. A campaign against *sati* was undertaken by missionaries like William Carey and William Wilberforce, to increase missionary activity in India. Raja Ram Mohan Roy's Brahma Samaj also spearheaded the campaign against *sati*.² It was Parashar Samhita from where Ram Mohan Roy took the shastric prohibitions of *sati*. He developed arguments and created campaign for the abolition of the *sati*. The British initially tried to regulate *Sati*.³

William Bentinck was quite concerned due to increased number of *sati* cases. The records of the East India Company account for 8135 deaths attributed to *Sati* from 1813 to 1828.⁴ Bentinck adopted a cautious approach. He surveyed secretly on three issues: whether the army would revolt, whether legislation was advisable and whether Hindu resistance could be contained. When he got convinced that army would cause no problem then Bentinck passed the *Sati*

Regulation, XVII of 1829. The regulation was unequivocal in its condemnation of Sati, declaring practice of Sati, or burning or burying alive widows illegal and punishable. The Act made zamindars, petty land owners, local agents and revenue collectors accountable for immediate communication to the officers of their nearest police station of any such intended sacrifice. In case of willful neglect the responsible officer was liable to a fine of Rs.200 or six months in jail for default. Although the ban was challenged in the courts but subsequently the Privy Council upheld it in 1832. The Act was also later on implemented in other company territories. *Sati* remained legal in some princely states. Jaipur was the last such state to ban the practice in 1846.

In September 1987, Roop Kanwar became sati on the funeral pyre of her husband at Deorala village of Sikar district in Rajasthan.⁵ The incident shocked the country. In October the state government promulgated The Rajasthan Sati (Prevention) Ordinance 1987. Due to widespread demand both house of the Indian Parliament passed *The Commission of Sati(Prevention) Bill, 1987* which made any attempt to commit, abet or glorify sati punishable.

Legislation against Infanticide

Among the social evils in the 19th century Indian society, female infanticide was another inhuman practice. It was particularly in vogue in Rajputana, Punjab and the North Western Provinces. Colonel Tod, Johnson Duncan, Malcolm and other British administrators have discussed about this evil custom in detail.⁶ There were several reasons responsible for this practice such as- family pride, the fear of not finding a suitable match for the girl child etc. So after birth, the female infants were being killed either by feeding them with opium or by strangulating or by purposely neglecting them. In order to eradicate this practice laws were enacted in the year 1795, 1802, 1804 and then in 1870. The Female Infanticide Prevention Act 1870 made the killing of girl child punishable. It authorised the police to maintain the register for the birth and death of infants. The Act had the provision of a prison sentence of six month and a fine of rupees thirty thousand for violating or disobeying the Act. Section 6 of the Act empowers the police to take away the female child from its parents if it is noticed that the child is being ignored or endangered.

However, the practice could not be completely eradicated. Today there are states like Haryana (879), Delhi (868) and Chandigarh (818) are poor regarding the male-female ratio.⁷ In 2014 when the Narendra Modi government came to power it gave the slogan '*Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao*' which is a welcome move. There is a need of increased awareness to save the vanishing daughters.

Legislation for Widow Remarriage

Widow Remarriage was widely prevalent in ancient India. In course of time due to increasing rigidity the practice was discontinued. By the first half of 19th century, there were lakhs of widows leading a life of solicitude, neglect and social anathema. Social reformers like Raja Rammohan Roy and Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar took the cause of widows and popularise widow remarriage by writing in newspapers and contemporary journals. Their widespread campaigns through books, pamphlets and petitions had a significant impact. Vidyasagar researched through the Vedic texts and find out that Vedas sanction widow remarriage. He discovered that the Vedic women enjoyed more rights and privileges. In 1856 the legislature passed the Widow Remarriage Act, 1856.

Legislation against Child Marriage

When we look into the condition of child marriage in first half of 19th century, in the year 1846, the marriageable age for a girl was 10 years only. The efforts and campaign of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar bore the fruit in form of the Act of 1860 which rose the age of consent for married and unmarried girls to ten. In November 1870, the Indian Reforms Association was started with the efforts of Keshav Chandra Sen which vigorously campaigned against the child marriage. A journal called Maha pap Bal Vivah (Child marriage: The Cardinal Sin) was also launched with the efforts of B.M. Malabaria Parsi from Bombay and a journalist by profession to fight against child marriage.

In 1891, through the enactment of the Age of Consent Act, marriageable age was raised to 12 years. The Act contains the provision of punishment for the violation of this Act equal to rape.⁸ It received support from the Indian social reformers like B M Malabari, Pandita Ramabai and several women's organisation. The Bill was opposed by several orthodox Hindu leaders like B G Tilak on the charge of interference in the Hindu faith and religion.⁹

In 1929 Child Marriage Restrained Act, 1929 was passed and it came into force in 1930. Through this Act the minimum age of marriage for girls was raised to 14 years and for boys it was raised to 18 years. It is also called Sharda Act due to pivotal role played by Judge HarBilas Sharda in the passing of this Act. Several women's organisations like All India Women's Conference, Women's Indian Association campaigned for passing the Act. This was the first Act where women fought and worked in an organised way to get the bill pass. They were determined not to guide by the ancient laws which shows their zest for modernity and it also brought the liberal feminism to the forefront.¹⁰ Even today there are some parts of the country like Rajasthan where we can witness the occurrence of mass child marriages.

Legislation and Purdah System

Purdah system was another social evil of 19th and 20th century which attracted condemnation and protest. The condition of women among the peasantry was relatively better in this respect. Purdah was widely prevalent in North India. In Southern part this tradition was almost absent. The Indian Freedom Struggle brought the women folk from the four walls of their houses and gave a jolt to the purdah system. Mahatma Gandhi wrote, 'The sight of the screen made me sad. It pained and humiliated me deeply... Let us not live with one limb completely of partially paralysed... Let us tear down the purdah in one mighty effort'.¹¹ However no specific legislation was framed to abolish the system. The system still continues in large part of the country especially in north India.

Legislation against Caste and Untouchability

The caste system continues to be a social evil till date. It is primarily based on the Varna System having fourfold division of society viz. Brahmins, Kshatriya, Vaishyas and Shudras. Here Brahmins were being the intellectual class, Kshatriyas being the warrior class, the Vaishyas being the merchant or business class, while shudras were conferred as the class which has to serve the upper three classes. The Shudras were subjected to all kinds of social discrimination. The castes of India had been further split into several sub castes.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy invoked the authority of *Mahanirvana Tantra*, an old religio- sociological work of Hinduism to support his view that caste should no longer continue. Brahma Samaj opposed to rigid social divisions and implied: 'There can't be a surer truth than this that high destiny can't be fulfilled without the utter destruction of the supreme root of all our social evils, the caste system'.¹² *The Caste Disabilities Removal Act, 1850* was passed by the government of Lord Dalhousie. It guarantees that any Indian converted to Christianity continue to possess his right of inheritance.

Abolition of 'untouchability' became a major issue of the 19th century social and religious reform movements in the country. Father of the nation, Mahatma Gandhi made the eradication of untouchability a part of his constructive programme. He brought out a paper, *The Harijan*, and also organised the Harijan Sevak Sangh having its headquarter at Delhi. Gandhi declared, 'Untouchability is a crime against God and Man'.¹³

Bhimrao Ambedkar dedicated his life for the welfare of the downtrodden. In Bombay, he formed a Bahiskrit Hitkarini Sabha in July 1924 for this purpose. Later, he also organised the Akhil Bharatiya Dalit Varg Sabha to fight against caste oppression. Jyotirao Phule in Western India and Shri Narayana Guru in Kerala respectively established the Satya Sodhak Samaj and the Shri Narayana

Dharma Partipalana Yogam to include self-esteem among the downtrodden. In the Madras Presidency also the beginning of 20th century witnessed the rise of Self-respect Movement of E.V. Ramaswamy alias Periyar. In order to remove this hateful practice several individual made commendable effort for Harizans so they may be entitled for drawing of water from public wells, getting entry into temples and get admission into schools.

After independence, Article 17 of the Indian constitution made practice of untouchability in any form illegal. This is one of the few fundamental rights against individuals. In order to further weaken the practice, the Indian Parliament passed Untouchability (offences) Act in 1955. This act was further amended and renamed in 1976 as Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955. It made provision of fine and imprisonment in case of denial of basic rights to the concerned groups.

Legislation against Devdasi System

Devdasi system flourished in India since ancient time. They used to get patronage from the rulers.¹⁴ However during British period several social reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Govind Ranade, Mutthulakshmi Reddy considered it evil since it leads to temple prostitution. However only after 1880 a strong group of reformists including educated middle class such as doctors, journalists, administrators and social workers advocated for the abolition of Devdasi system and the ceremony where girls are dedicated to the temple deity. They created a public campaign by organising academic gatherings such as conferences and seminars. There was a rise of venereal diseases in the last decade of 19th century in India mostly among the soldiers. Since the devdasi were equated with prostitutes, the British government passed the order for the registration of all prostitutes including devdasis. However revivalists like Theosophist advocated for the practice of Devdasi and considered their dance as manifestation of divine.

The Bombay Devdasi Protection Act, 1934 made dedication of girls to temple illegal and sanctioned the provisions that marriage of such girls are legal and children born from such marriage were to be treated as legitimate. Those found involved into forcing the girl into dedication were to face an imprisonment of one year, a fine or both. After independence The Madras Devdasi (Prevention of Dedication) Act, 1947 declared the Devdasi system illegal in Madras Presidency. Subsequently, the Karnataka Devdasis (Prohibition of Dedication) Act of 1982, Andhra Pradesh Devdasi (Prohibition Dedication) Act, 1989 and Goa's Children Act, 2003 were implemented to abolish the system of devdasi for good in India.¹⁵

Legislation against Slavery

The slave system in India was quite different in compare to Roman and Greek tradition where slaves were treated, bought and sold like commodities. The Greek traveller, Megasthenese who visited India during the period of Chandra Gupta Maurya could not notice the presence of slaves in India because slaves in India were mostly acted as domestic servant and they were treated well unlike the slaves in the west. Slavery was banned in the British Empire in 1833 and compensation was paid to the slave owners. After 10 years by Act V of 1843 slavery was declared illegal in India. This led to the slave emancipation without paying any compensation to the slave owners. The Penal Code of 1860 also made slavery illegal. However the actual practice of slavery continued. It had a visual impact on the export and import of slaves but agricultural slavery remained intact.

Conclusion

These social legislations played a very significant role in moving forward the movement of social reformation during colonial and post colonial India. Although these social evils still exists in our society, however there is greater awareness among the people against these practices. For example, child marriages occur in Rajasthan but there are large number of nongovernmental organisations and groups who are successful able to prevent the occurrence of these marriages. Similarly devdasi system and practice of caste discrimination also exist however they have no legitimacy or mass appeal and we can expect that with increased literacy and development these practices will also decimate.

Notes and References

¹It is evidenced after the researches that Manu was not the author of Manu Smiriti. It was compiled by Bhrigu. The laws given by various law givers for the period of several centuries were compiled in Manu Smiriti. As a result there are contradictory legislations in the work.

²Raja Ram Mohan Roy who is known as the morning star of social reformation in India, established Brahma Samaj in 1829 which was based on the notion of monism.

³A. R. Desai, *Social Background of Indian Nationalism*, Popular Prakashan Pvt. Ltd., Mumbai, 1998, p. 275.

⁴'Lord William Bentinck on the Suppression of Sati, 8 November 1829', *Speeches and Documents on Indian Policy, 1750-1921*, Arthur B. Keith(ed.), Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1922, vol. 1, pp. 208--226.

⁵*The Hindu*, September 18, 1987.

⁶For details refer Colonel Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, Oxford University Press, London, 1920.

⁷Census of India, 2011. <https://censusindia.gov.in/census.website/>.

⁸Peter Van der Veer, *Imperial Encounters: Religion and Modernity in India and Britain*, Princeton, 2001, P. 96.

⁹Charles H Heimsath, 'The Origin and Enactment of the Indian Age of Consent Bill, 1891', *Journal of Asian Studies*, 1962, 21 (4), pp. 491–504.

¹⁰Geraldin H Forbes, *Women in Modern India*, Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 71-82.

¹¹B L Grover, *A New Look at Modern Indian History*, S Chand, Delhi, 1998, p. 398.

¹²A R Desai, *ibid.*, p. 237.

¹³J C Kumarappa, *Planning by the People, for the People*, Seva Sangh Prakashan, 1954, p. 57.

¹⁴K.Chakraborty, *Women as Devdasis: Origin and Growth of the Devdasi Profession*, Delhi, Deep & Deep Publications, 2000, pp. 67, 69.

¹⁵Davesh Soneji, *Unfinished Gestures: Devdasis, Memory and Modernity in South India*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2012, pp. 112-14.

***Hen Puthi*, a specimen of functional literature in Medieval Assam-an Analysis**

Dr. Suryya Kumar Chetia

Assistant Professor

Department of Mass Communication and Journalism

Assam Women's University, Jorhat, Assam

Email : skumarchetia@gmail.com

And

Dr. Chandra Kamal Chetia

Assistant Professor

Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankaradeva Viswavidyalaya Nagaon, Assam

Email: chandrakamalchetia10@gmail.com

Abstract

The topic of research is 'Functional Literature in Medieval Assam Hen-Puthi: an analysis'. A considerable number of functional literatures were produced during the medieval period in Assam. Among those writings, several books on medicine (Nidan Sastra) were written at that time. It is worthy to be noted that a few books on veterinary science were also produced during that time. One such remarkable manuscript was on the training and treatment of falcons. The various aspects of falconry during Ahom era in Assam has been reflected in the book. This research paper aims to introduce the readers with different techniques to diagnose the ailments of the tamed falcons, their treatments and the skills to train those diurnal birds of prey to turn them into efficient hunters during medieval era along with the language and script of the manuscript. No comprehensive research has been conducted on falconry in medieval Assam till date. The Hen-Puthi written on the bark of Agar wood tree is yet to be published in printed form for which a lot of important aspects have still remained unnoticed. Therefore, the study of these aspects of Hen-Puthi as a specimen of the medieval Assamese functional literature has immense importance. The research paper has been divided into six segments for convenience to discuss different aspects related to the manuscript. A brief introduction to the medieval Assamese functional literature and Hen-Puthi is given in the first section of the research paper. The second section deals with the tradition of falconry. This section includes a historical account of falconry

in Assam too. The different ailments of falcons and their treatments are discussed in detail in the third section of the paper. An analysis of the language and script used in the Hen-Puthi is given in the fourth section of the research paper. The fifth segment of the research paper includes a discussion on the vocabulary used in the manuscript. The sixth section of the research paper offers a comprehensive discussion on the treatment methods mentioned in the Hen-Puthi and their relevance in the present time. Descriptive method of research has been applied to prepare the research paper.

Key words: *Hen-Puthi, Traditional treatment, functional literature.*

The topic of research is ‘Functional Literature of Medieval Assam – *Hen Puthi* : An analysis’. There are a number of evidences of functional literature in medieval Assam. Among these functional literatures the writings on medicine and treatment of diseases are remarkable. Some such writings are related to the domestic animals and creatures. An important manuscript of this kind is the Hen Puthi based on the training of the falcon and their treatment in different ailments. A faithful picture of falconry during Ahom rule in Assam has been found in this book. The book is enriched with the methods of treatments of the tamed falcons, their diseases, the methods of training, tricks of falconry and techniques of taming of the falcons.

For convenience of discussion, the research paper has been divided in to five segments. In the first segment a brief introduction has been provided. In the second segment a discussion on falconry in Assam has been included. In this segment an attempt has been made to trace the history of falconry in Assam. In the third segment the ailments of the tamed falcons and their treatments have been discussed in details. In the fourth segment the language and script used in the manuscript has been discussed. There is also an analysis of the vocabulary of the Hen Puthi in this segment. In the fifth segment a comprehensive study has been made on the importance of the traditional method of healing and treatment and its relevance in present time.

Importance of the study

In the backdrop of medieval Assam, falconry was an important subject. No comprehensive account of falconry is found except this manuscript dedicated to this subject. There are several reasons to carry out the research in this subject. It is to be worth mentioning that no indepth research is done on this vital issue till the date. Through this paper, an idea of Assamese traditional games and sports can be found in the book along with falconry. No only that, the history and the job of the clan of falconers known as *Henchowa* are known

from this book during Ahom rule. Above all, The subject is yet to be received attention of the people in general, as the *Hen Puthi* is not available in printed form. Noteworthy that, no systematic record on the treatment of the birds is available in the medieval period also.

In the light of this perspective, the paper intends to study the tradition of falconry in medieval Assam, taming, training and traditional treatment of the falcons including use of language and script in medieval Assam. The relevance of the traditional methods of treatment mentioned in the *Hen Puthi* in present time is also another focal study of this research paper. The descriptive method of research has been applied to prepare this research paper. However, historical analysis is also applied wherever required to confirm certain happenings in the past.

Scope of the study

In this research paper, the functional literature of medieval Assam *Hen Puthi* has been selected for discussion. In connection with *Hen Puthi*, the trends in functional literature during Medieval Assam, use of language, the tradition for falconry in Assam, illness of the falcons and their traditional methods of treatments are encompassed in this research work.

Trends in functional literature in medieval Assam and introduction to *Hen Puthi*

During the medieval period, the subject of the most of the writings was religious. The Buranjis written during the Ahom era were secular writings. But, those cannot be included into the group of functional literature. Apart from Vaishnavite, Sakta and Saiva literature, there were only a few books written on applied subjects. In this context Satyandranath Sarma said, 'Along with the religious Vaishnavite literature, there were the trend of writing functional literature in medieval Assam. But compared to the religious literature, the number of functional literature was quite few. Bakul Kayastha wrote a book entitled *Kitabat Manjari* on mathematics during 16th century. Then another poet Churamoni wrote a book on astrology in verse entitled *Jyotish Churamoni*. He mentioned about Bakul Kayastha in this book as he was a successor poet. Kabiratna Dwija, another writer translated the famous book on mathematics entitled *Lilavati*'.¹ Srihastha Mukta wali written by Kviraj Chkravarty unveiled some aspects of performing arts of that time. The applied knowledge of architecture of the medieval Assam was reflected in the *Changrung Phukanar Buranji*, written at that time.

Among the functional literature written in medieval Assam, the books on medicines are remarkable. There are four manuscripts on traditional treatment

preserved in the Shankardev Research Institute in Bordua. Besides, there are numerous books on 'Mantra's used in treatment of various ailments. Most of them are known as 'Karati Puthi'. Some Mantras are written on the dried skin of monitor lizards known as 'Bikhali Puthi'. During the Ahom rule there were several clans of Bez (person dealing with traditional medicines, witch doctor) known as-Bihboriya, Changbez etc.

The temple constructed during Ahom rule in Bezapathar is still there to tell the history of traditional medicine in medieval Assam. Several manuscripts written during medieval time are still there in the area.

The books written on medicine during the medieval Assam include the diseases of domestic animals and birds and their treatments. Among those books written during Ahom rule were Hasti-Bidyarnava, Gajendra Chintamani and Ghora Nidan remarkable. The first one was written by Sukumar Borikaith following the direction of Queen Ambika, the wife of King Siva Singha. The second book was written by Prithuram. It was recovered from Jorhat area. The third one was written to describe different types of horses and their treatment if they fell ill.

On the other hand the Hen Puthi was written on different diseases of the tamed falcons and their treatments with medicine and Mantras. The difference among different types of falcons and various techniques of training the falcons were also included in the manuscript. It is worthy to be noted here that the Ahom Kings (Chao Pha) created a separate clan of people in the kingdom only to rear the falcons. They were given the title HENCHOWA. They had to train the falcon to kill its prey for entertainment. There were numerous ailments among the tamed or reared falcons. Then they had to offer medicine and treatment to the ailing bird according to its disease. These HENCHOWA people became expert on such subject. Based on those experiences, the Hen Puthi were written in the medieval Assam. Unfortunately, due to political upheaval in Assam during the later part of the medieval era and adverse natural atmosphere most of the books of its kind were lost. As the Ahom rule came to an end, the tradition of falconry was also abandoned. As a result the books related to falconry also lost their importance among the people.

No mention of the time of writing of the Hen Puthi is found in the primary source of the research. But, from the shape of the letters and use of language it can be assumed that the book was written in the first stage of the 17th Century. It is mentioned that under the patronage of HENCHWA BARUAH, Biguram Das wrote the book. শ্রীলামলাখৰং ভিতৰুৱাল ফুকনদেৱৰ দাস খাৰঘৰীয়া ফুকনদেৱৰ ভাতৃ। হেনচোৱাবৰুৱাদেৱৰ অনুগ্রহ, হেনচোৱাৰ গাভৰুমেলাৰ হৰুৱড়া দাস।। তানৈ পুত্ৰ বিগুৰা দাস।। আৰে পুস্তক কৰনং ।। আপোনাৰ হস্তাখৰং মিদং।।^২

Only one edition of this book is available. The content page of the book is not ornamental. The book is written on the bark of Agar wood tree. There are total 58 pages in this book. Several pages of it are damaged and cannot be read.

Historical backdrop of falconry in Assam and its royal patronage

During the Ahom rule in Assam falconry was a royal sport. They set up 'Charaichung' in the low lying wetlands near the capital town Gargaon. In the Charaichung they supply small fishes so that the wooly necked stork and other birds assemble in large numbers (1000 to 12000) to eat. The fish eating birds came to Charaichung every morning and returned in the evening. They prepared 6/7 such Charaichung.³ According to the information received from Charaichuingiya, the persons in charge of those Charaichungs the King orders to organize the sport popularly known as 'Hen-Juj' in the month of January or February (Magh). The HENCHOWAS were in charge of the falcons and hawks. They tamed and trained the raptors. A considerable fund was allotted from the coffers of the King to support the families of those HENCHOWAS. The HENCHOWAS released their well trained falcons in front of the King and officers.

According to the information received from Charaichuingiya, the King, officers and other people go to the Charaichung where there was the largest number of wooly-necked storks (KANUA). Then some people go to the wooly-necked storks which were engaged in eating fishes and threaten them to fly into the sky. When the storks are about to go beyond the reach of the naked eye, the HENCHOWAS put off the hood from the eyes of their falcons. Then they released the falcons. A well trained falcon killed storks in the sky. And the dead storks fell from the sky one by one. It was a source of amusement for the spectators.⁴

If the falcon comes back to its falconer after killing the storks, then the King gave award to that falconer with his own hands. On the other hand if the falcon goes away without killing the storks, the falconer was punished for not training the falcon properly. The names of the places like Charaichung and HENCHOWA were still there holding the history of that sport.

A faithful account of this sport was found in the writings of Jean-Baptist Chevalier who visited Assam during the reign of King RAJESWAR SINGHA. During his return journey⁵ with the king he witnessed the spectacular performance by the falcons. He wrote, '...The one I liked the most was the one with the bird of prey known as baye. It is done on lakes which are covered with teals, ducks wild goose and quantities of other bird species. A dozen of these perfectly trained bayes are released on the lake. In an instant they fly above the water. The other birds, apparently their nemesis, try to escape. Their numbers darken the

air. Then, the bayes demonstrate the most pleasant of all shows. They rise in the sky as far the eye can see; above all the other birds, then they swoop down on them, knock them over and bash them with their wings. These preys, seemingly unhurt but paralyzed with fear, fall from all sides like hailstones. Small boats patrolling the lake pick them up. In less than two hours, which is the usual time required for this hunt, thousands of birds are brought to the feet of the king. The baye masters then disperse to call back the birds. It is admirable to see how well they obey their voice. Each one of them unmistakably recognizes the man who takes care of them. They land on the master's fist and, as a reward each is given a bird that he has caught, after it has been cut open through the middle of the stomach. The baye darts on it and quenches its thirst with the blood. These hunting birds are rare and found only on the highest hills, from where the people fetch them from their nests during the season and trade in them. If well trained, they can be sold for up to one thousand ecus (French money, a coin of gold or silver) each'.⁶ According to Chevalier the birds of prey used in the sport were known as 'baye' or baz the crested hawk-eagle. The raptors trained to prey were divided into various groups according to their size. Among these three such types were remarkable. They were known as Baz, Bechera and Bohori. Again Bohori birds were divided into several groups like Jangini Bohori, Gheri Bohori and Moimani Bohori. তলুৱা বহল, আঙ্গুলি দিঘল-ডাঙ্গৰ, পঞ্জা দিঘল, আগসুকুলা, বমোঁৰাঙ্গি জৰল, ভাগোচাকৈ, এই লক্ষণেৰে পালে, জাঙ্গিনি বহৰি বোলে। মুণ্ড সৰু বতুল, ঠোঁঠ

দিঘ, সৰু চক্ষু, সৰু নাক ডাঙ্গৰ, বৰ্ণ জৰদ, বায়ু কুন্দ পাতল, পৃষ্টি কুজ, দুম সৰু, আখৰ নাই, উৰা ডাঙৰ বহল, চাতি খিন আখৰোডাঙ্গৰ এই লক্ষণেৰে হলে ঘেৰি বহৰি বোলে। মুণ্ড গোটালি সৰু, ঠোঁঠ কোন সৰু, নাক সৰু, বৰ্ণ মটিয়া বগলু মাণিকিয়া, বাজুকুন্দ সৰু, পিষ্টি সমান, কোনাডাঙ্গৰ, চিৰখভোমা, দুমপাতল সৰু, চাতিচেপ, চিনা চেপ, ডহোত বঙ্গ, গুচ্ছ কাটি, বন্ধ নাই, জংখা সৰু চাকৈ, নলপাচিনা ভৰি তলুৱা উঠঙ্গা, চৰ্ম ডাঠ, আঙ্গুলি ভুটুঙ্গা, পঞ্জা চুটি, বৰ্ণোঁ মাহিকালু আখৰো সৰু, এই লক্ষণেৰে পালে মইমানি বহৰি বোলে।⁷

On the other hand, the Baz were divided into several categories like Moidanibaz, Daminibaz, Baimanikbaz and Chandnibaz. In traditional falconry, all those raptors were used. But during the reign of King Gadadhar Singha, the Bohoris were given much importance in falconry.

Training and treatment of the falcons according to the Hen Puthi

Taming and training the falcons in medieval Assam had some methods. The Henchowas collected the chicks of the falcons from the chasm of the rocks in remote Nagapahar hills. After that the training started. At first the eyelids of the falcon were stitched with small threads. After a few days, the stitch was cut to open the eyes in front of a number of persons. Thus the bird would not be afraid of human beings. Then a hood was used to cover the eyes. The word hood-wink was derived from that concept. The Henchowas supplied required

food and water to the falcon at that time. At first the falcon was trained to catch a chicken or a pigeon. The chicken was kept at a distance. The Henchowa tied a long string to the claw of the falcon. He kept one end of the string in his hand and allowed the falcon to hunt the chicken. If the falcon killed the chicken and came back to Henchowa, then the same process was repeated with a pigeon. If the falcon killed the pigeon too, then it was considered that the falcon had completed the first round of training known as 'first Bauli' successfully. Then the Henchowa collected a wooly-necked stork and kept amidst a group of four or five persons. After that he released the falcon completely. If the falcon killed the wooly-necked stork and came back to him, it was considered that the falcon was ready for sport. তামোল সাহেৰে বটিয়া মাজি চক্ষু সিৰ। পানি পিটাই ডাঙ্গৰ অগ্নি কাখৰত জাগি দিব। দহ পঞ্চ মানুহৰ আগত চক্ষু মেলিব। বটিয়া অগ্নিত পুৰিব। পাচে গাত্তো মাজি থাকিব। প্ৰাতসে তামা কামোৰাব। মন বুজি কুলা গুচাই থাকিব। বেলি ভটিয়ালে পানি চাৰ সহিতে তামা খুৰাব পানি চাৰ পেলালে পূৰ্বৰতে চাকি দিব। পাচে মন ভাল পালে হাকৰ তুলিব সুভ দিনা, পাচে কিছু কিছু কৰি বঢ়াব। এক উৰাজ আহিলে পূৰ্বৰতে কুকুৰা পোৱালি কটাব। পাচে হেকাৰত লগাই পাৰ কটাব। পাচে হাকৰে ঘুৰাই মাতিব, পাচে ফলঙ্গাই পাৰ কটাব। এই ক্ৰমে সাতোটা কটাব। পাচে ওৱাকৰ বাউলি কটাব। পাচে খৈৰ কটাব। পাচে আজান দিব। পাচে কনুৱা দিব। এই ক্ৰমে অপ্ৰআসে ওস্তাজে লহৰি বহৰি খেলিব পাৰে। জঙ্গিনি বহৰিকো ওস্তাজে অপ্ৰআসে খেলিব পাৰে।। ঘেৰি বহৰিক ওস্তাজে পৰি জতনেহে খেলিব পাৰে।। বৈন্মানি বহৰিক কথমপিহে খেলিব পাৰে।⁸

On the other hand for Baz, the smaller raptor than the Bohori had a different method of training. At first like the Bohori, its eyes too were kept shut by stitching the eyelids for seven days. After seven days its eyes should be opened. One should blow out air with mouth on the eyes of the Baz for six times. Then wipe its head with cotton for three times. After that taking the bird amidst some people addressed it with a sound. Then the raptor would be assigned to kill a chicken. If it killed the chicken, then it was considered to be passed in the test. প্ৰাতসমাক্ৰে দুৰ্বাৰে কপাহি বটিয়া মাজি চক্ষু দিব। সাতদিন অন্তৰে চকু মেলি বটিয়া পানিত পেলাব। চকুত চহঁবাৰ ফুই মাৰিব।। তুলাৰ সলা লগাই মুৰত সাতবাৰ ফুৰাব মানুহৰ মাজত লৈ তিনিবাৰ হাঙ্গাৰিব। মুগুৰে পৰা গা মাজি হাততলৈ হাঙ্গাৰিলৈ ফুৰাব। প্ৰাতহতে তামা কামুৰাব ভুহি হাত কৰিব। পাছে মন ভাল পালে এগৰাজ লগাই মাতিব। পাচে কুকুৰাপোয়ালি কটাব। গচত পেলাই মাতিব। পাছে বাউলি দিব। এই জাত বাজ অনাৰিএগেঁ খেলিব পাৰে।⁹

While training the falcons may experience sexual urge during the breeding season. To keep them away from such experience there were some medicines mentioned in the Hen Puthi. ডিমাপাৰিবৰ বতৰত মতালৈ মনতকৈ নপলাবৰ উসধ।। তঙ্গৰ কাফুৰঃ দুইক বাটি ঃ একেলগেথবঃ পুয়াগধুলিঃ তামাদি খুয়াবঃ মতালৈ কামমন এড়ে। এই নৰকো দিবঃ বাজকো দিব ঃ জোৰোলাকো

দিবঃ ॥¹⁰ It is mentioned here that the medicine is equally applicable to human being also.

Traditional methods of treatment of the falcons

It is a difficult task to tame the falcons. After fetching the falcons from the nest, certain care should be taken to keep them healthy. Otherwise they may become sick. Sometimes the falcon stops eating food. It just throws away the food offered to it. In that case, juice of sugarcane, sugar, salt, clove and nutmeg should be given to the bird as medicine. It is written in the book like this, তামা পেলুয়াৰ উসধ ॥ কুহিআৰ বসঃ চেনিঃ সন্ধক লোন লং জাইফল খুয়াবঃ অল্পকৈ আধাৰ দিবঃ তপত পানি দিবঃ বদকাচিয়লিত কিছু সুকাবঃ দুডাৰ বেলি হ'লে আধাৰ দিব। এতেকে আধাৰ নেপেলাই ॥¹¹

Besides, one may provide the medicine made of the bark of the pomegranate tree, roots of the eggplant and a kind of ant. These three items should be cooked with the food meant for the falcon. 'কেকোপৰুয়াঃ ডালিমৰ চালঃ বড়বেঙ্গনাৰ হিপাঃ তিনিকো সিজাই বস লব। আধাৰেৰে খুয়াব এতেকে তামা নেপেলাই ॥¹² If the falcon suffers from Lymphatic filariasis the bird starts limping. In such case there is a medicine made of some locally available herbs and items. বাচাৰগোধৰউসধ ॥ গোমাসাৰঘুনাচাঃ কেসৰাজঃ সালধিঃ চমলখাৰঃ লোনঃ বালকৰমুত্ৰেৰে বাটিবঃ মুঠিধৰিগোধত দিবঃ পতোৱাতবান্ধিবঃ কন্দিনতমেলিবঃ এই নিয়মে তিনিবাৰবান্ধিলেগোধগুচে ॥¹³ If the falcon suffers from fowl stood, there is also a medicine for it. বেয়া পিখাল হ'লে সেলুকবাটি বস লবঃ এটা সৰিয়হৰমান লোন মিহলাই খুয়াবতে বেনাস ॥ লগুনদিয়া ডিমৰুৰ আঠা আনিঃ তামাৰে খুয়াব তেবেনাস ॥¹⁴

There is another medicine if any bone of the falcon is broken or it gets hurt, 'সোনবৰিয়ালৰসিপাপতঃ ঝালুকঃ মৰানআদাঃ আমৰিলতাঃ হাৰঘুনাচাঃ সালধিঃ সালিমঃ সগুনিলতাঃ সবাকে সমভাগেবাটি লেপদিবঃ মনুসুৰকে চাপেৰেতিয়াই থাকিবঃ সাডজোড়াখাই। তেজমৰা উখহা পাখিতুলিবনোৱাৰা সবেভাল হই ৩ দিনৰ অন্তৰে উসধ মেলি গুচাব তেবে নাসং ॥¹⁵ The tamed falcon does not get much opportunity to fly like the wild birds. So, it gathers fat inside its body. Sometimes, it suffers from fatty liver. There is medicine for that disease too. আগমাংস বাঢ়েতাৰে উষধ ॥ একমুঠিনিমসঃ সমুদ্রঃ আকনৰ পাতৰৰসেৰেসাতদিনসিজাবঃ সুকাইবাটিথব তামাৰমাজতকৈ সেইলোন খুৰাব তহ গধুৰ নাসং ॥ ভোকো লাগে সবেৰোগ নাস হই ॥¹⁶

To recover the falcon from obesity or excessive fat there is another medicine mentioned in the book, তিনিকৰামানচেনিঃ মাহৰমান মুচাবৰঃ চাউলৰমানজৰদগুড়িঃ ধানৰমানবিকমাঃ লংবটাঃ এবাতিএলাপ্ৰিঃ আদৰাতিপিপলিঃ বাটি বড়ি কৰিবঃ সুকাবঃ মাংসৰ লগত খুৰাব নাসং ॥¹⁷

Likewise there are descriptions of the diseases of the bird like becoming weak, feather falling, becoming thin, suffering from the worms inside the body, not hunting birds and being scared of human appearance etc. and treatment for

those mentioned in the book. These are the outcome of the indigenous knowledge developing through the centuries.

Language and script of the Hen Puthi

The language of the Hen Puthi is the colloquial language of the medieval Assam. The language used in this manuscript is mostly influenced by the language of the earlier capital of Ahom Kingdom Gargaon. Especially the colloquial language of Sivasagar district is seen in this book. The names of the medicinal plants mentioned in the book shows that the language is the local language of that area. Those names were naginipat, kukurathengia, kotahi bengena, letaguti, harghunucha, hunboriyal, memedhu, titakachi, amorilota etc. All those words are still in use in Upper Assam.

The language is based on the pronunciation. So standardize spelling of the similar word is not found. The same word is written with different letters on the basis of pronunciation. In most cases য় is used in lieu of ব, ড় is used for ব্. Sometimes no distinction is visible between হ and শ. In that way, it differs from the present day spellings of Assamese words. For example, the word শেন is written in three different ways in three places of the book: হেন, সেন, শেন। Likewise the word ঔষধ has been written in two ways: উসধ and ভোসধ.

Different vocabulary used in the description also shows the local and external elements of the language:

Local Words থলুৱা শব্দ-নাগিনি পাত, ফুই দিয়া, কলাখাৰ, উজনীয়া লোণ, মেমেধু, খৰিচাপানি, ভকলি।

Words from Sanskrit origin তৎসম শব্দ-চক্ষু, পত্ৰ, অল্প, সৰ্ব্ব, পক্ষ, একক।

Words from Parsi origin আৰবী-ফাৰ্চীমূলীয় শব্দ-ওস্তাজ, ওয়াজ, দাৰু, অনাৰি।

Though the sentence pattern is quite Assamese, sometimes the influence of Sanskrit language is also observed. For example:

কুকুৰাঠেঙ্গিয়া ঃ বৰথেকেৰা ঃ পুৰি দুইকো মিহলাই লেপ দিব তথা নাসং ॥

মস্মাৰতিৰ পাত ঃ মেটেকাৰ আলু ঃ বালুকপাত ঃ সগুনিলতা ঃ সমভাগে বাটি লেপ দিব তেবে নাসং ॥

The use of the word নাসং in these two sentences is closer to the Sanskrit expressions. In the place of full stop at the end of a sentence ॥ this symbol is used. Instead of coma : is used in the book.

॥ পাখি কুটাৰ উসধ ॥ মুচাবৰ ঃ বহড ঃ ভেটাই পাতৰ বস কিছুঃ সবাকে বাটি

চৰত সিজাই ঘনকৈ ৰাখি পাখি কুটাত দিব ॥ জৰদগুড়ি ঃ সুৰগা ঃ চেনিলোন

চাৰিৰো এটা এৰাণ্ডিৰমানকৈ লৈ বাটি আধাৰেৰে খুয়াব তথা নাসং ॥

The book was written in medieval Assamese script. The characteristics of Gargoya Lipi are prominent in it. In some places there are characteristics of *Kaitheli Lipi* too.

Traditional treatments mentioned in Hen Puthi and their relevance in present time

Falconry is not practiced in Assam in present time. Therefore, the profession of taming and training the falcons also has come to an end. As a result the traditional methods of treatment of the falcons are no longer in practice in present time. But significantly there are some rare plants and materials mentioned in the Hen Puthi which should be studied scientifically for their medicinal value. Along with it there are some common diseases mentioned in the book which are prevalent in falcons and other fowls. So, treatment of those diseases may be conducted on the basis of the direction of the Hen Puthi. For example, foul stool, elephantiasis, obesity, worms etc. are some such common diseases mentioned in the book.

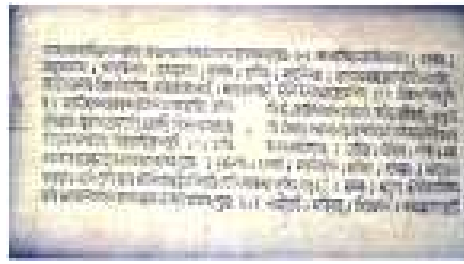
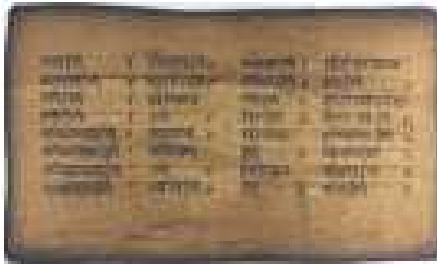
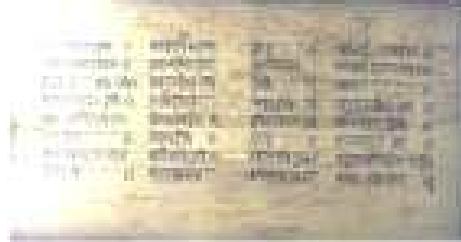
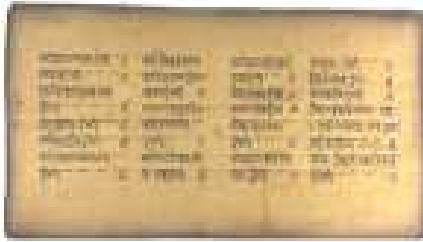
On the other hand the disease known as fatty-liver is also prevalent among the falcons. This is a common disease among human beings in present time. So, the medicine mentioned in the book may be applied to human to recover from it. It is mentioned in the book that the medicine is applicable to man also.

Moreover, a bunch of indigenous knowledge is preserved in this *Hen-Puthi*. At the same time it is a repository of the mediaeval practices in Assam. In that way it has historical value. This kind of research will enrich the history and culture of Assam in future.

Conclusion

From the above analysis we can have the opinions that the period of writing of this book was 17th-18th century. Different ailments and treatments of the falcons are mentioned in the manuscript. The book focuses direction to take proper care of the falcons according to their different variety. The language of *Hen Puthi* is nearer to the colloquial language of upper Assam. Along with the local words, some Sanskrit and foreign words are also used in it. There is some importance of the traditional method of treatment mentioned in *Hen Puthi* in the present time. Anyway, a comprehensive perusal of *Hen Puthi* would lend a new dimension and a new meaning to the analytical approach of the new school of Indian social thinkers.

Appendix
Some pages of the *Hen Puthi*.



Notes and References

¹Satyendranath Sarma, *Asomiyar Sahityar Itibritta*, p.162.

²Biguram, *Hen Puthi*, p.5.

³Suryya Kumar Bhuyan, *Deodhai Asom Buranji*, p.110.

⁴*ibid.*, pp.110-111.

⁵Suryya Kumar Bhuyan, *Tungkhungiya Buranji*, p.46.

⁶Caroline Dutta-Baruah 'The Adventures of Jean-Baptiste Chevalier in Eastern India' in *Historical Memoir and Journal of Travels in Assam Bengal and Tibet*, pp.35-36.

⁷Biguram, *Hen Puthi*, *op.cit.*,p.23.

⁸*ibid.*,p.24.

⁹*ibid.*,p.23.

¹⁰*ibid.*, p.10.

¹¹*ibid.*,p.12.

¹²*ibid.*,p.12.

¹³*ibid.*,p.14.

¹⁴*ibid.*,p.14.

¹⁵*ibid.*, p.15.

¹⁶*ibid.*,p.16.

¹⁷*ibid.*,p.16.

Bibliography

H. K, (ed.)Barpujari, *The Comprehensive History of Assam*, 2007.

Biguram, Hen Puthi, Hand written on the bark of Agarwood tree, Unpublished.

Suryya Kumar Bhuyan, *Deodhai Assam Buranji*, History and Antiquarian Studies, 4th Edition, 2001.

Hiteswar Borboruah, *Ahomor Din*, Publication Board of Assam, 6th Edition, 2013.

C.Dutta-Baruah and J.Deloche, *Adventures of Jean-Baptiste Chevalier in Eastern India (1752-65)*, 2008.

P. Naoboisa Phukan, *Asom Buranji*, 2013.

Sarbananda Rajkumar, *Itihase Soaura Chashata Bachar*, 2000.

Satyendranath Sarma, *Asomiya Sahityar Itibritta*, 7th Publication, 1977.

Leslie Waterfield Shakespear, *History of Upper Assam, Upper Burmah and North Eastern Frontier*, 1914.

M.S. Randhawa Contribution to Agriculture Advancements in Punjab (1945-52)

Dr. Ravidit Singh
Assistant Professor
Department of History
University College, Chunni Kalan
Email: kang.kangraviditt@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper discusses about M.S. Randhawa's efforts for agriculture advancements and related areas. An attempt has been made to unfold the efforts of M.S. Randhawa for the promotion of agriculture equipments. As an administrator, he became an inspiration for Punjabi's for Green Revolution. This paper intends to focus on his role in building up an environment conducive to the appreciation and encouragement of agriculture and farmers and how through his position as an administrator he extended his role to support agriculture officially and in his individual capacity. His main objective was to broaden the minds of the people to give an inspiration to the people to promote the agriculture of Punjab.

Keywords: *Agriculture Equipments, Green Revolution, Tube-wells, Agriculture, Consolidation Land.*

Punjab is one of the smaller states of India representing 1.6 per cent of its geographical area, 2.6 percent of its cropped area and 2.5 per cent of India's population. It is situated in the north-western corner of the country making an international frontier with Pakistan for more than 300 kilometers. It is flanked in the south by Rajasthan and Haryana, in the east by Himachal Pradesh and in the North by Jammu & Kashmir. The territorial extent of today's Punjab is 29° 30'N to 32° 32'N latitude and 75° 55'E to 76° 50' longitude. In shape, it is roughly triangular with an apex towards the north.¹ It has deep and fertile soils. The Punjab plain lies between 280 and 320 meters above sea level. The work of the two important agents of weathering wind and running water is well exemplified in this area. The action of wind in the western side and the action of running water near Shiwalik range have changed the face of the plain and have given the different tracts a modified look.²

The partition left East Punjab a deficit area that was bound to affect its economy. On 15 August 1947 India was partitioned and a new country, Pakistan appeared on the map of the world. The brunt of partition was borne by the state of Punjab which was partitioned into two segments- east and west Punjab. West Punjab was given 16 districts which included 55 per cent of the population and 62 per cent of the area. It inherited about 69.9 per cent of the income of the joint provinces. It also retained about 70 per cent of the canal area, including the famous Canal Colonies of Lyallpur, Montgomery and Sargodha. The granaries of India were left in the west Punjab.³ East Punjab had districts and five princely states. It obtained about 45 per cent of the population, 33 per cent of the area and 31 per cent of the income of the former united province. It was highly deficient in food grains.⁴

The partition of the Punjab divided the rivers and the canals of the Punjab. The Hindu and the Sikhs land holders left area of 6,700,00 acre in west Pakistan out of which 4,300,000 acre were irrigated while in Punjab only 4,700,000 acres were available out of which only 1,300,000 acre were irrigated the gap in area of about 2,00,000 acre was met by a scheme of graded cuts.⁵ Every land holder, irrespective of his holdings was subjected to a cut of 25 per cent and in the case of large land holders it was as much as 95 per cent. Thus there was a considerable leveling down of land ownership at higher levels.⁶ East Punjab lost not only the major irrigation canals but also the fertile cotton and wheat producing area to Pakistan.⁷

The total deficit of food grains in the East Punjab came to 35,000 tonnes at the time of partition.⁸ The calamity of partition provided a great opportunity for schemes for agricultural development and rural renewal. Twenty seven gardens - colonies for the cultivation of fruit plants were developed in an area of 20,000 acres. Loans were provided for the sinking of tube-wells, purchase tractors and other agricultural implements. Irrigation by means of tube-well powered by electricity was promoted for the first time. The use of tractors for cultivation was also an innovation. In fact, modernization of agriculture in the Indian Punjab started in 1950 with the rehabilitation of refugees. In the process of land allotment a large number of holdings were consolidated. Refugees were more experienced farmers who were ready to accept innovation; it was they who in due course spearheaded the agricultural revolution.⁹

At the time of independence, the greatest challenge before India was to feed its population. The country was facing near famine conditions caused by droughts and floods. After partition, the large scale migration of population

caused huge disruption in the agriculture production process. To feed the population and refugees was a difficult task. The government had to import large quantity of food grains to meet domestic demand for food.¹⁰ The world wide feeling was that India would not be able to stand on her feet due to this strain. The key to tremendous achievements lay in adoption of scientific and modern agricultural methods by farmers in which improved varieties of seeds and huge doses of inputs like fertilizers, pesticides and assured irrigation were used.¹¹

When the country was partitioned in 1947, East Punjab had a backlog of serious socio-economic problems. Its economy was shattered, owing to a large scale destruction of house and crops. The problem of resettlement of refugees was a formidable one. There was very little industry in the state. As a result the yield levels were low and agricultural production efficiency was circumscribed by the defective agrarian structure. In 1947 the Punjab agriculture was left with the problem of land, inadequate irrigation facilities and higher density of population. It made the 'food surplus' state to be 'food deficit'. However, the East Punjab had considerable potential for development of irrigation including exploitation of the ground water for cultivation of rice and wheat.¹² The efforts of capable administrator like Dr. Mohinder Singh Randhawa have played a productive role in this agricultural resettlement and revolution after the independence of the country.

M.S. Randhawa is considered as one of the maker of the modern Punjab. He was born on the midnight of 23-24 September, 1908 to Mata Bachint Kaur and Tehsildar Sher Singh Randhawa in Zira, District Ferozepur, where his father was posted, though his parents came from an affluent family belonging to the village of Bodal in Hoshiarpur district.¹³ M.S.Randhawa was born in a peasant family. He loved the farmers from depth of his soul and yearned to see them prosper and live in good houses in congenial environment. He was a botanist. The most important step taken by M.S.Randhawa to modernize agriculture in Punjab was the introduction of tube-wells and tractors.¹⁴ He had experienced the hardships of farming life in his village Bodal in Hoshiarpur.¹⁵ He had seen how the farmers cleared the scrub jungle infested with snakes and made it into a smiling land producing bumper crops. In 1934 he was selected in the prestigious Indian Civil Services (ICS)¹⁶ and from there he started his career as an administrative officer and became the great builder of modern Punjab. He joined as an assistant Magistrate of Saharanpur (UP) from 1934 to 1936. In 1934, while touring Roorkee subdivision, Randhawa learnt about the work of Sir William Stampe, who was the Chief Engineer of the Irrigation Department. Stampe

was a pioneer in tube-wells in the districts of western United Provinces.¹⁷ After that he served as a Joint Magistrate of Faizabad from 1936 to 1938. In 1938, he served as an Additional Magistrate Almora and he served as District magistrate of Agra from 1939 to 1942.¹⁸ M.S. Randhawa served as Deputy Commissioner of Raebaraeli from 1942 to 1945.

Before the brief tenure of his appointment as Secretary of the Imperial Council of Agriculture Research, M.S.Randhawa took keen interest in its research programme and the agricultural development of the country as a whole. His choice for this post was a particularly happy one for M.S.Randhawa was himself a scientist of distinction, having a number of research publications in botany and as such he was specially qualified to appraise and appreciate problems connected with agriculture and their possible solutions.¹⁹ In September 1945, an invitation arrived from Food and Agriculture Organisation (F.A.O) to attend a world conference on issues in farming technology in Quebec. M.S.Randhawa was chosen as the secretary of the Indian delegation of eight members. Diwan Sir T.Vijay Raghavchari was the leader of the delegation.²⁰ This was the first time M.S.Randhawa made a journey through air. While stopping by on the way, He chanced to visit the biological laboratory of London University and met J.B.S. Halden there. M.S.Randhawa discussed his scheme of museum of evolution with Halden and took his suggestions. After the conference finished, the delegation went to California, he tried to visit as many science museums as he could. It was his habit to devote his full energy and concentration to gather maximum information he could whenever he was visiting new place. He thought that he should try to find the best things that he can incorporate in his plan of administration for the betterment of Indian states. At that time, the Tennessee Valley Authority area was a show-piece in America. M.S.Randhawa went to Knoxville and saw some private farms. These were highly mechanized. What impressed him most was the use of low-horsepower electric motors for pumping water and for cutting fodder.²¹ That idea stuck in his mind.²² The journey that started on October 8, 1945 ended on November 24, 1945. M.S.Randhawa came to the conclusion that Indian Agriculture can be transformed with the use of tractor and electric motors.

After partition when M.S.Randhawa became the Director of Rehabilitation Department, he started a new tradition of using tube-wells and tractors in Punjab. He gave a new direction to agriculture by unifying the scattered land holding of farmers under the process of revenue records so that farmers can be benefitted from new technology by encouraging cooperative farming.²³ After partition most of the displaced person had no money when they started

settling on the evacuee land. Only some of them were able to bring their bullocks and carts with them. But even they were in need of money for purchasing food, fodder and seed. Under the conditions, it became the duty of the government to assist the displaced cultivators by lending money to them.²⁴ From September 1947 to March 1951, more than 45 million rupees was lent to displaced cultivators for different purposes. Loans were also distributed by Punjab Government for repairing and constructing houses and for purchasing seed, fodder, agricultural implements, and Persian wheels, and water pumps, tractors, sinking of tube-wells and repairing²⁵ on the advice of M.S.Randhawa.

Food loan was given to displaced person when they left the relief camps and settled in villages. Financial assistance for the purpose of fodder for animals was also not neglected. The greatest need of a cultivator is pair of bullocks and seeds. After all these, M.S.Randhawa organized a *Kisaan Mela* of agricultural tools and agricultural implements in Jalandhar region of Punjab, where firms dealing in agricultural machinery were invited. Applications for loans for tube-wells and tractors from refugee farmers who had been allotted land were processed in advance and loan chits were given.²⁶ Efforts were mobilized to provide loan to farmers for the purchasing of agricultural tools by M.S.Randhawa. The loanees, who had been notified of the date in advance, came to the fair, received their requirements and carted them home. This system had some advantage over the old system under which the rehabilitation official travelled from village to village with a cash box and handed out sums of money to displaced persons to be spent as they liked. M.S.Randhawa as an administrator at that time kept a keen vigil on the official persons in the field. This unorthodox approach speeded up the rehabilitation of agriculture in Punjab.²⁷

Lal Singh was the director of agriculture of Punjab at that time. He was a dynamic person; all for innovation and experiments. He acquired a number of high power rigs for boring tube-wells. M.S.Randhawa asked him to concentrate them in the suburban villages of the Jalandhar and Ludhiana districts, which he had saturated with loans for tube-wells. M.S.Randhawa also gave the idea to the people of Punjab to use the tube well to make the farming system better.²⁸ When the tube-wells had been bored and farmers were in their villages with pump sets and electric motors, he got hold of the electricity engineers created to justify their work. It was in this simple and unorthodox manner that the movement for the modernization of agriculture in Punjab was started. It must be said to the credit of the refugee farmers that they readily accepted this innovation with the help of M.S. Randhawa.²⁹ He was the first person to introduce the use of tractors in this field in Punjab. In reclaiming waste land and cultivating land in

the riverine areas, tractors proved very useful. Tractors were required not only for reclaiming such areas, but also for keeping them under cultivation.³⁰ Whenever tractors had been used, labour had been more effective and accordingly the cost of production had been reduced. After harvesting the land can be prepared for next crop in time with the help of tractors easily and fast. It must be said to the credit of the refugee farmers of Punjab that they repaired their implements with loans under the guidance of M.S.Randhawa.

Punjab government started the scheme of providing easy loan facility for the farmers for the purchase of tractors and tube-wells on the advice of Dr. Randhawa. With this step agriculture was tremendously benefitted in Punjab. M.S.Randhawa initiated the process of using fertilizers in agriculture in Punjab. Government gave tractor loans on the advice of M.S.Randhawa. At that time a tractor was rare sight in Punjab. In reclaiming waste land in the riverine areas tractors proved very useful. Tractors were required not only for reclaiming such area but also for keeping them under cultivation. The farmers saw the performance of various brands of tractors, pump-sets and electric motors and purchased them according to their own choice.

It was on the advice of M.S.Randhawa that Giani Kartar Singh was initiated as a Revenue Minister³¹ of Punjab and The Consolidation of Holdings and Fragmentation Act, 1948 was enacted during Gopi Chand Bhargava³² Government in Punjab. Though the act was passed in 1948, and a Department of Consolidation was created in April 1949, no substantial work could be done immediately, as the revenue staff remained busy with the allotment of the evacuee land till end of 1950. Under the guidance of M.S.Randhawa, as a Development Commissioner, Consolidation Department started work in 1951-52.³³ An element of compulsion was introduced and hence the progress was rapid. According to this act, village advisory committees were formed to advise the staff on all matters concerning the consolidation of land, and in particular, on the classification and valuation of fields, and preparation of village's consolidation schemes.³⁴

The work of consolidation of holdings in Punjab was started during the British period in 1920 through cooperative consolidation societies. Since consolidation was voluntary, the progress of the work was very slow and from 1920 to 1951 only 2,80,000 acres could be consolidated.³⁵ Soon after independence the necessity of consolidation of holdings was realized and the *East Punjab holdings- Consolidation of holdings Fragmentation Act* was enacted in 1948. An element of compulsion was introduced and hence the progress was rapid.³⁶

The preliminary work of the staff was the correction and bringing up to date of records of right and the preparation of preliminary statements. The plots of land were then evaluated keeping in view the quality of the soil, the source of irrigation, the productivity of land and the distance from the village *abadi* etc. The irregular fields were consolidated into rectangular blocks of an area size.³⁷

Apart from consolidating the holdings of the farmer, the scheme provided a unique opportunity for replanning the country side which included planning the location of schools, hospitals and road. Land was also reserved for community buildings such as community centres, place of worship and playground. Above all straight roads were provided to the village *abadi* as well as to the entire cultivated area. Circular roads around the villages and roads linking one village with another and with the main roads were also demarcated.³⁸

The process of consolidation of land was started in Punjab in 1950's.³⁹ The total expenditure in the consolidation of holdings in the composite state of Punjab was Rs, 145,330,000. The cost per hectare of consolidation ranged from Rs. 7.42 to Rs 9 lakhs which was recovered in full from the beneficiaries and the land owners. The entire work was completed in 20 years.⁴⁰

The most beneficial effect of the scheme of consolidation was that the farmers were enabled to sink tube-wells on their holdings. In 1950 Punjab had no tube wells besides the small number of state –owned tube-wells. Impetus to this was provided by M.S.Randhawa, who prepared schemes for rehabilitation of refugee farmers who were allotted evacuee lands.⁴¹ After reorganization Punjab has 275,000 tube wells. Besides there was a considerable reduction in land leased out, which indicates that the owner cultivators started cultivating their land themselves owing to reduction in the number of fragments. There was also an increase in the cultivated area which was previously lost in embankments. The consolidated plots of land could also enjoy the benefits of canal irrigation. Increase in agricultural production due to consolidation alone without change in techniques was reported to be about 25 per cent. It is entirely due to consolidation of holdings.⁴² This was achieved on account of sound political and administrative rural based leadership. The contribution made to the scheme by minister like Partap Singh Kairon and administrator like M.S.Randhawa is by no means small.

The political leadership realized that instead of building castles in the air, it was better to launch the scheme of consolidation of holdings under the guidance of M.S.Randhawa, Development Commissioner.⁴³ A sound land

reform policy is one of the important components of the strategy of Green revolution. It had two aims; to increase agricultural production and social justice. It has been seen that the best production is obtained in farms which are cultivated by the proprietors themselves and the most inefficient farms are those which are cultivated by tenants. This is mainly due to the fact that tenants have no incentive for land improvements and for the use of chemical fertilizers.⁴⁴

In 1952, M.S.Randhawa paid a visit to the Kullu Valley as the Development Commissioner of Punjab. He proposed that 1,000 acres be brought under apple cultivation. There was opposition by the apple growers of the Valley, who thought that it would create a glut in the apple market. He decided to go ahead after negotiating with the cultivators. Areas suitable for apple planting were surveyed and selected for establishing orchards. A large nursery programme was chalked out and plants were supplied on no profit-no loss basis to the growers. Pruning knives, secateurs and spray pumps were given to the growers as loan in kind with the help of M.S.Randhawa.⁴⁵ Provision was also made for opening training classes in gardening. Apart from the village level workers, orchard cultivators were also encouraged to go in for this training, which was started by M.S.Randhawa as a Development Commissioner of Punjab.

Conclusion

In the end we can say that had M.S.Randhawa been alive today, he will not remain silent spectator to the serious agrarian crisis we are witnessing now. He always conceived that our farmers will help the country to feed itself, if we help farmers to have access to assured and remunerative marketing facilities. We should therefore take the thought Revolution initiated by M.S.Randhawa in agriculture Research, education and extension forward so that our farmers are able to experience an evergreen revolution leading to enhancement of productivity and are profitable in perpetuity without ecological harm. He understood the practical problems of the farmers. He made extensive studies in agricultural economics and equipment. He advocated diversification of crops and was a strong votary for remunerative support price for the agricultural produce. His policies and support to the farmer's resulted in the ushering in of Green Revolution in Punjab. He wished that every farmer of Punjab should be a Model Farmer, every village- a Model village and the entire state of Punjab- a Model State. This was the beginning of a scheme which, in due course had a powerful impact on the agriculture of Punjab under the supervision of M.S.Randhawa. These tube-wells and pumps-sets served the purpose of demonstration and stimulated a demand that had to be met on large scale from year to year. Now there are more than half million private tube-wells in Punjab.

In the first instance, Punjab was being a deficit state at the time, there was a need for increasing agricultural production. Secondly the government of India aimed at establishing a just society free from exploitation. Some land reforms were therefore introduced in the state consistent with the political objective of a socialistic democracy. Since most of the legislations were passed in the early fifties and at that time the present Punjab area was composed of parts of two states.

Notes and References

- ¹M.S. Randhawa, *Green Revolution: A Case Study of Punjab*, Vikas Publishing House, Delhi, 1974, p.21.
- ²M.S.Randhawa, *A History of Agriculture in India, Vol. IV,1947-1981*, Indian Council of Agricultural Research, New Delhi, 1986, p.1.
- ³Rabinder Nath Ghosh, *Agriculture in Economic Development with Special Reference to Punjab*, Vikas Publishing House, Delhi, 1977, p.37.
- ⁴M.S.Randhawa, *Out of the Ashes: An account of the rehabilitation of refugees from west Pakistan in rural areas of East Punjab*, 1952, p.93.
- ⁵*Rehabilitation in East Punjab*, 1950, File No. Gen/ 78B, Rehabilitation Secretariat, Jalandhar.
- ⁶M.S. Randhawa, *op.cit.*, p.31.
- ⁷Rabinder Nath Ghosh, *Agriculture in Economic Development with Special Reference to Punjab*, Vikas Publishing House, Delhi, 1977, p.37.
- ⁸*Grow More Food, Punjab On March,, 1948*, Government of Punjab, Financial Department, Chandigarh, p.1.
- ⁹M.S. Randhawa, *op.cit.*, p.32.
- ¹⁰G. S. Bhalla, *Indian Agriculture Since independence*, National Book Trust, New Delhi, 2007, p.44.
- ¹¹B.M. Bhatia, *Indian Agriculture: A Policy Perspective*, pp. 22-23.
- ¹²M.S. Randhawa, *op.cit.*, p.32.
- ¹³M.S.Randhawa, *Aap Beeti*, Navyug Publishers, New Delhi, 1985, p. 21.
- ¹⁴Transcript of the Interview of Dr. Mohinder Singh Randhawa by Kirpal Singh, Oral History Cell, Department of Punjab Historical Studies, Punjabi University, 11 July 1978.
- ¹⁵M.S.Randhawa, *Aap Beeti*, Navyug Publishers, New Delhi, 1985, p.2.
- ¹⁶Suraj Bhan(ed.), *M.S. Randhawa : Abhinandhan Granth*, Navyug Publishers, Delhi, 1969, P. 20.
- ¹⁷M.S.Randhawa, *A History of Agriculture in India, Vol. IV,1947-1981*, Indian Council of Agricultural Research, New Delhi, 1986, p.24.
- ¹⁸M.S.Randhawa, *Aap Beeti, op.cit.*, pp. 191-194.
- ¹⁹U.N.Chatterjee, *Delhi's New Deputy Commissioner : An Appreciation*, Indian Farming, Vol.No.VII, 10 October, 1946, p.445.
- ²⁰The Conference ended with a commitment to establish a permanent organization for food and agriculture, which was achieved on 16 October 1945 in Quebec City, Canada, following the Constitution of the Food and Agriculture Organization.

- ²¹U.N.Chatterjee, *Delhi's New Deputy Commissioner : An Appreciation*, Indian Farming, Vol.No.VII, 10 October, 1946, p.445.
- ²²M.S.Randhawa, *op.cit.*, p.86.
- ²³Transcript of the Interview of Dr. Mohinder Singh Randhawa by Kirpal Singh, Oral History Cell, Department of Punjab Historical Studies, Punjabi University, 11 July 1978.
- ²⁴M.S.Randhawa, *A History of Agriculture in India, Vol. IV,1947-1981*, Indian Council of Agricultural Research, New Delhi, 1986, p.18.
- ²⁵Transcript of the Interview of Dr. Mohinder Singh Randhawa by Kirpal Singh, Oral History Cell, Department of Punjab Historical Studies, Punjabi University, 11 July 1978.
- ²⁶M.S.Randhawa, *A History of Agriculture in India, Vol. IV,1947-1981*, Indian Council of Agricultural Research, New Delhi, 1986, p.24.
- ²⁷Transcript of the Interview of Dr. Mohinder Singh Randhawa by Kirpal Singh, Oral History Cell, Department of Punjab Historical Studies, Punjabi University, 11 July 1978.
- ²⁸M.S.Randhawa, *A History of Agriculture in India, Vol. IV,1947-1981*, Indian Council of Agricultural Research, New Delhi, 1986, p.18.
- ²⁹*ibid.*, p. 25.
- ³⁰M.S.Randhawa, *Agriculture Research in India : Institute and Organization*, Indian Council of Agriculture Research, New Delhi, 1958, p.IV.
- ³¹M.S.Randhawa, *A History of Agriculture in India, Vol. IV,1947-1981*, Indian Council of Agricultural Research, New Delhi, 1986, p.18.
- ³²Gopi Chand Bhargava was the first chief minister of Punjab on 15 August, 1947 to 13 April,1949.Then he again became Chief Minister of the state for second time from 18 October, 1949 to 20 June 1951. On 21 June, 1964 he became the Chief Minister of Punjab for the third time and remained the Chief Minister till 6 July, 1964.
- ³³M.S.Randhawa, *A History of Agriculture in India, Vol. IV,1947-1981*, Indian Council of Agricultural Research, New Delhi, 1986, p.24.
- ³⁴*East Punjab Holdings* (Consolidation and Prevention of Fragmentation), Act No. 50,1948.
- ³⁵M.S. Randhawa, *Green Revolution: A Case Study of Punjab*, Vikas Publishing House, Delhi, 974, p.40.
- ³⁶*East Punjab holdings-Consolidation of holdings Fragmentation Act* was enacted 1948.
- ³⁷M.S. Randhawa, *Green Revolution: A Case Study of Punjab*, Vikas Publishing House, Delhi,1974, p.40.
- ³⁸G.S.Bhalla, *The Green revolution in the Punjab : Rural Structure Changes in Non Metropolitan Region*, Desh Bhagat Yaadgar Hall, Jalandhar, Acc No, 5016/Box-6/77/1,1979,p.140.
- ³⁹*National Council Applied Economic Research's Techno- Economic Survey of Punjab*, 1959-60, New Delhi, p. IX.
- ⁴⁰G.S.Bhalla, *The Green Revolution in the Punjab : Rural Structure Changes in Non Metropolitan Region*, Desh Bhagat Yaadgar Hall, Jalandhar, Acc No, 5016/Box-6/77/1,1979, p.141.
- ⁴¹M.S. Randhawa, *Green Revolution: A Case Study of Punjab*, Vikas Publishing House, Delhi, 1974,p.109.

⁴²R.N. Chopra, *Green Revolution in India, The Relevance of Administrative Support for its Success*, Intellectual Publishing House , New Delhi, 1985, p. 1

⁴³M.S.Randhawa, *Green Revolution: A Case Study of Punjab*, Vikas Publishing House, Delhi, 1974, p.43-44.

⁴⁴*ibid.*, p. 45.

⁴⁵M.S.Randhawa, *National Extension Service and Community Projects in the Punjab*, Community Project Administration, Punjab Government, Chandigarh, 1955, p.52.

Popular Uprising In South-East Punjab During 1857 A Case of Rohtak Region of Present Day Haryana

Dr. Uma Shanker Singh

Assistant Professor

Department of History

Dyal Singh College

University of Delhi

Email: umashanker.historian@gmail.com

Abstract

The ideas of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity prevailing in 18th century Europe had their impact on the 19th century history of India. After the battle of Plassey (1757) and Buxar (1764) the Britisher's in the form of East India Company tried to expand their power and hegemony in different parts of India. They applied different policies and methods to expand their empire in India. All these led to people's resentment in the form of 1857 revolt. This revolt started from Meerut on 10th May, 1857 and spread to different parts of India. This paper highlights the centre of movement in Haryana in general and Rohtak in particular. Paper highlights how 1857 revolt spread in different parts of Haryana?, who were the leaders?, what were the social compositions of the movement? etc.

Key Words: *Uprising, Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, Rohtak, Liberalism, Mutiny, South-East Punjab, Imperialism, Haryana.*

The American War of Independence (1776) and The French Revolution (1789) are given the credit for movement such as-Liberalism, Democracy and Nationalism, although many of these ideas became greatly transformed in the second half of the 19th and in the early 20th century. No other idea has had such a deep impact on the emerging nations as the ideas of equality, liberty and fraternity. These concepts found expression in many different ways because although they had different meaning for the different section of society, they nonetheless enjoyed a universal appeal. As movements, they were directly linked with political expression and social protests and the French Revolution became a source of inspiration for many of the subsequent movements. With the rise of Napoleon in Europe in general and France in particular, the slogan of French revolution such as- Liberty, Equality and Fraternity spread in different parts of the world.¹This was the period when India was under the British Imperialism and came under the influence of above revolutionary ideas prevailing in Europe.

The present study deals with the popular uprisings which took place during 1857 in present day Central Haryana which was termed as South-East Punjab during British period. The paper deals mainly with the peoples activities, actions in and around the Rohtak regions. The 19th century was an epoch making social, political and economic upheavals in the Indian history. In this century Indians fought bravely against the economic, social and political exploitations being carried by the British imperialism. The most important uprising against the British exploitation in 19th century was the 1857 revolt. The mighty popular revolt which started in 1857 soon engulfed most parts of India. The movement started from Meerut and soon reached Delhi from where it reached South East Punjab presently called Haryana. Local community participated in the movement very bravely. Although the movement was started by the sepoys but soon the communities like Rajputs, Jats, Ahirs, Ranghars and low caste Kasai's joined the movement. Hindu Muslim equally participated in the revolt against the British imperialism. Though the movement was crushed by the Britishers but it created the base for the future struggle against the imperialist forces.

The nature of 1857 revolt

What happened in the year 1857-58 in large parts of country has been given many names – some thought it was a ‘mutiny’ of the sepoys of the British Indian Army; others believed it to be a ‘popular revolt’ of the civilian population. William Dalrymple has recently used the term ‘uprising’.² Eric Stokes one of the foremost historians of 1857, has convincingly argued that it was not one movement but many³; so any one name possibly will not suffice. In the last 150 years almost every aspects of this history has been contested, re-imagined and re-invented for their presentist use. In 1998 Vipin Jain published an annotated bibliography on the ‘Indian mutiny’—as it is more popularly known in the International historical literature. He listed 1,172 printed books in European languages, 369 articles from journals and periodicals and 108 works of fiction.⁴ It is therefore one of the most written about episodes of Indian history. The 100th anniversary of the event in 1957 came up with various writings, discussing about the reasons, impacts and the intellectual framework associated with the revolt. This included the work S.N.Sen (1957), Talmiz Khaldun (1957), S.A.A. Rizvi (1957), P.C Joshi (1957), R.C Majumdar (1963), Atiq Siddiqui (1966), Moinul Haq (1968), Mahdi Hussain (1986) and many others. Many of these works remained based on British officials account. The other writers used indigenous sources. The work of S.N Sen, *Eighteen Fifty-Seven*, for example was written to correct the British imperialist bias. The 150th anniversary of 1857 revolt was celebrated in 2007 with much more pomp, gaiety and fanfare than it

was done in 1957. There was involvement of various government agencies and people participated in large number. It was during this time when the event was studied as 'greatest anti-colonial uprising of 19th century in the history of world' and a very serious effort was made to bring into focus indigenous discourse of rebel's world. One hundred sixty two years have passed even though new researches are being done on 1857 movement. Scholars like John W Kaye, G.B. Malleson, T.R. Homles, McLeod Innes, J. Thompson, Sir George Campbell, J Cave Browne, N.A.Chick, Saul David, William Wilson Hunter, G.W Forrest, Peter Robb, Chris Bayly, Thomas Metcalf, V.D Savarkar, S.B Chaudhary, Rudrangshu Mukherjee, Sabyasachi Dasgupta, Kaushik Roy, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Gautam Bhadra, Ranjit Guha, Rajat Ray, Swarupa Gupta, Biswamoy Pati etc. have thrown light on the events of 1857 revolt. In spite of all these, in the light of new sources and new perspectives scholars are pursuing research on different dimensions of 1857 revolt.

The popular revolt of 19th century in Haryana

The natives of Haryana gave a tough time to the British Imperial regime through different popular movements, of which 1857 was most memorable. This uprising spread in different regions of South-East Punjab such as in Delhi regions- Delhi Proper, Sonipat; Gurgaon regions- Gurgaon, Mewat, Ahirwal, Palwal, Faridabad, Ballabgarh, Pataudi, Farrukh Nagar; Panipat Regions- Panipat, Karnal, Jalmana; Thanesar Regions- Thaneswar, Ladwa; Hisar Regions- Bhattu, Hansi, Rania, Loharu; Ambala Regions- Ambala, Rupa, Jagadhari and Rohtak Regions- Kharkhaudah, Sampla, Dojana, Dadri, Jhajjar.

The sources dealing with the popular uprisings of 19th century in South East Punjab are available in National Archives of India (NAI), New Delhi, Punjab State Archives Chandigarh, Punjab State Archives Patiala, Haryana State Archives Panchkula and its Regional Repository- Rohtak, Hisar, Gurgaon and Ambala; and Nehru Memorial Museum and Library New Delhi. Some of the local tracts such as- Rao Man Singh's book 'Abhir Kuldepika', Subedar Vaidya Shivdhan Singh Yadav's work- 'Yadav Parivar' are very important. K.C. yadav's works such as- 'Undoing the Bondage; A Study of Life of Rao Tula Ram Hero of 1857 and Ahirwal ka Itihaas throws light on the history this region. Dr. Boodh Prakash's work- Glimpses of Haryana, The Punjab and Delhi in 1857 written by Cave Brownie, Caste and Tribes of Punjab written by Denzil Ibbetson are important sources to know the history of this part of India. The work of Griffin and Massey, James Mill, John Kaye's work- History of Sepoy War 1857-58 Vol. I and History of Indian Mutiny Vol. IV written by Kaye and Malleson, the Rajas of Punjab written by L.H. Griffin are of great help. Wahabi movement in

India written by Qeyamuddin Ahmed, Our Indian Musalmans written by W.W. Hunter, Elementary aspects of Peasant Insurgency by Ranjit Guha etc. are invaluable sources. The activities taking place in 19th century marked a remarkable moment in the sphere of political, economic and social history of the above region. The changes which took place had far reaching consequences, in the history of present day Haryana.

The popular uprising in Rohtak regions during 1857

The origin of Rohtak or Rohtak can be traced from Rohtasgarh.⁵ Historically it is named after the ruler Raja Rohtas during whose reign the city was built. The name also recurs in the famous tank located in the town of Gohana.⁶ The preserved traditions of the village communities mark the origin of this city. We find many waves of immigration of Rajputs, Jats, Ahirs and Afghans in this part of Haryana. This region of Haryana was historically very active during the Sultanate period (1206-1526). In 1410 Idris Khan was besieged in the fort of Rohtak and captured by Khizr Khan a pathan nobleman descended from the family of Sher Khan.⁷ This region of Haryana remained equally important during Mughal, Maratha and Sikh period. This part of country came under British influence with the capture of Delhi in 1803. The military adventure of George Thomas carved out his principality in Haryana like- Mehum, Beree, Jhajjar, in the present district of Rohtak.⁸ In 1824 separate Rohtak district was made consisting of Gohana, Kharkhoda, Mandauthi, Rohtak-Beri and Mehum-Bhiwani Tehsils. Upto 1832 AD the whole Delhi territory including Rohtak was administered by a political agent under resident at Delhi.⁹ Rohtak district was transferred from the North West Provinces to Punjab after 1857-58.¹⁰ The mutiny which began from Meerut on 10th May reached Delhi on 11th May from where it entered Rohtak on the same day. The district of Rohtak comprising an area of 1811 square miles had a population of half a million during 1857. It was bounded to the north by Karnal and to the south by Gurgaon, in the east Dojana and Delhi were there and in the west we find Hisar and Jind.¹¹ Many people of this part of Haryana had been serving in regular regiment of East India Company. The news about the revolt spread to the villages through these sepoys. Hindus formed about 65% population including 30% Jats, divided into numerous clan comprising several villages such as- a group of 84 (Chaurasi), 52 (Bawani), 24 (Chaubisi) and 12 (Barahi).¹² Jats became conscious after hearing the news of revolt. The Ranghars¹³ living in the midst of the sturdy Jat population also became active during 1857 uprising. The true occupation of Ranghars were cattle rustling and salt smuggling or military services for any who would hire them.¹⁴ Ranghars and the Butchers setup the mohammadan green flag under

which number of Ranghar soldiers who had muttined collected to form a unit. The leadership was provided by Bisarati Ali and Babar Khan. Bisarati Ali was a peasant from Kharkhoudah and had joined army and became risaldar by his hardwork. He was acquainted with military organization and warfare.¹⁵ Under the leadership of Bisarati Ali the whole region got free from British control, but they could not control Rohtak which was under the administration of John Adam Loch (of the Bengal civil Service) deputy commissioner. He had been in-charge of the district for the last 10 months. John Adam Loch with the help of Tehsildar Bakhtawar Singh, Thanedar Bhure Khan and the local troops tried to defend the British rule but he was overpowered by the local people taking part in the uprisings.¹⁶ These local peoples got encouragement when Tafzal Hussain an emissary of Bahadur Shah Zafar came to Rohtak via Bahadurgarh. John Adam Loch fled to Gohana with Thanedar Bhure Khan and Tehsildar Bakhtawar Singh. Other European officers also fled away from the district. The Offices, Kacheries and Bungalows of the British officials were burnt by the rebels. They destroyed the government revenue records, plundered the Mahajans and Baniyas and set the prisoners free from the district jail.¹⁷ The local peoples attacked on the British symbol of imperialism and tried to dismantle it to show their hegemony. All these were seen as a source of exploitation of the masses. During 1857 revolt there were some inter-rivalries amongst the Jats and Rajput community. In spite of this almost all the communities of the district such as- Jats, Rajputs, Ranghars and low caste Kasai (Butchers) played a prominent role in the uprisings. They got support from the local peasant against the Britishers. At many places Landlords who enjoyed rent free tenures and several other privileges also stood against the Britishers. When Mughal representative Tafzal Hussain left Rohtak the district came in grip of lawlessness. The news of factionalism amongst the different communities was reported to Bahadur Shah Zafar, who at once issued a farman to the people of Rohtak warning them to unite against the common enemy. He also warned that trouble makers will be harshly punished.¹⁸ There was no incident of communal strife between Hindus and Muslims. It is reported that royal instructions were executed in the district with the help of local chaudharies.¹⁹

The crushing of the uprisings by the Britishers

The British authorities took a very serious note of the whole situation and in order to bring Rohtak under their control, they dispatched the 60th native infantry of Ambala from Panipat under the command of Deputy Commissioner John Adam Loch on 28th May.²⁰ It is said that this regiment had already revolted

against the British government on May 10 in Ambala so John Loch took this responsibility to command it with a great deal of hesitation. John Adam Loch marched directly to Rohtak on 31st May, 1857.²¹ The district headquarter was recaptured easily as therebels did not pose any serious threat. In the meantime the rebels made secret negotiation with 60th Native Infantry. As a result of this, the regiment rose up in open mutiny on 10th June, 1857. The European officers saved their lives by fleeing in time. Now the rebel sepoys left Rohtak to reach Delhi on 11th June.²² By August 1857, Delhi was reported that Ranghars again got united under the leadership of Babar Khan.²³ Babar Khan was a peasant from Rohtak.²⁴ The British government took serious notes of the loss of Rohtak. This was the time when Major General Wilson, who was commanding the Delhi Field Force, sent Lt. W.S.R. Hodson with a small force to protect the Europeans in Rohtak area.²⁵ This force reached KharKhaudah, a village about 20 miles from Rohtak on Sonipat road, at about 12'O clock the same day.²⁶ The villagers gave a tough fight to Hodson.²⁷ The villagers got a motivating leadership of Risaldar Bisarati Ali. Even Hodson admitted their bravery.²⁸ With the help of superior power the Britishers quickly destroyed the Rebels. Bisarati Ali fell fighting along with 25 of his men.²⁹ In this fight British also suffered a number of casualties on their side. Soon after this encounter Hodson got intelligence report that under the leadership of Sabar Khan again a large number of Rebels rallied in Rohtak. Soon he left KharKhaudah for Rohtak. Hodson engaged their man with the local population who had taken shelter inside a fortified building in the vicinity of the Old Civil Station. The rebels successfully prevented them from entering the building from any side. At this moment Hodson withdrew his man to the open space in old kacheri compound. Britishers were attacked by Sabar Khan (the chief of Ranghars) with about 300 horse man belonging to different irregular cavalry regiment and a mass of foot man while the Britishers and their army was relaxing in the night. The battle of Rohak was indecisive where both the parties broke away without giving victory on each other.³⁰ Hodson left Rohtak for Delhi leaving some important towns such as KharKhaudah, Sonipat, Mehum, Gohana etc. under the care of Raja of Jind and the local Chaudhary. After the decline of Delhi the people got demoralized. General Van Courtland, D.C of Ferozpur reached Rohtak and he found his job was very easy.³¹ Villages all over the Rohtak submitted without a blow, mutinous sepoys surrendered, roads were opened and a large district of Rohtak was reduced by 26th September, 1857.

Conclusion

The ideas of 18th century Europe had their influence on the 19th century Indian Uprisings. The revolt of 1857 has many histories- reconstructed, re-imagined, reinvented, remembered and memorialized in various forms. There cannot be any one authentic version of these events- their causes, their nature and their aftermath remain forever contested. This paper deals about popular uprisings of 1857, especially in South East Punjab presently called Haryana. The movement spread in Delhi, Gurgaon, Panipat, Thaneswar, Hisar, Ambala and Rohtak regions of Haryana. This paper argued about the people's participation in 1857 revolt in Rohtak regions. Although the movement was initiated by the sepoys who were mainly Indian subjects and soon the leadership of the movement was taken by the local people comprising farmers, labourers, artisans and feudal lords etc. The main communities who participated in the movement were Rajputs, Jats, Ahirs, Afgans, Ranghars and low caste Kasai (Butchers). This movement is a perfect example of the unity between Hindus and Muslims. In this movement the rebels burnt the offices, kacheris, government bungalows, government revenue records and other symbols of British imperialism. The peoples attacked on the symbols of imperialism because they wanted to dismantle it to show their hegemony. They also plundered the Mahajans, Sahukars and Baniyas because they were seen as a source of exploitation for the masses. They freed the prisoners by breaking the jails. Although movement was crushed by British administration, it created the base for future struggles against the imperialist forces which were to take place in this part of the country.

Notes and References

¹John Merriman, *A History of Modern Europe: From the Renaissance to the Present*, W.W. Norton & Company, New York-London, 1996.

²William Dalrymple, *The Last Mughal: The Fall of a Dynasty, Delhi, 1857*, Bloomsbury, London, 2006.

³Eric Stokes, *The Peasant Armed*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, Delhi, 1986, pp. 226-43.

⁴Vipin Jain, *The Indian Mutiny of 1857: An Annotated and Illustrated Bibliography*, Vintage Books, Gurgaon, Haryana, 1998

⁵*Punjab District Gazetteer*, Vol. III, Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1911, Lahore, pp.330-331.

⁶*Rohtak District Gazetteer*, 1910, p.1.

⁷Elliot and Dowson, *History of India Told by its Own Historians*, Vol. IV, Allahabad, 1969, p.43.

⁸Prakash, Buddha, *Glimpses of Haryana*, Kurukshetra University, 1967, p.69.

⁹Rohtak district Gazetteer, 1910, p.30.

¹⁰*ibid.*

¹¹Kaye and Malleison, *History of Indian Mutiny*, Vol. IV, London, 1870, pp.140-41.

¹²District Gazeteer, Rohtak, 1910, pp.32-42.

¹³Ranghars are a muslim ethnic group, which is found in Sindh and Punjab provinces of Pakistan and Haryana, Delhi and Utar Pradesh states of India.

¹⁴Rohtak District gazetteer, 1910, p-32.

¹⁵Cave Browne, *The Punjab and Delhi in 1857*, Vol. II, London, 1893 pp.142-44.

¹⁶K.C. Yadav, *The Revolt of 1857 in Haryana*, p.61.

¹⁷Settlement Report of Rohtak, 1873-79, p.37.

¹⁸The Settlement Report Rohtak, 1873-79, p.37.

¹⁹K.C. Yadav, *Delhi in 1857, ibid.*, p.19.

²⁰John Loch(D.C of Rohtak) who accompanied corps from Panipat to Rohtak, *Foreign Secret Consultations*, No. 100-103, 25 September 1857.

²¹Settlement report of Rohtak, 1873-77, p.39.

²²G.W. Forrest, *ibid.*

²³Trial of Bahadur Shah, p.19.

²⁴Cave Browne, *The Punjab and Delhi in 1857*, Vol. II, London, 1893 pp.142-44.

²⁵Cave Browne, *ibid.*, p.14.

²⁶W.S.R. Hodson, *Twelve Years of a Soldiers Life in India*, London, 1858, p.265.

²⁷G.W.Forrest, *ibid.*, Vol.I, p.352.

²⁸Hodson, *ibid.*, p.265.

²⁹Cave Browne,*ibid.*, Vol. II, p.37.

³⁰G.W. Forrest, *ibid.*, pp.253-57.

³¹District Gazeteer of Karnal, 1910, p.40.

Iranian Elite Culture and Indian Sub-Continent The Family of Qazi Hamid-Ud-Din Nagauri In Jaunpur and Salon(Awadh)

Dr. Jaya Kakkar

Associate Professor

Department of History

Shyam Lal College

University of Delhi

Email: jkakk@shyamlal.du.ac.in

Abstract

The paper aims at understanding the dissemination of Iranian elite culture through certain families in northern India from the thirteenth century to the modern times. As tassawuf, was a major component of this culture in pre-modern Iran, it has left its imprint on all the related aspects like literature, poetry and even music. Hence, an attempt has been made to understand this cultural transposition by examining the saga of the family of Qazi Hamid ud Din Nagauri (d. 1244) which necessitates a peep into the efforts of some of his family members who had later on migrated to Jaunpur (capital of the Sharqi Sultans) and Salon in the kingdom of Awadh. It has been shown that in spite of the various influences and problems the main tradition of the family i.e. tassawuf and academic excellence continued throughout the period of our survey.

Key words : *Iranian culture, Familial traditions, Sufi thought, Sharqi era, Khanqah Karimia Salon, Awadh.*

The focus of the paper is to reconstruct the history of the families in Northern India which, having immigrated into India from Persia, played important role in the propagation and diffusions of Persian culture through the pursuit of literature and poetry on one hand and through their contributions towards the development of mysticism on the other. Such records rarely survive mainly due to the political upheavals, and perpetually shifting political equations; the British made attempts to undermine the contributions of some of these families after 1857.

Consequently, few families could survive the adversities and were able to preserve the records which have now come handy to resurrect their lineage and contributions. While one is at the process of rebuilding, one clearly witnesses

the manner in which the colonial masters systematically destroyed the pre colonial edifice of Indian society. But then this is not the only insight. Any perceptive observer can simultaneously unearth many other facts such as pattern of migration from abroad, the political upheavals, development and maintenance of sufistic traditions and the manner in which few families became the nucleus for the dissemination of Iranian culture in the sub-continent.

Thus, for instance, when one puts the family history of Qazi Hamid-ud-din Nagori under the arc light which came into India, settled at Nagor in Rajasthan, then moved to Jaunpur and finally migrated to Salon, one is able to trace not only the saga of a particular family. Rather, we learn about the contemporary society and the transformations within it. This then is the real novelty of this presentation. And the innovative approach lies in the fact that the researcher has avoided hagiology, oral traditions, and other legendary but unsubstantiated accounts of the events. On the contrary, the paper is based on well documented and authenticated contemporary accounts which can stand up to historical scrutiny.

It is a well documented fact that India (also known as Hindustan) and Iran have been traditional allies of each others since times immemorial. Those families which migrated from Iran and came to India, have contributed significantly towards transposing Iranian elite culture on Indian soil. This they did by expounding the principles of mysticism while they attempted to deliberate on certain controversial issues of their era. Simultaneously, while they were on it, they enriched the canvas of mystic ideology through the creation of scores of letters, treatises, and poetics. Every serious student of Indo-Iranian cultural ties acknowledges this contribution. What remains less known, however, is the fact that individual members of these families contributed their bit at various chronological points under various regimes through their literary and intellectual exploits.

This researcher, therefore, has decided to study the career of some of these families. Such an inquiry should help us in finding whether the traditions initiated by one individual were adopted and carried forward later on by the family or not. Or, whether the ideological, mystical, and theological positions embraced by the members of these families were taken up as ideological commitments by the later generation or whether they were abandoned subsequently, having been treated as inconsequential in nature and practice. Finally, such an exercise should help us in unraveling as to how far the state patronage had helped, or hindered, the multifaceted growth of these families and advancement of their pursuits in the academic, mystical, and theological domains.

While many families contributed immensely towards transposing of the Iranian elite culture on the Indian sub-continent during the medieval times, there is a dearth of historical accounts recording the contribution of these families. There are hardly any authentic documents that might enable a researcher to reconstruct the histories of these families or their immense contributions towards ushering in the cultural transition of such epic dimensions.

But this then becomes a challenge. The present researcher thought that it would be a worthwhile endeavour to extricate from the archives and study the contributions of these individuals and families who worked zealously and incessantly towards bringing this cultural shift. The scope of the study was in fact enlarged to learn about the compulsions and patterns of migration, the activities of these migrants in the land of their origin or one hand and the reception they received from their adopted land. This, it was thought, in turn should give us insight into how the Iranian elite culture seeped in Indian subcontinent initially and gradually helped shape parts of the culture prevailing in the northern Indian towns.

With a view to make a relevant contribution towards the deliberations proposed at the present conference, the author has decided to traverse an area that has largely remained uncharted. I have decided to study the pursuits of the family of Qazi Hamid ud din Nagori (d. 1244) initially at Nagaur and thereafter at Delhi. His writings and advocacy for the cause of sufi music (Sama) during the thirteenth century are well known. No less luminary than the famous Chisti Sufi Shaikh Nizamud din Auliya (d. 1325) endorses that Sama became acceptable to the locals of Delhi in the thirteenth century. The commitment of the Qazi was especially noteworthy since he was associated with the Suhrawardi order of the sufis who are not very fond of this practice.¹

When a branch of his family migrated to Jaunpur during the reigns of Sharqi Sultans, many of the members of his family such as Bahaud din Nathu (d. 1540), Shaikh Addhan (d. 1568) and Shaikh Alahdad attained the status of celebrities. A collection of letters of Shaikh Natthu was compiled and edited by his son Shaikh Addhan. This correspondence is replete with instances of the mystic ideology, dwelling on the several discussions of Persian mysticism that were being practised by the Indian elite of that era. An in-depth study of this compilation should enlighten any reader as to how the Iranian mystic traditions got seeded and bore fruits on the Indian soil during the period of the sharqi sultans.²

The next landmark in the history of this family came when some members of the family once again migrated from Jaunpur to Salon, a small qasba on the

easternmost frontier of the then Sharqi kingdom. The family is now settled there since the last ten generations. Many members of family such as ShaikhPirMuhammad(d. 1687), Shaikh Muhammad Ashraf (d. 1754) Shah Muhammad Karim Ata (d. 1833) and Shah Muhammad Naim Ata(d.1966) have earned name and fame for themselves. These members of family of QaziHamiud din have propagated the cause of the tasswuf in ruralAwadh, and have enriched theological studies as well.³

Qazi Hamiduddin Nagauri had migrated to India during the twelfth century and was entrusted with the Qaziship of Nagaur. However, he would keep on travelling to different parts of Islamic East. And this is how he got initiated into the precepts of mysticism by the founder of Suhrawardiorder. Likewise, Shaikh Shahabuddin befriended with the famous Chishti mystic Bhaktiyar Kaki (d.1236) which reached its pinnacle when the two saints came to reside in Delhi permanently a little while later. This bond has attained immortality since even death could not part them: they lie buried close to each other at Mehrauli in Delhi. And he got so immersed in the Chishtisufi practice of listening to sama that he started making the practise of sama popular in Delhi. Besides lending credence and authenticity to the practice, he did all this in the face of stiff opposition from contemporary theologians. He became a towering figure in the then intellectual milieu. The books that he wrote and left behind subsequently as his legacy bear testimony to his intellectual prowess and to his range and depth of understanding in various academic fields. A branch of his family later shifted to Jaunpur.

Qazi Hamid ud din Nagauri emigrated from Bukharato Delhi with his father Khwaja Ata Ulla during the reign of Sultan Muizzuddin. Sometime after settling in Delhi the father was appointed as Qazi of Nagaur, then an important town. After the death of his father he was handed over the Qaziship; thus he was conferred with this title. But his calling lay elsewhere. He resigned very soon and became a wanderer in the various parts of Islamic East.⁴ Hamid-ud-din was an eminent scholar and a prolific writer. He became the master of the intellectual class of his time. His writings are important testimony to his intellectual genius as also to his range and reach in various academic fields. Some of his famous works are Tawali-i-Shumus (the Dawns of the Suns) and Lawaih(flashes).⁵

The Shaikh had a natural flair for poetry; so naturally he became a poet of reckoning. His verses, found in his various works, go a long way to establish the veracity of the contention that he was a talented versifier. The verses and impetuously with which his poetical and prose writings are imbued further add to the charm of his metrical composition. But even though he led a life of

privation, immersing himself in ecstatic dancing and music, his way of life frequently brought him in confrontation with ulema since they consider edsama to be an aberration which was opposed to shariat.

The Tawali has been a source of considerable influence on people of all hues and is very popular. Virtually everyone referring to Shaikh Hamid ud din in his work mentions it unfailingly. Some have even quoted chapter and verses from it at some length. All this makes the work one of superb value and importance.

The work follows an allusive style, yet it is effervescent and forceful. Its theme is the exposition of the commonly known ninety nine names of God. This exposition is different from the ones given other popular counterparts since it is out and out mystical. The customary praise of God and of Prophet is conspicuously absent here. The treatise opens with a prayer to God for the thorough understanding of the meaning of the opening chapter of the Quran and for the grant of spiritual benediction upon the author. Therefore, it immediately goes on to the exposition of Huwa (the first and the fundamental name of God). This deviation from the traditional methodology of the treatment of an object, and that took a spiritual one, demonstrates in a way the aversion of the sufi's to traditions, and by implications to form which the sufis considered anathematic to 'spirit'. Thus, briefly put, the discussion embodied in the Tawali are of mystical orientation and are interspersed with sufistic concepts. Most of the sufis of the faith to which the Qazi belonged were pantheistic in their oral and written traditions; this trend consequently pervades all through in his work.⁶

The Shaikh used to keep himself abreast of the religious and philosophical trends of his time. He would criticize those which viewed through his lens, behaved contrary to the sufistic, and by implication, Islamic tenets like the dualism of the Magians and the fallacious reasoning of the sophists. Exposing the falsehood of dualism and sophism while stressing the concept of the unity of God, as held by the sufis, the Shaikh says: ' O brother! Affirm, as the mystic of the times have said, all the existence and do not take polytheism to your mind. Then deny real existenceto all, and not be afraid of the sophists in order that you might reach the source of the unity of God... for the affirmation of the existence of creatures is the affirmation of the influence of the qualities of God. But know that the existence which is attributed to each creature is borrowed (*i.e.*, non-sub stanti also take away the borrowed garment (*i.e.* imaginary existence) from the creatures and fleeing it to the wind of accidents (implying that all the beings other than God exist in name only) ,, And then give a deep thought to the scheme of things, and if ever then the existence of some contingent

appears substantial to you, consider yourself to be a polytheist...and do not, out of propriety, choose the epithet of 'unitarian' for yourself, for in that case you remain in the nadir of devotion. And, if unfortunately, you have reached that stage and see Him and yourself both coexisting simultaneously), pass on yourself the judgement of dualism because it is not the function of a Unitarian. If you wish to be delivered from the terrific whirlpool plunge yourself in the boundless ocean of unity, and that which you had been considering borrowed with regard to others, think it so in respect of yourself also (*i.e.*, consider your existence too, to be borrowed, like that of all the other creatures), and take it (*i.e.* the borrowed existence) away from yourself and conceal it in the corner of nonexistence, or in the abyss of shame, so that the secrets of unity are known to you'.⁷

The institution of sama (audition), one of the most popular mystic practice, became a subject of great controversy among the nobles of Delhi. Some mystics kept musicians in their service permanently. Two eminent Qazis of Delhi, Qazi Sad and QaziImad considered this practice to be unethical and even illegal. They protested against it and approached Iltumish to stop it. The Sultan summoned a mahzar to discuss the legality of the issue and invited QaziNagauri to participate in it. When Qazi Nagauri reached the court of Iltumish, the latter got up from his seat and showed great respect to him. On being asked to comment on the legality of sama, the Qazi opined that while it was permitted for the mystics but was prohibited for the externalists. It is also said that Nagauri even wrote a pamphlet in support of this view.

There were frequent protests by the orthodox Ulema against the mystic institution of sama but the ulema could not inter dictit. This difference of opinion between the theologians and sufis on the issue of sama had become quite wide ever since the Delhi Sultanate was founded. The issue was passionately debated upon.

It appears that the question of sama was a matter of concern during the period when Hujwiri was writing his treatise. On this issue he was closer to the school of Junaid. Thus, he gave precedence to the rule of the shariat over mystic experience. He writes, The lawfulness of sama depends on circumstances and cannot be attested absolutely. If sama produces a lawful effect on the mind then it is lawful. It is unlawful if the effect is unlawful, and permissible if the effect is permissible. However, the controversy kept on raging for the next centuries. Among all this, the credit of popularisingthe practice of sama among sufi circles of Delhi must go to Qazi Nagauri and Qazi Minhaj Siraj Juzjani (d:

1259). The latter contributed mainly in giving legal sanction to the institution of sama in India.

After the death of Qazi Hamid ud din at Delhi, we have little information about his surviving family members who were settled in Delhi, although the local tradition with the inmates of the dargah of Shaikh Bakhtiyar Kaki would like us to believe that his descendants became the custodians of the complex. But it is difficult to prove or disprove such a contention. The only thing one can say with certainty is that his descendants had a strong presence in affairs of the dargah complexes immediately after his death; otherwise his grave would not have been on a raised platform as compared to that of the grave of Shaikh Kaki.

The next important stage in the fortune of family is when one branch of it migrates to Jaunpur, the then capital of Sharqi Sultans, when it has become a seat of high cultural trends of religious activities. It is here that we find one of his descendants, Shaikh Bahaud din Natthu, was born and brought up. During his lifetime he wrote letters to his students, murids, khalifas, colleagues, and friends. Later Shaikh Addhan, his son and successor, compiled and edited these letters while his father was alive - and titled the volume as Sahaifut- tariqah. These letters throw valuable light on contemporary religious trends.⁸ The collections contain eighty nine letters. Eighty two of these letters are addressed to thirty seven different mashaiks. Two of these deal with the occasion of the death of the spiritual mentor of the author. Another one deals with the rules of audition (sama) and the other four cover the essentials of mysticism.

Shaikh Addhan Chishti started the compilation of these letters on the second of Shaban (904 A.H. /1498 A.D.) and completed the collections perhaps by 906 A.H./1500 A.D. while his father was still alive. His father died in 947 A.H./1540 A.D. These letters have been written in a florid Persian style of those days. Along with the verses of the holy Quran, sayings of the Holy Prophet, couplets of Persian poets, and Hindi dohas (rhymes) have been quoted. Stories and anecdotes with great didactic values enhance the effects of these letters.⁹ The main theme of these letters is mysticism. Besides the essentials of faith, the writer has discussed the principles of mysticism, the importance of Marifat, Nafs, Shaitan, Tauba, Safa i Batin, Yad i Haqq, Zikr, Muraqaba, etc. The author also discusses the rules governing the relationship between the pir and the murid.¹⁰ Some information about the different mystic orders about the Akhyari Abrari and Shattari order has also been provided by the writer. The discussion assumes great significance in view of the fact that the writings are supposed to

have been based on the personal spiritual experiences of the Shaikh. Shaikh Bahaud din Natthu was another great scholar of all esoteric subjects. He used to write poetry in Hindi. Apart from preaching spiritual precepts he also used to teach his murids and students who became well known scholars and sufis. They continued his tradition after his death.

The son and successor of Shaikh Bahaud din, namely Shaikh Addhan, was another eminent scholar. He seemed to be absorbed simultaneously in *ishq* (true love) and *marifat* (wisdom of Allah). In his writings he was overtaken by a spiritual ecstasy. His writings, descriptions and thoughts make him out to be a *sufi* of a very high order as also an experienced teacher and *pir*. When he laments that people are careless about *aqibat* and are busy in the wordy pursuits the reader is tempted to get rid of this world and care only for the next world. He discusses in his letters Islamic mysticism, its philosophy, and all its other aspects including its high spiritual status and mysteries. He explains ways and means of overcoming difficulties that come in the path of spiritualism. He explains the rights and the obligations of a *murid* as well as that of a *pir*. All things told, these letters are rare, stylish, and of an everlasting value even in contemporary modern times.¹¹

Shaikh Bahaud din discusses in his letters almost every aspect of mysticism. He explains in detail the meaning of *Kalima-i Tamjid* (confession of faith in God) and its *marifat* (spiritual wisdom). He also explains in detail the importance, effects on religion and on worldly matters of mysticism. He expounds on what belongs to Allah and explains *Tawhid* (faith in the unity of God). He also describes as to how everything has been created from his *nur* (i.e. the light) and how a man and this world are composed of four elements, viz., *Khak*, *Ab*, *Bad* and *Atish*. And all these themselves originated from the *Nur* of Allah. He further explains the significance of the statement of the Holy Prophet 'I am from the *Nur* of Allah' and everything in the world is from my *Nur*. Allah has no face and figure and therefore nothing in this world can bear the figure of Allah. Allah is all pure and transparent. The author explains further that everything in this world is a part of one body and one *Nur* and that is Allah.¹²

He further writes that although all Prophets were asked to preach and teach *Salat* to their *umma*, their *Salat* were different from the *Salat* to the *umma* of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. *Salat* teaches the significance of *Zakat* (Legal alms, according to the Islamic *Shariat*), *Rozah*, *Haji*, *Shahadat*, and *Jihad*. So when the special people say their *salat* their heart is completely absorbed in *Haqq* (the true God) and when the prophets or the *sufis* who have attained high level in mysticism do the same their *Ruh* is completely immersed and intoxicated

with the true love of Allah. Then there are two other kinds of Salat, viz, Salat-i Zahir and Salat-i Batin. The former is for the Ruh and is performed in accordance with the rites of Shariat, while the latter is acknowledged as the true meditation of the heart.¹³

The significance of Haji and its importance is another very important theme of his letters. The preaching here is to obey and respect the order of Allah and not merely visit the holy Ka'ba. The author writes in great depth about Marifat (spiritual wisdom) and discusses its significance at length in letters number forty four and forty seven. For Salat, he says, the Taharat is must, which again is of two kinds. Taharat-i Zahir is attained by Wazu and Ghusul, while Taharat-i Batin (inner cleanliness) is obtained by the purification of the self. The author believes and advises that the Shaitan is the oldest enemy of mankind; we must always endeavour to suppress evil temptations by shaitan. Fighting against Nafs (self) and Shaitan has been acknowledged as Jihadi Akbar (war against one's own lust).

The author emphasizes that nothing but Yad i Haqq (remembrance of Allah) should pass through the heart of the sufi and that every breath of a sufi should be spent in the Zikr of Allah. He discusses how to practice zikr and tells his readers about the best time suited for Zikr. He further tells them what kind of a Holy light appears in one's heart when one is performing Zikr.¹⁴ Tauba (repentance) is another important theme in his writings. Tauba i Akhasul (most special Tauba) in the shattari order is committed for each such breath and is wasted without Zikr. Every wasted breath is acknowledged as a major sin by a sufi, The author talks about Muraqaba (contemplation meditation), an important aspect of sufism and mysticism. He writes as to how to perform it.

According to the author there are three kinds of Sama, *i.e.* Samai Nafsis acknowledged by all as Haram (not allowed in Sharia). Then there is Samai Ruh which is treated as Mubah (allowable or lawful). And finally Sama i Qalb refers to the spiritual ecstasy of the heart. He further talks about under what conditions one could attend a Sama (gathering) and what affect it could have on the spirit and spiritual life of human beings. He touches upon this subject in various letters but in letter number eighty nine he writes about this issue specifically.¹⁵

The first four letters are all pertaining to Tauba which is the basic tenet of Islam and in accordance with the Shariat. In letters one he says: 'The day where neither wealth nor sons will wait but only he (will prosper) that brings to Allah a sound heart.' Similarly in letter two he says, 'I have wasted all my precious life in carelessness and never realized its importance. I am now over sixty eight and the boat of my life is in whirlpool. But I have not yet achieved

anything for my happy end. Truly speaking after the age of forty one should care for the good deeds and worry for his Akhiratas Holy Prophet has said'. Shaikh Addhan in the preface to his compilation Saha if ut Tariqah has included the Risala insisting on strict adherence to the rules of Shariat, and even the slightest deviation from Shariat was not approved. The Tauba for all the sins and deviations one might have committed in his life was a prerequisite for the initiation into sufism and mysticism.¹⁶

Shaikh Ilahadad, son of Shaikh Addhan became an important scholar of religion and theology. He wrote commentary on the juridical works of the Hanafisie. Hedaya and also on Kafiya. Probably he had migrated from Jaunpure to northern Bihar, sometimes in the 16th century itself, as there is a place near Patna (Bihar) known as Sarailahdad. In all likelihood the place drive its name from him. Presently, within the municipal limits of the township of Jaunpure, we have a mohalla known as Makhdum Shah Addhan, where his Dargah and mosque are located. As the tradition goes his descendent later on became Shia during the reign of Nawab Wazirs (1722-1856). Consequently, they abandoned the sufi traditions and all that which their ancestors stood.

However, the traditions of tassawuf of the family of Shaikh Addhan and Qazi Hamid ud Din Nagori were kept alive by another branch of it, which had migrated to Salon in the then sarkar Manikpur of suba Allahabad during the 16 century. This branch, at Salon, has combined all the aspects of eliteculture not only during the Mughal and Nawabi era, but also in the modern times.

The Khanqah established at Salon belongs to the ChishtiNizami tradition coming through ShaikhAlaulHaq of Pandua (d.1398) and his son ShaikhNurQutabe Alam (d.1410) to ShaikhHusamulHaq of Manikpur (d.1470) in Awadh. The seventh Sajjada Nashin of khanqah Husamiya Shaikh Abdul Karim (d. 1647) had selected Shaikh Pir Muhammad to lead his silsila in Awadh and nominated him as his successor. It is with this event that the shift took place from Manikpur to Salon. The newly established khanqah i karimiya by Shaikh Pir Muhammad became the nerve centre of Chishti Nizami tradition in Awadh.

The family of Shaikh Pir Muhammad had settled in Yemen thereafter it migrated to Nagaur in India. Shaikh Pir Muhammad (born. AH/994 A.D. 1585) went to Manikpur for higher studies in rational and traditional sciences, but eventually came back to Salon. While at Manikpur he studied Tafsir-i Baizawi (a Quranic commentary incorporating m'utazalite viewpoint) and Hidayah (the digest of jurisprudence of the Hanafischool). He finally settled at the place where we find the khanqah, mosque, and the tomb (maqbara) of the family

today.¹⁷ Shaikh Pir Muhammad became a celebrity in the world of spirituality so that even his spiritual mentor Shaikh Abdul Karim was compelled to say, 'having gone to see the popularity of Piran at his darbar, the eyes could not stand the glitter. I forgot even my own place'.¹⁸ But the admiration was mutual since the chief khalifas of Shaikh Pir Muhammad also had the following sentiments to express about the pir of his pir, 'the charm of the pir is manifest all over, (due to this charm) scores of scholars and the men of learning have been spoiled; the son of Asif get intoxicated with the glimpse of Pir Karim; intoxicated in his lore people have gone crazy'.

Soon the Shaikh acquired so much prominence as a mystic and theologian that Emperor Aurangzeb invited him to Delhi. He, however, declined the invitation. An imperial farman was also issued in A.D. 1676 where instead of standard format of madad-i maash, a high sounding description was incorporated so as to acknowledge the esteem in which the grantee was held by the local and imperial officials. The mystic died at the age of 105 years in AH 1099/AD 1687.¹⁹

The Shaikh Pir Muhammad was succeeded by his son, Shaikh Ashraf. Latter also became quite a legend and some sort of cult developed around his personality. He died in A.D. 1754. A tomb was constructed over his grave in A.D. 1754. The chronogram of this tomb has been reproduced in William Beale's Mifiab-ut-Tawarikh.²⁰ His eldest son Shaikh Muhammad Pir Ata became instrumental in establishing the branches of the khanqah at far-off places, like Hyderabad Deccan Shaikh Pir Ata popularized Owaisiya (Order of mysticism) at Salon. However, since he expired before his father, his second son, Shah Muhammad Panah, was passed the baton. He was also looked upon with great reverence by both Muslims and Hindus.

By this time British had already started gaining foothold in India. Kingdom of Awadh was annexed in AD 1856. Shah Panah Ata the then sajjada Nasheen of the Khanqah was deeply anguished and soundly condemned the act. He went to the extent of saying, 'The oppression by Wajid (Ali Shah) was better than the justice of the East India Company'.²¹

Between the annexation of Awadh (February 1856) and 1857, there was a move to confiscate the properties of the sajjada-nashin, but due to the strong social acceptability and the respect in which the institution was held by the Hindus and the Muslims both, the move to punish the institution for its alleged anti-British attitude was dropped. It is said that initially Major Barrow, the Chief Commissioner of Awadh after annexation, conducted an enquiry into the credentials of the grantee, but all the files and papers were destroyed during the

events of 1857. The second enquiry could begin only during the first regular settlement of the province (AD 1860). The details of the enquiry conducted by W.C. Wood, the then Deputy Commissioner of Partapgarh, now forms a historical narrative giving the history of the landed properties accruing to the family since the period of Aurangzeb, the details of the buildings belonging to the institution and maintained out of the waqf fund, the income and heads on which the expenditure was incurred. A distinction was made between the personal expenses of the sajjada-nashin and the charitable expenses of the institution, including the madrasa'. On the basis of this report and on behalf of Lord Canning a sanad was issued on 26 September 1862, recognizing the allodial rights of Shah Husain 'Ata, the then sajjada-nashin, over 22 villages of his grant.²² It is pertinent to point out that now the grant was a conditional one; it was to continue so long as the income was devoted to the maintenance of the Khanqah, buildings, tomb, mosques and running of a school of 'Muhammadan Education' and the continuance of the charities.

Till the promulgation of the UP Zamindari Abolition and Land Reforms act of 1952, the family continued to have possession of these 22 villages, though with some vicissitudes, especially through litigation. After the abolition of the zamindari the annuity was given by the UP Government only for the ma'afi villages and the amount fixed was Rs.14,806 per annum. The net result of such a policy has been quite disastrous for the upkeep of the institution. The present sajjada-nashin of the khanqah Shah Saiyid Ahmad Husain Jafri Islahi (himself a scholar) also feels, 'it is unthinkable to manage such an institution with the amount the government has fixed, but since the things have to be kept moving irrespective of the grant by the government, it shall be managed on our-own.²³

Thus, we notice that in the process of the dissemination of Iranian elite culture, certain families here played pivotal role in the sub-continent and in this case, it is the family of Qazi Hamid ud Din Nagauri (d. 1244) who enriched the new cultural values by contributing to the theological studies, aspects of tassawuf the practice of sama. While his descendants at Jaunpure during the 16th century carried the same legacy in the area dominated by Awadhi culture, it is needless to point out that the area had an audience to understand the intricacies of the issues of Persian elite culture, hence it was remembered as Shiraz-i-Hind. While at Salon during the Mughal at Nawabi periods, we find the members of the family not only carrying on the principals of tassawuf, but also pursuing the orthodox sciences, enriching the situation by writing poetry, and providing yomen service to the masses by establishing a network of the madaris and makatib till it was possible for them to carry on till their Maafi Villages were resumed by the

government. Now without any substantial regular income, they manage the affairs of the Khanqah (which includes a madarsa) on their own, mainly depending on Futuh (unasked gifts), that is how they carry on the tradition of Tawakkul (dependence on God), the hallmark or the early Sufis.

Notes and References

¹The biographical details for Qazi Hamid ud din Nagauri are available in almost all the chronicles and tazkirah. For details of his works see Mumtaz Ali Khan, *Shaikh/Qadi Hamid ud din of Nagauri, Islamic Culture*, Vol. LII, No. 1, January, 1978, Hyderabad, pp.71-87.

²The biographical dictionaries compiled during the Mughal times are replete with references about these members of the family of Qazi Hamid ud din. However, in the recent years Prof. M.M. Saeed has edited the text of the only surviving copy of the collection of his letters, titled as Sahaifut Tarigh, with a very detailed introduction at useful notes published from Aiwan Adab, Urdu Bazar, Lahore, 1995.

³Salon branch of the family gets mentioned in the 18th -19th century tazkirah as well as in the British records. In addition to these, farmans and parwanas issued from the time of Mughal emperor Aurangzeb (d. 1707) also survive with the family. Some of them have been cited in details by S.Z.H. Jafri, *Studies in the Anatomy of a Transformation: Awadh from Mughal to Colonial Rule* (hereafter, Jafri, Awadh), Delhi, 1998, see especially, pp.49-60, 83-94, 109-146 and in Masnad-e Faqr-o Irshad *Tareekh Khanwada-i Karimia Naimia Salon*, (in Urdu), Delhi, 2003. This is an important work for history and traditions of the family. It reproduces the original Mughal and Nawabi period documents also. See also Claudia Libeskind, *Piety on its Knees: Three Sufi Traditions in South Asia in Modern Times*, OUP, Delhi, 1998, see especially chapters IV, VI & VII (on Salon).

⁴K.A. Nizami, *Religion and Politics in India during the 13th Century*, Delhi, 1954.

⁵Mumtaz Ali Khan, *op.cit.*, pp.73-4.

⁶*ibid.*

⁷*ibid.*

⁸M. M Saeed (ed.), *op. cit.*

⁹*ibid.*

¹⁰*ibid.*, p.26.

¹¹*ibid.*, p.39.

¹²*ibid.*, p.40.

¹³*Letter No. 52*, ff.79a-80b, cf pp. 158-9 see also, p.41.

¹⁴*ibid.*, p.44.

¹⁵*ibid.*

¹⁶*ibid.*

¹⁷Jafri, Awadh, pp.117-118.

¹⁸*ibid.*, p.119.

¹⁹*ibid.*, pp. 49-50, see also the plate No. 1 for the copy of original farman of Emperor Aurangzeb.

²⁰*ibid.*, p.122.

²¹*ibid.*, p.123.

²²*ibid.*, p.124.

²³*ibid.*, p.124.

Bad Conditions of Babbar Akali Prisoners in the Punjab Jails

Dr. Gursewak Singh

Assistant Professor

University Collage, Moonak

Email: behgal900@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper is highlighted to the treatment of Babbar Akali prisoners in various jails of Punjab. Contrary to the Akali Sikhs, the Babbar Akalis believed in the cult of an organized violence. They believed in spreading terrorism and murders of jholichuck (Toddy of British). The Babbar Akalis had their origin in March 1921. There were some nationalists who did not believe in the concept of non-violent. They believed in the cult of guns and bombs. Although their aim was also to achieve independence from the British Government, due to their violent activities, they were put under surveillance and given harsh punishments in the jails. Even then they did not leave the ideology of violence. They wanted to bring revolution in the country. They were revolutionaries and organized themselves in secret societies. The object of this research is to highlight the activities and suppression of such organization by the government. In order to suppress and restraint the anti-British activities, the British Government started arresting the leaders and detaining in the jails. They Babbar Akalis were nationalist, they wanted to liberate their country from the Britishers but they were severely suppressed. In the jails, they were given inhuman treatment. According to the British administration, the Babbar Akalis who started terror in the Doaba and killed those who had contact with the British administration and people who give evidence in cases against persons involved in murders and offences, they created a reign of terror.

Keywords: Treatment, Babbar Akali, Political prisoners, Jails, Hunger strike, British Government.

Though the Ghadar Movement was subsided yet it left behind far reaching political effects. The Sikh loyalists to the British Government were shaken by the movement which subsequently gave rise to the Babbar Akali Movement. The acts of crime and terrible indignities committed in the period during the year 1919 had shaken the feelings of people and stirred the revolutionaries of

the country in the Punjab, it resulted in the formation of the Babbar Akali Movement.¹ The Babbar Akali Movement was mainly concentrated in Hoshiarpur and Jullundur Districts. By the winter of 1922 an absolute reign of terror had been established. Kishen Singh Gargaj, a pensioned *Havaldar* of the two-thirty five Sikh from baring in Jullundur was its main leader. He left the job to join nationalism.² The other members of this party like, Mota Singh of Patara, Karam Singh of Daulatpur, Karm Singh Jhinger, Dalip Gosal, Udhai Singh of Ramgarh, Mohinder Singh, Ganga Singh of Pindori, Dharma Singh of Biblipur, Banta Singh of Guiza and Sant Singh of Harya village of Ludhiana were the main force behind the movement. They started a campaign of murdering officials and loyalists.³

Kishen Singh Gargaj continued to preach rebellion and threatened loyalist. He gathered around him a band of assistants for the purpose of their pernicious propaganda. These included Karam Singh of Daulatpur, Asa Singh of Pakkrodi, Karm Singh of Jhinger, Dalip Singh Gosal and Sunder Singh Maksusuri. They obtained arms from certain Princely States and ammunition from different sources. In 1922, it was decided by Babbar Akalis that it was essential in order to secure for them safety from arrests to intimidate all those who were known as supporters of government who were prepared to assist officers with information. Razors were purchased therefore in Jullundur cantonment for the purpose of cutting off the nose and ears of the *jholichuks*. They announced the punishment of *jholichucks* was killing, maiming, plundering and warned the public generally not to assist them or the government. In 1923, seventy two persons were arrested later on it was found that out of these nineteen were active members of the Babbar Akali conspiracy and the arrests were the first serious blow to the Babbar Akalis.⁴

The Babbar Akali party warned the government and its officials to desist from tyranny but it failed to achieve any effect the gang adopted new methods of work. Later four or five persons including Buta Singh, *Lambardar* of Mangal Shaman and his grandson were arrested. Out of these one was arrested for life.⁵ The plots failed but out of eight Babbars and six were arrested. Kishen Singh and Mota Singh Patara escaped. A reward of Rs. 3000 for the arrest of Mota Singh was announced.⁶ In June 1922, Mota Singh was also arrested and sent to Nagpur Central Jail and later he was transferred to jail in Burma.⁷ He observed a hunger strike of forty four days continuously in Burma Jail. In the jail, he was not allowed to wear black turban and he was forced to wear clothes of criminal prisoners. He asked that he should be given permission to cook food himself.

He was kept in 'B' Class. The jail authorities tried to feed him forcibly during the hunger strike. He was threatened to eat beef and tobacco.⁸

Master Mota Singh in a speech said that 'We should win the *Swaraj* by violence and bravery of we cannot get it otherwise.' He said the Englishmen's livelihood depended on India and they would not leave her. They made acts like Rowlett Act to govern with strong hands. They would not get *Swaraj* with non-violence. He supported that the Babbar committed violence for the benefit of the country and they should welcome violence.⁹ In Rawalpindi, Master Mota Singh was on a hunger strike and awarded vindictive punishment for joining the general hunger strike.¹⁰ Sardul Singh Caveesher asked him to leave strike who was on strike in sympathy to Jatin Das and Sadhu Singh to commemorate his memory and martyrdom. He said he was pledged to observe hunger strike.¹¹ Master Mota Singh was transferred from Salem Jail (Madras) to Multan Jail.¹² The total period of term of imprisonment of Master Mota Singh was of four sentences. One was of five years transportation and three of one and half years, six month rigorous and again six months.¹³ Master Mota Singh who was convicted under Section 124 A and 153 Indian Penal Code 11th August 1922 was in Burma and his date of release was 20th August 1929.¹⁴

In June 1923, Sant Singh, the secretary of the Babbar Akali was arrested with a loaded revolver in this procession while travelling by train. In August 1923, conspiracy case was filed against ninety four men included seventeen approvers and fifteen absconders. Till then 226 were arrested, but of whom 104 were prosecuted under Section 107 Criminal Procedure Code. Action was taken under Section 107 Indian Penal Code against more than 100 persons in Doaba and ninety six under Section 216 Indian Penal Code were now in process of being dealt with a special magistrate deputed to try them.¹⁵ In August 1923, the government issued the third proclamation regarding the awards for the arrests of the Babbar. The following were declared as proclaimed absconders. Rewards as mentioned against each name for their arrests were: Karam Singh (Daulatpur) Rs. 3000, Udey Singh (Ramgarh Jhuggian) Rs. 2000, Dhanna Singh (Behbalpur) Rs 2000, Bant Singh, Dalipa (Dhamian) and Waryam Singh (Dhugga) Rs 1000, Anup Singh (Manko) Rs. 500, Bishan Singh (Mangat) Rs. 400, and Buta Singh (Pindori Nijjaran) Rs. 200. The government adopted repressive policy to extract information about the Babbar and established police posts in various villages.¹⁶

Police made approvers and started a First Babbar Akali Conspiracy Case. A challan was sent to Lahore on 13th August 1924. Proceedings were taken against sixty two Babbar in camera. Ten Babbar

were given life imprisonment, fifteen were given seven years imprisonment and Rs. 100 as fine and two were given six years imprisonment and a fine of 100. Sixteen were given five years imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 100 each. Five were given four years imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 100. Thirty four were released from the jail. The session judge announced the decision on 28th February 1925. According to in Second Babbar Akali Conspiracy Case, six were hanged to death, fourteen were given life imprisonment and for three months, they were kept in cells.¹⁷

Mr. Tap Special Magistrate decided the case of Babbar Akalis in March 1925. This case was pending for the last two and a half years. The case involved eighty nine people. Amongst these five were given death sentence, eleven were given life imprisonment in Kale Pani and thirty eight men were awarded imprisonment ranging from four years to eleven years. These imprisonments were different in different cases. Amongst these eighty nine, thirty four were released free. Sardar Kishen Singh was given death sentence under sedition. Sardar Karm Singh and Sardar Nand Singh were given death sentence on the charge of murder of Gainda Singh. Babu Santa Singh was given two years rigorous imprisonment and three months in cell and Rs. 100 fine for keeping armaments against law and secretly keeping armaments again four years rigorous imprisonment, three months in cell and death sentence for murder and conspiracy. Sardar Daleep Singh was given death sentence for committing dacoits and murder.¹⁸

Giani Kartar Singh Gobindpuri, Sant Thakar Singh, Sardar Man Singh Gobindpuri, Udham Singh Ji and Surjan Singh ji Daulatpuri all Babbar Akali activists were undergoing imprisonment in Multan Jail. They observed hunger strike. They were accused of raising a rebellion against the crown. They claimed themselves as political prisoners and wanted to be treated as political prisoners. As all the government treated their political prisoners in human way but they were treated like a beast.¹⁹ Sardar Kartar Singh, S. Hazara Singh, S. Bachan Singh and three more Babbar Akali prisoners in Montgomery Central Jail were on hunger strike for a month as a protest against bad diet and ill treatment of political prisoners. They were all punished with fetters and locked up in the grinding cells. They were not removed to the jail hospital as yet in spite of the too fact that they were much reduced and had lost their weight heavily. Twenty five more political prisoners under took hunger strike in sympathy of these prisoners.²⁰ Babbar Akali, Hazara Singh ran away from the jail was punished. He was given ninety canes but only thirty were placed on history sheets.²¹ He spent twenty one years imprisonment in the jails. In the jails, he was beaten 315

batons, two and half years spent in hunger strike was in fetters for fourteen years and seven year cell. Every day the cell was changed.²² Bhai Balwant was arrested under Section 17 and an educated person. But in the jail at Campbellpur, he was given rigorous imprisonment. To protest against this, he observed hunger strike twice, once for seven days and second time for nine days.²³

The *Syasat*, Lahore, 22nd May 1926 published under caption alleged hunger strike by Babbar Akalis stating that the Babbar Akalis confined in the Lahore Central Jail went on hunger strike for more than a month ago. Their condition became unspeakable but the government as usual was bent upon making them to give up the hunger strike by restarting to machinations instead of fulfilling's their demand which was said to be to the effect that being political prisoners they should be treated as such.²⁴ In September 1926 about twelve Babbars Bhai Karm Singh Jhingar, Dalip Singh Manko, Hardit Singh Jasewal and Kartar Singh Gondpur etc. observed hunger strike in Multan Jail in connection with the bad behavior of the jail authorities. Many prisoners observed hunger strike in the beginning but some of them left in between and only eight out of them remained firm. After twenty five days of hunger strike, the jail officials tried to suppress the strike and beaten Dalip Singh Manke and Hardit Singh Jasowal with baton. But these Babbars did not bother, later the officials gave these prisoners medicine which caused vomiting and all were saved.²⁵ Again the press published Babbar Akali prisoners on hunger strike. Thakar Singh, Bachin Singh, Kartar Singh and Karm Singh Babbar Akali prisoners were on hunger strike in 1929. Sardar Karam Singh was reported to be suffering from high fever while Thakar Singh from dysentery both was admitted to hospital.²⁶

Sardar Partap Singh who was sentenced for sedition by a Lahore magistrate was sent to Amritsar on 13th January 1931 after undergoing his term of imprisonment in Montgomery Central Jail. He told that the Babbar Akali prisoners at Montgomery Jail had been confined in solitary cells and they were considerably reduced in weight. Sardar Hazara Singh another Babbar Akali prisoner was not given good treatment. The left leg of one Sikh prisoner who was undergoing imprisonment in connection with Ahmadgarh Train Dacoity Case became paralyzed.²⁷ The *Tribune* 26th April 1931 published under caption 'Babbar Akalis kept standing in sun' Mr. Gurnam Singh of the Montgomery Congress Committee wrote to *The Tribune* that all the Babbar Akalis who were on hunger strike in the Montgomery Central Jail were kept standing throughout the day in the scorching sun. It was alleged that the weak among them fainted many a time.²⁸

Sardar Kabul Singh Govindpuri, a special class prisoner in Mianwali Jail wrote a letter to the Governor of the Punjab stating that he was on a hunger strike for the last eighty days to raise the status of the political prisoners in the jail. Due to the Congress members pressure he reluctantly suspended the hunger striker to the fact that the government was prepared to meet the demands. But on the other hand they were facing insults in the jail. The privileges which were given to Kakori prisoners were taken back as a result of punishment for joining hunger strike. Master Mota Singh, S. Arjiun Singh, S. Balwant Singh and other Babbar Akali prisoners and those of First Conspiracy Case prisoners were yet treated as ordinary prisoners. Gazi Abdul Rehman and S. Ajit Singh were recommended as special class prisoners but the government has not thought it fit to accept this recommendation with the result that they had been deprived of even the nominal privileges of special class prisoners and were treated as ordinary prisoners.²⁹ Master Dalip Singh a famous Babbar Akali political prisoner suffered with Tuberculosis in Rawalpindi Jail. Due to sickness he lost his weight also.³⁰ By 1935, twenty one Babbar Akalis were undergoing imprisonment in various jails of the country. Some of them were sick and some of them were seriously suffering from some diseases. The Babbar Akalis were those who were eager to liberate their country, but the government suppressed them and gave them tortures.³¹

Kabul Singh and Gopal Singh political prisoners in the Mianwali Jail were punished for hunger strike.³² These men were tried under Section 52 of the prison act and awarded three months imprisonment each. They refused to go to court rather laid down on the ground violently resisted their removal and kicked, struck and abused the police. They were tried under the prison act.³³ Similar punishment was given to Baba Sohan Singh an old man of seventy, undergoing his sentence of life transportation in connection with the Lahore Conspiracy Case. Master Mota Singh confined in Rawalpindi Jail was also awarded vindicated punishment for joining the hunger strike, in such cases the punishment was enhanced and special privileges were withdrawn.³⁴ Sardar Shiv Singh a Babbar Akali of Jullundur District was released on the expiry of his seven years rigorous imprisonment from the Multan Jail, where he had gone on hunger strike and was forcibly fed.³⁵ The Babbar Akali political prisoners in the Multan Central Jail informed the authorities that if the government would use any repression against the hunger strike of Second Lahore Conspiracy Case, they would also go on hunger strike again. When Bhagat Singh and others observed hunger strike last time, many also of them observed hunger strike which they discontinued at the persuasion of Lala Bodh Raj.³⁶ In Multan Jail,

Lala Bodh Raj M.L.C. made an interview with the Babbar Akali prisoners confined in the Central Jail as they had been on hunger strike. They were given rigorous imprisonment for one year for resorting to a hunger strike.³⁷

The following Babbar Akalis were S. Banta Singh, S. Ujagar Singh, S. Shiv Singh, S. Bant Singh, S. Hari Singh, S. Waryam Singh, S. Waryam Singh Bhabhyana, S. Kartar Singh, S. Ram Singh, S. Duman Singh, S. Gurbachan Singh, S. Hardit Singh, S. Hari Singh, S. Thakar Singh and S. Kartar Singh were given seven years rigorous imprisonment three months cell and Rs.100 fine. In case of non-payment of fine one year more imprisonment was given. Following were awarded five years rigorous imprisonment, three months in cell and Rs. 100 fine and on non-payment of fine further one year more imprisonment was given. These were: S. Prem Singh, S. Arjan Singh, S. Udham Singh, S. Sardul Singh, S. Munsha Singh, S. Mahing Singh and S. Surjan Singh.³⁸ Eleven Babbar Akalis were given life imprisonment for Kale Pani. They were:- Sardar Daleep Singh Gosal, Sardar Atama Singh Beka, Sardar Karm Singh Jhingar, S. Sundar Singh, S. Rattan Singh, S. Daleep Singh, S. Piara Singh, S. Thakar Singh, S. Surjan Singh, S. Dharm Singh and S. Buta Singh.³⁹ The following Babbar Akali prisoners were hanged to death. They were *Jathedar* Kishen Singh Baring (Jullundur), S. Daleep Singh (Chotta) Dhannia (Hoshiarpur), S. Nand Singh Ghurial (Jullundur), S. Karam Singh Manke (Jullundur), Babu Santa Singh Choti Harion (Ludhiana) and S. Dharm Singh Hyatpur (Hoshiarpur). All the Babbars were not feeling sad rather one night earlier from their execution they were feeling proud to be hanged and wished that their fellow Babbars must see the country independent. After the execution the dead bodies were not handed over to the relatives but after the insistence of the public all the dead bodies were given to the relatives of the hanged Babbars.⁴⁰

The British Government tried to suppress the Babbar Akali prisoners by imposing harsh policies on them. But it could not suppress the feelings of nationalism. The Babbar Akalis were also arrested and given long imprisonment with hard labour. Many Babbars were transported to Andaman. They were given life imprisonment. In the jail, they were kept in dark dingy cells. Even after the completion of their life imprisonment, they were not released from the jails. In the Punjab jails, they faced harsh rules. The Babbars were given inhuman treatment in the jails. In order to get information from the imprisoned Babbars the police adopted harsh measures. The police did not allow the Babbars to sleep for days together. They were made to stand in the sun on the alive insects. Their hands were placed under the leg of the cots and many people were asked to sit on the cots to put weight on the hands. Their hairs of delicate parts of the

body were also pulled to torture them. They were mercilessly beaten with sticks baton and shoes. Even chilli powder was put in their anus to torture them. Pins were pierced in their nails. The police tried their best to get clue about the Babbars outside the jails. But the imprisoned Babbars did not give any information in spite of inhuman treatment given to them. The Punjab Government resorted to repression and arrested Babbars Akalis volunteers from various places of the Punjab. Besides arrest orders, some of the volunteers were served with restraint orders and interned in their villages to restrict their activities.

Notes and References

- ¹S. C. Mittal, *Freedom Movement in Punjab*, Concept Publishing Company, Delhi, 1977, pp.85-86 & 144.
- ²Gyani Nahar Singh, *Azadi Dian Lehran*, Gyani Harbhajan Singh Publisher, Amritsar, 1960, p.299.
- ³*Home Department, Political, Part-B*, 1924, File No-1/X/1924, p.2.
- ⁴*ibid*, pp.2-3.
- ⁵*Home Department, Political*, 1923, File No, 134/II, p.55.
- ⁶*Home Department, Political*, 1924, p.2.
- ⁷*Punjab Legislative Council Debates*, 16 January 1925, Vol- VIII-I, Superintendent Government Punjab, Lahore, 1925, p.106.
- ⁸*Kaumi Dard*, (Daily), Amritsar, 8 April, 1925.
- ⁹*The Tribune*, Lahore, 15 August, 1929.
- ¹⁰*The Indian Annual Register*, January to July 1930, Vol-I, The Annual Register Office, Calcutta, 1931, p.86.
- ¹¹*The Tribune*, 30 October, 1929.
- ¹²*The Tribune*, 21 July, 1931.
- ¹³*Punjab Legislative Council Debate*, 20 February 1928, Vol-XI, Superintendent Government Punjab, Lahore, 1928, p.23
- ¹⁴*Punjab Legislative Council Debate*, 27 February 1929, Superintendent Government Punjab, Lahore, 1929, p.467.
- ¹⁵*Home Department, Political*, 1924, pp. 4-5.
- ¹⁶*The Tribune*, 30 November, 1923.
- ¹⁷Ram Singh Magithha, *Hindustan Di Azadi de Larai Wich Punjab*, Punjab State Freedom Fighter, Jalandhar, 1988, pp.293-303.
- ¹⁸*Khalsa Te Khalsa Advocate* (Weekly), Amritsar, 5 March, 1925.
- ¹⁹*Babbar Sher* (Daily), Amritsar, 26 July, 1926.
- ²⁰*The Tribune*, 9 December, 1930.
- ²¹*Punjab Legislative Assembly Debates*, 27 February 1939(21 March 1939), Vol-VIII, Superintendent Government Punjab, Lahore, 1939, p.512.
- ²²*Jang Azadi* (Monthly), Lahore, 17 December, 1945.

²³*Babbar Sher*, 6 November, 1925.

²⁴*The Syasat*, Lahore, 22 May, 1926.

²⁵Sunder Singh Babbar, *Itihas Babbar Akali Lehar*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 1961, pp.262-263.

²⁶*The Tribune*, 9 October, 1929.

²⁷*The Tribune*, 17 January, 1931.

²⁸*The Tribune*, 26 April, 1931.

²⁹*The Tribune*, 15 November, 1929.

³⁰*Khalsa Sewak* (Daily), Amritsar, 2 October, 1936.

³¹*Fateh*, 12 April, 1936.

³²*The Indian Annual Register*, January to June, 1930, p.86.

³³*Government of India, Home Department, Political*, 1930, File No-137/30, pp.2-3. See also, *The Tribune*, 7 August 1929.

³⁴*ibid.*

³⁵*The Tribune*, 12 April, 1931.

³⁶*The Tribune*, 12 February, 1930.

³⁷*The Tribune*, 6 November, 1929.

³⁸*Khalsa Te Khalsa Advocate*, 5 March, 1925.

³⁹*ibid.*

⁴⁰Sundar Singh Babbar, *Itihas Babbar Akali Lehar*, pp.256-257.

The Contribution of the Indian Government with regard to modern education in Bhutan

Ratna Paul

Assistant Professor
Department of History
Birsa Munda College
Dargeeling, West Bengal
Email: ratna.paul961@gmail.com

Abstract

Modern education in Bhutan began at the beginning of the 20th century, before which monastic or religious education had served the need of the society. Ugyen Wangchuck, the first hereditary king of Bhutan took the initiative to introduce modern education and with the help of the teachers from Kalimpong, the first school in Bhutan was established at Haa in western Bhutan in 1914 to impart modern education. Bright and meritorious students after completing their primary level of studies were sent to India mostly in Darjeeling and Kalimpong for further education. The Government of India contributed funds in the growth of education in Bhutan. The First and Second Five Year Plans in Bhutan were totally financed by India. Dantak (Indian Border Roads Organization) built many schools in Bhutan including the country's first college. In the initial period almost the entire teaching force consisted of educators from India. The Indian government offered various scholarships to meritorious Bhutanese students to pursue their education in India with seats reserved for them in various educational institutes. The Embassy of India in Thimphu played a vital role in selecting Bhutanese students to get enrolled for higher education and to avail of scholarships in Indian institutes. Among its neighbouring countries, India always gave importance to Bhutan and assisted her in socio-economic development, particularly in the field of education.

Key words: Indian Government, Bhutan, Education, Indian Embassy, Scholarships.

The Himalayan country Bhutan shares its border with India in the east, west, and south. Under a colonial condition, the political affairs between the neighboring states and India were initially controlled by the British East India Company first and subsequently by the British Parliament. There were altogether 18 Duars (*dwar* or passes), eleven in Bengal and seven in Assam to enter India

from Bhutan. Bhutan rulers frequently attacked the Duars plains and its relations with Cooch Behar were hostile, with the border lines changing according to the raids and resistance either by Bhutan or Cooch Behar. In 1772 Cooch Behar appealed to the East India Company for assistance resulting in expulsion of Bhutanese from Cooch Behar. In 1841, the Company annexed the Assam Duars and subsequently in 1864 Bengal Duars was also annexed which was legitimized through the Treaty of Sinchula (1865). The treaty stipulated the British to pay Rs 25,000 yearly with a rider that it would be doubled if Bhutan remained faithful to the articles of the treaty.

With the help of the British, Tongsa *Penlop* (Governor), Ugyen Wangchuck assumed political supremacy in Bhutan in 1907. Subsequently he signed a treaty of friendship in Punakha (1910) and Britain increased the annual payment to Rs. 100,000. British Political Officers of Sikkim were assigned to look after Bhutan affairs. The second King, Jigme Wangchuck (enthronement 1926) made appeals to the British Indian Government and the subsidy was doubled in 1942. A fresh treaty was signed between India and Bhutan (1949) wherein the Indian Government raised the yearly allocation to Rs. 500,000. Monastic education was the only education system prevailing in Bhutan. Ugyen Wangchuck and his Gonzim (Chamberlain) Raja Ugyen Dorji were aware that monastic education was inadequate to modernize the country. They established schools in line with the modern education prevailing in India. Ugyen Wangchuck made links with the Government of India and sent several students there for schooling and vocational studies. In both these ventures the government of India extended assistance. The first school in Bhutan were run by teachers from Kalimpong.¹ On May 12, 1914, The Political Officer at Sikkim, Charles A. Bell reported that, '46 boys are being educated by the teachers appointed by the Scotland Mission at Kalimpong and they stay with Raja Ugyen Dorji at Kalimpong and Haa'.² During the summer season the students were taught at Haa and in winter at Kalimpong. The King realized that if students were given training in technical fields they would be able to develop their skills which ultimately would lead to a holistic development of the kingdom. However, the country funds being low, an appeal was made to Lord Reading, the then Viceroy, for support, and in 1924 an amount of Rs. 49, 629 was sanctioned by the Indian Government for the education of Bhutanese students.³ Till the middle of the second half of the 20th century Bhutan had only primary schools, so students had to go to India for the upper level of education. After completing formal education most of them pursued training in technical courses and returned to the country to serve there.

In 1954 the 3rd King, Jigme Dorji Wangchuck visited India and noticed the development there, after returning back he concentrated on modernizing his country. Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Indian Prime Minister, along with his daughter Indira Gandhi and some officials visited Bhutan in September 1958. Bhutan was afraid of India's motive to get in the way of their domestic dealings, but Nehru's words removed their misconceptions and at the same time they also got assurance of their sovereignty. India's aid to Bhutan was also increased after Prime Minister's visit. While addressing a meeting on 23rd September at Paro, Indian Prime Minister told that India will always be with Bhutan in its path of progress, and they will remain friends so that any other power could not do any harm to both of them.⁴

In 1955 Government of India announced that in every year 30 seats in Indian schools would be reserved for Bhutanese students and whose responsibility will be borne by the Indian Government.⁵ Availing this opportunity Bhutanese student went mostly to schools in Kalimpong and Darjeeling.⁶ On returning home they held different government jobs. As there was no teachers training institution in Bhutan, students who wished to pursue teachers training were sent to Kalimpong and this training was known as 'Guru Training'.⁷ Bhutanese dignitaries who were educated in India warmly recall their teachers in India who not only imparted knowledge to them but were also very much affectionate to the students.⁸

Bhutan had a scarcity of resources in introducing five years plans.⁹ With the assurance from Indian Prime Minister Nehru the country took steps for planned socio-economic development of the country with the launching in 1961 the First Five Year Plan. The Government of India shouldered the total financial responsibilities of the First Plan. At the same time, the Planning Commission of India sent a technical team to Bhutan to assist in implements of five-year plans.¹⁰ Second Five Year Plan was also totally financed by the Government of India and after that in the Third Plan, 90% assistance was from India, 77% in the Fourth Plan, 30.2% in the Fifth, 42.1% in the Sixth, 31.9% in the Seventh, 26% in the Eighth, 29.33% in the Ninth, 23% in the Tenth, and 21% in the Eleventh.¹¹ In the ongoing 12th Five Year Plan of Bhutan India has promised a contribution of Rs. 4500 crores.¹² Thus in all the five-year plans, India has extended its financial cooperation with Bhutan. From the beginning of its introduction to modern education, India was always supportive of Bhutan's efforts toward educational progress. Here are a few proofs of the Indian Government's assistance in this regard viz.(a)With the Indian Government's

financial assistance the project Dantak (Indian Border Roads Organization) started in 1961 and took the works of building roads, and bridges in Bhutan which developed the communication system in the country. The Sherubtse High School at Kanglung, the country's first public school in eastern Bhutan was constructed by Dantak between 1965 and 1968; later the School was upgraded to College. At the inauguration ceremony of the School, Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, the third King congratulated Dantak officials, engineers, and workers for their continuous effort and said, 'so long as Bhutan remains, the name of Border Roads will not be forgotten'.¹³(b)With generous assistance from the Government of India a high school was established at Tashigang in 1969.¹⁴ (c)By the initiative of the Government of India, Indo-Bhutan Central School was established in 1977 and was later renamed Chhukha Higher Secondary School. The school building is a blend of Indo-Bhutan architectural design which is very unique in Bhutan.¹⁵ (d)In 1968, a special office of India was inaugurated in Thimphu with BS Das in charge of the office. In 1971 this was changed to the Embassy of India with BS Das as the first ambassador to Bhutan from India.¹⁶ Indian Ambassador Dalip Mehta on 29 April 1996 attended the opening ceremony of Damthing Primary School, the construction work of which was funded by the Government of India. He also contributed books with an assurance of the construction of hostels, staff quarters, water delivery system, etc.¹⁷(e)After they completed school education some of Bhutanese joined the government service and some continued higher education mostly in India. Kuensel, the national newspaper of Bhutan, in the month of July 1972 reported that some of the students after their completion of secondary and higher secondary from India joined in government service in Bhutan and some went to study humanity, medical or technical courses in India and other countries.¹⁸(f)Sherubtse College, the first college in the country got its affiliation from Delhi University after their formal approaches two times.¹⁹ An inspection team of the university visited Bhutan and looked after the infrastructural condition and other probabilities. The university also amended its constitution to affiliate with a foreign college. Humanities, Science, and Commerce – three streams were opened with various departments. An Advisory Committee of the College was also formed which was a system prevalent in other colleges under the university. It was resolved that the university will look after the academic matters and administrative tasks would be under the Royal Government of Bhutan. The inspection team also mentioned that the College would be under Delhi University till Bhutan could establish a university, then automatically the affiliation will be ceased.²⁰ Accordingly with the commissioning of the Royal University of Bhutan in 2003, the College came under its

jurisdiction.(g) Sherubtse High School, which was later upgraded to Sherubtse College was built by the Dantak. The principal of the College, Father LeClaire, during its first convocation ceremony in 1986 appreciated Dantak for the striking architectural work done there.²¹ Again during the fifth convocation ceremony, Zangley Dukpa, the then Principal appreciated Government of India for its generous assistance and admitted ongoing support of the Delhi University.²² (h) In 1968 Bhutanese students first appeared in the matriculation examination in their own country from Tashigang High School, but since the examination system being not affiliated with any recognized authority, the students were denied admission to Indian institutes, Five of them went to Australia and New Zealand under the Colombo Plan Scholarship.²³ Considering the appeal from the Bhutan Government, high schools were affiliated with the Cambridge University Board, which was later changed to the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE), New Delhi.²⁴ Even when the Bhutan Board of Examinations was established, class X and XII examinations were jointly conducted by the CISCE, till the mid-1990s.²⁵ (i) In a memorandum of understanding between the two countries on 22nd December 2009, the Indian Government assured assistance in the development of the Bhutan Institute of Medical Science.²⁶ (j) During his visit to Bhutan on 6 November 2014, Pranab Mukherjee, the President of India declared that the door of Nalanda University will be open to Bhutanese students²⁷ and (k) During the visit of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Bhutan on 17-18 August 2019, seven memorandums of understanding (MOU) were signed between India and Bhutan in the field of education. Among these, 4 MOUs were signed by the Royal University of Bhutan and the Indian Institute of Technology of Kanpur, Delhi, Mumbai, and the National Institute of Technology, Silchar.²⁸ Prime Minister of India assured that the connection with India's Institutions, scholars, and academicians in Bhutan will surely lead to the educational and technological advancement of Bhutan and the relationship between the two countries would become much deeper. To develop educated manpower in Bhutan Government of India provides various scholarships to the Bhutanese students studying in India and also training to the Bhutanese personnel-

PTA (Project Tied Assistance) projects: Undergraduate and Postgraduate schemes

The Indian Government provided various scholarships annually at the undergraduate level for Bhutanese students to pursue different professional courses. Department of Adult and Higher Education (DAHE), Bhutan looked into the matter of student selection. Several postgraduate scholarships are also

provided to the Bhutanese students who deserve them.⁴⁰ In the 10th and 11th Plan period of Bhutan Bhutanese students availed of 90 UG scholarships for MBBS study in Indian colleges.²⁹

ICCR scholarships

Indian Council for Cultural Relations scholarship was instituted in 2012 in which 20 slots were allotted each year for Bhutanese students to pursue engineering courses and 4 slots were to pursue courses in arts, music, and culture from various colleges in India.³⁰

Nehru Wangchuck Scholarships

This was instituted in 2009 with the signing of a MOU between the two countries in which the Government of India agreed to bear all the responsibilities of 8 students of Bhutan who were studying post-graduation courses in select Indian universities. In the beginning scholarship fund in this scheme was one crore which was doubled in 2014 and from 2016-17, the amount has increased to 4 crores.³¹

Ambassador Scholarships

The academic scholarship schemes for various undergraduate and postgraduate courses offered by India to Bhutan were administered by the Indian embassy in Bhutan through DAHE and RCSC (Royal Civil Service Commission). Deserving students studying in India on a self-financing basis were awarded Embassy scholarships. The Embassy gave every year a small amount of cash scholarships to about 350 Bhutanese students studying in India under self-financing courses to help them with their expenses. From 2011 to 2018 about 5982 Bhutanese students studying in India were benefitted from the Ambassador Scholarship scheme.³²

ITEC/TCS

Indian Technical Economic Cooperation/Technical Cooperation Scheme (ITEC/TCS) was instituted in 1964. Under this scheme, training is given to Bhutanese nationals in various fields for the upgradation of administrative and technical skills. Not only government officials but Bhutanese working in the private sector also participates in the training process. From 2012 onwards, more than 1200 Bhutanese citizens have availed this technical training.³³

Sainik School Scholarships

Annually 10 scholarships were given to Bhutanese students if they were admitted in class VI in various *Sainik* Schools in India and the Government of India borne all their expenses. The Indian Embassy conducted a written test and the students were further interviewed in India, before their admission in different *Sainik* Schools³⁴

SAARC Scholarships

In this system, the Indian Government offered one fellowship and two scholarships for deserving Bhutanese students.³⁵ Bhutanese students could appeal for this scholarship through the Embassy of India, Thimphu to study in some Indian Institutes according to the availability of seats. In 2018-19 two students got the opportunity to study at Forest Research Institute, Dehradun.³⁶

Nalanda University Scholarships

Two meritorious Bhutanese students studying at Nalanda University would get this scholarship whose total responsibility was borne by the Government of India. From 2019-20, this opportunity has been extended to five Bhutanese students.³⁷

India-Bhutan Friendship Scholarships

Three new scholarships were introduced for Bhutanese students to do M. Tech courses at IIT Kanpur from the year 2021. They would be selected through the Indian Embassy and would get the chance to study in one of the esteemed IITs in India.³⁸

IIT, Gandhinagar Scholarships

This scheme had been introduced in 2021-22, under which two scholarships were offered to Bhutanese students to pursue M.Tech at the Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar. Students would be selected through Indian Embassy, Thimphu, and the Government of India would bear their expenses.³⁹

IIT, Hyderabad Scholarships

Meritorious Bhutanese students who were pursuing M.Tech courses at the Indian Institute of Technology, Hyderabad received 12,500 INR monthly during their two-year courses.⁴⁰

TCS of Colombo Plan Lecturers on Deputation

The Government of India deputed lecturers to Bhutan on the request made by the Royal University of Bhutan and the salaries and allowances were paid by the Indian Government. The Royal University of Bhutan had requested for deputation of 21 lecturers for various colleges in Bhutan in 2017-18.⁴¹ The treaty of 1949 has been updated and renewed in 2007 which declared the relationship of perpetual friendship between the two countries. Among its neighbouring countries, India always gave importance to Bhutan and assisted her in socio-economic development through donations and grants, at the same time Bhutan is India's leading development partner. Besides education, Bhutan's roads and communication, health system, hydropower, the army, etc have developed with India's cooperation. Not only monetary help but technical and human resources were also utilized to modernize Bhutan. In the field of education,

in the initial period, not only teachers- clerks, school inspectors, but exam controllers were all Indians. Even up to the period of 1970s directors of the Education Department were Indians.⁴² In the of 1980s, among the 20 Government officials in Bhutan 13 took their education from India.⁴³

Thus India and Bhutan have always maintained a very cordial bonding and India has extended its cooperation to this small Himalayan country for its all-around development. During his visit to India on October 5, 2014, at Lawrence School, Sanawar, in which the queen is an alumna, Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuck, the present King of Bhutan said, 'India has played a vital role in education in Bhutan. While numerous Indian teachers have taught across the country, a number of Bhutanese youth routinely study in leading Indian schools. These students come back and contribute in building our country. This, in turn, contributes a lot toward Indo-Bhutanese relations'.⁴⁴

Notes and References

¹B.K. Subba(ed.), *Sumite Centenary Souvenir*, S.U.M. Institution, Kalimpong, 1986, p.9.

²A.C. Sinha, *Himalayan Kingdom Bhutan: Tradition, Transition and Transformation*, Indus Publishing House, New Delhi, 2001, 2004, pp.191-192.

³*ibid.*

⁴V. H. Coelho, *Sikkim and Bhutan*, Vikash Publications, Delhi, 1970, p.76.

⁵A. C. Sinha, *op.cit.*, p.193.

⁶SonamTobgey, 'Sherig Century' in *Kuensel*, July 21, 2012, p.11.

⁷Ratna Paul, *Growth and Development of Modern Education in Bhutan*, Unpublished Ph. D. Thesis, University of North Bengal, 2019, p.220.

⁸Interview with Nado Rinchen, Minister, Privy Council, Royal Government of Bhutan on 01/05/2014.

⁹Zangley Dukpa, *School Leadership and Development, the role of head teachers*, Centre for Bhutan Studies and GNH Research, Thimphu, Bhutan, 2013, pp.55-56.

¹⁰Eternal Knot, 'A Journey of two nations in time' in *Institute of Management Studies*, Thimphu, Bhutan, 2014, p.30.

¹¹<https://www.indembthimphu.gov.in/pages.php?id=4> retrieved 16/06/2020.

¹²https://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ani/india-to-contribute-rs-4-500-cr-to-bhutan-for-12th-five-year-plan-118122800641_1.html retrieved 17/ 08/ 2022.

¹³'Opening of Sherubtse High School', *Kuensel*, Vol-II, No-10, 31st may, 1968, p.2.

¹⁴'Education', *Kuensel*, Vol. III, No. 21, 15th May, 1969, p.6.

¹⁵Sherig Saga, 'Profiles of Our Seat of Learning' in *Centre for Educational Research and Development*, Paro College of Education, Royal University of Bhutan, 2008, p.40.

¹⁶Eternal Knot, *op.cit.*, p. 50.

- ¹⁷'Ambassador opens Damthang School' in *Kuensel*, Vol-XI, No-17, May 4, 1996, p.2.
- ¹⁸'Students Selection' in *Kuensel*, Vol-VI, No-47, July 16, 1972, p.2.
- ¹⁹'Convocation from Bhutan's first College' in *Kuensel*, Vol-I, No-14, November, 29, 1986, p.12.
- ²⁰A.C. Sinha, *op.cit.*, p. 202.
- ²¹'Convocation from Bhutan's first College', *op. cit.*, p.12.
- ²²'Sherubtse holds convocation ceremony' in *Kuensel*, Vol. IX, No. 48, November 26, 1994, p.12.
- ²³'Students For Australia' in *Kuensel*, Vol-III, No-24, 31st December, 1969, p.3.
- ²⁴Howard Solverson, *The Jesuit and the Dragon: The Life of Father Mackey in the Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan*, Robert Devies Publishing, Quebec, Kanada, 1995, p.228.
- ²⁵Ratna Paul, *op. cit.*, p. 224.
- ²⁶<http://mea.gov.in>Portal>Bhutan-2021> retrieved 17/08/2022.
- ²⁷<https://www.hindustantimes.com>india>pranab-mukh> retrieved 18/08/2022.
- ²⁸<http://www.vifindia.org>article>august>education> retrieved 18.08.2022.
- ²⁹Ratna Paul(ed.), *Indo-Bhutan Relations, Scholarships Administered by the Embassy of India in Bhutan: An example of Indo-Bhutan Friendship by Radha Venkataraman*, Abhijeet Publications, New Delhi, 2022, p.38.
- ³⁰Collected from Esha Srivastava, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of India, Thimphu, Bhutan, 28/11/2018.
- ³¹*ibid.*
- ³²Ratna Paul(ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 40.
- ³³Collected from Esha Srivastava, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of India, Thimphu, Bhutan, 28/11/2018.
- ³⁴*ibid.*
- ³⁵www.indianembassythimphu.bt retrieved 16/07/2022.
- ³⁶*ibid.*
- ³⁷*ibid.*
- ³⁸<http://mea.gov.in>ForeignRelation>Bhutan-2021> retrieved 18/08/2022.
- ³⁹www.indianembassythimphu.bt retrieved 16/07/2022.
- ⁴⁰*ibid.*
- ⁴¹Collected from Esha Srivastava, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of India, Thimphu, Bhutan, 28/11/2018.
- ⁴²Ratna Paul, *op. cit.*, p. 238.
- ⁴³A. C. Sinha, Bhutan, *Ethnic Identity and National Dilemma*, Reliance Publishing House, New Delhi, 1991, p.223.
- ⁴⁴<https://www.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chandigarh/India-role-in-Bhutanese-education-is-vital/articleshow/44363180.cms#.P:text=India%20has%20played%20a%20> retrieved 18/08/2022.

The Compassionate Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das Commitment to Responsibility and Patriotism

Akhil Sarkar

Assistant Professor
Nabadwip Vidyasagar College
West Bengal
Email: akhil@nvc.ac.in

Abstract

The major portion of the history of the Indian freedom struggle was basically the autobiographies of outstanding people. Chittaranjan Das was one of the significant figures who commonly utilized his personal fascination, intellect, understanding, or authority in such a way that had a significant historical influence on political and Indian national movement. Chittaranjan Das left an appropriate and prominent legacy in the independent movement. He was a frontrunner who devoted his life to the emancipation of India from imperial oppression and had the vision to make free India one of the world's leading nations. He once remarked, 'Sacrifice everything, or else there is no meaning to this pursuit'. In contemporary politics, he became a unique personality of great potential due to his direct approach to the dynamism and emotional integration in the country, which was a tremendous phenomenon in the history of India's freedom struggle.

Keywords: *Nistarini Devi and Basanti Devi, Donation, Charity, Advocate, Motherland, Narayani.*

In writing this article in honour of Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das's 150th birth anniversary, the respect and tempt and contemplations and doctrines movement the year 2020 was the this eminent patriot, was there any such enthusiasm observed



author expresses his profound dignity for him. He has tried to at-plate his magnificent accomplish- in the subjugated Indian indepen- from a historical perspective. In fact, 150th illustrious appearance year of but neither in Bengal nor in India, grand, exciting anniversary or en- for Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das.

It seemed that the freedom fighter and honoured and dignified figure who cre

ated the once memorable history of the nation had departed from collective historical remembrance. Perhaps the intensity of the worldwide pandemic may have prevented us from having the scope to remember him. However, we have been neglecting our national responsibility towards this great universal and unique champion. *Yugapurush* Deshbandhu's narrative was like nectar. The paradigm he set for the overall emancipation of human society and for achieving India's independence is one of the rare doctrines in Indian history. A true patriot, a glorious statesman, and a multi-talented intellect were acutely reflected in his temperament. In the famous book, *The Lessons of History* composed by Will Durant, he mentioned that 'man is the maker of History' It is the prime duty and decency of the citizens of India to express respect and gratitude by remembering those who sacrificed their lives before attaining liberty, motivated by the strong desire for the unification of the country.

Bikrampur Pargana was the dreamy abode of the ancient Gourabanga, sacred with the knowledge of the past of the bank of the Ganges and Meghna rivers. Previously, Bikrampur was known as *Samatat*.¹ During the Sen regime, the name of this territory was changed from *Samatat* to Bikrampur. Rajendralal Mitra composed a famous book '*Indo Aryan*' in this book he mentioned that 'The chief seat of their power was at Vikrampur near Dhaka where the ruins of Ballal palace are still shown to travellers'. Dr. Wise in his notice of Vikrampur says, 'A remarkable evidence of this is offered by the names of the 56 villages assigned to the descendants of the five Brahmins, Adisura brought them from Kanauj'.² During Naypaladeva's kingdom, Dipankara Srigyan of Vikrampur was appointed as *Sanghasthabir* of Nalanda Mahavihara. Dipankar Sreegyan was born in Vajrayogini village in Vikrampur pargana. Eventually, at the request of the Tibetan monarch, he had journeyed to Tibet. Dipankar's biographer commented, 'he was born in the central place called Suvarna Dhaja (Dhvaja ensigns of royalty) of the city of Vikrampur in Bengal'.³ The Zamindars like Chand Roy and Kedar Roy were among the twelve Bhuiyas of Bengal who fought against tyranny during the Mughal Empire, and their reputation elevated this soil. In the colonial period, it was the home of some of the prominent figures of Bengali culture. Jagadish Chandra Bose was born on this soil and he was also an eminent scientist. Sarojini Naidu was also born in 1879. Her maternal homeland was Vikrampur. Her brother, Virendra Nath Chattopadhyay, was an active revolutionary. Her other sibling, Mahendra Nath, was a poet, playwright, and actor. Distinguished Justice Chandra Madhab Ghosh also originated from this sacred soil. In the holy land of Vikrampur which is now situated in Bangladesh. Lord Carmichael who visited Vikrampur in 1915 narrated it in such

a way, 'Vikrampur seems to resemble in some ways my native land of Scotland for many of the best of her sons seek employment beyond her borders and indeed, like Scotsmen in the British Empire, take a large share in the administration of the affairs of the people, and, like Scotsmen, they are always proud of the land from which they come and their children are proud of the connection with the home of their forefathers'.⁴

The Das family had a wide reputation for philanthropy and hospitality. Their generosity and compassion were reflected or revealed in the masses of that area. Sukumar Ranjan Dasgupta commented on the philanthropy of Chittaranjan's grandfather, Jagabandhu, saying, 'I can't say the fault or quality of this clan. No one has any attitude towards savings. There was no infringement on this norm in the case of Jagabandhu. Most of his earnings were spent on the maintenance of the poor, his relatives, and the guests of his own village. It was also a prime duty to verify whether the sum given by them was being properly spent on hospitableness'.⁵ Chittaranjan's grandfather Kashishwar Das was a highly righteous and erudite man. For a long time, *Narayan Seva* and *Hari Loot's Panchali*, penned by him, were popular in Vikrampur Pargana for reading and singing. Chittaranjan's uncle, Durgamohan Das, was a prominent member of *Brahmo society* in his day. He had considerable influence at that time in support of widow marriages and as a social reformer. He demonstrated the remarriage of the young widowed stepmother of his family to organize widow re-marriage successfully in an extensive manner. Chittaranjan's father, Bhuban Mohan, worked as an advocate in the Calcutta High Court. He was a gentleman of immense sympathy and erudition, and his generosity had no bounds. He had a deep appreciation for poetry and music, and he regularly began his day by singing a medley of his own compositions. His writing was straightforward and chaste, and he had a talent for discipline. At first, he was the editor of the newspaper *Brahma Public Opinion* and he acquired a high position among the journalists of Bengal. During his editorship, the newspaper was comprehensively prosperous. Later, he was engaged as the editor of the fortnightly newspaper 'Bengal Public Opinion'. Bhubanmohan was indeed a patriot. In every step, his unswerving obligation to the country and selfless patriotism were observed.⁶ That is why his father's contribution and doctrine to shaping Chittaranjan's character and ideas were immense. On the other hand, his mother, Nistarini Devi, was an epitome of sacrificial grace and chastity, from whose door the afflicted never returned empty-handed. If he heard of someone's melancholy or adversity, he would assist them with all his capability.

Chittaranjan's ancestral soil was Telirbagh village, belonging to Vikrampur. But he was born in 1870 AD in the abode of Bhuvanmohan in Pataldanga Street, Calcutta. Chittaranjan passed the entrance examination from the 'London Missionary Society School' at Bhavanipur and got admission to the Presidency College, Calcutta. He completed his graduation in 1890. After that, he went across the ocean to arrive in London to get a higher education.

Along with him went J. N. Gupta, who had been a friend in college, and afterward he became a prominent member of the Indian Civil Service. His prime intention was to return to the country as an ICS officer, and so was his mother's desire. But even with cumbersome preparation twice, he could not reach his desired goal. As a result, he started studying to be a barrister. In his life, he used to say mockingly that his failure to do so. 'I came first in the unsuccessful list'. A strange incident occurred while studying for the Law in London when a prominent member of parliament named MacLean referred to the Indian pupils as a slave race. Chittaranjan protested and manifested his protest in strong language. Chittaranjan delivered the explanation during a speech he gave in London. 'It was not her sword and bayonet that won for her this vast and glorious empire, it was not her military valour that achieved this triumph (cheers), it was in the main a moral victory or a moral triumph, England might well be proud of. But to attribute all this to the ought to be pursued in India, is to my mind absolutely base and quite unworthy of an Englishman (cheers). Our legislative councils are only guided by shames, splendid lies, and magnificent do-nothings (cheers). We have men in those councils who have no business being there and others are studiously excluded without whom no legislature in any country can be perfect. We want Indians of the right sort, but his Excellency the viceroy takes precious good care to nominate only men of a certain stamp, men either weak in intellect or persons in inclination men entirely out of touch with teeming millions of my countrymen and men whom your gentleman in this country, call aristocratic model'.⁷ The English community was shaken in the serious context of this incident. Sensing the urgency of the situation, Mr. Gladstone, the leader of the Liberal Party, organized an assembly in which Chittaranjan was present and delivered the real facts. Mr. McLean had to apologize after being found guilty and he accepted responsibility for the incident. In the wake of this occurrence, he was forced to resign his position as a member of the British Parliament. That is, the example Chittaranjan created by not bowing down to the formidable British imperialist powers but protesting their injustice was unprecedented.⁸

In 1894, he returned home after completing his studies at the 'Middle Temple', and he started practicing as a lawyer in the Calcutta High Court. But

by this stage, his financial situation had gotten so out of control that he found it almost impossible to even lead a normal lifestyle. That's why Chittaranjan didn't have adequate capital to purchase clothes and paraphernalia to become an advocate. On the other hand, a junior advocate had to face fierce competition from the renowned and famous barristers of that time. But he was not a man to give up. He had to contend with mountain high obstacles. Finally, he achieved success through hard work. He had become proficient in the field of law, a first-class barrister in both civil and criminal disciplines. Perhaps once, he narrated to his uncle that 'it was the greatest tragedy in my life that I had been drawn to a profession that I do not like'.⁹

When describing this moment, Bipin Chandra Pal narrates, 'at this time, another movement was slowly gathering strength in our politics. New India was started in 1901. From its very birth, Chittaranjan was very intimately associated with it. When the original proprietors found it difficult to bear its burdens, Chittaranjan came forward to save it. A joint stock company was formed to finance it and Chittaranjan thought unable to join the Board of Directors of the Company owing to his insolvency induced his friends to put their names and money into this enterprise. In 1905, with the birth of our new nationalist movement, our old intimacy and comradeship and myself were really co-partners in the service of our common motherland. While I worked he found the means of my subsistence. And he bore my burdens with a deep and abiding sense of sacred duty which made it possible for me freely to accept his help without hesitancy or humiliation'.¹⁰ Chittaranjan's professional career experienced a turning point in 1907. At this stage, he had already promoted a strong reputation as a criminal and civil law attorney. He was now regarded as a distinguished patriot and the defender of the laws of the nation. After being charged with rebellion, the Brahma Bandhob Upadhyaya came before the Chief Presidency Magistrate in Calcutta. He was protected by Chittaranjan, just like Bipin Chandra Pal.

Later, Sri Aurobindo Ghose was arrested at his 48 Grey Street residence. On August 19th, 1908, a preliminary hearing was conducted, and the defendants were accused of agitation and conspiracy. Under Mr. Beachcraft's supervision, the Alipore Conspiracy Case trial was held in 1908. Distinguished attorneys Byomkesh Chakraborty and Hemendraprasad Ghosh were selected to fight the most serious case on behalf of Shri Aurobindo Ghose. But they gave up the responsibility of the case without getting the money. In such circumstances, there was no one left to defend them except Chittaranjan. He took responsibility for the case without receiving any remuneration. Even Chittaranjan raised funds to fight this case by selling his horse cart. The case was also tried for about 126

days, during which Chittaranjan emerged victorious in the case, and Aurobindo Ghose was finally acquitted in the trial.¹¹ Chittaranjan's foresight and competence defended the key revolutionaries of the Alipore case, Barindra Kumar Ghose, Bhupen Bandyopadhyay, and Ullash Kar, from the gallows. The Chief Justice was deeply impressed by the presentation of Chittaranjan, once he remarked that, 'I desire in particular to place on record my high appreciation of the manner in which the case was presented to the court by their leading advocate, Mr. C. R. Das'.¹² On the other hand, Srigupta stated that, 'His able arguments surprised me and I was sure that Chitta would one day shine in the profession as a leading figure in the Bar'.¹³ After this verdict, Aurobindo Ghose nominated him the 'man of Narayan incarnation'. Remembering this, Chittaranjan published a monthly magazine named *Narayani*. His fame and fortune increased drastically after this case. After being freed from imprisonment, Aurobindo Ghose remarked, 'Narayan himself appeared for my redemption'. In other words, Chittaranjan's acute legal acumen and profound insight did not just come from resolving Swadeshi cases. He gained the courage and sacrifice required to lead the political and national independence movements in the proper directions by following this approach.¹⁴ When his financial condition improved after his father's death, he felt eager to reimburse his father's debts. The Chief Justice of the High Court, Fletcher, expressed amazement and said, 'I have never noticed any person in my life who went bankrupt and paid such a huge parental debt'.¹⁵ Although similar occurrences can be found in the history of Bengali, in the case of Maharishi Devendranath Tagore, he also reimbursed all the debts left by his father and exempted him from the debts owed to him. The elder uncle of Sir Ashutosh Mukhopadhyay, Durga Prasad Mukhopadhyay, presented an illustration of paying this type of ancestral debt. Who is a great man? In reaction to this question, Benjamin Disraeli commented that, 'a great man is one who influences the lives of man in a radical manner, who gives a direction to man's thought and actions'. Chittaranjan Das was a very significant figure who commonly utilized his personal fascination, intellect, understanding, or authority in a way that had a significant historical influence on political as well as Indian national movements.

Chittaranjan's fortunes at that time were so favourable that money kept flooding into the home in considerable amounts. With this tremendous sum of money, he could have achieved financial success if he so desired. But his fundamental premise was to live a straightforward, unassuming life. Most often, it was observed that the capital he acquired was used to help the impoverished in the lower strata of society. He became a true sympathizer with the impoverished. His genuine patriotism and philanthropic heart were always opposed to the

tyranny and monopoly of the aristocracy. In a speech in Mymensingh, Chittaranjan stated that the country's work is an organ (part) of his religion. It is my ideal of life. In the imagination of my country, I see God's redemption unfolding.¹⁶ Chittaranjan Das was against the caste system. He used to study the Vedas with the Vedic *pandits* to comprehend the essence of Vedic religion. Chittaranjan gave his eldest daughter (Aparna Devi) in marriage to a *Kayastha* groom and brought in a daughter-in-law for his son (Chiraranjan Das) from the Vaidya community. On the other hand, Chittaranjan himself married a Brahmin groom, *i.e.*, Basanti Devi.¹⁷ Because he married a courteous and progressive woman, Chittaranjan was able to prevail in the struggle of life. Once, Basanti Devi went to prison with her husband for agitating against British imperialist power.

Once the renowned Russian dramatist Anton Pavlovich Chekhov commented that, medicine is my lawful wife and literature, my mistress. Like Anton Pavlovich Chekhov, Chittaranjan was a personality, of extraordinary character and could say with a strong voice that law is my subsistence, literature is my existence. But the principal objective of his life's accomplishments was to serve the country and free the motherland from the ominous imperialist power. Chittaranjan used to earn a lot of money for bestowing. It was said that his monthly income was close to fifty thousand rupees. In addition, he did not receive any payment for conducting political litigation. He had donated huge sums of capital for the improvement and progress of the native education system. He had given huge sums for the construction of the *Brahmo Vidyalaya* in Calcutta. He bestowed it on the Belgachia Medical College in Calcutta. He had provided money liberally for the improvement of the Bengali language and literature. He had a strong attachment to the literary practice, and he had also composed, one by one, *Malancha*, *Sagar Sangeet*, *Mala*, and donated money to the Bengali Literary Conference every year. Chittaranjan was deeply influenced by the works of Thomas Hood in composing the *Barbilasini* poem. Besides, English poet Robert Browning (1812-1899) was his ideal poet.¹⁸ For a while, Chittaranjan Das had edited this respectable and reputable literary magazine at his Rasha Road home. The prominent authors of this magazine were among group are Dinesh Chandra Sen, Haraprasad Shastri, Rakhaldas Bandyopadhyay, Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay, Jalandhar Sen, Jyogendranath Gupta, Bojendranath Shil, Khirod Prasad Vidyavinod, Pandit Jadabeshwar Tarkaratna, Hemendraprasad Ghosh, Jyogendranath Gupta, Panchkari Bandyopadhyay, Sureshchandra Samajpati, Jagadindra Nath Roy, Vuganjadhar Roychawdhury, Jyotindramohan Singha, Kalidash Roy, Kironshankar Roy, Hemantakumar

Sarkar, Sukumarranjan Das, Priyangbada Devi, Hemendranath Dasgupta, Satyandrakrishna Gupta, Girindramohini Dasi, etc.¹⁹

Chittaranjan was awarded the title of Deshbandhu by the countrymen for his outstanding compassion and sacrifice to the motherland. His father had a huge edifice in the Purulia district. He conferred three lakh rupees for its renovation and upgradation and converted it into an ashram with a month-wise arrangement of three thousand rupees. In the Nadia district, Chittaranjan donated two lakh rupees to orphans and impoverished people at Nityananda's hermitage. His donation to the orphan ashram of Bhavanipur was no less. Chittaranjan himself was a literary individual; in this regard, he used to provide a considerable of capital to the poor, talented, and young writers. When Surendranath Samajpati refused to continue editing '*Sahitya Patrika*' because of huge debts, Chittaranjan gave him the money he needed to pay off his debt. In order to support the local *Kirtaniya* group, he had arranged for a contribution of one thousand rupees. He had also provided substantial amounts of money to the *Belur Math's* annual festival and helped numerous revolutionaries financially when they needed it. In other words, while giving away to charity and benevolence, his wealth had been exhausted. For this reason, as *Danveer Karan*, (a donor like Karna) at the end of his life, he also handed over the large building at No. 148 Rasa Road to the trustees for women's education, which is now known as *Chittaranjan Sebasadan*. He built a small cottage for himself. That's why Deshbandhu Chittaranjan said Kabiguru Rabindranath Tagore about Das. এনেছিলে সাথেকরেমৃত্যুহীন প্রাণ, মরণে তাহাই তুমি করে গেলেদান।²⁰ স্বদেশের যে ধুলিরে শেষ স্পর্শ দিয়ে গেলে তুমি বক্ষের অঞ্চলপাতেসেথায়তোমার জন্মভূমি। দেশের বন্দন বাজে শব্দহীন পাষণের গীতে- এসোদেহহীন স্মৃতি মৃত্যুহীন প্রেমের বেদীতে।²¹

Regarding donation, it is uttered in verse ten of *Sukta* No. sixteen of the Seventh *Mandal* of the *Rigveda*, "*Oh Agni!* You are the protector of those who are contributors may the benefactor be the lord of a hundred citizens. Such donation arrived to hundreds of citizens and acknowledges him as the lord. (যে রাখাংসি দদত্যশ্চা মঘা কামেন শ্রাসসোসো মহোঃ। তাঁ অংহসঃ পিপৃহি পত্নীভিব্ধং শতং পূর্ভিব্ধিষ্ঠ।)²² This multifaceted, modest, selfless, and generous personality was Chittaranjan Das. He was steadfast in his preference for Hindu-Muslim assimilation politics, ignoring various conspiracies. Because he perceived that India was a diverse country according to the *Rigveda*, একংসদিপ্রাবঙ্খাবদন্ত্যগ্নিংযমংমাতরিশ্বানমাছ।²³ for the unification of the country, people of all religions, castes, and races should be united against an inauspicious imperialist power. Therefore, he tried to manifest a strong message

and strengthen communal harmony. He also understood that the progress of the homeland was not only possible through communal harmony, but he firmly believed that the progress of advancement and improvement of the country would be achieved through women's education and women's empowerment. For this reason, his wife, Basanti Devi, was also actively involved in the nationalist movement. In 1923, due to disagreements with Congress leaders on various issues, he established an organization called the *Swaraj party* with the cooperation of Motilal Nehru. As the leading commander of this *Swaraj Party*, he was elected as the Mayor for the first Calcutta Municipal Election was obtained on 16 April 1924, during the period of British India.

And in 1925, he had travelled to Darjeeling to restore his broken health, but on November 5th, the work-exhausted indestructible spirit sank away in the sea of grief and he had passed to the next world. Deeply distressed, Subhash Chandra Bose remarked, 'Someday his biography will be written'. When the body arrived at Barrackpore, Mahatma Gandhi joined in the journey. When the body reached Sealdah station, a huge crowd of people irrespective of caste, creed, and race had assembled with their main motive to see a glimpse of him. His mortal remains were cremated at Keoratala, the crematorium in *Ghat*.²⁴ *The Indian Struggle 1920-1934*, written by Subhas Chandra Bose, mentioned that, 'The death of Deshbandhu on June 16th, 1925, was for India a national calamity of the first magnitude. Though his, active political career consisted of barely five years, his rise had been phenomenal. With the reckless abandon of a Vaishnava devotee, he had plunged into the political movement with heart and soul and he had given not only himself but his all in the fight for *Swaraj*. When he died, whatever worldly possessions he still had, were left to the nation. By the government, he was both feared and admired. They feared his strength but admired his character. They knew that he was a man of his word. They also knew that though he was a hard fighter, he was nonetheless a clean fighter, and further, he was also the man with whom they could bargain for a settlement. He was clear-headed, his political instinct was sound and unerring and unlike the Mahatma, he was fully conscious of the role he was to play in Indian politics. He knew more than anyone else, that situations favourable for wresting political power from the enemy do not come often and when they do come, they do not last long. While the crisis lasts, a bargain has to be struck'.²⁵ Between 1919 and 1925, Chittaranjan Das had a highly active and committed political life, and he made up his mind to renounce advocacy in the service of the country and become a monk. *Atmano mokshartham jagat hitayacha i.e.*, 'for one's personal redemption (spiritual growth) and for the welfare of the world (service to the

motherland)²⁶ Subhas Chandra Bose, Birendranath Sasmal, Jatindranath Sengupta, and many more committed young lads sacrificed their lives at that time in order to serve their nation. He also joined Gandhi in supporting the non-cooperation movement, but their ideologies diverged on a number of issues. In 1921, Chittaranjan Das was elected president to lead the Ahmedabad Congress. But, Hekim Ajmal Khan was selected as the president to lead the National Congress. Due to the fact that he was imprisoned at the time, he did not attend the convention, although, in 1922, he was elected to lead the Gaya Congress.

His unfettered or illimitable movement in the unambiguous politics of the motherland was for a very short period, but the inspiration of national responsibility with which he illuminated and enlivened the people of the country was incomparable. His personality was remarkable in his activities, ethics, representative integrity, and piety. Almost the entire portion of his earned wealth has been spent on compatible institutions and helping the underprivileged and downtrodden. He did not hesitate twice about spending his accumulated wealth freely when the country needed assistance during famines, the appetites of people, or major natural calamities. Bengal was fortunate to have a pioneer leader as devoted and tremendously nationalistic as Chittaranjan Das. The majority of academicians, researchers, and historians believe that the National Congress would have had to compete with stiff or strong opposition in every sphere if Chittaranjan's *Swaraj Party*-which he founded in India had not been the victim of an untimely demise.

Notes and References

¹*Samatata* is an ancient region in the south-eastern part of Bengal province. Details of *Samatata* are available during the period of the Gupta emperor Samudragupta. In the Allahabad Pillar Inscription, especially known as *Prayag Prashasti*, mentioned here as a distinct state on the eastern border with Dabak, Kamrup, Nepal, and Karttrpura. In the *Brhatsanghita*, *Samatata* is mentioned as an individual state from Bengal. Hiuen-Tsang, a seventh-century Chinese scholar, stated that he arrived at *Samatata* after traveling south from Kamrup. He described a Buddhist cultural centre in the state capital. It-Singh has also given us a detailed description of *Samatata*.

²Rajendralal Mitra, *Indo Aryans: Contributions towards the Education of their Ancient and Medieval History*, Calcutta, 1881, p.260.

³Jogendranath Gupta, *Vikrampur Itihash*, Part-I, Calcutta, 1939, p.121.

⁴Hemendranath Dasgupta, *Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das*, The Publication Division, Calcutta, 1959, p.1.

⁵Sri Satyandra Kumar Basu, *Desh Bandhu Chittaranjan*, Basumati Sahitya Mandir, Calcutta, 1921, p.11.

⁶Sri Sukumar Ranjan Dasgupta, *Chittaranjan*, Indian Book Club, Calcutta, 1918, p.8

- ⁷Hena Chowdhury, *Deshbandhu Chittaranjaner Jiban-Ved*, Alfa Bit Publication, Calcutta, 1961.
- ⁸Aparna Devi, *Manush Chittaranjan*, Indian Associated Publishing Company Limited, Calcutta, 1954, p.35.
- ⁹Naresh Chandra Ghosh, *Chittajoyi Chittaranjan*, Joyi Prokashini, Calcutta, 1951, p.23.
- ¹⁰Hemendranath Dasgupta, *Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das*, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Government of India, Calcutta, 1960, p.27.
- ¹¹*ibid.*, pp.10-12.
- ¹²*ibid.*, p.16.
- ¹³Moni Bagchi, *Deshbandhu*, Calcutta, 1969, p.63.
- ¹⁴Hena Chowdhury, *op.cit.*, p.64
- ¹⁵Sri Kalipada Basu, *Amader Chittaranjan*, Calcutta Pustakalaya, Calcutta, 1962, p.16.
- ¹⁶Satyandranath Kumar Basu, *op.cit.*, p.67.
- ¹⁷Sri Sukumar Ranjan Dasgupta, *op.cit.*, p.49.
- ¹⁸Sri Hemendranath Dasgupta, *Sahitya Sadhok Chittaranjan*, Sriguru Library, p.23.
- ¹⁹Moni Bagchi, *op.cit.*, p.130.
- ²⁰*Rabindra Rachanabali (Astadash Khanda)*, Biswabharati, 1925, p.8.
- ²¹*ibid.*, 1935, p.8.
- ²²*Rigveda Samhita*, translated by Rameshchandra Dutta, Vol-II, Dynamic printers, Calcutta, 1976, 7/16/10, p.120.
- ²³*Rigveda Samhita*, Translated by Rameshchandra Dutta, Vol-I, Dynamic printers, Calcutta, 1976, 1/164/46, p.229.
- ²⁴A *ghat* is a landing area on a riverbank or pond bank that people (particularly Hindus) utilise for bathing and other purifying activities. Hindus who die are cleaned by their closest family members by shaving and bathing by the brink of a river or pond. The ancient term for this practise is *ghat*, and it is from this name that the general term *ghat*, which is a geographical name used for not only bathing but also communication and trade, emerged. In this situation, it functions as a landing area for people and goods disembarking from boats or ships. It is also commonly regarded as a riverside trade post where a variety of rivercraft, including country boats, steamers, and launches, may dock. The size of the *ghat* varies widely depending on the importance of the place.
- ²⁵Subhas Chandra Bose, *The Indian Struggle 1920-1934*, London Wishart and Company Ltd. 1935, p.130.
- ²⁶Dr. Kamal Singh, *The Sterling Book of Hinduism*, New Dawn Press Group, New Delhi, 2007, p.1.

**Afghan *Kabuliwalas* of Calcutta
A Historical Analysis of their socio-cultural Lives
(1801-2015)**

Anisul Haque

Research Scholar

Department of History

Jadavpur University, West Bengal

Email: tuhinhaque93@gmail.com

Abstract

Calcutta has carved its own niche in the context of immigration and diaspora, the two recent themes that have triggered important discussions in Indian history. The heterogeneity of population in Calcutta is not only marked by the presence of non-Bengali Indians but Calcutta has also been the haven for a myriad of people coming from different parts of the world. Among them the Afghans have always been a source of tremendous common inquisition and fascination. They were first introduced through the literary works of Rabindranath Tagore. The Afghans came to Calcutta during the 18th century to sell dry fruits, asafoetida, soorma (a type of kohl) and such products. During the colonial period the Afghans came to India from two of the southernmost provinces of Afghanistan—Paktiya and Patkiya. Later as border was built, they could not return. In British India a typical Afghan culture was celebrated through the physical structure and sartorial choices of these Afghans and this continued till the end of the 1890's. A rough physique, bearded, wearing salwar kameez and a turban—this image, somewhat, became analogous to those of the Afghans. Even years after induction to the modern Calcutta culture, the Afghans could never fully nullify their Afghani cultural origins and their homes, their furniture and their culinary culture still bear traces of that cultural fountainhead.

Keywords: kabuliwala, Diaspora, Migration, Calcutta, Community, Afghan.

History of immigration has an inevitable importance in Indian history. Scholars debate the origin of Indo-Aryan peoples in northern India. Many have rejected the claim of Indo-Aryan origin outside of India entirely, claiming the Indo-Aryan people and languages originated in India. Other origin hypotheses include an Indo-Aryan Migration in the period 1800-1500 BCE, and a fusion of

the nomadic people known as Kurgans. Most history of this period is derived from the Vedas, the oldest scriptures in Hinduism, which help chart the timeline of an era from 1750-500 BCE, known as the Vedic Period. Foreigners from the north are believed to have migrated to India and settled in the Indus Valley and Ganges Plain from 1800-1500 BCE. The most prominent of these groups spoke Indo-European languages and were called Aryans, or noble people in the Sanskrit language. These Indo-Aryans were a branch of the Indo-Iranians, who originated in present-day northern Afghanistan. By 1500 BCE, the Indo-Aryans had created small herding and agricultural communities across northern India. These migrations took place over several centuries and likely did not involve an invasion, as hypothesized by British archaeologist Mortimer Wheeler in the mid-1940s.

The immigrants and their histories add a special texture to the fabric of India's history and its diversity. Notwithstanding a materialistic discussion, it is safe to say that a variety of foreign powers and race had set foot in India as a result of various contemporary reasons, desire to build an empire or to settle permanently or to search the bare necessities of livelihood. The process that started with the arrival of the Aryans still continues unabated even in the 21st century.

Aryans were the first group of people to migrate into the Indian subcontinent.¹ Later, Persians, Greeks and Turks in the Ancient period, Mughals, Huns and Pathans in the Medieval era started arriving into the subcontinent in large groups.² In the early Modern period, this system was followed by the Portuguese, British, Dutch and French traders.³ After that, Armenians, Jews and various trade groups continue to live in Calcutta.⁴ After all, the Afghans came to Calcutta in the 1840s.⁵ Many of them have chosen Kolkata as their residence and inculcated in themselves the values and ideals related to Kolkata or Bengal. There were several social, cultural, economic similarities as well as dissimilarities among these various groups. Some of the migrants have taken these values back to their homeland in Europe or Asia, which in turn led to the flourishing of a mixed culture.

Many non-Bengalis have been living in Kolkata for a long time. Amongst the several waves of migrants, Afghans occupy a special place in the imaginations of ordinary people mostly because of Rabindranath Tagore's story *Kabuliwala*.⁶ The Afghans who came to Kolkata in the 18th century, and since they originally belonged from Kabul, they were known as *Kabuliwalas*. They primarily took to the occupation of selling dried fruits. During the British rule, these *Kabuliwalas* played the most pivotal role in establishing a connection with the Afghans. But

it was through Tagore's pen and his imagination that *Kabuliwalas* came to occupy a prominent space in the common Bengali mind.

However, the popular conception of the *Kabuliwalas* being original inhabitants of Kabul is a mistaken notion. Many of them have never been to Kabul and as a matter of fact for generations they have been living outside of Kabul as migrants. They are mainly inhabitants of some southern provinces of Afghanistan⁷ who came to India right before the independence and after the demarcation of borders could never again go back. It might be said that they came to be known as *Kabuliwalas* primarily because Tagore called them so in his story and introduced them to the Bengali readers. Kabul had a historic contact with India from the colonial period and the communication remained equally strong even in the later period of India's independence. Moreover, the commercial and economic relations have been improving still today. During the colonial period, Afghans came to Calcutta mainly for business and commerce and to have a better life. In Rabindranath Tagore's story *Kabuliwala*,⁸ we get a reflection of the professional lives of these people.

In the 19th century Calcutta became a safe haven for various foreign minority communities. Calcutta's political and economic stature as the capital of colonial India also appealed to these foreign minorities.⁹ So, Afghan businessmen and tribals continued to expand business in Calcutta.¹⁰ Initially, Afghan businessmen or *Kabuliwalas* used to sell goods like dry fruits, asafoetida, soorma, atar at the New Market area in Calcutta. They also ferried these items to the villages.

In the 1940s, their profession underwent some changes. Initially, they brought dried fruits from Afghanistan and sold them in Calcutta at low prices. This entire process was not much of a hassle for them before the Taliban took over their country. However, after the Taliban came to power in Afghanistan, this import of the products stopped. As a result, products had to be brought from other states to be sold here.¹¹

Among the avenues of income that the Afghans chose for themselves, money lending was their main businesses.¹² And it proved to be immensely profitable for them.¹³ This idea of money lending first occurred to a man named *Rahmat*, who was involved in a scuffle regarding borrowing money on interest, as it has been narrated in Tagore's story *Kabuliwala*.¹⁴ Aamir Khan, the leader of the *Kabuliwala* organization, said that when their ancestors first came to India, they were involved in this business. His father (Junaid Khan) was involved in the business of interest.¹⁵ He also added that this profession is risky and profitable as well. In the nineteenth century, the Indian government gave the

licenses to the *Kabuliwalas* to legally act as moneylenders.¹⁶ However, they are facing various financial problems in recent times. As in most cases they cannot earn the money back. As a result, the *Kabuliwalas* are abandoning the risky profession. Also, with introduction of modern banking services they are forced to retreat from the interest settlement. Besides, the *Kabuliwalas* are not able to do much in the context of new marketing strategies. As a result, they started considering other professions as the money lending market is not available anymore. However, circulation of money has increased in the mean time, the issue of this business is really the first thing that the *Kabuliwala* wants to consider. It was because in the last decade, Calcutta *Kabuliwala* was the holder of this profession. However, *Kabuliwal*'s organizing president Aamir Khan said some people of the *Kabuliwala* are still involved in this business but they are few in number. In 1919, on 28th October there was an incident mentioned in *Basumati*, 'extortions by the *kabuliwas*, Migrant traders and money lenders who were themselves a part of the cosmopolitan city working class and the urban underbelly on the lower middle class and poor who also recurring problem. The *Basumati* (28th october) wrote that 'the kabuli oppression' was increasing in Calcutta. Two Kabulis were sentenced to imprisonment for having assaulted a woman. In another case, three kabuli's were found, and in another, one kabuli had been bound down. The paper demanded to know why the Government did not strike at the root of kabuli oppression in Bengal. We learn from newspaper that Mr Halliday, the commissioner of the Calcutta police, ordered all Kabulis to be deprived of their lathis and this order was to be carried out. But inspite of this measure, Kabulis were reportedly seen carrying big lathis in Calcutta streets.¹⁷

Calcutta's *Kabuliwalas* have moved a lot of money morally earlier than before. There has been a lot of improvement in the socio-economic aspect as they used to earn a living by traditional ferry trade, now they do not have to do that, modern-day *Kabuliwala* do not want to go back to old business. The reason behind this, many of them lived in Kolkata and was able to obtain modern education.¹⁸ As a result, there was a fundamental change in the profession. Some of these people were associated with modern banking business.¹⁹ They are more interested in educating themselves. Yusuf Khan's son Arafat Khan (Afghan resident in Calcutta) is currently studying in English medium school in Calcutta. He said in the future, he has expressed an interest in studying engineering.²⁰

Currently there are several Afghan *Kabuliwalas* in Kolkata who have reside in Khidirpur area.²¹ They were first seen in Khidirpur area years ago. The Khidirpur area is located in the port area, attracting many old Afghan families,

because the port presented many advantages of trading. At present, many of them are engaged in promotional business in Khidirpur area. Apart from this, they can be found in the New Town area of the suburbs of Rajarhat. Many of them live in the suburbs with a contractual business. Amidst such professional versatility Afghan *Kabuliwalas* still maintain their existence in the country like India. Afghan *Kabuliyala*'s recipes have got special recognition in different parts of India including Calcutta. As a result, many of them are associated with the hotel business themselves in some big cities of India. Their livelihood depends largely by balancing their economic condition. Many among these *Kabuliwals* are quite prosperous, especially those who migrated from Afghanistan to Calcutta in the recent time. They involve themselves in hotel or restaurant business. 'Kabul Calcutta Restaurant' in Rajarhat, and *Kabuliwala* Restaurant in Salt Lake Sector-5 and Park Circus area one of the biggest examples.²²

Economic deterioration was noticed among the Afghan businessmen who came to India from the early 19th century. But since then, *kabuliwalas* have tasted financial prosperity and subsequently contributed to the Indian economic system. During the colonial government, they could not engage themselves in the multi-faceted profession, so they limited themselves to buying things such as hing, cashew nuts, walnuts, etc. The relationship between India and Afghanistan had its inception in ancient India, and in the Middle Ages with the coming of the Turks and Afghans. After that, communication was snapped for a long time. However, in the nineteenth century, Afghans renewed their contact with India and started a new era and another new episode. The initiative taken by *Kabuliwala*, or Afghan migrants, had a great role to play in this renewal of contacts. At present, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his welcome address in Afghanistan, talked about the origin of the Indo-Afghan relations,²³ from the very ancient times, even in the Mahabharata we can see the history of communication between the two provinces. In the latter context, the poem was rewritten by the Afghan *Kabuliwalas*. So, the relationship between the two countries needs to be strengthened.²⁴

Afghani traders by the name Dadgul Khan and Yusuf Khan (based in Calcutta) have appropriately stated that compared to the other cities of India, Calcutta is a peaceful city. Hence, they have no problems residing here. The people of Calcutta have a diverse and deep sense of empathy. Moreover, problems related to monetary and commercial transactions are solved efficiently by the police officials. But they are not personally harassed by the police anymore. He also stated that Calcutta had provided a living space, employment opportunities, hence does not want to settle elsewhere. Mr. Amir Khan has

stated that Kashipur area has given the maximum respect to these Kabuliwalahs. They had unlimited access to this area. In the Hindi and Urdu speaking areas of Calcutta, we notice the presence of these *Kabuliwalahs*.

Individuals travelling to Afghanistan have noticed that people of various caste and religion reside in in this land. Mostly several srenis or castes comprise to form the Afghani class. Though most of Afghan population are Muslims, several religions exist within one composite class or sampradaya. For example, in the Hizlai composite class, both Hindus and Muslims exist. Most of the Kabuliwalahs of our country identify themselves as Hindu and Muslim in respective situations. Some of them are Hindus as well, but we identify and categorize them into Pathan or Afghani Muslim class.²⁵

The cultural sphere of *Kabuliwalahs* is noticeable in their inner circles. In SusmitaBandyopadhyay's '*Kabuliwalas Bengali Wife*' (*Kabuliwalas Bangali Bou*)²⁶ the description of Afghanistan is observed among the Kabuliwalahs of Bengal. Even in a warm climatic region like Calcutta, they use carpets on the floor to sleep, eat and to perform other duties. Among the various customs and traditions of Afghanistan, one of the most important customs was to dine together. This tradition is still prevalent among the *Kabuliwalahs* of Calcutta even today. The residential areas of *Kabuliwalahs* called 'Khan-Kothi.'²⁷ The Afghans also use this term as well. They are residing with their families for many years. Though situated in Calcutta, these houses are characterised and designed as per Afghani traditions. They are not loaded with furniture, but floors with empty spaces are the most important feature. These residential have high walled roof, and some of these can be seen in the Kashipore area even today.

The Afghans *Kabuliwalas* who have lived in Kolkata have marital relation with Bengali women. Their marriage rituals vary from one province to another. For example, the groom has to pay dowry to the bride's family before the marriage without which the marriage doesn't stand. This custom is exactly opposite to the Indian tradition of female dowry. Another ritual goes like after marriage, the bride would stay in her parental house for a year during which the groom has to take all the responsibility of her alimony. According the Amir Khan, this custom is similar to the Indian Islamic tradition where the groom has to pay 'den-mohar'²⁸ to the bride's family. Sushmita Bandyopadhyay has suggested that, 'it is for certain that girls in Kabul are sold by their parents'. Except from this, others rituals follow the custom of throwing sugar grains at the bride when she arrives at her in-law's house and firing gunshots in sky.

The above-stated customs are common among the Afghans who live in India, especially those who reside in Kolkata. Mr. Amir Khan claims that as the Afghan families are learning to think beyond their traditional social ethos, their rituals and customs are becoming outdated. Some families may still follow the rituals but it is completely up to individual choice. There is no such rigidity regarding these customs among the *kabuliwalas* of Kolkata. In maintaining their marriage custom, the economic well-being of the bride's family is also taken into consideration which is beneficiary for both the families. However, Khan thinks that this system or custom is indeed problematic.²⁹

Afghans speak different mother tongues in different provinces of which Dari and Pashto are the most prominent dialects. Afghans who came to Kolkata in colonial period spoke Pashtun as their mother tongue. Gradually they learnt Bengali and Hindi. Many of them have a good command over Urdu and Persian. However, they give most importance to Hindi in their day-to-day public interactions while using their mother tongue Pashtun inside the community.³⁰ One of the remarkable features of nineteenth-century Afghans was that they chose very diverse field professions for expansion of trade and earning livelihood. In Kolkata also they were involved in various kinds of trade and commerce. But the new generation of Afghan teens are becoming more interested in pursuing education. Now they can be found in the classrooms of renowned schools and colleges in Kolkata and struggling in job market with the mainstream society. Socio-economic condition of the *kabuliwalas* has been evolved with time and the new generation of Afghan youths are trying to incorporate themselves in the organized sector of Indian economy while leaving behind their traditional profession and craft.

Afghan settlements are scattered throughout the city of Kolkata. However they are most likely to be seen in the New Market region. On any day of the week they can be found in restaurants like Zeeshan and Aminia from where they have their breakfast and leave for day's work.³¹ In Sundays they gather in Maidan (a place in Kolkata near Fort William) and in the afternoon they take part in different sports amongst themselves (colloquially, *mulakat*). They could also be noticed around Nakhoda Mosque in Kolkata as many of them arrange their merchandise around this holy place. Afghans are devout Muslims and many of them read namaj (*Salah*, literally 'prayer, worship') five times (waqt) a day. Mr. Amir Khan has informed that on the auspicious day of Eid, Afghan *kabuliwalas* join the gathering of Muslims to read namaj on Red Road. Afghans living across the country meet on both the Eid. They often take up the duty of serving the pirs (a Sufi saint and spiritual guide in Islam). By gathering in different

religious and cultural festivals and discussing several issues they foster a community feeling amongst themselves.³²

In view of this discussion, it can be concluded that Afghan *kabuliwalas* were a migrated community from Afghanistan who started coming to India from the colonial period and then permanently settled in the country. Today they can be recognized by their physic and traditional attire in the streets of central Kolkata. Bengalis first came to know about them from the legendary short story written by Rabindranath Tagore named '*Kabuliwala*'. The poet popularized their profession in Bengali psyche and since then they are famous as *kabuliwalas* in Bengal. In the context of the entire discussion, it can be said that the socio-economic status and the cultural life of the *Kabuliwalas* has developed and has mixed with the socio-economic and cultural life of Calcutta. Many of them grew up in the society of Calcutta; a community living thousands of kilo-meters away from their own country is also living in the crisis of their own existence in Calcutta. Many foreign populations living in Calcutta have been living their livelihood even in extreme financial uncertainty, but Calcutta has provided shelter to innumerable people and maintains its huge diversity and its Heritage.

Notes and References

- ¹J.L Mehata, Modern Afganisthan was a part of the ancient India, the afgan belonged to the part of indo-aryan civilization, *Advanced study in History of Mediavel India*, p. 31.
- ²Francois Bernier, *Travels in the Mughal Empire ad.1656-1668*, London, Oxford University Press, 1967.
- ³Pradip Sinha, *Calcutta Urban History*, Calcutta, KLM Frima Pvt.Ltd, 1978.
- ⁴Abraham S Isaac, *Origin and History of the Calcutta jews*, Calcutta, Asian Printers, 1996, p. 14.
- ⁵Susil Chaudhury, 'Trading Network in a Traditional Diaspopora, Armennians in India, 1600-1800', *XIIth International Economic History congress Buenos Aires*, 2012,p.6.
- ⁶Rabindranath Tagore, *Kabuliwala*, Viswabharati, Sadhana Patrika, 1299.
- ⁷Panthajan, *Kabuler Pothe Pothe*, Kolkata, Ananda, 2009.
- ⁸Rabindranath Tagore, *op.cit*.
- ⁹Amir Khan, Interview, Kolkata, 18.03.2017. The interview was conducted by the author.
- ¹⁰Nazia Afrin, *Kabuler Khoje Khoje*, BD News Twenty Four Dot Com, 2015.
- ¹¹Anandabazar Patrika, 24th April, 2015.
- ¹²Amir Khan,*op.cit*.
- ¹³Nazia Afrin, *op.cit*.
- ¹⁴Rabindranath Tagore, *op.cit*.
- ¹⁵Amir Khan,*op.cit*.

- ¹⁶Najes Afroj and Moska Najib, *Kabul to Kolkata*, Picture Gallery, 2015.
- ¹⁷Basumoti Patrika, 28th October, 1919.
- ¹⁸Anandabazar Patrika, 24th April, 2015.
- ¹⁹Nazia Afrin, *op.cit.*
- ²⁰Najes Afroj and Moska Najib, *op.cit.*
- ²¹Agni Roy, 'Bodleche Jhuli, Naya Digyante Rahamotera', *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, 24th April, 2015.
- ²²The information was collected from the owner of Kabul Kolkata Restaurant.
- ²³*Anandabazar Patrika*, 24th April, 2015.
- ²⁴Vyasdev, *The Mahabharata*, Hymns - 257, 326, 503, 691, 1110 and 1188.
- ²⁵Ramanath Biswas, *Afganisthan Vroman*, Kolkata, Ashok Pustokaloy, 1349.
- ²⁶Susmita Bandyopadhyay, *Kabuliwalar Bangali Bou*, Kolkata, Bhasa O Sahitya, 1998.
- ²⁷Amir Khan, *op.cit.*
- ²⁸Susmita Bandyopadhyay:, *op.cit.*
- ²⁹Amir Khan, *op.cit.*
- ³⁰Amitabha Roy, *Kabul Nama*, Kolkata, Anushtup, 2010.
- ³¹Najes Afroj and Moska Najib, *op.cit.*
- ³²Amir Khan, *op.cit.*

Port History and the Development of Maritime Research India and the World

Soumyajit Mukherjee

Research Fellow

Department of History

Jadavpur University, Kolkata

Guest Lecturer at Sanskrit College & University, Kolkata

Email : soumyajitm.history.rs@jadavpuruniversity.in

Abstract

An assessment of maritime historiography, both from an Indian and a global perspective, is the focus of this paper, which pays special attention to the scholarly engagement with 'port history' writing. The detailed extant literature reveals three different yet interlinked phases of port history studies. First, ports were only considered in the early stages of maritime historiography when maritime historians addressed ancient cross-civilization exchange networks. Second, by considering the ports merely as a part of a city's urbanization rather than as an 'institutional entity', a subset of urban historians helped propel the field of port studies into the limelight. Finally, ports have been attracting a great deal of attention since the scholars of economics, sociology, and management studies started to examine (or, some would argue, exaggerate) the repercussions of 'modernisation' in the world shipping industry by projecting the labour market problem. Almost all early maritime historical scholarship is devoid of references to ports; thereby, ports' significance in maritime history and affairs has been grossly pushed aside. Only after the major 'institutionalisation' of world ports began in the 1950s, combined with an accrescent specialization in the global shipping industry, did port history studies gain traction, offering a new approach towards scientific and interdisciplinary inquiry based on the repudiation of past propositions and models. Overall, ports and maritime historiography have been discussed.

Keywords: economic history, Indian Ocean trade, maritime historiography, ports, shipping.

An institution? A maritime hub of international commerce? A centre of global exchanges? Or birthplace for creating cosmopolitanism? Ports have the potential to bring about significant societal shifts, and indeed, throughout human history, this is often the case. When it came to altering the 'dis-embedded

economy' and encouraging consistent long-distance trade, ancient ports played a deciding role. In medieval times, ports acted as an 'emporium', facilitating both commercial activities and cultural intermixture. In the early modern era, it served as a 'bridgehead' and played a dramatic role in the structural divergence of western commerce by turning the 'peddling' trade into a transnational one. The ports acted as a node for international capital flows and mass migration during the long nineteenth century. And since 1945, in the era of globalisation, ports have evolved into a robust and powerful economic institution, an 'independent unit' that plays a crucial part in the global economy, and aids in the development of nations. Ports have now completely lost their millennia-old mediatory role in cultural exchange.

The study of ports, typically known as 'port history', is becoming increasingly popular in maritime history, blue economy, and development studies. In fact, for the researchers, a study on ports is considered a sharp door to enter into maritime studies. In India, maritime history has had its root from very early on. Imperialist history writings gave birth to the nationalist history, and national history writings gave birth to maritime history.

Long ago, there was a typical historical school commonly known in academia as the Imperialist School. It emerged as a support to the academia, legitimizing British imperialism and colonialism in Asia. While writing Asian history, it was a frequent practice to impose the idea of a stagnant society. They categorized the oriental societies as decrepit, unchanging, bound with religious ethics, and replete with superstitions. One of the prevalent notions of this imperialist school was to deny the history of any overseas contacts of the Asian countries so that their very claim—that is, Asia as a stagnant society—could be out rightly established.

For instance, they scorned the history of intercourse between India and the western world, dating back to the days when the Roman Empire reached the pinnacle in its trade with India. When maritime archaeologists discovered many South Indian ports that served as significant ports in the Indo-Roman trade, imperialist historians vehemently denied their claim, invoking inflexible and strange arguments. One of their notorious and biased arguments was that the Roman interest was the driving force behind the arrival of Roman traders in India. India was, as they argued, so self-sufficient that it never had an interest in trading with the Roman Empire.¹ However, this view was later challenged by many Indian nationalist historians who, by publishing their tremendous research works, successfully established India's long and rich history of intercourse and cross-

cultural exchange with many other overseas societies, even long before the Indo-Roman trade.² Thus, a new trend in Indian historiography emerged-maritime history. Maritime history is a study of the interaction between different societies over far distances in-between that exchanged ideas and cultures through maritime trade and shipping.³

Maritime History: Scope and Character

First and foremost, readers should become acquainted with the nature and scope of maritime history before plunging into port historiography. Maritime history delves into the exploits of those who traversed the great seas and oceans throughout history. There is nothing more to it than a history of human engagement with oceans and seas that encompasses maritime trade, shipbuilding technologies, and the lives and activities of maritime merchants such as sailors and seamen, as well as boatmen and fishermen who had a close connection with the aquatic world. Thus, maritime history depicts the land-sea interaction. It also covers the interplay of diverse communities along an ocean's or sea's shore. 'Littoral societies' are sometimes referred to as such by modern historians. However, maritime historians have significant differences of opinion when it comes to the definition and nature of maritime history. The vast majority of historians are of the opinion that maritime history embodies the terms 'international' and 'global' in scope, regarding both the nature and the extent of its coverage. Some names stand out among them, including David Abulafia, Michael Pearson, Jerry H Bentley, N. A. M. Rodger, Gelina Harlaftis, Frank Broeze, Ashin Dasgupta, and Rila Mukherjee, among others.⁴ Broeze claims that maritime history necessarily spans national boundaries.⁵ Hester Blum claims that sailors were undoubtedly 'international by definition'.⁶ The well-known journal *International Journal of Maritime History* has been instrumental in fostering the development of a more international or global perspective among maritime historians. This has been accomplished through the publication of numerous articles in the journal that have a global approach. However, the editor of this journal asserted that contemporary maritime history literature is increasingly focused on local and national concerns.⁷ To the author of this present article, maritime history is a cross-disciplinary academic study that aids us in comprehending the history of intricate interactions between humans and oceans/seas across time and space. Depending on the theme it covers, such as the history of seafaring or maritime merchants, it may be global or international. On the other hand, the history of fishermen or boatmen on the Ganges or the Bay of Bengal could serve as an example of national or regional history. Whether the

breadth and perspective of maritime history are global or regional, they span a large time and space.

Ports in Maritime Research

Port history is considered an easy point to enter into maritime studies. Historically, ports served as a meeting point for individuals of various religions, cultures, and ethnicities. On the one hand, a port functions as a conduit for international trade and shipping. On the other hand, it integrates various societies and cultures into a single circuit: the network of business and trade, allowing them to communicate with one another. Port is also a place where people develop a sense of belonging to a multicultural community. Throughout history, the oceans of the world have experienced a variety of human interactions. The history of a port discloses such interactions well. While port studies are instrumental in explaining maritime trade and merchant shipping in modern Indian Ocean history, they are equally crucial in examining other critical facets of human history, such as long-distance migration, diasporas, emigration, labour transportation, and environmental studies. In colonial times, ports in the Indian Ocean served as a point of departure for a diverse range of people: slaves and labourers, dealers, merchants, shippers, government personnel, officials, and many nationalist leaders, among others. Thus, port history research could uncover a plethora of fascinating information about the human history of the world's oceans and seas.

A Short Review of Literature: Port -a 'Neglected' Theme in Maritime History

Maritime historians have successfully produced great scholarly works in almost every field of maritime studies, on naval history, maritime trade, shipping, sailors, shipbuilding, naval technology, and oceanic interaction. Ports, on the other hand, got short shrift. This paradox might be probed further by conducting a brief literature survey on maritime history in both the Indian and Western contexts.

W. H. Mooreland's works on Indian history first sparked an interest in the maritime trade of India in the pre-colonial period. In some of his best-known writings, he included chapters on the Indian Ocean trade.⁸ Mooreland promulgated that before Europeans arrived in the Indian Ocean, Indian/Asian maritime trade was skimpy and unremarkable in magnitude. Later, J. C. Van Leur, a well-known historian of South-East Asian maritime trade, best known for his 'Pedlar Thesis', contested Mooreland's views and went on to write about the indigenous Indian Ocean merchants. He wrote extensively on that and established a new history of the nature and character of Asian maritime merchants.

Indonesian Trade and Society is one of his most well-known writings. Even though he addressed several novel concerns about the structure and form of Indian Ocean trade in this work, he did not devote enough attention to the role of Indian Ocean ports in the overall picture.⁹ In an influential book, *Asian Trade and European Influence*, M. A. P. Meilink Roelofsz went into considerable depth about the maritime trade of the Dutch and Asian merchants; nevertheless, significant ports were again left out of the discussion.¹⁰ Radhakumud Mukherji authored a renowned book on India's maritime history.¹¹ This work is still considered an outstanding contribution to India's maritime past for a variety of reasons. However, Mukherji confined himself only to narrating maritime trade and shipping activities. There is little information available to readers about important ancient Indian seaports. In this regard, Ashin Dasgupta was unquestionably the first historian to devote significant attention to ports. His ground-breaking work *Indian Merchant and the Decline of Surat* is esteemed in academia as a benchmark in Indian Ocean maritime history.¹² In this work, Dasgupta discussed various causes and the contemporary political climax that led to the decline of the port Surat, the main outlet of Mughal India. Unfortunately, ports were explicitly marginalised in his later works. The Bay of Bengal has long been overlooked by historians and scholars of Indian Ocean history. Even those who have shaken its water through the publication of research articles, books, and essays have omitted to mention its major ports, which include Madras, Visakhapatnam, Pulicat, Calcutta, and Chittagong.¹³

Even the most well-regarded books and works on Indian economic history leave me scratching my head when I discover that they contain no chapters on Indian Ocean ports. For example, multiple chapters were given to railways, irrigation, banking, foreign trade, national income, population, and other topics in *The Cambridge Economic History of India* (vol.2); however, no chapter was devoted to maritime trade or Indian ports. In a similar vein, Indian ports received only a few words in Tirthankar Roy's renowned and extensively disseminated book on Indian economic history.¹⁴ This identical illustration can be seen in other works on Indian economic and business history. They paint quite a similar picture.¹⁵

Port, as a prime theme in maritime and economic history, is a recurrent occurrence in the historiography of Bengal's trade and commerce, as is the tendency to overlook them as a topic. Reputable historians including R. C. Majumder, N. K. Sinha, Amallesh Tripathi, Sushil Chaudhuri, Barun Dey, Sugata Bose, and S. Bhattacharya ignored Bengal's ports.¹⁶ Even Tilottama Mukherjee's very recently published scholarship on Bengal trade and commerce fails to give

the ports of Bengal adequate consideration they need.¹⁷ Although, to a lesser extent, ports received attention in Bhaswati Bhattacharya's essay 'Ports, Hinterlands and Merchant Networks: Armenians in Bengal in the Eighteenth Century', where the author illustrated in great detail how the Armenian merchant networks were instrumental in the development of the intricate relationship between the ports and the hinterland. However, the author plunged the merchants into the main discussion and paid much more attention to them than to the institutional mechanisation of ports.¹⁸

Alternatively, a similar disregard for port history may be noticed in European maritime and economic historiography, although to a lesser extent. Despite the fact that massive works on Mediterranean maritime history and North Sea history have been produced, all of the scholarships avoided the port as a central point of discussion. There are several notable European economic historians, such as Henri Pirenne, Robert S. Lopez, Alfons Dopsch, Robert Latouche, M. M. Postan, Georges Duby, Norman Pounds, Steven A. Epstein, and Jacques Le Goff, who have written extensively about the structure and growth of the European economy; yet, European seaports were largely overlooked or have been under-researched in comparison to other parts of the economy.¹⁹ However, in his latest *magnum opus* on the European economy titled, *Origins of the European Economy: Communications and Commerce AD 300-900*, Professor Michael McCormick devotes great attention to the importance of the North Sea and Mediterranean ports in determining economic progress.²⁰ Modern historians of the Mediterranean, the Atlantic, and the North Sea have provided a brief explanation of the significance of European ports in maritime trade and exchanges, but ports have not been elevated to the centre of their discussions.²¹ Professor David Abulafia, a leading historian of Mediterranean history at Cambridge University, provides an excellent example. *The Great Sea: A Human History of the Mediterranean* is an amazing book by him. While he has a lot to recommend for his explanations and narratives, the only flaw is that he views ports as an 'urban unit' in a sea rather than a 'commercial emporium'. Recently published works of Mediterranean and Atlantic history could be found to have the same fashion as the previous works.²²

Port History-A Recent Trend in Maritime History

A subset of contemporary maritime historians concentrates their research and writing on ports and port history. Some universities and institutes based in Australia are leading the way to place the ports as the primary focus of research. In addition, certain colleges or institutes located near the ports are conducting various research projects on the history of ports. The University of Liverpool,

for example, has created a particular department/research unit dedicated only to port studies-*The Centre for Port and Maritime History*. This research centre has published many monographs and books on ports, and they are now considered necessary reading for anybody interested in global networks, multinational business, and international connections. There is a lot to be said about one of its most notable publications, *Harbours and Havens: Essays in Port History*, edited by Professor Lewis R. Fischer, which focuses on the world's major ports. Needless to say, it is the first and perhaps the only work that provides a comparative study of the major ports of Australia, Asia, Europe, and the Atlantic from a historical perspective. The contributors of the book have unequivocally acclaimed that 'ports were of far greater national importance than the railways or the telegraphs'.²³ Another notable work that ought to be mentioned is *Liverpool and Merseyside: Essays in the economic and social history of the port and its hinterland*, which discusses the extensive shipping networks of the port of Liverpool.²⁴

Port history was initiated and amplified in India by a few urban historians. The book *Ports and their Hinterlands in India (1700-1950)* by the finest Indian urban historian, professor Indu Banga is a prominent example of this type.²⁵ Subsequently, port studies became popular, and several marine staff and port officials conducted studies on Indian ports. Animesh Ray, formerly the port commissioner of Calcutta Port Trust, wrote a book titled *Maritime India: Ports and Shipping*. It has gone to great lengths about the history of Indian ports prior to and following India's independence. He also wrote about the history of Calcutta Port.²⁶ Sadanand Gupta's newly published book *Shipping Industry In India: Colonialism to Globalisation (A Spatio-Temporal Analysis)* focuses on the history of Indian ports after 1947 and contains more statistics-based research.²⁷ For the Asian port history, Frank Broeze's edited book *Gateways of Asia: Port Cities of Asia in the 13th-20th Centuries* is undoubtedly an important addition.²⁸

Several works on maritime history have been published recently, with ports as a focus of an investigation. Rila Mukherjee's edited volume *Vanguards of Globalization: Port-Cities from the Classical to the Modern* has detailed the historical evolution of Asian port-cities. Yogesh Sharma's recently edited work *Cities in Medieval India* is required reading in this context, as this volume contains three (03) extensive chapters on the ports of coastal India. Another one is *Port Towns of Gujarat*, where for the first time, medieval Indian ports have received ample attention.²⁹ While all of the publications mentioned above are worthy enough in port studies, they equally contain many deficiencies; the

most significant one is that they refer to Indian ports as ‘port cities’. Port as an inter-modal gateway and its importance in international sea transport has been under-emphasized in this literature. Such a portrayal of ports can also be found in both European and American historiography. *Cities and the Sea: Port City Planning in Early Modern Europe* is a perfect example to validate this assertion as the contributors of this book considered European ports to be the equivalent of port cities.³⁰

Finally, I would like to draw the readers’ attention to a few recently released publications on maritime history that have opened the doors for research on port studies and placed a focus on ports for understanding comparative international history. The first is *The Asian Mediterranean: Port Cities and Trading Networks in China, Japan and Southeast Asia, 13th-21st Century*, which made a comparison between Asian and Mediterranean ports and argued that rather than serving as a nation’s gateway to international trade, Asian ports are stand-alone units of international exchanges.³¹ The other one is *Commodities, Ports and Asian Maritime Trade Since 1750* that has addressed the historical importance that Asian ports played in trans-oceanic trade.³² Also, in a recent addition, *Ports in the Medieval European Atlantic, Shipping, Transport and Labour*, the author used extensive archival sources and described many crucial aspects of the Atlantic ports and their connection with shipping, trade, and labour.³³ The book *Empires on the Waterfront: Japan’s Ports and Power, 1858–1899*, published by the Harvard University Asia Center is also a welcome addition to the field of maritime history, focusing on the country’s traditional ports and the rise and fall of its imperial power at that time. Here the author Catherine L. Phipps brings to the forefront the role of the treaty ports in transforming Japan into a modern nation-state. Such a tale of traditional ports has never been acknowledged by the historians of Japanese history.

Port History in Indian Historiography: The Case of Calcutta and Bombay

India has a long tradition of maritime trade, and it has a sizable number of major and minor ports along its extensive coastlines. Notwithstanding, in traditional historiography, the history of Indian ports is given less weight. For instance, despite being the premier port of modern India, Calcutta Port received little attention from maritime historians. Rila Mukherjee’s positive endeavour towards port studies is confined mainly to early modern ports and port cities. Her recently published book on port history has no chapter dedicated to Calcutta Port. Most historians (like C. A. Bayly and P. J. Marshall) tend to consider Calcutta as a metropolis; in certain cases, they have used it as a significant focus in their writings on urban history.³⁴ While writing about the city, scholars,

and historians barely mentioned Calcutta as an international port. However, we owe gratitude to several economics and management studies researchers and the Kolkata Port Trust for producing significant (albeit restricted) research works on the port of Calcutta. I want to call attention to three publications, in particular, each of which includes a separate chapter dedicated to the Calcutta Port. Dr. Prajnananda Banerjee, in his book *Calcutta and its Hinterland- A Study in Economic History of India*, wrote about the trade of Calcutta Port in some detail. He used archival records and governmental data.³⁵ Another notable work is *Port and Development: A Study of Calcutta Port in India*, where the author discusses the history of Calcutta Port prior to India's independence.³⁶ However, Calcutta Port's history has recently been enriched by the addition of a newly published work. Dr. Sunil Kumar Munshi contributed a chapter concerning the selection of sites for the establishment of Calcutta Port immediately before its formal port trust appeared in 1870 in his book *Dynamics of Urban Growth in Eastern India*.³⁷

The Calcutta Port Trust Administration has published a few books on the port that are not very much related to academics but are nonetheless intriguing. The statutory body of the Kolkata Port Trust is highly interested and concerned about documenting the heritage of the organization's long and prosperous existence. The trust administration had gone to great lengths to portray the port's paramount significance in Indian history. Even before our freedom, there was an example of this sort to be found. In 1920, the port trust published a book named *The Calcutta Port Trust-A Brief History of Fifty Years' Work* undertaken by S. C. Stuart-Williams, the then commissioner of Calcutta Port Trust. Although it placed a greater emphasis on the work of the port commissioners (from 1870 to 1920); therefore, maritime and commercial activities of the port were poorly highlighted as required. Later, the trustees of the Calcutta Port bestowed a great responsibility to Prof Nilmani Mukherjee of Calcutta University, who was tasked with compiling a complete historical account of the port. Prof Mukherjee wrote a brief but highly admirable history of Calcutta Port taking the period from the port's inception till the 1970s. It may be used as a reference for students, researchers and general readers. He used enormous archival sources of the government, port trust official documents, reports, and rare secondary sources in his book *The Port of Calcutta: A Short History*.³⁸

However, most of the works cited above have tried to sketch a dry narrative of the works of port commissioners. We are simply given the export-import statistics of the port without casting their historical context. Therefore, none of them were able to clearly identify the ways in which numerous domestic

and global economic trends impacted the port's activities. One would be hard-pressed to locate the port's shipping and commercial activities, as well as the port's linkage to the upheavals of the global economy. In general, these works make little mention of Calcutta Port's connection with the development of the Indian and world economies.

Since the second half of the nineteenth century, Calcutta Port was gradually losing its eminent role in modern India, with Bombay Port attracting special attention from merchants, traders, importers, exporters, and shipping companies. Notwithstanding, historians have paid scant attention to Bombay Port. Here again, we observe a similar pattern as in the case of Calcutta. Most historians considered the Bombay Port as part of their discussion on the city's urbanization process; some authors even did not go to include mention of the city's prime port. To give an example, the *Centre for Urban Policy and Governance* of Tata Institute of Social Science (TISS) has recently published a project that depicts the entire history of Bombay's urban development from 1661 to the present. Needless to say, this work could be a grievous blow to anybody who works on maritime history. It did not end well for Bombay Port as the endeavour has not resulted in Bombay Port having a short chapter to write. For another instance, take a look at the magisterial study carried out by the finest economic historian of the twentieth century, Holden Furber, on the Bombay Presidency, titled *Bombay Presidency in the Mid-Eighteenth Century*. It is a fundamental, research-based work and considered essential reading for western India's economic history. However, while discussing the Bombay Presidency's country trade, private trade, and company trade, Furber did not address the development of the port of Bombay.³⁹ Bombay received an 'urban viewpoint' solely from academicians in Frank Broeze's edited book *Gateways of Asia*.⁴⁰ A recently published study titled *Bombay: From Fishing Village to Colonial Port City (1662-1947)* by Dick Kooiman shows how numerous external and internal forces had transformed the nature of the city.⁴¹ They were merchant communities, traders, migrant labourers, waves of imperialism and nationalism, and great freedom fighters. The article does a great job of tracing Bombay's gradual evolution from a trading post to a significant urban centre in the British Empire. However, the readers of this article would be hard-pressed to trace the evolution of the Bombay Port or how it shaped the city's economic history. In many additional scholarly works, such similar stances toward the Bombay Port were expressed, ranging from prominent journal articles to books published by well-known publishing houses. Only the Mumbai Port Trust cleared the way for significant attention to be paid to writing the entire history of the port. In 2000,

the trust published a book named *Tides of Time: History of Mumbai Port*, where the author explored several important topics such as a short history of Bombay Port, its development, economic activities, export-import statistics, labour issues, and port's role in city's urbanization.⁴² Although, like with Calcutta, readers may find it exaggeration the port trust's actions and achievements!

New Directions: Global Shipping and Port History After 1945

The Second World War (WWII) altered the structure of the nineteenth-century world economy and politics. Traditional powerful states, mostly western, had lost their hegemony; instead, a slew of new nations emerged as true players in international affairs. Following the war, almost all countries and nations began making rapid modifications to their infrastructure toward *modernization*. Within decades, the curve of the foreign trade of nations, which temporarily slackened between the two world wars due to political instability and, to a lesser extent, the global adaptation of import substitution after 1945, has resumed its ascending trajectory. It was a period in which creating export-oriented infrastructures was given the topmost priority by the governments around the world. In such a situation, ports received special care since they served as catalysts for a country's international trade and commerce. Prioritising ports' infrastructural development became a radical necessity when *containerization* was implemented in oceanic shipping in the 1960s, especially in the 1980s and 1990s when countries worldwide (Latin America, India, etc.) began adopting trade liberalisation. During this period, governments, merchant organisations, traders, and large capital investment firms around the world conferred primogeniture-like status on the seaports. Consequently, world ports have evolved into significant economic institutions.

With such changes in the character of ports, there has been an increase in academic research focused on ports and port studies among notable economists, historians, and other experts. It went in *two* directions. One group of experts, generally leftists, tended to exaggerate the negative repercussions of port-modernisation by projecting labour market problems. Others, who may be coloured as liberals, assailed to demonstrate how modernity augmented global economic growth, GDP, and per capita income in numerous academic journals. An example of the former kind is the work conducted under the aegis of *Shri Ram Centre for Industrial Relations*, published in the year 1970, titled *Trade Unionism in Indian Ports: A Case Study at Calcutta and Bombay*⁴³ (note the publication year! It was when Indian ports began to adopt containerization). Here the author has traced the growth of trade unions in the ports and made some concluding observations based on a comparative analysis of the ports of

Calcutta and Bombay. Aniruddha Bose, a professor at Saint Francis University, is the most recent addition to this type of research. It was Professor Bose's 2018 book, *Class Conflict and Modernization in India: The Raj and the Calcutta Waterfront*, that delved into in-depth the modernization process in Calcutta Port from 1860 to 1910.⁴⁴ While discussing the early literature on Calcutta Port, the author lamented deeply: 'Despite the significance of both the port and its workforce there is very little historical literature that covers the port's history'.⁴⁵ For the period of post-independent India, a recent work, *Logistical Asia, The Labour of Making a World Region* added a further contribution where ports have been seriously considered as the focal point of discussion on India's economic growth. Additionally, the book investigated how advances in logistical management affected the lives of port labourers.⁴⁶ However, a major demerit is that all the contributors to this volume notoriously played a game to avoid official archival sources; their discussions and conclusions are leaned only on secondary records.

Estimating the role of seaports in fortifying the contours of the colonial world economy is still relatively an unexplored area in academia. Very recently, a group of scholars has done this well in the context of the Atlantic World Economy taking its peak period of growth, between 1850 and 1930. In the book *Atlantic Ports and the First Globalisation*, ports have been considered an *institution*. The contributors to this collection have studied several essential features of colonial ports. These include infrastructure improvements, technological advancements and reforms, as well as port administration.⁴⁷ Perhaps for the first time, as it seems to the author of this present essay, scholars and historians have considered the colonial ports an 'independent institution' rather than a part of urbanization. Readers will find several intriguing themes in this collection, such as Daniel Hidalgo's essay on the steps taken towards modernization at Dakar (a port located on the Cape Verde Peninsula, West African coast).⁴⁸ It was served as a crucial port in the French African Empire. Sometimes, recent scholars tend to consider the ports as one of the principal instruments for sustaining the nineteenth-century colonial world empires, as in the newly published book *Colonialism in Global Perspective* (2021).⁴⁹ Professor Kris Manjapra has represented the ports in a slightly different manner in this instance. Despite the author's prime focus on port cities, he meticulously explored how ports served as a key tool for spreading the webs of colonialism and assisting in executing colonial exploitations. In his own words, 'A port is a political and economic domain where mobility over land connects to mobility over seas, ...ports are also governmental apparatuses for the command of

movement across land and sea, and between societies'.⁵⁰ A fundamental drawback is explicitly reflecting on the author's over-attention to the aspects of the seaports' specific role in managing trans-oceanic human migration in the colonial realm. Other considerations, such as trade, shipping, and modernizations, were repudiated. Despite such limitations, the book is the only study that discusses colonial histories with ports as a key component. In recent years, a group of Australian economists, historians, and development studies professionals have carried out and published good research projects on the development of Australian ports in the contemporary era, making port history research more appealing, enlightening, and scientific. Among them, two renowned Australian historians, Professor Frank Broeze and Malcolm Tull, have done numerous empirical studies on the business of Australian ports. With their excellent research outputs, port history research has grown popular within the domain of modern maritime history. In an excellent essay, 'Australian Ports Since 1945', Malcolm Tull carefully examined various changes that occurred in some important sectors of the Australian ports, including the trade and shipping activities, port performance, technological changes, and economic reforms.⁵¹ Overall, this paper has demonstrated the various obstacles the major Australian ports have faced since 1945, and at the end of his discussion, the author has suggested some remedies to improve the capacity of the Australian ports better to cope with the webs of the emerging world economy in present times.⁵² In the Indian context, Megan Maruschke's recent outstanding scholarship, *Portals of Globalization, Repositioning Mumbai's Ports and Zones, 1833–2014* has critically examined the long historical journey of Bombay/Mumbai Port based on its various proposed plans, projects and reforms from the time of British colonialism to postcolonial liberalization.⁵³

Observations

The present study has drawn attention to the inadequacies and lacunas of maritime historiography by focusing on an important area: port history research. In a country with a plethora of large and minor ports along its vast coastline, historians have done little to document the long and illuminating history of Indian ports. Even world historians have not lagged; they have also shown a similar stance of dismissing it.

In our discussion, it has been observed that this tendency took a turn in the immediate aftermath of World War II (1945), which can be attributed to a confluence of *two* factors. First, Historians and economists have a growing disagreement regarding the coercive relationship of colonial institutions with economic development. This discourse allured historians to dig deeper into the

roles of certain important colonial institutions. The seaports, thereby, attracted a great deal of attention since they served as significant economic institutions in the colonial world economy. The other involved the introduction of modernizations in marine transportation and the repercussions of the changes on labour market. In recent years, as spreading the spark of globalization in the maritime industry has reached its zenith, port studies and evaluations of their historical significance have received thrived attention.

Notes and References

- ¹H. G. Rawlinson, *Intercourse Between India and the Western World*, Cambridge, At the University Press, 1916; E. H. Warmington, *The Commerce Between the Roman Empire and India*, Cambridge, At the University Press, 1928; M. Wheeler, *Rome beyond the Imperial Frontier*, London, Bell, 1954; one of the examples of the scholarship that depicted India's cultural greatness and overlapped India's external trade and influence upon overseas societies is, A. L. Basham, *Cultural History of India*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1975.
- ²Among them, one of the best scholarships was Radhakumud Mukherjee, *Indian Shipping, A History of Sea-Borne Trade and Maritime Activity of the of the Indians from the Earliest Times*, Bombay, Longmans, Green and Co., 1912.
- ³This debate is greatly discussed with enormous reviews of old and recent scholarships in *Trade in Early India*, ed. Ranabir Chakravarti, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2010.
- ⁴Among the authors who have expressed their views that maritime history is international or global in nature are David Abulafia, 'Mediterranean History as Global History', *Holberg Prize Symposium*, 2010 Lecture series; Jerry H. Bentley, Renate Bridenthal and Karen Wigen (eds.), *Seascapes: Maritime Histories, Littoral Cultures, and Transoceanic Exchanges*, Reprint edition, Honolulu, University of Hawai'i Press, 2016; Maria Fusaro and Amélia Polónia (eds.), *Maritime History as Global History*, Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2010; Frank Broeze(ed.), *The Globalization of the Oceans*, Newfoundland, International Maritime Economic History Association, 2002; Daniel Finamore, *Maritime History as World History*, Florida, University Press of Florida, 2008; Rila Mukherjee (ed.), *Networks in the First Global Age: 1400-1800*, New Delhi, Primus Books, 2011; *Oceans Connect: Reflections on Water Worlds Across Time and Space*, New Delhi: Primus Books, 2013; Michael Pearson(ed.), *Trade, Circulation, and Flow in the Indian Ocean World*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.
- ⁵Frank Broeze(ed.), *Maritime History at the Crossroads: A Critical Review of Recent Historiography*, Newfoundland, International Maritime Economic History Association, 1995.
- ⁶Hester Blum, *The View from the Masthead: Maritime Imagination and Antebellum American Sea Narratives*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2008.
- ⁷For a concise description of this debate see, Joshua M. Smith, 'Far Beyond Jack Tar: Maritime Historians and the Problem of Audience', *CORIOLIS*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 2011, pp.1-11.

⁸W. H. Mooreland, *India at the death of Akbar: An Economic Study*, London, Macmillan and Co., 1920; *From Akbar to Aurangzeb: A Study in Indian Economic History*, London, Macmillan & Co. 1923.

⁹J. C. Van Leur, *Indonesian Trade and Society: Essays in Asian Social and Economic History*, The Hague, W. Van Hoeve, 1955.

¹⁰M. A. P. Meilink-Roelofs, *Asian Trade and European Influence In the Indonesian Archipelago between 1500 and about 1630*, Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1962.

¹¹Radha Kumud Mookerji, *Indian Shipping: A History of the Sea-Borne Trade and Maritime Activity of the Indians From the Earliest Times*, London, Longmans, 1912.

¹²Ashin Dasgupta, *Indian Merchants and the Decline of Surat*, Wiesbaden, Franz Steiner Verlag, 1979; *The World of the Indian Ocean Merchant, 1500-1800*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2001.

¹³Two major contributions to the study of the Bay of Bengal are, Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Portuguese Trade and Settlement in the Bay of Bengal, 1500-1700*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1991; and Rila Mukherjee, *Strange Riches: Bengal in the Mercantile Map of South Asia*, New Delhi, Foundation Books, 2006; but both the contributors avoided the port issue.

¹⁴Tirthankar Roy, *The Economic History of India 1857-1947*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2012; Here, Professor Roy avoided developing seaports while discussing colonial India's infrastructures.

¹⁵To compare this issue in standard economic history books, readers could see Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, *The Financial Foundations of the British Raj: Ideas and Interests in the Reconstruction of Indian Public Finance 1858-1872*, Reprint edition, New Delhi: Orient BlackSwan, 2005; *Oupanibeshik Bharater Arthaniti*, (in Bengali), Kolkata: Ananda Publishers Private Limited, 2015; *Essays In Modern Indian Economic History*, New Delhi, Primus Books, 2014; B. R. Tomlinson, *The Economy of Modern India, 1860-1970*, Reprint edition, New Delhi, Cambridge University Press, 2005; S. N. Pandey, *Economic History of Modern India: 1757-1947*, New Delhi, Readworthy Publications Pvt Ltd, 2008, Irfan Habib, *Indian Economy 1858-1914, A people's History of India*, vol.28, New Delhi, Tulika Books, 2008; Dietmar Rothermund, *An Economic History of India*, Second edition, New York: Routledge, 1988.

¹⁶In most of the trade and economic history books of modern Bengal, the role of the ports in Bengal's economy is always a subject of negation. For example see, N. K. Sinha, *The Economic History of Bengal*, 3 vols, Calcutta, Farma K. L. M. Mukhopadhyay, 1970; Amales Tripathi, *Trade and Finance in the Bengal Presidency, 1793-1833, Middle Ages*, Chicago, University Of Chicago Press, 1982; M. M. Postan, *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe, Vol. II: Trade and Industry in the Middle Ages*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987; Norman Pounds, *An Economic History of Medieval Europe*, London, Pearson Longman, 1994; Steven A. Epstein, *An Economic and Social History of Later Medieval Europe, 1000-1500*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009.

¹⁷Tilottma Mukherjee, *Political Cultural and Economy in Eighteenth-Century Bengal: Network of Exchange, Consumption and Communication*, New Delhi:, Orient Blackswan, 2013.

- ¹⁸Tsukasa Mizushima, George Bryan Souza and Dennis O Flynn(eds.), *Hinterland and Commodities: Place, Space, Time and the Political Economic Development of Asia over the Long Eighteenth Century*, Leiden, Brill Academic Publishers, 2014.
- ¹⁹Henri Pirenne, *Economic and Social History of Medieval Europe*, Florida: Harvest Books, 1956, Robert Latouche, *The Birth of the Western Economy: Economic Aspect of the Dark Ages*, London Methuen & Co., 1967; Robert S.Lopez, *The Commercial Revolution of the Middle Age. 950-1350*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976; George Duby, *The Early Growth of the European Economy: Warriors and Peasants from the Seventh to the Twelfth Century*, New York, Cornell University Press 1978, Jacques Le Goff, *Time, Work and culture in the Middle Age*, Chicago University of Chicago Press, 1982; M.M. Postan, *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe, Vol. II: Trade and Industry in the Middle Ages*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994, Steven A Epstein, *An Economic and Social History of Later Medieval Europe, 1000-1500*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- ²⁰Michael McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy: Communications and Commerce AD 300- 900*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- ²¹David Abulafia, *The Great Sea: A Human History of the Mediterranean*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2011.
- ²²Archibald R. Lewis, *Naval Power and Trade in the Mediterranean, A.D. 500-1100*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1951; *The Northern Seas: Shipping and Commerce in Northern Europe A.D. 300-1100*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1958; *European Naval and Maritime History, 300-1500*, Indiana, Indiana University Press, 1990; Molly Greene, *Catholic Pirates and Greek Merchants: A Maritime History of the Mediterranean*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2013; Ralph Davis, *The Rise of the Atlantic Economies*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1973; Thomas Benjamin, *The Atlantic World: Europeans, Africans, Indians and their Shared History, 1400-1900*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- ²³Adrian Jarvis, 'Port History: Some Thoughts on Where it Came from and Where it Might be Going', in Lewis R. Fischer (ed.), *Harbours and Havens: Essays in Port History*, (Newfoundland, International Maritime Economic History Association, 1999, p.17.
- ²⁴J.A.Harris (ed.), *Liverpool and Merseyside, Essays in the economic and social history of the port and its hinterland*, London, Frank Cass & Co. Ltd, 1969.
- ²⁵Indu Banga (ed.), *Ports and their Hinterlands in India, 1700-1950*, New Delhi, Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 1992.
- ²⁶For an extensive history of Calcutta Port and other major Indian ports, see Animesh Ray, *Maritime India: Ports and Shipping*, New Delhi, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1995.
- ²⁷Sadananda Gupta, *Shipping Industry In India: Colonialism to Globalisation, A Spatio-Temporal Analysis*, New Delhi, Pentagon Press, 2016.
- ²⁸Frank Broeze (ed.), *Gateways of Asia: Port Cities of Asia in the 13th-20th Centuries*, London, Routledge, 1997.
- ²⁹Rila Mukherjee(ed), *Vanguards of Globalization: Port-Cities from the Classical to the Modern*, New Delhi, Primus Books, 2014; Yogesh Sharma(ed.), *Cities in Medieval*

India, New Delhi, Primus Books, 2015; Sara Keller & Michael Pearson(eds.) *Port Towns of Gujarat*, New Delhi, Primus Books, 2015.

³⁰Josef W. Konvitz, *Cities and the Sea: Port City Planning in Early Modern Europe*, Maryland, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978.

³¹Francois Gipouloux, *The Asian Mediterranean: Port Cities and Trading Networks in China, Japan and Southeast Asia, 13th-21st Century*, Cheltenham, Edward Elgar Publication, 2011.

³²Anthony Webster, Ulbe Bosma and Jaime de Melo (eds.), *Commodities, Ports and Asian Maritime Trade Since 1750*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

³³Ana María Rivera Medina (ed.), *Ports in the Medieval European Atlantic: Shipping, Transport and Labour*, Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2021.

³⁴C. A. Bayly, 'Inland Port Cities in North India: Calcutta and the Gangetic Plains, 1780–1900 in Dilip K. Basu(ed.) *The Rise and Growth of the Colonial Port Cities in Asia*, Santa Cruz: Center for South Pacific Studies, University of California, 1985, pp. 13-18 and P. J. Marshall, 'Eighteenth-Century Calcutta', in Robert J Ross, Gerard J Telkamp and Raymond F Betts (eds), *Colonial Cities: Essays on Urbanism in a Colonial Context*, First edition, Place of publication not identified, Springer, 2012. In both articles, the authors have treated Calcutta as a colonial city and the results of colonial urbanization.

³⁵Prajananda Banerjee, *Calcutta and its Hinterland, A Study in Economic History of India, 1833-1900*, Calcutta, Progressive Publishers,1975.

³⁶Sachinandan Sau, *Port and Development, A Study of Calcutta Port*, Calcutta, Firma KLM Private Ltd, 1997.

³⁷Sunil Kumar Muni, *Dynamics of Urban Growth in Eastern India*, Kolkata, Thema publishers, 2011.

³⁸Nilmani Mukherjee, *The Port of Calcutta: A Short History*, Calcutta, The Commissioners for the Port of Calcutta, 1968.

³⁹Holden Furber, *Bombay Presidency in the Mid-Eighteenth Century*, Bombay, Asia Publishing House, 1965.

⁴⁰Mariam Dossal, 'Bombay and the Famine of 1803-6, The Food Supply and Public Order of a Colonial Port City', in Frank Broeze(ed.), *Gateway Of Asia, op.cit.*, pp.127-48.

⁴¹Dick Kooiman, 'Bombay: from Fishing Village to Colonial Port City (1662–1947)' in R.J. Ross, and Gerard J. Telkamp(eds.), *Colonial Cities: Essays on Urbanism in a Colonial Context*, Springer, Reprint edition of 1985, pp.207-30.

⁴²*Tides of Time: History of Mumbai Port*, Mumbai, Mumbai Port Trust, 2000.

⁴³Michael V. d. Bogaert, *Trade Unionism in Indian Ports*, New Delhi, Shri Ram Centre for Industrial Relations, 1970.

⁴⁴Aniruddha Bose, *Class Conflict and Modernization in India, The Raj and the Calcutta Waterfront (1860-1910)*, New York, Routledge, 2018.

⁴⁵*ibid.*, p.7.

⁴⁶Brett Neilson et al. (eds.), *Logistical Asia, The Labour of Making a World Region*, Switzerland, Springer, 2018.

⁴⁷Miguel Suárez Bosa(ed.), *Atlantic Ports and the First Globalisation, c.1850-1930*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

⁴⁸*ibid.*, pp.90-111.

⁴⁹Kris Manjapra, *Colonialism in Global Perspective*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2020.

⁵⁰*ibid.*, p.102.

⁵¹Lewis R. Fischer(ed.),Malcolm Tull, 'Australian Ports Since 1945,' in *Harbours and Havens: Essays in Port History, op.cit.*, pp. 111-138.

⁵²*ibid.*, p.138.

⁵³Megan Maruschke, *Portals of Globalization, Repositioning Mumbai's Ports and Zones,1833–2014*, Berlin, De Gruyter, 2019.

British India policy towards Tibet through Darjeeling: A study on the opening of trade route 1849-1890

Yangden Lepcha

Research Scholar

Department of History

Jadavpur University

Kolkata, West Bengal

Email :yangdenlepcha9@gmail.com

Abstract

The colonization of Darjeeling in 1835 by the British Empire led to a new beginning in the historicity of the British-Tibet relationship. Darjeeling was not only a health sanatorium for the British Officers but also an important entrepôt for the India-Tibet trade. This article is an attempt to understand the strategic significance of Darjeeling in the commercial and diplomatic intercourse of the British with Tibet. This paper will also explore the development of the connectivity of the trading route from Darjeeling to Tibet focusing on the role of the British officers.

Keywords: India, Tibet, Trade, route, Darjeeling, Sikkim, Kalimpong, diplomacy, invasion, mission.

The British Government of India in the nineteenth century strategically maneuvered the frontier policy to build up to intercourse with Tibet. The first move was to encircle Tibet with the states favorable to British interests are followed by their settlement with Nepal in 1816 which gave political control over some of the strategic Himalayan districts of Kumaon and Garhwal by the treaty of Sugauli. In 1846 while handing over Kashmir to Maharaja Gulab Singh, Lahaul and Spiti were carefully detached from the Ladakh district of Kashmir and incorporated into the Kangra district of Punjab, the latter was finally annexed in 1849. To the east of Nepal, the Darjeeling district was acquired from the Raja of Sikkim in 1835, after several vicissitudes, satisfactory settlements were reached with the Sikkim in 1861 and Bhutan in 1865.¹ In consequence of this geographical and political settlement of the British in the trans-Himalayan region technically manifested to be advantageous for the British to have access to Tibet extensively.

Early contact

The year 1772, which can be marked as the beginning of the relationship between British India and the Tibetan government began after the Bhutanese soldiers attacked Kuch Behar (Cooch Behar) and the Raja was taken as a prisoner, during this time British interfere militarily and resisted the aggression of the Bhutanese and drove them out from the plains of Bengal. The Regent of Tibet Tashi Lama (Panchen Lama) negotiated on behalf of the Bhutanese with the British this gave the opportunity to the British authorities in India to established a relationship with Tibet which later became an important aspect of the foreign policy of the British policymakers on Tibet.² Tashi Lama wrote a letter to Warren Hastings the Governor-General of Bengal writes that, 'I request you will cease all hostilities against him, and in doing this you will confer the greatest favor and friendship upon me' which is considered as a remarkable letter in the relationship between British and Tibet, this letter showed that the instigation of the intercourse between Tibet and British India was actually started by the Tibetans.³ Hasting in his reply wrote to Tashi Lama proposing for a general treaty of amity and commerce between Bengal and Tibet. In 1774 he dispatched George Bogle, a young writer of the East India Company, not only to Bhutan but also to Tashi-lhunpo, to improve the intercourse, commercially between Bengal and Tibet. After some opposition, Bogle was permitted to enter Tibet. Bogle who was born in Scotland in 1746 has obtained a position at the British East India Company in Calcutta by 1774. He was the first British traveler to enter Tibet and the account that he left behind became an important source of information about this mystical land.⁴ Bogle stayed several months at Tashi-lhunpo, where he gained friendship with Tashi Lama this led to the beginning of the formal British-Tibet relationship.⁵ The Panchen Lama (to whom European referred as the Tashi Lama) held great influence in this period, not only in Tibet but also at the Qing court in Peking, where the British were attempting to open up diplomatic relations.⁶

In 1779, Bogle was reappointed as the British envoy to Tibet for the second time but the Tashi Lama was at a visit to Peking to meet Emperor of China which caused the delay to the mission, Tashi Lama as he discussed the importance of the Warren Hastings and the English in India in the Chinese court. The arrangement was made for the Bogle that he will visit to meet his friend Tashi Lama in Peking and had planned to return to Tibet together, but unfortunate death of these two important figures shadowed the friendship between India and Tibet.⁷ The geopolitical position of Tibet was very suitable

for the British in linking with China through trade and diplomatic relation, which will certainly emerge as an alternative to the British position at Canton where they were facing obstructions from the Chinese authorities. Hastings was well aware of this fact but it was the friendship of the Bogle with the Tashi Lama that showed how Tibet might become an important terrain in British-Chinese relations.⁸

In 1783, Samuel Turner was sent to Tibet as the British embassy, following the route previously taken by Bogle, he arrived in Bhutan in June 1783 and stayed at the summer place of Druk Desi, he then moved on to arrive at Shigatse in Tibet's Tsang Province on 22 September 1783 where an audience with the infant Panchen Lama welcomed and favorably received him and at his first meeting he informed the representative of the Tibetan authorities that Warren Hastings wanted to develop the relation which was established during the times of Bogle and former Tashi Lama. Turner almost spent a year in Tibet but he never as his predecessor Bogle reached Lhasa. The mission of Turner was quite fruitful for the British in India it obtained some substantial concessions from the Regent of the Tashi Lama at Shigatse on the regard of movement of the merchant and commercial intercourse between India and Tibet.⁹

The invasion of Nepal into Tibet in 1792 effectively changed the dynamic of the intercourse between British and Tibet. Chinese during the Nepalese invasion acted as the protector for the Tibetan people and drove Nepali invaders out from their territory as the British did to Bhutan when they invaded Cooch Behar, but in this event, the British were not fortunate enough to rendered help to his new friend Tibet. Simultaneously, the other unfortunate event happened for the British in this circumstance that is the arrival of the first British envoy in Nepal during the time of the invasion. Chinese on the other side disseminated propaganda among Tibetan people that the British instigated or encouraged Nepalese to attack Tibet this move of the Chinese heavily hammered the newly developing friendship between India-Tibet. Sir Francis Younghusband later commented by observing this event in British Tibet relation he said that 'certainly it is a most unfortunate circumstance that we so often are unable to help our friends just when they most need our help, press our friendship upon them just when they least want it'.¹⁰ After 1792 Chinese political position in Tibet increased than they had ever possessed before.

Arrival of the British in Darjeeling

In 1828, Lt. General (then Captain), G. A. Lloyd and G. W. Grant, I.C.S., the commercial Resident at Maldah (Malda, West Bengal) after settling the internal factions between Nepal and Sikkim states, found their way into Chungtong to the West of Darjeeling and were much impressed with the

possibilities of the station as a sanatorium. The following year the former officer visited Darjeeling to be followed shortly after by Mr. Grant and Capt. J. D. Herbert, the then Deputy Surveyor-General, Bengal, likewise reported favorably on the situation of the hill of Darjeeling. The court of directors of British East India Company accordingly directed that General Llyod be deputed to start negotiations with the Sikkim Raja for the cession of the hill either for an equivalent in money or land. On 1st February 1835, through the personal influence and efforts of Lloyd with the Raja of Sikkim who handed over a strip of hill territory, 24 miles long and about 5 to 6 miles wide, stretching from the northern frontier of the district to Pankhabarie in the plains, which in its trend included the villages of Darjeeling and Kurseong. In return, the Raja will receive an annual allowance of rupees 3,000 which later was subsequently raised to rupees 6,000. The portion of the land which the British acquired from the Sikkim Raja at the beginning the revenue derived from this area never exceeded rupees twenty a year.¹¹

The annexation of Darjeeling was an important in the history of the northern frontier of British India. The main factor of this region that attracted the British was the high possibilities of trade with Tibet. Since the beginning of the days after the establishment of Darjeeling as the sanatorium by the British, there were always British officials who strongly advocated in developing a friendly relationship with Tibet and later the region also became a center for Tibetan studies. The appointment of Dr. Archibald Campbell as superintendent of Darjeeling in 1839 brought a change in the relationship between British India and Sikkim. In 1849, a crisis occurred between the British government and Raja of Sikkim after the visit of Sikkim by Campbell and Dr. Joseph Hooker who was the distinguished naturalist arrived in Darjeeling to explore the Himalayas and to study flora and its glaciers. They were arrested by the Sikkim authority. The British settled the issue without any confrontation with Sikkim and soon both the prisoners were released and they reached Darjeeling on 24th December 1849. The allowance which the British had been paying since 1841 to Sikkim for the loss of Darjeeling as an act of grace was stopped. The rest of Sikkim Morung (Terai) was annexed and the new British India and Sikkim frontier along the Ranjit (Rangeet) river was demarcated.¹² After this political victory, the British achieved an advantageous position in Sikkim and the possibilities of opening trade routes by constructing roads from Darjeeling to Jelep La Pass became the main objectives of the British officers.

Opening of the Darjeeling-Tibet trade route

The early advocates of building a road to the Sikkim-Tibet frontier was suggested by Hodgson and Campbell, the prime objective of these two gentlemen was that they visualized that an improvement in the conditions of trade in the Sub-Himalaya region 'would greatly improve the resources of Darjeeling' they were confident about their vision due to the growth of the tea industry in Kumaon, Darjeeling, and Assam needed an outlet and according to their observation, Tibet will emerge as the best market for the British Tea, where the Chinese brick-tea of Szechuan was widely preferred by the Tibetan people which arrives at the market of Tibet by a long and arduous road, whereas, the Darjeeling tea can reach Tibetan market via Sikkim sooner than Chinese brick-tea.¹³

In 1873 the Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling Sir John Edgar was deputed to enquire into the possibility of re-establishing Indian trade with Tibet, which had been the prime objective since the time of Hastings almost a century ago when the mission was dispatched under Bogle. A few years later a road was made by Sir Richard Temple through Sikkim to the Tibetan frontier at the Jelap pass.¹⁴ In the minute by the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, dated 28th June 1875 where the discussion on the trade route from Darjeeling, through Sikkim to the Tibetan frontier is much mentioned. Starting from Darjeeling, the route descends for about 6,000 feet to the River Runjeet (Darjeeling being 7,000 feet and the river under 1,000 feet) by a very good bridle-road, aligned and constructed by the Public Works Department (PWD). From this point onwards it is under the care of the district authorities. It passes by a fair bridle-road (without crossing that river) along the right bank of the Teesta River, a total distance of eight miles. Then it crosses the Teesta River, for which crossing a cane bridge for foot passengers and a raft for the passage of laden animals are provided. From across the Teesta, it proceeds by gradual ascent without meeting any river also by a fair bridle road to Pedong (located at 20km East of Kalimpong district at an altitude of 1,240metres), height 4,500 feet, which is situated just below the Dhumsong ridge in Kalimpong, distant 19 miles from the Teesta. The rafts there could not cross in the rainy season and even in the other months; there would be much delay and trouble in crossing any large number of animals at once. The distance from Darjeeling to Pedong may be taken at 37 miles. The distance between Pedong to Jelep La is divided into six stages by British officials like Edgar, confirmed by Major Judge, Mr. Blandford, and others. **The first stage**, distance about 6 miles, from Pedong, 5,200 feet, descend to the River Rishi, 2,400 feet, width of river about 25 yard, cross it and ascend to Rheinock, 5,100 feet high. **Second stage**, distance about 9 miles, descend to the Rilli

river, 2,817 feet, width about 35 yards, cross it and ascend to a spur of the Lingcham range; camp above Chus-achen 5,400 feet. **Third stage**, distance about 12 miles, cross Lingcham ridge, 6,500 feet, then descend to Lingtam river, 6,500 feet, then descend to Lingtam river (4,800feet), about 15 yards in width, cross it, then reascend Lingcham range to Kenlaka (5,200feet), a winter station for herdsmen. **Fourth stage**, distance about 9 miles, perhaps less, but road difficult, and ascend to Jeyluk (10,000feet) on the side of the Lingtu Hill, near the base of the highlands leading to the Jelep La Pass. **Fifth stage**, distance about 11 miles, passes over top of Lingta (12,500feet) to Guatong (13,000feet). **Sixth stage**, Guatong to Kofoo, at the foot of Jelep La Pass, about seven miles; height of the pass itself about 14,000feet about two miles further: total distance nine miles, when the frontier of Tibet is met with.

From Pedong to the Jelep La Pass the route is travelled by laden men with some difficulty, but by the laden animals not at all. But Mr. Edgar, with good ponies and mules, was able to ride over the greater part of it, having to dismount, however, occasionally. The total distance between Pedong to Jelep La Pass, Tibet frontier during that time was around fifty six miles and from Darjeeling to Jelep La Pass was around ninety-three miles.¹⁵

Campbell, who looked on Darjeeling as his own creation, lost no opportunity to press for an improvement in the conditions of trade and travel in the Himalayas, which would greatly improve the resources of Darjeeling and add to its attractions as a Sanatorium. Campbell the superintendent of Darjeeling sent a letter in 4th January 1844 to J. R. Davidson the officer secretary to Government of India in foreign department at Fort William, Campbell writes that to forward for the information of the Honble the President in Council and in continuation of the routes furnished on 20th August 1840 a route from the Jumloong in Sikkim to Phari in Tibet with a rate on the Lake Salt of Tibet which brought for sale to Darjeeling and other places in the Himalaya south. He further added that last year August he had forwarded the specimens of the salt to W. Piddington of the Asiatic society which was brought from Eastern Tibet to Darjeeling. The price of the salt in Darjeeling was eight rupees per mound which is two rupees less than the salt of Indian is sold.¹⁶ The developing of trade through the Darjeeling to Tibet became utmost priority of the British Government in India. Tea which was main beverages of Tibetans and considered as a national drink of Tibet, this product market in Tibetan land was mostly dominated by the import of the Chinese Tea, and the British wanted to introduce Darjeeling Tea into Tibet to counter Chinese tea. The trade from the route of Jelep La through Pedong in Kalimpong was carried since long time before the British decided to

use this route which has easy Himalayan pass to enter Tibet through Chumbi Valley which lies in between Sikkim and Bhutan. This is the shortest trade route between Calcutta and Tibet which was opened legally after 1904. After signing of 1856 treaty between Nepal and Tibet the Nepalese traders throughout the Tibet were exempted from the burden of taxes. As the Nepalese merchants had privileges in both internal and external trades of Tibet, they wanted to carry trade through the Chumbi valley trade route. After the opening of Phari trade route, the Nepalese traders had transferred their trading centre from Kathmandu to Kalimpong but the Tibetan resisted Nepalese intrusion over this route by imposing taxes on the goods from Nepal and discouraged Nepali merchants to use this route.¹⁷

Richard Temple the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal in his minute dated 28th June 1875 writes that the Jelep La Pass crosses the Chola Snowy Range, to the north of this Pass there are other Passes such as the Guatni, Yukla, and the Chola. But this Jelep La Pass is the best, and is open all the year round. It is the lowest Pass in the Chola Range, which again is one of the lowest sections of the main Himalayan Snowy Range. It leads into the territory of Chumbi in Tibet, and an undulating tract, average height about 11,000 feet. The town of Chumbi, the administration of which is under the Lhasa Lama, is reported to be only a few miles distant from the Jelep La Pass. The journey from Pass to Lhasa is said to be 15 equestrian marches almost 250 to 300 miles, but what is more important, commercially, the distance to Jhansu Jong (or Gyangze Jong), the principal mart of Eastern Thibet, is only 150 miles; and distance only 50 miles, or so onwards, say 200 miles, or a little more, to Tashilumbo on the great Narichoo river, where one of the best tracts of Tibet is situated. This route is the best and nearest between Northern Bengal and Tibet. It already has some trade, not inconsiderable, for hilly country, which is increasing, and which would be augmented if the route were open.¹⁸ Through this trading route British India Government was also trying to develop commercial intercourse not only with Lhasa but also with other important trading marts of Tibet. Mr. Edgar presented enquires about the traders at Darjeeling which at that period turned into the principal mart or *entrepôt* in the northern Bengal and surrounding hills, and checking the data by similar enquires from in the interior and came up with the statement which is not more than approximate, and which he apprehends may slightly be wrong from the reality:

Item	Value (Rupees)
Broadcloth(500 pieces)	25,000
Flannels and similar cloth(15,000 pieces)	45,000
Chintz and cottons(7,000 pieces)	30,000
American Drill(4,000 pieces)	28,000
Tobacco	8,000
Indigo	14,000
Catechu	800
Umbrellas (Gingham)	1,750
Iron hooks and pots	500
Brass utensils	2,200
Looking glasses	1,000
Goor (molasses)	500
Hookahs (smoking pipes)	800
Miscellaneous	7,000
Total Rupees	1,64,550

Item	Value (Rupees)
Muriva (Millet)	500
Rice	1,000
Oranges	250
Madder	4,000
Miscellaneous	1,000
Total Rupees	6,750
Grand Total Rupees	1,71,300

Item	Value (Rupees)
Ponies (300)	39,000
Blankets, coarse (450)	900
Blankets, good (75)	500
Salt(3,000 mounds)	24,000
Jewelry	200
Yaks' tails	5,000
China caps	150
Musk	1,000
Silk	1,500
Tea	300
Sheep	2,500
Total	75,050

Note : *John Edgar's report on the commercial exports and imports of the Darjeeling, Sikkim with the Tibet through enquires from traders. This report is mentioned in the Minutes of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, dated the 28th June, 1875.*¹⁹

The total value of all the ascertained exports from Darjeeling and Sikkim to Tibet being Rupees 1,71,300; while the value of the imports amounts to Rupees 75,050; there remains a balance of Rupees 96,250 due by Tibet. This balance due from Tibet is paid, in British rupees, which rupees the Tibetans obtain by selling their cattle, salt, and other produce in Assam and Nepal. This approximate amount of treasure then should be added to the total value of the trade. Besides the articles above specified, there used to be borax, which for some reason, not yet ascertained, has not come down from Tibet by this route and the absence of wool from the list will be remarked. Mr. Edgar believes that (and he is probably right) that the wool fails to come down from Tibet, only because laden animals cannot travel by this route; the article being too bulky to be carried by men. The excellence of the Tibetan wool has a certain degree of celebrity.²⁰ The principal articles of merchandise between Bengal and Tibet were broad-cloth, atter, skins, indigo, chalk, spices, pearls, coral, amber, and other leads, tobacco, sugar, maida, striped satins, and a few white cloths chiefly coarse. The returns were made in gold dust, musk and cow-tails.²¹

After his return to Darjeeling from Sikkim in December 1873, Edgar made a number of the proposals to the Government of India to improve the relations with Tibet.²² Mr. Edgar, in his report on Sikkim, recommended that all necessary improvement on this route should be gradually carried out by degrees through the district officer of Darjeeling. It will be remembered that from the Rishi river below Pedong the Sikkim jurisdiction commences; but we have, by treaty, a right to make roads at our own expense through that jurisdiction. The Government of Bengal recommended that a larger view should be taken of the case, and that a regular road, on professional plans, should be constructed, but the Government of India did not accede to that proposal. But having seen during the last autumn and the present summer something of the manner in which roads are made in the Darjeeling district. Richard Temple, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, agreed with Mr. Edgar in thinking that he and his subordinates would make the road from Pedong to the Jelep La Pass, 56 miles, passable for laden animals, at a comparatively small expense. Temple himself believes that he could do the work at a cost of Rupees 500 a mile, including the bridges over the three Rivers Rishi, Rilli, and Lingtani; the estimated cost thus amounting to Rupees 28,500.²³

The Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, Richard Temple believed that British-Tibet relations could be developed simply by improving the communications in the Sikkim frontier. He came forward and supported the proposal and idea of Edgar's report which was focused on the construction of the road to the Tibetan frontier through Pedong to Jelep La, and Sikkim, and wanted that the whole project should be completed within the span of three four years with the support of British Government in India by assigning the proposed plan from the imperial funds for this special purpose. Unfortunately, the Government of India, unlike the Bengal Government did not react favorably to Edgar's proposal for the construction of a road to the Tibetan frontier through Sikkim. In 19th November 1875, Government of India dispatched a letter to the Secretary of State for India, mentioning on the subject of the development of trade between India and Tibet, that a survey should be at once undertaken to ascertain the estimated cost of making a tolerable bridle path throughout that portion of the route from Darjeeling to the Tibet frontier this lies within British territory. While concurring generally in the views therein expressed by Sir R. Temple, we have stated our opinion that, although the probabilities of trade with Tibet are not sufficiently great to justify a grant from Imperial revenues for the purpose of undertaking the survey, such measures as may be necessary for the improvement of the route will doubtless be gradually effected from the provincial resources at the disposal of the Government of Bengal.²⁴ The Governor-General in Council has no doubt that Sir R. Temple will gradually improve the route from Provincial resources; but that His Excellency in Council does not consider the probabilities of trade with Tibet sufficiently great to justify a grant from Imperial funds.²⁵ The reason behind the British Government for not implementing any type of strong hold over the development of the commercial intercourse with the Tibet through Sikkim during 1874 was due to the existing relations between India and China which might get affected by this decision and certainly results into crisis between two states. Nevertheless, the influence of British Government in Sikkim increased after the Edgar's visit in 1873.²⁶

British Tibet mission through Darjeeling

Tibetan suspicion of British power in India emerged more strongly when the extension of their rule expanded over the Himalayan states where the influence of Lhasa, even if not sovereign, had long been respected. Tibet over centuries was closely connected culturally with the Sub-Himalayan region and the people inhabiting the region saw Lhasa as the center of their faith.²⁷ Nevertheless, British afford of establishing intercourse with the Tibet was certainly inevitable and it became the prime concern by the end of nineteenth century. After the return of

the Sarat Chandra Das in 1883 (the famous Bengali explorer who has played important role in the British Tibet policy) the commercial intercourse between India-Tibet through Sikkim frontier was stopped by The Tibetan government. The Bengal Government suggested to the Government of India that a repetition of a Mission to Sikkim, like Edgar's of 1873, was essential to investigate the cause of trade stoppage on the this frontier. The Government of India approved of the suggestion and asked the Bengal Government to depute its finance secretary, Colman Macaulay, to visit Sikkim in October 1884. In 1885 a serious effort was made to open up intercourse with Tibet, Macaulay was deputed on a commercial mission and to find out whether a direct road could be opened up between Darjeeling and the province of Tsang which is famous for its wool production. In 1885 he visited Peking to obtain passport for the mission to Tibet, under the provision of Chefoo Convention in 1876 which guaranteed the protection of British mission. After some difficulty, the Tsungli Yamen granted the required passport.²⁸ The Mission stayed in Darjeeling inactively and the other developments had taken place. The Government of India did not receive Macaulay's proposals with enthusiasm. The Viceroy, Lord Dufferin, did not wanted to interfere in the existing relationship between India-China by allowing Macaulay Mission to proceed further and he was well aware that any attempts to open Tibet might involve complications with China. After third Anglo-Burmese War the British political influence in the region increased and the British wanted Chinese recognition of their political victory in Burma. China, taking advantage of the British anxiety, secured the countermand of the Mission into Tibet. In return, it agreed to recognize British rule and supremacy in Burma. On 29 July 1886, the Secretary of State for India asked the Government to countermand the Mission.²⁹

The Tibetans, who had been greatly disturbed by the prospect of the Mission, attributed its abandonment, and they developed aggressive attitude towards the British India erected the stone-fort across the Sikkim frontier.³⁰ The Tibet Mission, which has been assembled at Darjeeling for two months, has been finally countermanded. Henceforth, the position in Sikkim-Tibet frontier was changing into anti-British resistance, it was reported that the armed parties of Tibetans approximately 300 troops under Tibetan officers, have occupied the upper Edgar Road, for a length of 12 miles in Sikkim, to oppose the mission. They are building a fort a Langtu and a habitation for soldiers at Choambok, both on road. They requisitioned the village of Rhenock, immediately on the British border, and other neighboring villages with the help

of unpaid labor to help the erections of fort, and the demand has been compiled with, Sikkim officers of Rhenock informing us of the fact and protesting that they are acting under compulsion.³¹ On the 21st May 1888, the Tibetans troops consisting of 3,000 attacked the British camp at Gnatong, but were repulsed. On September 23rd they again advance from Chumbi, and erected a stone wall 3 miles long above Gnatong.³²

In March 1888 General Graham attacked the fort, defeated the Tibetans in three engagements, and advanced twelve miles across the frontier into the Chumbi Valley. But, in order to avoid offending Chinese Government the British troops were called back immediately to Gnatong within Sikkim territory. The Chinese Resident in Lhasa came to India to negotiate the dispute between British and Tibet at his arrival the British Government put forward some of the agreement with the Amban, firstly, British Protectorate over Sikkim should be recognized, secondly the Tibet-Sikkim frontier should be delimited, and thirdly the British India and Tibet trade to be promoted prosperously, the negotiation on these condition between British and Chinese took almost year which made British to decide to close the incident, as far as China was concerned, without insisting upon a specific agreement.³³ The reason why British could not established its relations with the Tibet and its subjects lies in the ignorance attitude. Tibetans confound all foreigners together, and are unaware of any distinction of nationality or creed for example between French and English. Thus the English suffer unjustly by being confounded with the French, with a people, that is to say, violent and treacherous in disposition, and professing religion admittedly objectionable and inferior to that of the English.³⁴

In March 1890, the Convention between Britain and China was held relating to Sikkim and Tibet and the treaty was signed. It recognized a British Protectorate over Sikkim and in the article one of the treaty the boundary between Sikkim and Tibet was demarcated. The water-parting of the Teesta River should form the boundary between Sikkim and Tibet. The increased facilities for trade across the Sikkim-Tibet frontier will hereafter be discussed with a view to mutually satisfactory arrangement by all the participants.³⁵ Henceforth, Chinese authority feared the development of the British influence over Sikkim and Tibet and agreed for the negotiations which finally resulted in an agreement in 1893 this led to the opening of the Yatung trade mart.³⁶ In the nineteenth century, the other objective of the British Indian Government was to keep Tibet as the 'buffer state' from the advances of foreign power like Russia.

Conclusion

The British Government of India from the second half of the eighteenth to the end of the nineteenth century tried to establish a relationship with the Tibet by adopting different diplomatic relations but couldn't achieve strengthen it firmly. The isolation policy of the Tibetan Government and the jealousy of the Chinese power created havoc on the path of British policy towards Tibet. The trade which was the prime objective of the British Government to enter Tibet had many obstacles and challenges, though the Western trade route through Ladakh into Tibet was actively engaged by the local traders, British also maintained some trading relations from this route, but after the cession of Darjeeling in the mid-nineteenth century laid to the changed on the policy of the British Government in the question of opening with Tibet through the Sikkim-Tibet frontier. The 'technicality factor' played an important role in the British attempts to open the Darjeeling-Sikkim trade route for the commercial purpose of linking directly with Tibet, this route had the shortest distance to enter Tibet compare to other routes of India.

Notes and References

- ¹Hugh E. Richardson, *Tibet and Its History*, Boston, USA, Shambhala Publications, 1984, p73.
- ²Francis Younghusband, *India and Tibet*, London, John Murray, Albemarle street, 1910, pp. 4-5.
- ³Younghusband, pp.4-6.
- ⁴Lezlee Brown Halper and Stefan Halper, *Tibet an unfinished story*, UK, Oxford University Press, 2014, pp.7-8.
- ⁵Charles Bell, *Tibet Past and Present*, New Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1992, p.41.
- ⁶Halper, p.8.
- ⁷Clements R. Markham, *Narratives of the Mission of the George Bogle to Tibet, and of Thomas Manning to Lhasa*, London, Trubner and CO., Ludgate Hill, 1876, pp. lxxviii-lxx.
- ⁸Alastair Lamb, *British India and Tibet 1766-1910*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960, p.9.
- ⁹Younghusband, pp.26-32.
- ¹⁰*ibid.*, p. 31.
- ¹¹E. C. Dozey, *A Concise History of the Darjeeling district since 1835 with a complete itinerary of tours in Sikkim and the district*, Publisher N. Mukharjee, Calcutta, 1922, pp. 2-3.
- ¹²Lamb, pp. 68-82.
- ¹³Amar Kaur Jasbir Singh, *Himalayan Triangle A historical survey of British India's relations with Tibet, Sikkim and Bhutan 1765-1950*, London, British Library, 1988, p.197.

- ¹⁴C. U. Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements, and Sanads Relating to India and neighboring countries, Vol. XIV*, Delhi, 1983: Mittal Publications, p.16.
- ¹⁵NAI, GOI, FD, Pol. A, November 1875, No.93, pp. 1-2.
- ¹⁶NAI, GOI, FD, 1844, Political, No.62, pp. 1-7.
- ¹⁷Tirtha Prasad Mishra, 'A critical assessment of the Nepal-Tibet treaty 1856', in Alex McKay (ed.), *Tibet and her Neighbors A History*, London, Edition Hansjorg Mayer, 2003, p.141.
- ¹⁸NAI, GOI, FD, Pol. A, 1875 November, No.93, pp. 2-3.
- ¹⁹NAI, GOI, FD, Pol. A, Progs. November 1875, No.93, p.3.
- ²⁰NAI, GOI, FD, Pol. A, Progs. November 1875 / No.93, pp.3-4.
- ²¹Savitri Saran, 'Trade and Commerce of Tibet in the second half of the 18th century' in *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* 30(1968), pp. 426-29, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44141514> accessed on: 14/02/2022, 1:10 PM.
- ²²P. R. Rao, *India and Sikkim*, New Delhi, Sterling Publishers, 1972, p.59.
- ²³NAI, GOI, FD, Pol.A, Progs. November 1875, No.93, p.5.
- ²⁴NAI, GOI, FD, Pol. A, Progs. November 1875, No.102, pp.3-4.
- ²⁵NAI, GOI, FD, Pol. A, Progs. November 1875, No.103, p.5.
- ²⁶Singh, p.203.
- ²⁷Dawa Norbu, *China's Tibet Policy*, UK, Curzon Press, 2001, p.151.
- ²⁸Aitchison, p.16.
- ²⁹Rao, pp.71-79.
- ³⁰Aitchison, pp.15-17.
- ³¹NAI, FD, Secret E, Progs. September 1886, No. 473, p.1.
- ³²Aitchison, pp. 16-17.
- ³³Bell, pp. 59-61.
- ³⁴NAI, FD, 1886, Secret E, Progs., November 1886, No.235, p.5.
- ³⁵NAI, FD, Secret E, Progs. March 1890, No. 241, p.55.
- ³⁶A. C. McKay, 'The establishment of the British Trade agencies in Tibet: A survey' in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, November 1992, Third Series, Vol. 2, No. 3, pp.399-421, Cambridge University Press ,Great Britain, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25182574> accessed on 14/02/2022 2:20 pm.

History of Tea Plantation in India: transition of tea from China to Northern region of West Bengal

Saurav Chettri

Research Scholar

Department of History

Jadavpur University, West Bengal

Email: simonsauravchettri92@gmail.com

Abstract

The history of tea plantation in Darjeeling and the Sub-Himalayan Region of West Bengal has been an important aspect of research. Area for research in this region and in the plantation sector is quite immense. Various factors such as socio-economic and cultural have been a point of concern regarding the research of this region. After the tea plantation was set up the topography, settlement and the society became a new factor in the tea gardens of these regions. Hence in this paper I am trying to bring out the history of how tea from China went to Europe, the impact of tea in the English culture which became a reason for the demand of more tea has been focus too. Planting tea in India especially in Darjeeling hills and Sub-Himalayan region was not a result of a sudden plan and implementation of it; but there were various confrontation before it was started. I have brought the whole process of how the plantation in India was made a success and the phases of how tea was planted. Lastly, a brief mention has been made on how British with tea plantation brought their harsh system of rule in the labour society they formed for their benefits.

Key words: tea, tea plantation, Europe, Darjeeling, Duars, workers.

‘Tea’, is one common drink which is consumed by people around the world after coffee. This drink came to be renowned after it was introduced in Europe by the Portuguese traders in 1580 from China.¹ The drink became in so much demand but in the main time trade with China didn’t went well, therefore to make up the demand the British traders came up with the idea of setting up of tea plantation in its colonies. While the experiment for tea plantation was done by the colonizers India became one of the countries in Asian continent where the tea plantation turned to be rewarding. As a result of the establishing tea plantation in India the northern region of West Bengal which is Darjeeling² and the Sub-Himalayan Region which is commonly known as Duars³ became suitable for the plantation.

Travel of tea from China to Europe

China happens to be the place of origin for tea. Origin of tea is connected with various myths, historical aspects, stories and oral narratives. Tea was taken as a sacred or special drink in China from many years ago; primarily it was taken as medicinal use. Later, the popularity of tea in China continued to grow rapidly specially from the 4th Century and tea became valued for everyday pleasure and refreshment and rarely for its medicinal use. Tea plantations spread throughout China, tea merchants became rich, and expensive, elegant tea wares became the banner for the wealth and status of their owners. Koehler also states that it was during the Zhou Dynasty (1046-256 B.C.), tea leaves began to be boiled and drunk without the addition of other herbs that is, drunk as *tea* rather than a medicinal brew.⁴ The discovery of tea has still been a debatable topic, but majority has taken the Chinese myths as the first discovery of tea as a drink. The earliest myth about the origin of tea goes as, Shen Nung a mythological emperor who is said to have been born in 28th century BCE; he is regarded as father of Chinese agriculture and renowned Herbalist and even knows as the father of Chinese herbal medicine. One day, as he boiled some water for drinking, a few stray leaves blew over from a nearby tree and fell into the water. Curious of the new aroma, Shen Nung decided to try some and found the brew both refreshing and tasty. The mysterious tree proved to be *Camellia sinensis*, the same plant from which tea is still made till today.⁵

In eight century Chinese scholar Lu Yu wrote a book on tea and it's making which was known as *Ch'a Ching* or the Tea Book or even called as The Classic of Tea.⁶ Lu Yu writes about how the tea plantation was done, even mentions about its making process and its history, he states, 'Drinking tea was very popular in the T'ang Dynasty AD 620-907. In some parts of Honan, Sensi, Hunan and Szechwan the drink was universal. There is ordinary tea and ground tea. What is called cake tea is put in a jar or bottle after being pounded, and the boiling water is poured over it. Sometimes onion, ginger, ju-jube, orange peel, and peppermint are used and it is permitted to boil for some time before skimming off the froth. Alas! This is the slop water of a ditch'.⁷ Regarding the writings of Lu Yu in his book The Classic of Tea, Jeff Koehler makes an observation by stating, 'Around 780, he penned his brief but comprehensive masterpiece on tea. It contains such precise details on tea's origin cultivation, processing, and preparation that a thousand years later the British drew upon it when they started producing tea themselves'.⁸

Tea was used as a drink for medicinal purpose and also as a refreshing drink; but it was even used for other purpose that was as a meditational stimulator.

Allan Watts in his book 'The Way of Zen' mentions about how the Zen monks used tea as a meditation stimulant, and how tea became paramount in aiding long period of deep concentration. Watts even makes a statement stating, 'if Christianity is wine and Islam coffee, Buddhism is most certainly tea'.⁹ The literary works on history of tea by the European started only after tea reached Europe and it became an important regular drink in their society. The study regarding the origin or the early history of tea and its plantation has been a debatable topic till date as various scholars has given various statements on this study.

Tea first reached Europe via whispers. Perhaps first noticed by travellers to Japan in the mid-sixteenth century as a strange predilection for drinking 'hot water', the earliest definitive reference surfaced in the second volume of *Navigazioni et viaggi* (Voyages and Travels) by the powerful Venetian merchant-scholar Giovanni Battista Ramusio (1485-1557).¹⁰ Ramusio after knowing about the mysterious leaf, which was dried and taken hot after boiling with water, which had various benefits, while he was discussing this with his friend who was a trader from Persia (present day Iran), named Haji Muhamed, by the time they were discussing the Portuguese traders went to China and set up their trade and later exported tea from China to Europe in 1570s. Introduction of tea leaf in Europe turned to be very fine, as its consumption spread like a wild fire in the Europe.

The European society accepted the drink so much that it promptly became part of its culture. After tea reached Europe it became part of the class differentiation which largely prevailed in European society during that period. At the initial period when tea was introduced in Europe only the aristocratic people were able to consume it hence it was taken as a noble or an aristocratic drink. It was much later when the price of the tea was brought low, during that period the working class were able to consume tea; consuming tea gave the working few benefits one was they used to get energy for work as they used to drink tea by adding sugar to it and they used to get protection from water born diseases as the water was boiled when they prepared the tea. Co-incidentally tea and coffee were introduced in Europe at same time; both the drinks were taken by the Europeans similarly. The introduction of coffee house in Europe increased the consumption of both the drinks in the European society. Percival Griffith states that, 'by a strange coincidence, tea and coffee were introduced into England at about the same time and the growth in the popularity of tea in the late seventeen and early eighteen centuries was largely due to the influence of the

coffee houses. The first London coffee house seems to have been opened in St Michael's Alley in 1652'.¹¹

Europe witnessed a change in their society which became a part of their society with the advent of tea. Tea stood not just as a drink but a sophisticated drink which was taken in a sophisticated fashion. The consumption of tea was boosted more after sugar was imported to European from its West Indian colonies. Tea drinking culture during afternoon in between lunch and dinner came to be categorised as 'Afternoon Tea', this was taken daily in the European houses, mostly they used to get clean and well dressed before the afternoon tea was taken. Sometimes tea taken during some events in the afternoon time was made little more sophisticated, it was taken around 6 pm, with tea there used to be meat, bread, cheese, bakery items and much more; this kind of tea drinking events came to be known as 'High Tea'. These two types of tea drinking culture were mostly categorised on the basis of gender, afternoon tea was looked upon more of a ladies social event and high tea was looked upon more of a men's event.

Tea was taken as a luxury item in Europe; because of this the tax levied on it was very high. The rise in demand and the rise in price and tax in tea paved the way for the traders to smuggle tea in the black market. To control the market the government later brought down the tax levied on tea and the price went low as well in England in 1784. In England tea stood as a luxurious item for a long period and slowly became part of England's culture, as a result of that the demand for tea went on increasing day by day in England and in other parts of Europe. John Griffith writes in his work stating that, 'Tea in England was a luxury commodity that had been deemed sufficiently exotic and rare for the East India Company to present the tea-drinking monarch Charles II in 1666 with 22 ¾ lb of it at 50 shillings per pound. By 1700 tea imports still stood at only 20,000lb, scarcely surprising when even six years later, at Thomas Twining's Golden Lion in the Strand, a small cup-Chinese porcelain, presumably – cost a shilling'.¹² John Griffith even gives an account on how the consumption and demand of tea grew in London and its nearby area. He states, 'by 1721 in England, tea as a drink had spread over all classes and even was famous in nearby places of London which were Glasgow, Wales, and Ireland. Between 1721 and 1790 British official annual tea imports climbed from one million pounds to 16 million and doubled again by 1816 to 36 million'.¹³

As the tea was taken as a luxury item it was mostly consumed in a luxurious tea pots and cups, the plates in which the other edibles were kept used to be of very high quality; holding up of cup had a similar style or a

statute, they were dressed very well; all this can be found in various pictures of the society in England during this period. With the passing years tea from a commodity drink slowly it became an essential commodity and it was not just a essential drink for its benefits but it was even representing a class in England and also in some other European countries. Piya Chatterjee writes, 'in its journey from the mountains of southern China to the parlors of Georgian and Victorian England it became one of the most important commodities to circulate in the expanding trade on the ocean frontiers'.¹⁴

Tea plantation in India: in northern region of West Bengal

The East Indian Company had to fulfil the demands of the people of England regarding tea as it turned to be an essential drink for them. To reach the demand the company had to increase the import from China. Since the relation between China and East India Company was not running well, this was worsened by the opium war's which were fought between the two as the company imported opium illegally into China which was an illegal item there. The trade relation became much worse which hampered the import of tea into Europe from China; later the Charter Act of 1833 brought to an end the monopoly of trade by East India Company. After the Act other European traders and Japan took over the tea trade in Europe; to bring back the monopoly of trade in tea the East India Company started its campaign of tea plantation in its colonies, of which India became its first priority as it is said that the discussion regarding the tea plantation in India was taking much prior to the Charter Act of 1833.

Before the Charter act of 1833 the East India Company was trying to experiment tea plantation in India and were trying to get tea seeds and bushes from China. In order to look for the possibilities of tea plantation in India, Joseph Bank the English botanist was given the responsibility. Joseph Bank at first suggested Bihar and Cooch Behar to be suitable for tea plantation in India. Some seeds and bushes which were brought from China were first trailed at Sibpur Botanical Garden in Calcutta in 1780 by Lt. Kyd. With this trail the first practical step to introduced tea in India was taken forward by Joseph Banks. The intention behind this plantation was to put down the monopoly of tea trade of China and to have an upper hand in the trade once again. To carry out more experiment on tea plantation the East India Company was in need of more tea seeds and plants, because of the relation with the Chinese emperor being not good it was little hard for them.

In order to import tea seeds and plants from China Lord Macartney was sent to Peking by the East India Company. After the negotiation Macartney was able to convince the emperor and few tea seeds and plants were sent to

India. The tea plant which Macartney sent to India didn't survive but the seeds germinated in the Botanical garden of Calcutta but the germinated plant couldn't flourish in the unfavourable climate of Calcutta. In the later years more expedition to China for the tea seed and its plant were sent by the East India Company but they were not been able to bring the seeds properly or because of some reason the experiment failed. For few years the tea plantation expedition and experiment were not taken forward by the East India Company in larger manner. It was in the year 1815 the story of Colonel Latter noticed the tea drinking habits of the *Singpo* tribe of Assam and subsequently in 1816 another story of tea tree bearing a height of ten foot in Kathmandu in Nepal was circulated around and then the officials looking after the possibilities of tea in India became actively involved in the matter again.

A ray of hope again ignited to the Agricultural and Horticultural Society of India regarding the possibilities of tea plantation in India after the narrative of tea drinking culture of the *Singpo* tribe of Assam came out. The first European or an Englishman who came across the tea plant found in Assam was Robert Bruce who was the then Major in the Bengal Artillery, he even went across how the *Singpo* tribe used to prepare tea and the way they consumed. Bruce then became friend with the *Singpo* chief Bisa Gam and arranged some seeds for further experiment, but the Anglo-Burmese War of 1824 delayed the sampling. Unfortunately Robert Bruce died in the same year, after that the work was taken forward by his brother Charles Alexander Bruce. He took seeds from the *Singpo* chief and sent it to Calcutta for further sampling. The Botanical Garden of Calcutta denied the seed to be of the Chinese variant of *Camellia Sinensis*, but said to be of some other family. Another British officer Lieutenant Charlton discovered a tea plant in place named Suddyah or Sadhiya in Assam. Charlton sent the sample to Botanical Garden of Calcutta stating his observation as, 'the tea tree grows in the vicinity of Suddyah, the most remote of the British possessions towards the east, in Assam, and adjacent to British territory. Some of the native of Suddyah are in the habit of drinking an infusion of the dried leaves, but they do not prepare them in any particular manner. Although the leaves are devoid of fragrance in their green state, they acquire the smell and taste of Chinese tea when dried'.¹⁵

Beside not getting a constructive result regarding the tea plantation the then Governor-General Lord William Bentinck appointed a 'Tea Committee' in 1834 a year after the Charter Act of 1833 was made. The committee was made to submit a report of tea possibilities of tea plantation in India. In 1836 C.A. Bruce who was conducting survey of his own tea nurseries was made the

superintendent of tea forest. The Chinese variant given by the government didn't survive the heat of Assam and in place of that the Assam variant discovered earlier was taken for plantation; hence the tea plantation in Assam started from this point. With the efficient work and with the experience of C.A. Bruce the tea plantation in Assam gave a good result. In 1838, 12 chest of tea were sent to London as a sample for the first time. The samples proved to be very promising and hence the tea from India started to export to England and to other countries of Europe.

Advent of tea plantation in Darjeeling and the Sub-Himalayan region of West Bengal

Assam tea plantation proved to be a good response for the East India Company, but still the tea produced from the Assam variety of tea was not able to fulfil the demand of Europe. Though the Assam variant was a success but still the Chinese variety which was earlier imported to Europe was absent. In that case the East India Company was taking on the experiment of Chinese variant. The experiments were going on in various hilly tracts of India, during this time a newly visited hilly tracts of Darjeeling became one area of sampling the Chinese variant. Darjeeling was recently given to the East India Company by the Raja of Sikkim as a deed of 1835, which was to be used as a sanatorium by the British. After Darjeeling became part of East India Company the exploration started in the new place. Dr. Archibald Campbell servant of Indian Medical Service, who was appointed as a Superintendent of Darjeeling brought some Chinese variety of seed from Gordon's plantation at Kumaon from the Western Himalayas and planted in his garden residence at Alubari which was approx 7000ft in height. The plant grew but was damaged soon, but the Campbell's experiment gave a positive result. This was followed by other European planters and planted in various new places in Darjeeling. Mr. Cronmelen planted in Lebong place which was 1000ft below the place where Campbell planted earlier. The tea plantation in Darjeeling gave a successful result regarding the Chinese variant of tea. Small planters and Companies were welcomed to Darjeeling after its positive result, with their arrival in Darjeeling the tea plantation started to flourish in Darjeeling in a speedy manner. With the tea plantation new areas of Darjeeling were brought under plantation by clearing its vegetation. Regarding the growth of tea plantation L.S.S. O'Malley writes, 'the year 1856 may accordingly be taken as the date at which the industry was established as a commercial enterprise. In that year the Alubari tea garden was opened by the Kurseong¹⁶ and Darjeeling Tea Company, and another on the Lebong spur by the Darjeeling Land Mortgage Bank; in 1859 the Dhutaria garden was started by

Dr. Brougham; and between 1860 and 1864 four gardens, at Ging, Ambutia, Takdah and Phubsering were established by the Darjeeling Tea Company and the garden at Takvar and Badamtam by the Lebong Tea Company. Other gardens which were started at this early period were those now known as the Makaibari, Pandam and Steinthal tea estates'.¹⁷ The growth of tea plantation grew rapidly in the Darjeeling hills as well in Assam and was already looking for more places to expand.

While the British Government was looking for the place to expand the tea plantation, they went for the foothill area of Darjeeling which was known as 'Terai'. This region was before part of Sikkim which was annexed by the British in 1850. After the annexation the Terai region was merged in the Darjeeling district and the area was prepared for the tea plantation which was covered by a dense forest. Hence in 1862 the first tea garden was set up in Champta near Khaprail by Mr. James White who even opened Singell tea garden at Kurseong, which was followed by the growth of 14 more tea gardens in 10 years, which went on increasing later. The expansion of area for tea plantation was still on and at this juncture the Anglo-Bhutan War or the Duars War took place. Bhutan after the loss had to pay war compensation; the compensation was Bhutan had to hand over both the Assam Duars and West Bengal Duars to the British Government on a treaty of *Sinchula*. The new land of Duars region or the Sub-Himalayan region gave the British more area for plantation, as result of it the first tea garden in Duars was opened at Gazoldoba in the year 1874 by Dr. Haugton, who is considered as a pioneer of tea plantation in Sub-Himalayan region, who even opened Dhutaria tea garden in 1859 at Darjeeling. The area of the Sun-Himalayan region was vast and fertile which paved the way for more tea gardens and which produces lager quantity of tea till date.

The establishment of various tea plantations around the hilly tracts of Darjeeling, the foothills or the Terai and the Duars region gave the British Government a good yield of tea which they exported to England and other parts of Europe and could again compete with the tea production and its trade with China. The three different regions gave different varieties of tea out of which the Darjeeling tea was taken to be superior in taste but were less in quantity as compared to the tea produced from the Terai and Duars region. Tea plantation and its production grew predominantly every year, more importantly after the roads were built and steam engine train commonly known as Toy Train was introduced. The records of the land under production and the outturn have been recorded in various gazetteers and books; in Darjeeling district in 1866 the area under tea was 10,000 acres and the outturn was 4,33,000 pound and before

the independence in 1940 the area under plantation was 63,059 acres and the outturn was 22,743,000 pound.¹⁸ Similarly in Jalpaiguri district in 1876 the land under the plantation was 818 acres and the outturn of tea was 29,520 pound and in 1941 the area was 1,31,770 acre and the outturn was 94,604,450 pound.¹⁹ Hence the tea plantation from its beginning went on growing which is prevalent till date, the plant which was not a natural fauna of these region has now been the primary plantation, acts as a tourist attraction and does plays a major role in the socio-economic life of the people living here.

The Tea Plantation Workers Society during The Colonial Period

Before the advent of tea plantation the Darjeeling region was very scarcely populated. It was mostly covered with forest, very few people lived here. L.S.S. O'Malley states, 'when the British first acquired the hill territory in 1835, it was almost entirely under forest, and what small population it had, had been driven out by the oppression of the petty rulers whom they replaced. It was in fact, estimated that the whole of this tract, comprising 138 square miles, contained only 100 souls'.²⁰ Unlike Darjeeling, Dooars did have population little more than Darjeeling as it was a very fertile agricultural land. To clear the forest and pave the way for tea plantation maximum number of workers were required in both the regions. In Darjeeling hills workers were brought from the hilly tracts of Nepal as the climatic condition was quite similar for them and in the tea gardens of Duars and Terai region with the workers from Nepal workers from Chottanagpur region were brought for work. The workers were mostly lured with false sayings and showing them greed for more money. Khemraj Sharma writes, 'the *Marad* (Men) and *Aurat* (Women) tea estates workers were lured with the local slogan as *Chiya Ko Bot Ma Paisa Falcha*, meaning thereby that "the tea estate bushes fetches easy money for the workers'.²¹

By doing all this fake promises and many other misdeeds the *Sardars* employed by the British officer for recruiting labours brought the labours and were kept in various tea gardens. The workers were kept in Labour *Dhuras* or Labour Lines, the workers of one labour line were not allowed to come in contact with the workers of another. *Sardars* used to look after the labour line to control the workers. The *Chokri* system was prevalent in the tea gardens, which meant if the British officers saw any girl in the tea garden and wants them to be in his bungalow and assaulted her sexually. In this type of cases or any other cases if the workers raise their voice they had to face *Hatta Bahar*, in which the person with his or her family had to leave the tea garden. Hygiene were not maintained properly mainly in the tea gardens of Terai and Duars,

where sickness by mosquito, filthy water was prevalent with the prickling heat. Death due to *kala-azar* and other water born diseases were quite high. Physical torture was quite rampant; workers were not allowed to look at the British officer directly and were not allowed to dress in a well manner.

Conclusion

The drink made from a dried leaf of a plant used basically for refreshment and which gave some medical benefits had travelled from one part of the world to another leaving behind various events in history. The centre theme of this research paper is to look back the history of tea after its origin which for a long time was effective only in China suddenly became drink that the world was asking for. Tea when it reached Europe it reached as a trading product, but it caught a very high market and remand high on demand. To mention the few reasons for tea being an essential drink in England were, firstly, before tea and coffee the drinks which were used by the Europeans were alcoholic one. Tea came as a non-alcoholic drink having some medicinal benefits and which was suitable to drink for people with every age group. Secondly, this drink proved to be a social drink which could be used in every formal and informal gathering. Thirdly, tea directly became part of the English culture; it built one new culture of 'Afternoon Tea' and 'High Tea' which the English aristocratic society welcomed and preserved, which was followed by rest of other society too. This made the English traders to fulfil the demand at any cost. The trade with China became problematic and as a result of it they were in search or other alternative for tea. As an alternative India which was their colony at that time became place for experiment and which proved to be a success. The tea plantation in the Darjeeling and the Sub-Himalayan region did affect its natural vegetation, large number of trees and other floras were affected. The greed to maintain the monopoly over tea trade and to compete with the China tea trade and to fulfil the sophisticated cultural demand of the English society can be termed as a reason for tea plantation in Darjeeling and the Sub-Himalayan region.

With the tea plantation, the British created a society of labours which was totally looked after by the officers in every section; they were made like a puppet society or which was not less than a slave society. The socio-economic condition which the British officers created during the colonial period has its effects till date in the tea gardens. The system of paying the labours less, to put them in debt, which makes risk of tea garden workers to leave the garden work were introduced by the British, they consequences of this system can be seen till date in the tea gardens.

Notes and References

- ¹Koehler Jeff, *Darjeeling: A History of the World's Greatest Tea*, London, 2016, p.17.
- ²Darjeeling: Derived from the Tibetan Words 'Dorje' meaning thunderbolt and 'Ling' meaning place, hence known as 'the land of thunderbolt'.
- ³Duars: Geographical descriptive name, down the Bhutan hills, the part of India with an average breath of of 30 Km and length of 350 Km in West Bengal and Assam, known as Duars or Dooars.
- ⁴Koehler, *op.cit.*, p.17.
- ⁵Camellia's Tea House, <http://www.camelliasteahouse.com/tea-history/>, online.
- ⁶Griffith Percival, *The History of The Indian Tea Industry*, London, 1967, p.4.
- ⁷*ibid.*, p.5.
- ⁸Koehler, *op.cit.*, p.18.
- ⁹Watt Alan, *The Way of Zen*, New York, 1957, p. 207.
- ¹⁰Markman Ellis, Richard Coulton, Matthew Mauger, *Empire of Tea*, New Delhi, 2016, p.19.
- ¹¹Griffith, *op.cit.*, p.18.
- ¹²Griffith John, *Tea: The Drink That Changed The World*, London, 2007, p.18.
- ¹³*ibid.*, p. 19.
- ¹⁴Chatterjee Piya, *A Time for Tea*, Durham, 2001, p.45.
- ¹⁵Moxham Roy, *A Brief History of Tea*, Philadelphia, 2009, p.89.
- ¹⁶Kurseong: Derived from the Lepcha word 'Kurson-rip' which means 'Little White Orchid', because of the little white Orchids bloomed in this valley, hence known as 'The Land of White Orchid'.
- ¹⁷O'Malley L.S.S, *Bengal District Gazetteers: Darjeeling*, New Delhi, 1999, p.74.
- ¹⁸Dash Arther Jules, *Bengal District Gazetteer: Darjeeling*, Siliguri, 2011, p.114.
- ¹⁹Grunnings J.F, *Eastern Bengal and Assam District Gazetteer: Jalpaiguri*, Siliguri, 2008, p. 135.
- ²⁰O'Malley, *op.cit.*, p.35.
- ²¹Sharma Khemraj, *Plantation Sociology of North-East India*, Delhi, 2010, p.17.

From look East to Act East Re-envisioning the strategic significance of North-East for India's Act east policy

Sampiya Mahanta

Ex-Post Graduate Student

Jamia Millia Islamia University, New Delhi

Email : samipyamahanta@gmail.com

Abstract

India has been constantly trying to link the South East Asian countries through North East India within the framework of Act East Policy. This paper tries to explore the possible opportunities and challenges in connectivity, primarily-physical, institutional and people to people connectivity and recognises the strategic significance of the North East of India as the gateway of the East countries. The Act East Policy (AEP) envisions promoting economic cooperation, cultural ties and developing strategic relationship with countries in the Asia-Pacific region through engagement at bilateral, regional and multilateral levels, thereby providing connectivity to the states of North Eastern region. There are a range of opportunities regarding connectivity of India with South East Asian nations through North East India. At the same time, the issue of connectivity has to overcome several challenges associated with the North East India. This article examines the progress of India's Look East to Act-East and the role that Northeast India can play a crucial part in it.

Keywords: Look East Policy, Act East Policy, North-East, ASEAN, South-East Asia, connectivity.

*'The greater connectivity and economic integration of North Eastern Region with its eastern neighboring countries is to be considered as the main focus area of the Act East Policy for the growth and development of the region'.
Ashok Barman*



The North East India is poised to earn several benefits from India's growing links with South East Asian nations as the process of globalization through cross border market access has great potential to uplift people from poverty and bring prosperity and inculcate entrepreneurial skills. In 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi transformed the Look East Policy to the Act East Policy. The Look East Policy was initiated in India in 1991 by former PM Narasimha Rao. The Act East Policy is basically the continuation of the Look East Policy.

The end of the Cold war marked a turning point in India's relations with South East Asian countries and led to new orientations in the foreign policies of India. With the launching of India's economic liberalization programme in 1991, ASEAN came to be identified as being vital to India's policy in the Asia-Pacific region.

The first phase of India's Look East Policy was ASEAN centered and emphasized primarily on trade and investment linkage. The Second phase, which started in 2003, is more comprehensive in its coverage extending from Australia to East Asia, with ASEAN as its core. This new phase marks a shift in focus from trade to broader economic and security cooperation, political partnerships, physical connectivity through road and rail links.

In short, the Look East Policy regime can be divided into three significant phases, according to the time period of three different Prime Ministers of India viz. (i) 1991-1996, Narasimha Rao, (ii) 1998- 2004, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and (iii) 2004-2014, Manmohan Singh. As a part of the policy India has upgraded

its relations to strategic partnership with Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Japan, South Korea, Australia, Singapore and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

To connect any nation of the ASEAN it is necessary to come across through north eastern states of India. The development of transportation, power supply, the connectivity of people etc. of NER are to get top most importance for the strategic development of the country in the field of business, politics, foreign policy and security. The North Eastern Region of India (NER) comprising of eight states is known for huge reservoirs of natural resources, like minerals, forests, water resources and human resources along with a variety of flora and fauna. It is the home land of several indigenous communities and tribes with their own socio-cultural life-style and customs.

The NER is considered as the gateway of India to the South East Asian countries like Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, Bhutan and China. The region has tremendous prospects for trade and industrial development in collaboration with the South East Asian countries. The people of the region have some similarities with the people of South East Asian countries like Thailand, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Indonesia in their religious tradition, culture, custom, traditional dresses, food habits. Lack of physical infrastructural facilities, intra territorial conflicts among states, natural calamities, ethnic violence and insurgency problem have prevented the economic development of this wonderful region. The Act East Policy has been emphasized on the India-ASEAN cooperation in the field of development of infrastructure, manufacturing sector, trade, skills, urban development, Make in India, smart cities etc. The NER borders are in direct touch with five neighbour countries namely, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Myanmar and China.

According to Thongkhohal Haokip¹, the Government of India initiated Look East Policy to develop extensive economic and strategic relations with South East Asian nations in order to bolster its standing as a regional power and a counterbalance to the strategic influence of China. Kaokip highlights that six developed countries of ASEAN, particularly Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand are increasingly investing in the sectors of telecommunications, fuels, tourism, heavy industries, chemicals, fertilizers, textiles, food processing industries of India since the adoption of Look East Policy. Atul Sarma and Saswati Choudhury² in their book 'Mainstreaming the Northeast in India's Look East and Act East Policy', addresses the nuances of the policy and its efficacy for the Northeast Region. The scholars have mentioned that the Northeast India is a landlocked region which shares most of its boundary with neighboring countries of South

and South East Asia. It empirically explores the progress and prospects for trade, investment and connectivity between NER and Southeast Asian countries. Further, the book discusses a range of regional and sub-regional multilateral initiatives such as the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC) that could potentially strengthen cooperation between Northeast India and neighbours in the social, cultural and economic activities.

Scholars often question the practical relevance of clubbing all the eight states together and calling it the 'Northeast'. Udayon Misra³ observes that the term 'Northeast' is itself ambiguous as the region represents a diverse cultural mosaic and has never considered itself as one compact unit. It is true that the Northeastern region shares certain common problems like ethnic unrests, immigration, insurgency, drug trafficking, communication gap, etc but all of them have intra-regional differences too. Wasbir Hussain⁴ points out that, 'by bracketing the eight northeastern Indian states, with its diverse tribes, cultures, into what is called the 'Northeast', we often tend to ignore the distinct identities and sub-national aspirations of these ethnic groups'.

According to Sanghamitra Kalita⁵, the Look East Policy is pivotal in India's effort towards globalisation and economic reform, which was launched in 1991. She further observes that under the regime of Narendra Modi which came to power in 2014, the policy has received immense priority. In context on India's growing and evolving relations with South East Asia, it is inevitable that North Eastern region would be the epicenter of the overall Look East Policy given its geographical proximity and socio-cultural and historic ties with the South East Asia region.

For the purpose of the study of 'From Look East to Act East : Re-envisioning the strategic significance of Northeast for India's Act East policy', an analytical study follows the descriptive method. This literature review is done to find out the gap of the study in the line of impact and scope of Act East Policy in socio-economic development of NER. The data or information of the study is purely based on secondary sources. The basic sources of the data are books, articles published on national and international journals, newspaper, thesis, editorials, internet etc.

Information is also drawn from Government documents, publications and reports of Ministry of the Development of the North Eastern Region (Donor). The Keynote addresses, speeches and statements of Prime Ministers, Ministers of Donor and Foreign diplomats are also widely used. Memorandums and

agreements signed between the Government of India and various communities and insurgent outfits in Northeast India are also analyzed.

North-East acts as a gateway to the South-East Asian nations. It comprises of states- Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura and Sikkim. A narrow stretch of land or the Siliguri Corridor connects the NER to the rest of India. The region shares more than ninety percent of its border with China (southern Tibet) in the north, Bangladesh in the southwest, Myanmar in the east, and Bhutan to the northwest. Topographically, the North Eastern region provides the only physical connection between India and Southeast Asia.

It should be noted that it was during the second phase of Look East policy that North East got the due recognition for availing the fruitful prospects through the policy. Firstly, when Myanmar was inducted as a full member into ASEAN in 1997, Northeast region assumed greater attention in its Look East policy since India's four states- Mizoram, Nagaland, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh shares its borders with Myanmar and gives connectivity options with Southeast Asia via Myanmar. Secondly, the growing interest on the part of Indian foreign policy makers that development of physical connectivity with ASEAN nations is a prerequisite to fully utilize the opportunities provided by the Look East policy. Third, the security scenario in the NER with the presence of many armed militants infused by isolation and the status of underdevelopment became a hot boiling issue for which the government needed an alternative option.

Although the Look East policy has completed three decades of its implementation, but since starting different governments have given little interest for its actual implementation, though the NDA led Modi government has given emphasis on the application of its provisions since 2014 only. The earlier Vajpayee government took the keen interest for the development of North Eastern states by creating the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (Donor) in September 2001, which prime function is the socio-economic development of the Northeastern states.

Gorky Chaturvedy⁶ has identified that India's northeastern region lay at the heart of India's eastward engagement, and the dynamics of internal developmental agenda of the current government need active external cooperation. R.Bhatia⁷ observes that an ethno-cultural similarity of people of NER with the Southeast Asian countries is seen as an advantage for India. Diverse tribes, communities such as Mizos, Nagas, Tangkhul, Meities, Paites and Tai-Ahoms of NER enjoy close familial, community-related, linguistic, religious and cultural

ties with ethnic tribes from Myanmar and Thailand. These socio-cultural similarities were acknowledged to provide an additional potent to the policy. The current government is showing importance to develop and strengthen connectivity of North East India with the ASEAN through people to people contacts, trade, culture, tourism, physical infrastructure like airport, road, power, telecommunications, water ways etc.

It is noted from the study that the topmost priority for the development of NE is the infrastructural development to connect with the eastern countries. Considering the significance of the region, the Government of India, under the Ministry of Road-Transport & Highways has taken the initiative to develop the of National Highways of NER. One of the basic agendas of the AEP is to connect the people of NER through land, air and sea with the ASEAN countries.

Three major initiatives have been identified in the North East region with regard to physical connectivity within the framework of Look /Act East Policy viz. the Trilateral Highway between India, Myanmar and Thailand, The Asian Highway Network and the Kaladan Multi Model Project. The Trilateral Highway proposal to connect NER of India, Myanmar and Thailand is a part of the larger Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC).The proposed project is supposed to pass through Moreh in Manipur, Bagan in Myanmar and Mae Sot in Thailand. The Asian Highway I and II is an ambitious cooperative project among nations in Asia and Europe and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), to improve the highway network in Asia. In NER, the network is connected to the state of Assam, Nagaland, Manipur and Meghalaya.



Map of The Kaladan Multimodal Transport Project.

The re-opening of the Stillwell road to connect with the capital city of Yunan Province of China, Kunming, through Myanmar will greatly help to boost the border trade from the NE India to the South East Asian nations. The NH-153 is a part of the famous Stillwell Road that starts from Lekhapani in Assam to Jairampur of Arunachal Pradesh. The bridges across the Brahmaputra River are initiatives of Act East-inspired schemes for connecting navigable rivers across the region and its international neighbors. The completion of the Dhola-Sadiya, Bogibeel Bridge over Brahmaputra River is some more of the examples in this context.

There are plans for developing twelve airports across Northeast including the larger airports such as Guwahati and Imphal airports to envision air connectivity within the region. The recently completed Rupshi Airport in Dhubri District in Assam serves both Air force and civilian and trade purposes. Until recently, NE was the only region in our country to have states that were completely untouched by railway lines. However, in the recent past as the developmental policy for the region has focused on building infrastructure and connectivity, projects for construction of nine new railway lines to link the NE states of Meghalaya, Tripura, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh that were without rail connectivity and two more projects for conversion of railway gauge have considerably improved rail connectivity within the NER.

A Students Exchange Programme has been institutionalized under which around 250 ASEAN students visit India annually from ASEAN member nations. Already a number of students from Laos, Cambodia, Thailand have joined in the different courses of Gauhati University and vice-versa. The NER has great scope and potential for industries like tea-based industries, food processing industries, crude oil and natural gas, petro-chemicals based industries, agro and forest based industries, tourism, textile and handicraft industries etc. As a part of the Act East Policy to attract the world investors and entrepreneurs, an international event was organized by the Government of Assam as 'Advantage-Assam' summit 2018 at Guwahati, where several potential investors participated.

The Tourism sector of NER of India gets attention under the purview of the Act East Policy. Apart from the wonderful scenic landscape, all the states have a number of special tourist spots including adventure, eco-Tourism. It is mentioned that 7 National Parks and 22 wild life sanctuaries, Majuli (World's largest populated river island with distinct cultures) of Assam, Tawang of Arunachal Pradesh and Cherrapunji (World's highest rainfall area), are few examples.

Taz Barua⁸ observes that the Northeast has historically trailed behind other regions of India in industrial development and economic growth due to the 'step-motherly treatment' by the centre that led to several regional political agitations. Natural assets were seen to be taken away from the region, and in return, the state made no such investments in industrial development. The Assam Movement (1979-1985), for example, aimed, apart from the creation of employment opportunities, development of cultural security for local identity.

The movement of Krishak Mukti Xongam Xomiti (KMSS) in Assam has opposed big infrastructure development projects, such as the highway, dam construction on the grounds that the poor sections of society have nothing to gain from infrastructure development. In the time of investment thrust in physical infrastructure in NER, organizations such as Asom Jatiyabadi Yuba Chattra Parixod (AJYCP) in Assam, the Joint Committee on the Inner Line Permit System (JCILPS) in Manipur and the Khasi Students Union (KSU) in Meghalaya have sought protection for the local people of the states so that connectivity projects does not submerge the availability of livelihoods for the locals. Frequent local protests at industrial sites in the region have opposed industrial projects for their failure to economic rehabilitation and compensation of the development-induced people.

For North Eastern India, Chinese influence is not only an economic and political factor, but also a cultural and ethnic factor. China often claims that some parts of Arunachal Pradesh (Tawang) is a part of Chinese territory. For connectivity, incentives should come not only from India's side, but also from all the countries of South East Asia. The people of South East Asian countries have low awareness about the people of North East India. Corruption is a rampant problem in the NER. The North East India has witnessed socio-economic and political crisis and instability for long time. Bandhs, strikes, economic blockades and ethnic clashes are instances of socio-economic and political instability in the region.

NER has been facing the problem of insurgency and militancy. Although the Union Government has had some success in achieving stability in the region, using tactics from negotiations, accords to military operations to root out militants, it still remains a boiling issue in the region. It is a huge challenge for physical connectivity, because the roads would pass through the areas where the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN), Kuki and Meitei militants are operating. Apart from it, some of the armed militant groups also have a legitimate control of the trade routes and pursue both legal and illegal businesses such as arms and drugs trade.

The North Eastern region is not homogenous; each state within it differs from the other on many aspects such as the level of urbanization, per capita state domestic product, and the number and types of ethnic communities. The issues identified in the NE states include problems faced by 'Border Haats' and how the region has become a source of cheap raw materials for the neighboring nations. The products, such as bamboo, exotic fruits and vegetables, orchids, spices such as ginger, produced in the NER, have broad demand in the neighboring countries. For example, Bangladesh imports pulses from Canada, which in the foreseeable future can be imported from the NER of India with the setting up of Dal Mills in the NE states. In another example, the excess surplus supply of pork from the NER can be exported to the ASEAN nations and also to China by initiating the right policy.

On the other hand, bamboo products and handicrafts, for example, sold in Bengaluru are imported from Vietnam, instead of getting them from the NE India. Therefore, efforts should be made to supply them from the NER. On textiles' front, even though Vietnam and Bangladesh are quite competitive, still the NER can have successive gains by contributing to the textile technology. The handicrafts and the handloom can get a further boost through partnerships between the North Eastern Handicrafts and Handloom Development Corporation (NEHHDC) and the neighboring nations to explore markets across the Eastern borders for high-end handloom products and artifacts, produced by local fashion designers and handicrafts made by local artisans. There is an urgent need to formalize prevailing informal trade along the borders of the NER. Tourism - adventure, medical and religious would get an added impetus in the NER through the India-ASEAN connectivity, given the strategic advantage the NER has in terms of its location. There has also been considerable progress in connectivity via air, rail and road. Inland waterways have the capacity to reduce distance considerably, for which services such as Ro-Ro ferry have been explored.

Steps need to be taken on tourism entrepreneurship especially on cultural tourism, religious tourism and health care entrepreneurship, like Ayurvedic medicine, and similar to that of the Hornbill Festival of Nagaland, Joonbil Mela of Assam for cultural and adventure tourism. . In the study it is also observed that the Government has taken proposals for opening an Indian Institute Science, Education and Research Centre in Nagaland, All India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS) in Assam, already the preliminary works of construction has started a centre of Film Production and Animation in Arunachal Pradesh.

Japan has invested for decades in the development and modernization of infrastructure, particularly road connectivity, across states in the NER and is

presently engaged in the construction of the Dhubri-Phulbari bridge across the Brahmaputra river in Assam. The Union Government has taken several keen initiatives, such as developing organic farming, making the entire North Eastern region as an epi-centre for organic farming. The Centre is also interested to create a venture fund to promote start-ups in the NE States under Make in India and Digital India.

To sum up, the Northeastern states are significant for investment primarily on two fronts—firstly, the strategic location of the region that links the product markets between the larger India along with the sound South and Southeast Asian markets. Secondly, the presence of potent input market catalysts such as social (diversity, cultural richness), physical (potential energy supply centers), human (inexpensive, skilled labour) and natural (minerals, tea, forests) capitals in the region. Hence, in the post-pandemic world, taking leverage from these factors could play a vital role in the growing partnership. Although India's GDP is showing a downward trend since 2017, the Act East policy can act as a catalyst to strengthen its relations with Southeast Asia and also bring growth to the North East Region and country as a whole.

Notes and References

- ¹Thongkholal Haokip, *India's Look East policy and North East*, New Delhi, Sage Publications India Pvt. Limited, 2015.
- ²Atul Sharma and Saswati Choudhury, *Mainstreaming the Northeast in India's Look and Act East Policy*, New Delhi, 2018, p.66.
- ³Udayon Mishra, 'The Periphery Strikes Back: Challenges to the Nation-State in Assam and Nagaland' Indian Institute of Advance Studies, Shimla 2000, p.1.
- ⁴Wasbir Hussain, 'India's North-East: The Problem' paper presented as part of the 'Interaction on the North East' Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi, 2004.
- ⁵Sanghamitra Kalita, 'India's Act east policy and North-east: Prospects and challenges' in *International Journal of Advanced Research and Development*, 2018, Vol. 3, No.1, pp. 268-270.
- ⁶Gorky Chakraborty, 'Look East Policy and Northeast India: space, region and existing reality' in *Gurudas Das and C Joshua Thomas Look East to Act East Policy: Implications for India's northeast*, South Asia Edition, New Delhi: Routledge, 2016, pp.160-183.
- ⁷R.Bhatia, *India-Myanmar Relations: Changing Contours*, New York, Routledge, 2016, p.4.
- ⁸Taz Tonmoy Barua, 'The Look East Policy/Act East Policy-driven Development Model in Northeast India' in *Jadavpur Journal of International Relations*, SAGE, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0973598420908844>.

Survival of indigenous system Medicine and the British Raj

Dr. Suman Yadav

Department of History

University of Delhi

Email :yadavjisuman@gmail.com

Abstract

British rule from 1757 to 1900 in India is marked by various socio-political changes and scientific breakthroughs that impacted indigenous medical systems, institutions, and practitioners. They introduced western medicine and offered opportunities to many Indians to learn and get employment as 'native doctors' in the subordinate medical services. The superior medical services, by and large, comprised Europeans. On the other hand, the colonial regime withdrew most of its patronage from the indigenous systems of medicine. The practitioners, i.e. vaidyas and hakims, suffered a significant loss of prestige against Western medicine's claims of being a more rational and 'superior' system of medicine. The drive faced two responses: while one group of vaidyas and hakims became purists and defended and promoted the local systems such as Hakim Ajmal Khan and the Shareefi family, others incorporated the methods and ideas of Western medicine into their education and practice. This paper maps the history of the survival of the indigenous medicine system against the western hegemony of medicines under British rule and argues that the folk practitioners or indigenous system continued to be popular among the masses.

Keywords: *Hakim Ajmal Khan, Western Medicine, Tibbiya College, Medical Practitioners, Hindustani Dawakhana.*

To understand the historical journey of indigenous medicine in India and its survival during the British Raj, it is important to focus on the course of institutionalization or the development of the idea of Hospital in the Pre-colonial period. Medical institutions and hospitals, as we know them today, first developed in Western Asia more than a thousand years ago. The first and most elaborate were built during the eighth century under *Caliph Harun Al-Rashid*. Before long, dozens of such institutions flourished between Asia Minor and the Maghreb. One of the finest hospitals was founded in 1200 A.D. at Marrakesh in North Africa.

These hospitals not only provided free treatment but food and other necessities.¹ The chief pharmacist was called *Saydalani*, and the director of the hospitals was known as *Saur-al Bimaristan*.² This nomenclature continued in the Indian system as well. For example, the chief physician in Mughal India was known as *saramad-i-atiba* or *saramad-i-hukama*.³ The Medieval period in India saw similar State patronage to the physicians and surgeons of the society and the establishment of hospitals and colleges for the students. According to *Firishta*, 45 prominent physicians (*hakims*) were in imperial service during the reign of Alauddin Khilji (time?). There were 70 dispensaries and hospitals in the vicinity of Delhi where 1,200 *hakims* were employed during the reign of Muhammad Bin Tughlaq (1325-1352 A.D.)⁴ Similar developments took place during the reign of Firuz Shah Tughluq, who added five more hospitals and ordered the establishment of 30 medical schools.⁵ According to other estimates, however, Firuz Shah added 15 more hospitals with a good number of general physicians and specialists associated with them.

Rulers from other regional kingdoms made sincere efforts in this regard and *Darush shifa* or *Shifakhanas* (hospitals) were established in regional kingdoms. According to a well-known eighteenth-century lexicon, the terms *Darush shifa* or *Shifakhanas* connoted a building established by a ruler or a prominent person for the medical treatment of the poor and needy.⁶ Sultan Mahmud Shah Khilji of Malwa for example, issued an order in 1442-43 to establish a *Darush-shifa* (hospital) and a *Darukhana* (pharmacy) at Mandu, Madhya Pradesh. In these institutions those who had knowledge, both Muslims and Hindus, of drugs (*adwiyashinas*) were appointed to look after and treat the patients.⁷ Sultan Muhammad Qutub Shah IV also built a *Darush-shifa* in 1595 A.D. in Hyderabad.⁸ Although not much information is available during the reign of Akbar regarding state-established hospitals, we do have documents illustrating the functioning of hospitals. According to some documentary evidences, certain physicians were granted revenue-free grants (*madad-i ma'ash*) to treat the 'poor and the delight'.⁹

Mirat -i- Ahmadi mentioned about the treatment for travelers and says that people who fall ill should be taken to a hospital and the expenses of the treatment should be taken care by the *Sarkar*.¹⁰ During the reign of Shah Jahan, a big hospital was built on the northern and the southern corners of the Jama Masjid in Delhi in 1650 A.D.¹¹ Number of hospitals were also established by the Mughal nobles. Another hospital, a *Darushshifa*, along with an attached madrasa was established at Chiniot, Punjab by Hakim Alimuddin Wazir Khan.¹²

During the reign of Aurangzeb, large number of hospitals was established in the capital and other cities of the kingdom. Besides state 'sefforts, nobles and wealthy people also established a few private hospitals. Forexample, Nawab Khayr Andish Khan Kanboh established a big hospital in Etawah wherein he appointed both Unani and Ayurvedic physicians (Hakims and Vaidyas), and the free treatment was given to the poor and needy patients.¹³ During the twilight of Mughals and the incoming of Europeans like Portuguese and French, they tried to control the flow of medicine by making their own medical centers and contributing their ideas around the modern medicines in various parts in India including Bengal, Bombay and Madras.

It is equally interesting to focus on the formations of institutions, hospitals, schools and colleges which emerged in high rate in the hope to 'revive' the culture of Unani Medicine during the British rule in India. The efforts were made by many renowned physicians but the most talked physician in the history of Unani medicine as a revolution in Modern India is Hakim Mohammed Ajmal Khan. He made remarkable contributions in the history of indigenous medicine. His most important contribution was the formation of Tibbiya College in Delhi. Hence, taking a case study of Delhi as a capital hub for understanding the growth of institutions in not just acting as a teaching place for Unani traditions but as an institution to produce *tabibs* with effectual knowledge of modern surgeries as well.

Tibbiya College of Delhi: A response to Colonial Medicine

The formation of Tibbiya College—a continuity of the *Madrassa-e Tibbiya* (a school for Unani medicine) established in 1889—was the moment, both in the history of the institutions and of the medical ideas in colonial India, which contained within itself the seeds of immense possibilities.¹⁴ It marked both an epistemological shift and an assertion in the Unani/Muslim mind and a crucial moment in the historical biography of Indian physicians, defined by Unani's response to colonial rule. It was the response that developed its resistance to the colonial politics of medicine, which, indue course, paved the way for a common platform for the protection of indigenous medicines.

Madrassa-e Tibbiya/ Tibbiya College, which has hardly been studied historically, occupy a prominent place in the Unani renewal movement specifically in north India and elsewhere. The structuring principles of Tibbiya College and its associated institutions arose primarily from the internal logic of the college's existence and from conscience-based ethical values traditionally associated with the profession of Tibb (Unani medicine) against the British, the market-oriented logic of profession-related ethics. Tibbiya College stood as a non-colonial

institution where as an institution; it was an intervention in the rampant colonial power that intended to destabilize the knowledge systems in the colonies. This intervention ultimately determined the content and form of the much-debated crucial question of the 'reform' of Unani.

Tibbiya College was established at a time when Western Medicines emerged strongly as a marker of modernity and the truth which was about to negate non-colonial traditions of knowledge. The college signified the systematization of Unani theory and practice in the new context, one of the key components was the issue of 'reform'. The reform effort was actually aimed at an informed renewal of Unani based on the logic of its own existence. The concept of *tajdeed-e-tibb* (renewal of Tibb) introduced new ways to look at the issue of reform, which had been viewed predominantly from the perspective of Unani having to emulate Western medical science as a survival strategy when it faced stiff opposition, challenges and competition from Western medicine.¹⁵

Colonial contexts had created palpable tensions within Unani, which brought the question of reform as a defining marker to fore. There were broadly four sources of reform-related tensions within the Unani that outline the 'reason of reform': First, the brazenly arrogant opposition from the colonial state and Western medicine with far-reaching disciplinary, economic and cultural connotations. Second, the issue of Muslim identity in relation to the position of Muslims all over the world in the wake of Western colonization, on the one hand, and the decline and loss of Indian Muslim power in post-1756 India, which contributed to the destabilization of Unani.

The establishment of this College was also intricately linked with the issues of the nature of science, scientific proof, verifiability, scientific education and the colonial ideological project. Science, the scientific temper and scientific institutions, in the colonial context, were intrinsically linked with the notions of progress that constituted a complex hole and became one of the keys defining categories in colonial India. In recent times, the question of science in the colonies did attract the attention of historians of science and other social scientists such as George Basalla, Donald Fleming, Daniel Hedrick, Roy MacLeod, Deepak Kumar and Mark Harrison and others.¹⁶

It is evident to see that Hakim Ajmal Khan's understanding of science which was an integral part of Unani's understanding of science, as He argues- In the light of the statements describing the meaning of science I (Ajmal Khan) would briefly say that science is the name of that part of human knowledge, components of which are distinguished from other knowledge and this should be based on *usul* (roots [and branches], cause [and effect]) and *qawaid*

(principles, rule), moreover this should be systematically documented in which correlation of its component is also explained. He continues by saying, ‘...I will rely on this definition of science and will explain how Vedic and Unani is scientific in the light of this definition’.¹⁷

Tibbiya: from Madrasa to a College

The formal teaching of Unani began anew outside the governmental framework with the *Madrasa-e Tibbiya* in 1889 in Delhi. This Madrasa had specific medical, culture and political connotations. Its geographical location-Delhi-also signified the location of Unani’s canonized medico-cultural power. It was founded by Hakim Abdul Majeed Khan.

The journey from the *Madrasa-e- Tibbiya* to Tibbiya College did not mark any fundamental shift as might have been supposed, as the College was an extension of the logic on which the *Madrasa-e-Tibbiya* was founded. The change in nomenclature, however, did signify that. First, the Madrasa (literally, a place for reading, academy, school, seminary) came to be popularly identified with a place for religious teaching and for the training of religious teachers, preachers and *mullas*, where tibb initially formed part of its syllabi. The change from Madrasa to College reflected the traditional separation of the secular and the religious (medicine), which was part of the new realization for the renewal or reform of Unani. Second, it also reflected the contentious fact that the Madrasa might not attract the attention of people seeking separate formal instruction in Unani Tibb in order to recognize Unani medical practitioners in the newly emerging social contexts. This also signified that ‘madrasa’ came to be equated with non-modern and conservative, and became the subject of humor and satire; although it would be wrong to assume that this was wholly impelled by ‘modernity’ as *mullas* and sheikhs have traditionally been joked about and have come under heavy criticism for being conservative and closed-minded. Third, it signified a new strategy to cope with the emerging new contexts of colonialism and education, so that Unani as a form of indigenous knowledge could offer a counterpoint to the knowledge of foreign Western medicine. The College marked a complex interplay of history, politics, colonialism and culture. Soon, Ajmal Khan took over the leadership of the *Madrasa-e-Tibbiya* a few years after the death of its founder Hakim Abdulmajeed in 1901.

Ayurveda and Unani Tibbiya College, Hindustani Dawakhana, and the All India Vedic and Unani Tibbi Conference (AIVUTC) were established (chronologically, in that order). These soon emerged as the foremost organizations of the Unani Tibbi movement in colonial India. At a time when Unani was regarded as irrational by Western medicine, the Tibbiya College

signified a high level of theoretical and practical training in the Unani system. Later, in 1931, in the context of the establishment of a few more Tibbi institutions, Hakim Ilyas expressed his concern that with the spread of other institutions, there would be a decline in the importance of the Tibbiya College of Delhi. His advice was that the formulation of the educational policy of all Tibbi institutions of the country should remain in the hands of the Tibbiya College, Delhi.¹⁸

The foundation stone of the College was laid by Lord Hardinge on 19th March 1916. On this occasion Ajmal Khan outlined the importance of Ayurveda and Unani systems of medicine and spoke about their wider reach across the length and breadth of India, including big cities like Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. According to him in India, the Education in these systems was mostly imparted at the clinics of Vaidyas and Hakims and in some private schools. He then said, ‘...we should not hesitate to benefit from modern medicine where necessary and thus update our own systems. For this purpose, we need college which should impart education in Ayurveda and Unani medicine and at the same time in some new subjects like surgery’.¹⁹

The success of the Tibbiya College can be gauged from the number of patients who came for medical attention to the Shifakhana attached to it. Hakim Zafar Hussain Khan has provided the details for the months of June and July in 1931. According to him, during this period 21,829 patients came to the Shifakhana for treatment, out of which 8,020 patients visited the Unani section. Of these, 1,014 were inpatients and 7,006 outpatients.²⁰ In July 1932, 9,073 patients attended the Shifakhana, of which 3,243 patients received medical treatment in the Unani section; 2,915 were outpatients and 328 inpatients.²¹ By the 1920s, the political atmosphere in India was becoming increasingly communalized, affecting every domain of social life. Tibbiya College and the Unani movement, too, was not untouched by the growing communal politics during British Raj in India.

Tibbiya and Hindustani Dawakhana

The Tibbiya College and Hindustani Dawakhana were intrinsically linked. The Dawakhana was the ideological and practical product of the Unani medical movement, which began with the *Madrassa-e Tibbiya*. Dawakhana stood against the capitalist profit and the market-oriented logic of profession-related ethics. It did not occupy any significant place in any way in the colonial industrial imagination. There was a paucity of studies on the pharmaceutical industry in general during the colonial period, so there is no question of indigenous pharmaceutical efforts attracting the attention of scholars. The Hindustani Dawakhana had specific economic, political and cultural connotations against

the background of the debate and effort to establish independent manufacturing units for indigenous medicines, to counter the drug industries set up by the colonial administration to produce Western medicine through either foreign industrialists or Indian ones. The Dawakhana emerged as one of the most visible centers in the critical anti-colonial public sphere. It was the practical realization of the concern for scientific research.

The original name of the Hindustani Dawakhana was the Unani and Vedic Company Ltd., Delhi. The founder of the *Madrassa-e Tibbiya*, Hakim Abdul Majeed Khan, had visualized a pharmacy where students could be trained in pharmacy and pharmacognosy along with manufacturing genuine Unani medicines, but this did not materialize during his life time. In 1905, the Medicines Company was started by Hakim Wasil Khan, son of Hakim Abdul Majeed Khan, for the production of reliable medicines, as the issue of manufacturing medicines of better quality was of primary concern if they were to compete with production of Western medicines, which were projected as based on scientific principles. The Medicine Company was initially 'started with the money collected by the shareholders but later the Shareefi family bought all the shares and it was attached to the College'.²²

Hakim Ajmal Khan, being the patron, included some of the proven medicines of his world-renowned ancestors, a distinctive feature of this Dawakhana. It was emphasized that the Dawakhana had nothing to do with selfishness and greed; for example, all ingredients such as *Mushk* (musk), *Anbar* (ambergris) and *Jawahar* (gems) were used in pure form. The publication also informs us that there were proper arrangements for preserving *murakkab* and *mafarrad* medicines.²³ It is important to note that the previously exclusive canonized medicines were now being opened for 'public benefit', indicating a secularizing process.

From 1909 the Dawakhana made new advances, such as the storage of *mufarrad* (uncompounded) medicines, in a magnificent new building, on newly evolved principles of storage. These developments continued in future. The Dawakhana was so successful in its endeavor that some modern American and European pharmacies produced its medicines in a modified form under various names like 'Serpasil', which the Hindustani Dawakhana sold under the name *Dawaush-Shifa*.²⁴

It was said that a large part of the budget that the Board of Trustees of Tibbiya College spent on its different departments came from the profits earned by the Hindustani Dawakhana. The Dawakhana provided about Rs.80,000 out of its profit to Tibbiya College every year. In 1923–24, the Dawakhana's income

was Rs.2, 58,300; its expenses were Rs.1, 78,200 and its net profit was Rs.80,100.²⁵

Therefore, at last an important individual who needs more than a mention, a person of prominent stature was Hakim Ajmal Khan. His forefathers were all celebrated Hakims. His father, Hakim Mahmud Khan was a well-known personality. Mahmud Khan's major venture was the establishment of Tibbiya College in 1885, as we already discussed. Ajmal Khan took over his position after his death and brought distinction to the city of Delhi. His widening circles of influence point to significant developments in the history of Delhi and ultimately, India. He was a follower and close associate of Gandhi. His efforts to preserve the traditional medicinal art were closely linked to his concern for Muslim status and welfare.

Hakim Ajmal Khan and the System of Medicine in the City

Hakim Ajmal Khan was the President of the All India Ayurvedic and Unani-Tibbia Conference in the early part of 20th century that he formed in 1906. Those who graduated from Tibbi College fought to claim legitimacy and considered themselves as the best trained in Unani-tibb. Ajmal Khan and his forefathers were open to Western techniques notably in surgery and anatomy. They felt that Unani should be open to these techniques and this insistence was opposed by many of their class. It is also important to note that for many, the challenge to Unani system was perceived not as Ayurveda but 'western' medicine. Ajmal Khan wrote to the Chief Commissioner, ' ... I have made it the mission of my life to improve the indigenous systems of medicine on modern scientific basis introducing into them the latest developments of Western Science, thus putting the entire system on a sound basis...'

Ajmal Khan wanted indigenous pharmacopoeia to develop and the *vaidyas* to join in his pursuit. This too led to resistance from a lot of Hakims but he was of the view that to bring the indigenous systems at par with allopathic one had to understand the latter and in turn prove the scientific basis of the indigenous systems. His relationship with the British was never antagonistic, and he was always willing to have a dialogue with them, as seen from his correspondence with the government. The government in fact, facilitated his trips to Britain so that he could visit the medical libraries and hospitals there.

Ajmal Khan himself had little patience with those who did not educate themselves well especially those who did not come from regular institutions. He wanted to regularize the conditions under which Unani and Ayurvedic systems of medicine were taught and practiced in Delhi and sent a proposal for expanding the Ayurvedic and Unani-Tibb College and requesting grant of land from the

government. The British government wanted a detailed report on the teaching and working of the indigenous systems after insistence from well-known practitioners of indigenous medicines to review the possibility of placing these systems of medicines on a scientific basis. Hakim Ajmal Khan even founded the Jamia Milia Islamia (National Islamic University) in Aligarh that later shifted to Delhi and also a Women's Tibbiya College in Delhi. After his death in 1927, there was no one individual to take up from where he left by 1941 there were five colleges for indigenous systems in Delhi.

Growth of Other Medical Institutions in Delhi

The city of Delhi was confined within the walls *i.e.*, Shahjahanabad. The first fifty years of British occupation in Delhi is said to have been peaceful and the city was thickly populated in some places while the wider spaces were occupied by the nobles. Delhi had Muslims (Mughal descendants and others), Hindus (dominant castes were the Khatri and the Kayasths) and the Jains. Other than an active intellectual movement there was an enthusiasm for science that was inspired by translations of English texts. The peaceful years culminated in the mutiny of 1857 that resulted in a massive disruption of city life. The immediate sequel to the fall of Delhi was that vast wealth was seized by the British forces, thousands were killed, and surviving inhabitants were driven outside the city walls. Those who aided the British secured immunity from them. Lala Chunna Mal was one such individual who was a rich banker. The Hakims of Ballimaran (the younger son was Hakim Ajmal Khan, who later became popular) were protected by their patron, the ruler of Patiala. The British were prejudiced against the Muslims and by January 1858, allowed only the Hindus to re-enter the city. It is said that a year passed before the Muslims were allowed to re-enter the city. Many prominent Muslims were reduced to beggars, and many fled to the neighboring towns of Jaipur, Lucknow etc. and started life all over. The British on the other hand shifted away from the city to the Civil Lines.

Between 1858 and 1862, Delhi went through 'the most remarkable revolutions in the ownership of urban poverty'. The Cantonment and railway station started getting built. Houses of Muslims who could not prove their innocence were confiscated. Delhi started settling down again by the 1860s and population started increasing with the hype in trade and handicrafts that the Hindu and Jain traders dominated. Many poor also lived in these parts where the 'business class' would live. The Hakims would visit them every morning to treat them of ailments. Poor were concentrated at the fringes of the walled city

and the marked territories were Mori Gate, Turkman Gate and Delhi Gate. Mori Gate and Ajmeri Gate became the focus of missionary activities

Missionaries and the Colleges in 19th Century in Delhi

Five families have been identified who assisted the British during 1857 and received concessions from the latter. They also captured top Municipal positions in the coming years. For example, Chunna Mal held the position of Municipal Commissioner. The other four were Saligram and Girdharilal families, who were Jains, and Gurwala and Naharwala families were Khatri. Number of Hindus who were Kayasths also held positions in the Municipality. Muslim loyalists too figured in the Municipality and Jama Masjid Committee. Among the Muslims, the 'rais' had enhanced their status and did not need an official stamp for favors. They included the likes of the Hakims of Ballimaran, the *maulvis* and the literati. The Hakims of repute held a place in society and some were also eminent literary scholars. Chunna Mal contributed for building for 'zenana' teachers of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG).

This gave lead to other rich men in organizing massive outdoor relief during famines of 1860, 1862 and 1869. These charitable ventures enabled the government to curtail its relief expenditure and encouraged charity from the well-off Indians. The 1861 famine relief depended a lot on charity from many rich individuals mentioned above Chunna Mal, Mahesh Das, Sahib Singh, Ramni Mal and Khan Mahbub Bux. The charity fund of Rs.5000 exceeded the Municipal contribution of Rs.2000. It is said that Hindu and Jain members, so generous in private philanthropy saw little need for a social welfare policy. Three missions were present in Delhi in the late 19th Century - while the SPG and the Cambridge Mission worked together there was also the Baptist Mission.

These missions started their charity work at the periphery of the walls. While the poor Muslims included Chamars (characteristic of Delhi) and Mughal descendants reduced to poverty after 1857, the poor Hindus were mostly weavers, dyers of clothes, Kumhars and butchers. One of the most popular SPG missionaries of the time was Rev. R. Winter. He and the Cambridge mission started with education and medical work among the women and children and soon established a dispensary with few beds for in-patients in Chandni Chowk.

Most practitioners of indigenous medicines - *Hakims* and *Vaidyas* provided free treatment. The well-known among them were patronized and made personal visits to ruling 95 chiefs and rich families all over India. They travelled to the courts of princes when summoned for illnesses. A biography of Ajmal Khan, a renowned Unani practitioner, chronicles his visits made to various princely states. The rule was that if visits were made to Delhi to these practitioners, then

no fees was paid and services rendered were free even if it was a prince but if summoned, they charged fees. Ajmal Khan is said to have charged thousand rupees for his visits to rulers in princely states. In the lean years of 1896-1900 due to famines, the Arya Samaj (mostly comprised of Punjabis and Jats in rural hinterland) movement gained momentum. It became popular at the time of century. The Arya Samaj, the two Christian missions and individuals, took on the main burden of famine relief. The principle of non-intervention seems to have been rigidly followed especially during the famine years by the British.

In the early 19th Century, the city was divided into *ilakas* (each *ilaka* had a sub-committee) after 1857. While with regard to treatment and curative services the government played a limited role in reaching out to the general population, individual charity and missionary work were encouraged. Government's role was limited to preventive, sanitary measures and response to epidemics though even that was piecemeal. In 1931 a Bill was passed to establish an All India Medical Council to maintain a register of qualified practitioners of 'modern scientific medicine' to establish a uniform standard of qualifications in medicine for all provinces. There were lot of resistances by British who did not want to give recognition to degrees in India but the Bill was restated again to recognize medical qualifications by medical institutions in British India and outside British India.

The only medical college that was set up in the north was the Lahore Medical College in 1860. Once Delhi became the capital, the Lady Harding Medical College was set up for women. It was only in 1929 that a proposal was put forth to the government to consider building a medical college in Delhi. This came up after some students in Delhi put up a request saying that many were debarred from getting admission in other province medical college.

The Second World War was an obstacle towards setting up a Medical College and it was only after independence that there was any medical college established in Delhi *i.e.* the Maulana Azad Medical College. The British General Medical Council refused to recognize India educated doctors since the 1930s. The Indian Medical Service had mostly British educated doctors in colonial India. British norms of medical education were adopted by the Medical Council of India to gain recognition. The Indian doctors who collaborated with the colonial rule were the ones who stepped in to positions of power after 1947, socialized into the Western model and were educated in Britain for higher studies and these individuals constituted the upper class of society. The colonial character profoundly influenced all aspects of health services and therefore medical education too.

With the increase in the nationalist movement in the early 20th century, many noted Indians' part of the movement wanted more of a dialogue than confrontation with the British. These individuals realized that in order to debate, one had to learn the colonial language and perspective to get through to them. Western thought also influenced many, and many had started imbibing the scientific knowledge that was gaining popularity. Therefore, there was some dialogue and cooperation between practitioners of Indian medical systems and those trained in Western medicine. However, with significant advances in Western medicine, and the emergence of Utilitarianism as the dominant thought guiding British policy in India, the distance between practitioners of different systems widened. By the end of the 19th century, Western medicine had a significant presence in big cities and towns. *Hakims* and *vaidyas* felt threatened and neglected due to the complete loss of state patronage and decline in their social status. Some started questioning their own system, and adopted various different ways to stay relevant. Others stood up for their systems through vigorous defense and promotion of their systems.

Notes and References

¹O.P. Jaggi, *Hospitals in India*, *op. cit.*, pp.71-72.

²*ibid.*, pp.72.

³Khwaja Kamgar Husaini, 'Maasir-i-Jahangir' in Azra Alavi(ed.), Centre of Advanced Study In History, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, 1978, pp.50-52.

⁴Abul Qasim Firishta, *Tarikh-i Firishta*, Eng. tr., *The History of the Rise of the Muhametan Power in India*, London, 1829, vol. I, p. 35; *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*, Eng. tr. R.C. Jauhari, *Medieval India in Transition- Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi: A First-Hand Account*, New Delhi, 1968, pp.200-203; See also M.Z. Siddiqi, *Studies in Arabic and Persian Medical Literature*, Calcutta University, Calcutta, 1959, p. 33.

⁵S.L. Bhatia, *A History of Medicine with Special Reference to the Orient*, Office of the Medical Council of India, New Delhi, 1977, p.119.

⁶Munshi Tek Chand Bahar, *Bahar-i Azam, 1739-40*, litho. Nawal Kishore, Lucknow, 1336/1916, Vol. II, p.166.

⁷Maasir-i-Mahmud Shahi, p.64, cf. S. A. N. Rezavi, Physicians as Professional in Medieval India, in Deepak Kumar (ed.), *Disease and Medicine in India: A Historical Overview*, Tulika Books, New Delhi, 2001, p.49.

⁸O.P. Jaggi, *Hospitals in India*, *op. cit.*, p.73.

⁹Hodivala, *Studies in Parsi History*, Bombay, 1929, pp.167-68.

¹⁰Ali Muhammad Khan, *Mirat-i-Ahmadi*, edited by Nawab Ali, Vol. I, Baroda, 1972-78, p.162.

- ¹¹R.L.Verma, *The Growth of Greaco-Arabian Medicine in India*, Indian Journal of History Science, Vol. V, no. 2, 1970, p.358.
- ¹²Shah Nawaz Khan, *Ma'asir-ul Umara*, edited by Maulvi Abdur Rahim, Vol. III, Calcutta, p.936.
- ¹³R.L Verma., *Unani Medicine During the Mughal Reign in India*, in *Scientific Heritage of India*, edited by B. Subbarayappa and S.N. Murthy, Bangalore, The Mythic Society, 1988, p.123.
- ¹⁴The change in name from Madrasa-e Tibbiya to Tibbiya College is discussed below.
- ¹⁵Charles Leslie, *The Ambiguities of Medical Revivalism in Modern India*; Barbara Metcalf, *Nationalist Muslims in British India: The Case of Hakim Ajmal Khan*; Punam Bala, *Imperialism and Medicine in Bengal: A Socio-historical Perspective*.
- ¹⁶George Basalla, *The Spread of Western Science*; Donald Flemming, *Science in Australia, Canada and the United States: Some Comparative Remarks*; Daniel Headrick, *The Tentacles of Progress: Technology Transfer in the Age of Imperialism*; Roy MacLeod, 'On Visiting the Moving Metropolis : Reflections on the Architecture of Imperial Science'; Deepak Kumar, *Science and the Raj*; Mark Harrison, in *Isis*, 96, 2005, pp. 56–63
- ¹⁷Ajmal Khan, *Ajmal Magazine*; he made this statement in 1919.
- ¹⁸Qanoon-e-A'sari, 1931 (Delhi: Majlis-e-tehqqeeqat-e-Tibbiya), pp. 22–23.
- ¹⁹Razzack, Hakim Mohammed Abdur, 1987, *Hakim Ajmal Khan—The Versatile Genius*, New Delhi: Council for Research in Unani Medicine, pp. 17–18.
- ²⁰*Al-hakim*, October, 1931.
- ²¹*Al-hakim*, September 1932.
- ²²Razzack, *Hakim Ajmal Khan*, pp. 15, 26.
- ²³*Hindustani Dawakhana ki Fehrist-e Adwiyat*, p.1.
- ²⁴Muhammad Zabayr Siddiqui, *Studies in Arabic and Persian Medical Literature*, p. XLI.
- ²⁵*Al-Maseeh*, June 1924.

Prison writings Reflections on Jail experiences of ‘political prisoners’¹

Anshuman Srivastava
Doctoral Research Scholar
Department of History
University of Delhi
Email :anshurmila@gmail.com

Abstract

It is a demanding task to explore prisoners’ agency and their perspectives in the jail regime of colonial India. However it is comparatively easier to unearth prisoners’ experiences from early 20th century, as there were significant number of prisoners, who were literate and recording their prison experiences through autobiographies. Their ideas and prison experiences were not limited to anti-colonial struggles in India; instead their ideas on the issues such as violence, religion, societal discriminations were shaped by the varied experiences in jail. Living in jail meant not only bearing the punishment and defying colonial authority at various junctures of the punishment, but it was also an act of shaping ideas on larger issues i.e. religion, which were receptive to amendments within the varied social setting of prison.

Keywords: *Revolutionaries, Prison, Prison Writings, Jail Experiences, Aurobindo Ghose, Bhagat Singh, Hemachandra Kanungo.*

The advent of British prison system in India was not regularized purely on modern English ideas of confinement,² though during the second half of the 19th century efforts to reform prison system on those ideas were made. Notwithstanding the actual outcome of such efforts, changes in operation of prison system were clearly visible during the first half of the 20th century.³ For the inhabitants of the Indian subcontinent, the system with codified proceedings for punishments of various crimes and structured courts was an unusual experience.

The paper will in the main discuss the writings of three prominent political prisoners-Bhagat Singh, Aurobindo Ghose and Hemachandra Kanungo. The purpose of this paper is not merely to provide a narration of their prison experiences. Purpose is to juxtapose and understand their ideas on larger thematic

issues such as - revolution, spirituality, and the role of religiosity and violence in the freedom struggle - within their experiences of prison life. The primary reason for choosing these figures is because of their explicit or implicit role in the anti-colonial movement, which allowed them to comprehend and represent the national and regional politics. According to Chaman Lal, Bhagat Singh's writings were not usual or typical prison writings. As Chaman Lal states, 'Bhagat Singh's jail notebook is not a diary at all in the conventional sense, in that it does not record his daily life in the prison, nor his thoughts and emotions. Bhagat Singh's Jail Notebook is a record of his study and reading in the prison prior to his execution. It helps us understand the roots and trajectory of his political and philosophical growth and development'.⁴

Also one of the aims of Bhagat Singh during his imprisonment was 'to develop himself ideologically and politically by undertaking a rigorous and serious programme of reading'.⁵ This particular approach of Bhagat Singh in jail allowed him to reflect on larger issues such as socialism, the nature of British rule in India, casteism and the use of armed struggle in the anti – colonial movement.

Another commonality between these three figures was that, all of them were of the belief that political prisoners had the right to be treated in a humane manner since they were not the 'criminals' in the literal sense of the term. However their critical reflection on the prison system was limited not to the treatment of political prisoners but extended to an examination of the prison conditions of other non-political prisoners.

Thoughts on Violence and Religion

We will begin with a discussion of the writings of Aurobindo Ghose and Hemachandra Kanungo, as both were convicted in the Alipore Bomb Case 1908.⁶ The most important aspect of Kanungo's text is its intense criticism of Aurobindo Ghose. Kanungo's primary criticism was related to the role of religiosity in revolutionary movements in Bengal during the first two decades of the 20th century. The functioning of secret societies during this period in Bengal was primarily headed by Aurobindo Ghose and his brother Barindra Ghose. For Kanungo the use of Hindu symbols in secret societies and the indifference of the leadership towards the question of Hindu – Muslim relations during revolutionary movements led him to believe that this leadership was responsible for excluding Muslims from this critical phase of nationalist movement.⁷ Kanungo's criticism gives a glimpse of an operational nature of revolutionary activities during first two decades in Bengal. By reading Kanungo's writings closely it appears that there was not so much a feeling of explicit hate towards the Muslim community in Aurobindo Ghose's ideas as there was a clear sense of indifference towards them. As Kanungo explains, The two great

problems, which cannot but stand like the insurmountable Himalayas in the way of liberation of India from the clutches of the English, did not become matters of concern for Aurobindo Babu as well as for other leaders, or at any rate they failed to appreciate their seriousness, These two issues are the Hindu-Moslem problem and the caste distinctions amongst the Hindus themselves. One day, in a meeting of the secret society, means to solve the Hindu-Moslem problem was discussed. It was resolved that if the Moslems joined this revolution it was all to the good; because when the country became free, privileges in proportion to the extent of their help would be conferred on them. But if they did not join they would be classed as enemies and were to be put in the same category with the English.⁸

As we can notice that, Ghose's indifference to the Hindu-Muslim question led the other members of secret society to make their own opinions about this issue, and at times their opinions were not only critical of Muslim community but also hostile towards Muslim community. It is important to observe that, this phase of revolutionary struggles was permeated with religious symbols and idioms. Aurobindo Ghose's and his secret society's inclination to use religious symbols was characteristic of the first phase of revolutionary movements in the early decades of the twentieth century in India. It was during the 1920's and 1930's that socialist ideas became prevalent in revolutionary armed struggles and hence these movements acquired an increasingly secular nature in their philosophy and function. Kanungo's strict criticism could be understood in the light of the fact that he has visited Europe before his arrest and was the part of French anarchist and other socialist/communist groups. He was exposed to the ideas and functioning of European revolutionary groups which practiced socialist ideas for the revolutionary activities, such as awakening of masses especially of the subaltern groups.⁹ Whereas in Bengal, as discussed above, according to Kanungo the situation was opposite in a sense that revolutionary groups in Bengal used religious symbols and lacked long term revolutionary strategies.

Another important criticism related to religiosity in secret societies was related to spiritualism. For Kanungo this kind of mysticism was an abstract notion on which leadership of the secret societies and especially Aurobindo Ghose relied on aimlessly¹⁰ and which harmed the purposes of secret societies of Bengal severely. It is quite correct that, Ghose was overwhelmed with the idea of spiritualism. Ghose in his writings even claimed that that in prison, he was able to experience 'God'.¹¹ According to Ghose his arrest and then solitary

confinement was the plan of some mystic power, which helped him to attain higher levels of meditation.¹²

At the outset the idea of experiencing some supernatural or mystic power appears nonsensical; however Bhagat Singh in his prison writings gives very interesting explanation for such approach from the standpoints of an atheist and a prisoner who is experiencing various hardships in jail.

Bhagat Singh gives a causal explanation as to why some revolutionaries tend to believe in 'god', prayers or some metaphysical forces. While writing the introduction for a book authored by his friend Lal Ram Saran Das, Bhagat Singh reflects on these issues in the context of Das' belief in god and metaphysical powers-His interpretation of the universe is teleological and metaphysical, while I am a materialist and my interpretation of the phenomenon would be causal. Nevertheless, it is by no means out of place or out of date. The general ideas that are prevailing in our country are more in accordance with those expressed by him. To fight that depressing mood he resorted to prayers as is evident that the whole of the beginning of the book is devoted to God, His praise, his definition. Belief in God is the outcome of mysticism which is the natural consequence of depression. That this world is 'Maya' or 'Mithya', or a fiction, is clear mysticism which has been originated and developed by Hindu sages of old ages, such as Shankaracharya-and others. But in the materialist philosophy this mode of thinking has got absolutely no place. But this mysticism of the author is by no means ignoble or deplorable. It has its own beauty and charm.¹³ He further continues, from my personal experience I can safely assert that in the secret work, when a man constantly leads a risky life, 'without hope and without fear', 'always prepared to die unknown, unhonoured and unsung', then, he cannot but fight the personal temptations and desires by this sort of mysticism which is by no means demoralizing.¹⁴

As should be evident from the above, Bhagat Singh did not treat an expression of belief in god or metaphysical powers as insulting or corrupting for a revolutionary. On the contrary he viewed such feelings as a refuge for a prisoner, in the face of the immense hardships and sufferings one has to experience in jail. It is understandable that he sympathized with the prisoners who believed in the notions of god as he was himself experiencing the distress caused for being in jail. For Bhagat Singh, belief in god at a personal level seems not to be a concern.

He was however critical of the deployment of religion in the public sphere: his main opposition towards religion and belief in god was because he considered these notions instrumental in creating superstition, fanaticism and

exploitation within various social strata. Bhagat Singh criticized the exploitative and irrational traditions of Hinduism, Islam and Christianity. He extended this criticism to Islam and Christianity as well and asked their followers that if one god is the sole creator and controller of the world, then what is the explanation for rampant miseries in the world majorly caused by societal and economic exploitation.¹⁵

His criticism of Hinduism majorly pertains to the prevalent casteism in the society which caused severe poverty in the lower rungs of the Hindu society. He asked whether when a 'chamar' commits a crime because of the exploitation meted out to him, who should be blamed for this?¹⁶ According to Bhagat Singh caste oppression in Hindu society was legitimised through the idea of god and religious texts.

Though Bhagat Singh, Aurobindo Ghose and Hemachandra Kanungo wrote in different times and spaces, it is interesting to note that how their writings spoke to each other on various issues. The discussion above regarding their thoughts on god, religion and mysticism proves this. In this context it is important to discuss one of the crucial issues here. It is pertaining to their views on revolutionary terrorism. It is noteworthy that despite being directly or indirectly involved in armed struggle against colonial rule, they had deep contempt for violent or 'terror' methods for the struggle against colonial rule.

Kanungo narrates about the futility of plan for murdering Lieutenant – Governor Bampfylde Fuller. For Kanungo, it was an inconceivable idea to murder someone without incitement and this characteristic was more related to society than to an individual. As Kanungo puts it, 'in our country even males, not to speak of females, shudder at the mention of war, which they consider to be nothing better than an homicidal affair. We are all spiritual beings, and the men and women of any other country do not compare with us in that respect. We cannot, therefore, with our spiritual excellence, approve of war which entails destruction of human life'.¹⁷ He further describes this trait, So it is easily to be guessed how terrible a matter it is for a Bengali Hindu, brought up amidst such non-violent and spiritual atmosphere, to kill a man without provocation. I do not say that the Bengalis do not commit homicide in any way. It is to be noticed, however, that the majority of the Bengali criminals convicted of this crime, kill women. In any case murder committed on sudden provocation is quite a different thing from revolutionary murder. No doubt revolutionary murders have taken place in Bengal, but their number is insignificant in comparison with the number of failures. The public do not know to what extent mental weakness was responsible for it. In Bengal, of all countries, the strength of mind required for

unavoidable murder for the welfare of humanity or the country is most lacking. This want of the requisite frame of mind led to nervous breakdown when sufficient power of self-control was lacking among the revolutionaries undertaking murder for a revolutionary purpose. I believe a different atmosphere has to be created, and training for generations in that new atmosphere has to be undergone in order to enable the Bengalis to overcome such weakness.¹⁸

It appears from his thoughts that he understood this disbelief in violent methods of struggle against colonial rule as being related to some general traits of the community he belonged to. It was perhaps because of this that he recommended the 'training' of Bengalis, 'to overcome such weaknesses'. However it is noticeable that Kanungo has layers of writing. It is difficult to confine his writings to a single genre. He kept returning to the belief in humanity and skepticism for murdering an individual for a larger cause, while at the same time attributing non-violent trait to a particular community. As he reflected in the context of two failed attempts to murder the Lieutenant - Governor - during nearly two years after it, numerous such 'honest attempts' at action were made and all of them failed. Why? The reason is that the kind of war in which a man derives satisfaction from slaying a man has been almost unknown in this country for many years.¹⁹ Also, he clearly states that he was happy after the idea of a 'revolutionary dacoity' of a widow's house was abandoned.²⁰ His attribution of idea of non-violence to a community is understandable because he had to justify his long association with secret societies of Bengal whose operational method largely depended on the individual acts of violence.

Bhagat Singh's views on violence and terrorism were multifaceted. He described in detail under what circumstances violence or armed struggle could be futile. Most significantly, he never considered the use of violence as the sole and only dominant tool against the colonial state. In a rebuttal to the editor of *Modern Review*-Ramanand Chatterji-who distrusted ideas of revolution, Bhagat Singh stated, we stated therein that Revolution did not necessarily involve sanguinary strife. It was not a cult of bomb and pistol. They may sometimes be mere means for its achievement. No doubt they play a prominent part in some movements, but they do not-for that very reason-become one and the same thing. A rebellion is not a revolution. It may ultimately lead to that end.²¹

He further elaborated on this issue in the introduction to the book called *Dreamland*- 'revolution necessarily implies the program of systematic reconstruction of society on new and better adapted basis, after complete destruction of the existing state of affairs (*i.e.*, regime)'.²²

Bhagat Singh's above mentioned thoughts elaborate that he did not want violence to attain a permanent status in revolutionary struggles. Instead it

was a means, only to end exploitation against proletariat and peasants and to establish communist regime. According to him strategic and measured use of violence was necessary to end economic exploitation in society. This could be understood in the context of the fact that just before the commencement of Civil Disobedience Movement in 1929 the message he sent to the Second Punjab Student's Conference was that instead of choosing violent methods, youth should be involved in generating awareness among poor laborers and villagers, in a shared struggle against the colonial regime.²³

It is significant to quote Bhagat Singh at length to obtain a clearer understanding of his thoughts on the use of violence -Apparently I have acted like a terrorist. But I am not a terrorist. I am a revolutionary who has got such definite ideas of a lengthy programme as is being discussed here. My 'comrades in arms' might accuse me, like Ram Prasad Bismil, for having been subjected to certain sort of reaction in the condemned cell, which is not true. I have got the same ideas, same convictions, same zeal and same spirit as I used to have outside, perhaps nay, decidedly-better. Hence I warn my readers to be careful while reading my words. They should not try to read anything between the lines. Let me announce with all the strength at my command, that I am not a terrorist and I never was, except perhaps in the beginning of my revolutionary career. And I am convinced that we cannot gain anything through those methods. One can easily judge it from the history of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association. All our activities were directed towards an aim, *i.e.*, identifying ourselves with the great movement as its military wing. If anybody has misunderstood me, let him amend his ideas. I do not mean that bomb and pistols are useless, rather the contrary. But I mean to say that mere bomb-throwing is not only useless but sometimes harmful. The military department of the party should always keep ready all the war-material it can command for any emergency. It should back the political work of the party. It cannot and should not work independently.²⁴

Apart from the fact that Bhagat Singh desired armed struggle under political leadership and not as an independent one, his continuous insistence that he was not a 'terrorist' is noteworthy. He had no apprehensions about his punishment, so there was no possibility that he was insisting on himself being not a terrorist in order to mitigate his punishment. He was clearly drawing the line between a terrorist and revolutionary. For him a terrorist might indulge in mindless and inhumane violence, but for the revolutionary, violence was a last refuge. For a revolutionary, the priority was the dispersion of ideas in society, which could enable an uprooting of the existing system and a re-ordering of the societal system in a manner such that miseries borne out of various kinds of

exploitation could be minimized. It is interesting that, when in today's context there are passionate debates about whether it is incorrect to call those revolutionaries as 'terrorists' or not, who were involved against British colonial rule, their own views on such issues were complex and multilayered, and had the ability to unearth new questions.

V. D. Savarkar's memoir about his incarceration in Andaman cellular jail depicts his discomfit about the fact that, prison authorities associated him solely with violence and hence prevalent term for the prisoners like Savarkar was *Bumwale* (associated with bomb).²⁵ Instead of, he preferred the term *Rajbandi* (State Prisoner). As Savarkar emphasized that during anti-colonial struggle some participated through use of violence and some used the writing, to express anti-colonial ideas.²⁶ And some even participated through both the means.²⁷ Savarkar's insistence on the use of term 'state prisoners' for the prisoners who were involved in armed struggle against colonial state, also implied the issue of treatment of political prisoners by prison authorities *vis-a-vis* ordinary prisoners.

Reviewing foucauldian analysis through the writings of Indian Revolutionaries

This issue has been much discussed *i.e.*, to what extent Michel Foucault's analysis is applicable to the prison regime in Indian subcontinent during colonial state. With caution, it is safe to argue that, on the one hand the changes introduced in Western European jails in 18th century, as highlighted by Foucault at the level of idea were introduced in Indian subcontinent as well. On the other hand the specific practical changes in Europe were not extrapolated in colonial Indian jails. In this paper with regard to the writings of the political prisoners discussed above, an attempt will be made to analyze foucauldian theory. Since, these writings are firsthand accounts of the experiences in jail during 20th century Indian jails, this attempt might be able to suggest to what extent foucauldian analysis was veritable in Indian context.

Foucault essentially proposed that during the 18th and 19th centuries, Western Europe witnessed major penal reforms that reflected a considerable change in the state's view regarding crime, punishment and prisoners. Foucault's analysis elaborates the shift that occurred in the idea of punishment, as the state now started focusing on 'corrective' measures for the prisoners. The focus was on reforming the 'soul' instead of punishing the 'body'. The motive of punishment was to reform the prisoner, instead of solely inflicting pain.²⁸

In the context of colonial India, it is important to note that there were different categories of prisoners separated on the basis of the nature of the

crime, years of imprisonment, age, gender and race also. For the purpose of this paper, Aurobindo Ghose, Bhagat Singh, Hemachandra Kanungo and other revolutionaries are discussed as political prisoners, perceived by the state as prisoners who waged war against the state. Placing this in the context of Foucault's 'reforming' the 'soul', it was used by the state as a pretext for the surveillance of prisoners and to eliminate any human contact with them so as to deter them from being involved in any kind of rebellion against the state. Ghose's description of solitary confinement suggests that, colonial state in India -in the context of imprisonment of revolutionaries-followed the above mentioned idea. . . Ghose stated, according to a proverb, one who can bear solitude is either a god or brute; It is beyond the capability of mere mortals. Although my belief in this proverb was previously limited, I could now see the truth inherent in it; I realized that it was difficult for even yogic aspirants to bears solitude. I recalled the dreadful fate of the Italian regicide, Bresci. The judges instead of passing the death- sentence, gave him seven years of solitary imprisonment. Bresci became insane even before a year had passed. But he did endure for that long. Was my mental strength going to last only this far? I could not understand then that God was but toying with my mind and actually teaching me some necessary lessons, in the guise of this play. First, He gave me an insight into the mental process that impels a prisoner towards insanity in solitary confinement, and exposing the inhuman cruelty inherent in this manner of punishment, turned me into a staunch opponent of the European prison-system.²⁹

However Ghose's description of hygiene in a 20th century colonial prison counters Foucault's proposition of insistence on hygiene in reformed Western European prisons. As Ghose gives the details of how he was compelled to use one bowl for washing, bathing and eating purposes, this description offers a clear picture of the conditions of hygiene, or the absence of it, in colonial prisons in India.³⁰ He also writes about the arrangements for excretion in solitary imprisonment. Two tar coated baskets were provided within the cell. He informs that two *Mehters* were employed to clean the basket in the morning and evening.³¹ Traditional caste based social hierarchies and exploitations were therefore being followed in colonial prisons.

The argument here is not that traditional social hierarchies were reproduced in totality the colonial prison regime in India. For instance an analysis of the composition of prison labour, tells us that the replication of caste based norms of traditional indigenous society in colonial prisons does not seem to have been a universal trend.³² It appears however that for menial and cleaning works in the colonial prisons, people were employed from lower castes exclusively.³³

Scholars have varied arguments on the issue. David Arnold argues that, ‘... prisoners were not exclusively drawn from lower classes’.³⁴ But Anand Yang, argues in the context of jail ‘riots’ in Bihar region during 1840’s and 50’s-emerged because of the new regulations pertaining to jail dietary- ‘in part the primary role assumed by low caste prisoners especially Ahirs, reflect their large representation in the prison population’.³⁵ The varied opinions about the population of lower caste prisoners emerged because in order to examine the extent of exploitation of lower caste prisoners encountered in colonial prisons. Did the colonial prison regime exclusively or dominantly target the lower caste population or not? These issues need robust research.

It could be argued that specific technical details analyzed by Foucault about panoptican and Benthamite prison regime could not have been exactly followed in the colonial prisons in India. However the idea of surveillance and deterrence appears in different forms. The pervasiveness of this surveillance is the context in which Bhagat Singh and Sukhdev engaged in a philosophical debate over ‘suicide’ through letters while in imprisonment.³⁶ A close reading of the letter to Sukhdev by Bhagat Singh strongly suggests that Sukhdev was depressed because of the sufferings in jail and gradually started to believe that to commit suicide was easier. Bhagat Singh’s letter to Sukhdev says, you may still recollect that one day I had discussed suicide with you. That time I told you that in some situations suicide may be justifiable, but you contested my point. I vividly remember the time and place of our conversation. We talked about this in the Shahanshahi Kutia one evening. You said in jest that such a cowardly act can never be justified. You said that acts of this kind were horrible and heinous, but I see that you have now made an about –turn on this subject. Now you find it not only proper in certain situations but also necessary, even essential. My opinion is what had held earlier, that suicide is heinous crime. It is an act of complete cowardice. Leave alone revolutionaries, no individual can ever justify such an act.³⁷ Bhagat Singh continues further that at the time of our imprisonment, the condition for the political prisoners of our party were very miserable. We tried to improve that. I tell you quite seriously that we believed we should die very shortly. Neither we were aware of the technique of forced feeding nor did we ever think of it. We were ready to die. Do you mean to say that we were intending to commit suicide? No. Striving and sacrificing one’s life for a superior ideal can never be called suicide. We are envious of the death of our Comrade Yatindra Nath Das. Will you call it suicide? Ultimately, our sufferings bore fruit. A big movement started in the whole of the country. We were successful in our aim. Death in the struggles of this kind is an ideal death.

Apart from this, the comrades among us, who believe that they will be awarded death, should await that day patiently when the sentence will be announced and they will be hanged. This death will also be beautiful, but committing suicide-to cut short the life just to avoid some pain-is cowardice.³⁸

Upendranath Bandhopadhyay narrates the tortures in prison and the weakening mental conditions of the prisoners in Andamans which eventually led a revolutionary, Indu bhushan Roy, to commit suicide and another revolutionary Ullaskar Dutta to become terminally mentally ill.³⁹ Durba Ghosh has reflected on these issues in detail. Ghosh has analyzed the conditions of the security prisoners who were detained in detention camps without judicial trial on the accusation of 'terrorism'. This detention in many cases was for many years, and that too without contact with family members. This policy of the state led to the suicides of many detainees.⁴⁰

It is important to take into consideration the above mentioned tortures and punishment meted out to revolutionaries, who were either put under trial for many years, or detained without trial, or were sent to Andamans or hanged. The severe threat they posed to the legitimacy and existence of the colonial state was the obvious explanation for the treatment meted out to them. However this takes us to the issue of different treatment to the varied categories or groups of prisoners by prison authorities.

We noticed in this essay that political prisoners were critical of prison authorities for treating political prisoners and ordinary prisoners in the similar manner. However it seems that, prison authorities were harsher towards the political prisoners. As Ujjwal Singh states for Bengal revolutionaries, prisoners' accounts, however, take pains to show that they were not allowed to live or work together. Singled out in cellular accommodation, any conversation among them at work could be judged suspicious and punished by measures which exceeded the standards set for the ordinary prisoners. The Government of India, moved by its concern to contain the spread of 'dangerous' ideas to other convicts and preventing 'anarchist' prisoners from conspiring against the government or organizing a mutiny among the convicts, instructed that they be treated as 'specially dangerous prisoners' and 'not be allowed to work in the same group with each other or with other Bengali convicts.'⁴¹

This difference was visible within the category of political prisoners as well. As Ujjawal Singh informs in the context of prisoners of Lahore Conspiracy Case in Hazaribagh-'the difference in the treatment of state prisoners and the seditionists was too evident to be overlooked'.⁴² The skepticism of political prisoners towards ordinary prisoners is explainable in the light of evidences,

clearly mentioning the differential treatment meted out to political prisoners and especially to those prisoners who were incarcerated because of their involvement in violent methods against colonial state.

Conclusion

As mentioned earlier in this essay the writings of political prisoners in a way seemed to be engaging with each other on various issues. Such accounts are significant not just because they represented a counter narrative to the dominant colonial discourse, but also because their references to other political prisoners and revolutionaries depict important junctures of nationalist struggles from within. The criticisms of fellow revolutionaries and political workers speak about the failings of political organizations and revolutionary groups more than that of individuals. The accounts of prisoners discussed in this essay are therefore also helpful in understanding the wider ideological divides between political workers, worked within the same organizations and for the common cause. Ujjwal Singh informs us that, during the period from 1920's to 1940's revolutionaries were excluded from the category of political prisoners.⁴³ It clearly indicates that during this period to be in this category had certain implications which were beneficial for the prisoners. Possibly the acknowledgment of the status of a political prisoner would have compelled the colonial state to treat prisoners within a prescribed regulations. This paper could not explore this issue and questions arising from this issue, including why the colonial state treated revolutionaries and political activists involved in non – violent movements differentially. Why did the state consider people involved in armed struggle as more threatening to its legitimacy, when non-violent movements like Civil Disobedience Movement and Quit India Movement rejected the legitimacy of the colonial state to rule, and that too in everyday life? How did political prisoners view themselves in relation to ordinary prisoners? These questions are significant to analyze the antagonisms and cooperation in the relationship of different categories of prisoners.

Notes and References

¹There were certainly disparities in the treatment of the prisoners within this category, by the colonial state. For the colonial state revolutionaries appeared more threatening than political activists involved anti-colonial Gandhian movements or some other non-violent movements. See Ujjwal Kumar Singh, *Political Prisoners in India*, New Delhi, OUP, 1998, pp. 22-25. Though jail conditions in general were dreadful for all the prisoners but Muhammad Yunus' account of his experience in the jails of North–Western Province shows that

prisoners involved in non-violent anti-colonial struggle were allowed to have more flexibility in terms of diet, reading and had better access to medical treatment. He was associated with *Khudai- Khidmatgar*. See Muhammad Yunus, *Qaidi ke khat* (Hindi), Delhi, Vikas Publishing House, pp. 25,41 & 53-59.

²This could be understood in the context of jail reforms in Indian subcontinent during colonial regime. Though jail reforms were extensively discussed between authorities but its actual implementation was much lesser than the planning, which resulted in high mortality rates and overcrowding. See Joannah M.A Clark, *Prison reform in Nineteenth Century British- India Thesis*, University of Canterbury, 2015, p 133.

³As Ujjwal Singh has argued that before the Indian Jails Committee of 1919-20, officially the serious attempts for prison reforms were very less; instead the primary idea was to deter political prisoners. Ujjwal Singh, pp.4-5.

⁴Bhagat Singh, *Bhagat Singh: The Jail Notebook and Other Writings*, compiled by Chaman Lal and annotated by Bhoopendra Hooja, New Delhi, Left Word, 2007, p.23.

⁵*ibid.*, p.22.

⁶Hem Chandra Kanungo, 'Account of the revolutionary Movement in Bengal' in edited by Amiya K Samanta and Annotated by Intelligence Branch, Bengal, Kolkata, Setu Prakashani, 2015 and Aurobindo Ghose, *Tales of Prison Life*, e-book, Sri Aurobindo Institute of Culture, 2013.

⁷Hem Chandra Kanungo, 'Account of the revolutionary Movement in Bengal' in edited by Amiya K Samanta and Annotated by Intelligence Branch, Bengal, Kolkata, Setu Prakashani, 2015, pp.139-42.

⁸*ibid.*, p.139.

⁹Kanungo, pp.191-195.

¹⁰*ibid.*, p.95, pp.138-39.

¹¹*ibid.*, p.93.

¹²Aurobindo Ghose, *Tales of Prison Life*, e-book, Sri Aurobindo Institute of Culture, 2013, pp.26-30, 46-48.

¹³Bhagat Singh, 'Introduction to Dreamland', p.153.

¹⁴*ibid.*

¹⁵Bhagat Singh, 'Why I am an Atheist', p.174.

¹⁶*ibid.*, p.175.

¹⁷Kanungo, p.183.

¹⁸*ibid.*, pp.183-84.

¹⁹*ibid.*, pp.182-83.

²⁰*ibid.*, p.179.

²¹Bhagat Singh, 'On the Slogan 'Lomg Live Revolution' , p.141.

²²Bhagat Singh, 'Introduction to Dreamland', p.152.

²³*ibid.*, p.139.

²⁴*ibid.*, 'To Young Political Workers', pp.164-65.

²⁵Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, *Mera Ajivan Karavaas*, (Hindi), Delhi, Prabhat Prakashan, 2004, pp.107-108.

²⁶*ibid.*, p.108.

²⁷*ibid.*

²⁸Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, New York, Vintage Books, 1979, pp.7-65.

²⁹Ghose, p.46.

³⁰*ibid.*, pp.19-20.

³¹*ibid.*, pp.20-22.

³²*Annual Report with tabular statements on the condition and management of the Jails in the North-Western and Provinces*, 1873, Allahabad, Government Press, 1874, p.14.

³³*Report of the Committee on Prison Discipline*, (Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press, 1838).p.16. Also it is mentioned above that according to Aurobindo Ghose's account two Mehters were employed to remove tar coated baskets, which were provided to him in the solitary confinement for the purpose of excretion.

³⁴David Arnold, 'The Colonial Prison: Power, Knowledge, and Penology in Nineteenth-Century India' in *Subaltern Studies VIII, Essays in Honour of Ranajit Guha*, David Arnold and David Hardiman(eds.), New Delhi, OUP, 1994, p.169.

³⁵Anand Yang, 'Disciplining "Natives: Prisons and Prisoners Early Nineteenth Century India' in *South Asia*, Vol.10, no.2,1987.

³⁶Bhagat Singh, 'Regarding Suicide: Letter to Sukhdev', pp.142-146.

³⁷*ibid.*, p.142

³⁸*ibid.*, p.143. Seemingly the tendency to commit suicide was largely developed within the group of prisoners who were charged of adopting violent means against colonial state. This also depicts the harsher conditions for this group of prisoners in comparison to other categories of prisoners. V.D. Savarkar also mentions his attraction towards committing suicide during his imprisonment in Andaman cellular jail. See, V. D. Savarkar, *Mera Ajivan Karavaas* (Hindi), pp.137-38.

³⁹Amitava Hazra, 'Upendranath Bandhopadhyay's *Nirasiter Atmakatha: A Memoir of Prison Life*' in *Prison Writings in India*, C.N.Srinath(ed.), Delhi, Sahitya Akademi, 2014.p.45.

⁴⁰Durba Ghosh, *Gentelmanly Terrorists*, Cambridge, CUP, 2017, pp.202-3.

⁴¹Ujjwal Singh, p.54.

⁴²*ibid.*, p.48.

⁴³Ujjawal Singh, p.17. Also V.D. Savarkar explains in his memoir that, Superintendent of the cellular jail at Port Blair-David Barrie-was emphatic that prisoners incarcerated in the cellular jail for waging the war against the colonial state should not consider themselves as political prisoners and by fellow prisoners. Savarkar, pp.109 & 128.

Book Review



Author : Rup Kumar Barman
Professor, Department of History
Jadavpur University, West Bengal
Price : Rs. 450/- (INR)

Paribarta Anusandhan: Rashtra Nagarikatwa Bastuchyuti O Itihascharcha (Search for Alternative: State, Citizenship, Displacement and Historical Research) Kolkata, Gangchil, 2022, Page-170.

'*Paribarta Anusandhan*' (*Search for Alternative*) tells the tale of a man's journey through life. The narration begins from Chhoto Chowkir Bos located at the banks of the river *Raidak* in North Bengal, continues through Kamakshyaguri, Darjeeling, Cooch Behar and culminates in Kolkata. And through the vivid depiction of this journey, the reader is presented with a kaleidoscopic portraiture of North Bengal-its urban life, its geological and cultural diversity. The historical consciousness of the narrator has aptly captivated the events occurring from 1970s to 2022 in all their layers and colourations.

In the first chapter of this astonishing memoir, the writer has described his childhood days at Chhoto Chowkir Bos. It is a village in the Dooars of West Bengal and is adjacent to Bhutan. Through the description of its geographical, cultural and anthropological diversity, the author has shown how this terminal territory has been shaped by national and international turn of events. In the first chapter, we get to know how the studentship of the author at Mahakalguri Mission High School was enriched due to plural cultural trend of the region. As the writer depicts the then Kamakshyaguri during his days as a student of History Honours in Alipurduar College, he allows us glimpses into the untold history of '*Tar-kata Andolan*' [cutting off telegraph wires during the Quite India movement (1942)] and '*Dooars Gandhi*'. Incidentally, he has presented the noticeable national

and internal events of the 1980s and early 1990s to remind the readers that the world was experimenting new ideas for moving towards a better world.

The second part of this heartrending book is set in Darjeeling, and tells the story of the writer's university life. Naxalbari and its political history find expression in the narrator's personal journey through time. His sharp historical aptitude also perceives new paradigm shifts in history and historiography. We see our narrator entering his professional life towards the conclusion of this part. As he describes his new professional life as a young assistant professor of History in St. Joseph's College (Darjeeling) and ABN Seal College (Cooch Behar) at the outset of the third part, he also throws ample light on the Cooch Behar region, from its inception to its maturity. On a parallel plain, we find that the life of the writer itself is moving towards fulfilment - he begins extensive research works, comes to the cultural hub of Kolkata in South Bengal, joins Jadavpur University. In this long journey from Chhoto Chowkir Bos to Kolkata, our narrator tackles and overcomes numerous obstacles, stops at none. It becomes the story of a man who submerges himself in various research works, explores his own mind and goes beyond the limitations posed by the self. The book often shifts its narrative from historical objective observations to more subjective personal experiences. As a result, the historical evolution of a particular sub-region 'where three countries meet' (Ahom, Cooch Behar and Bhutan) gets mirrored with all the minute detailing of its socio-cultural and economic arena and political aspirations. The arguments and observations (whether personal or objective) are associated by the long listing of documents and complementing artefacts. However, in the last chapter personal memoir is often overshadowed by the historian's narrative of his methodology and craft.

As we move towards the end, we realise the magnitude of this astonishing memoir in its totality. '*Paribarta Anusandhan*' is 'a kind of an investigation of the self in relation to one's nation, society and people. It is quite different from an autobiography; it is a narration of the universal centred around the individual.' The opera glass used by the author made a beautiful co-ordination among nature, people and their dreams in future. It carries and uplift into non-fiction the legacy which the author's major inspiration Adwaita Mallabarman had left in his studies of the 'sons of the water' with his liberty of imagination in the fictional works.

Payel Deshmukh

Research Scholar

Department of History

Jadavpur University,

West Bengal

Email: icebluepayeldeshmukh@gmail.com

Guidelines to the contributors

The Mirror, a peer reviewed annual Journal (having impact factor 5.105), department of history, Cinnamara College, Cinnamara, Jorhat-785008, Assam in collaboration with Assam State Archive, (Listed and indexed by international Institute of Organized Research) welcomes the contributors from the scholars, academician, historian and social scientists of various branches of history and allied disciplines which have interface with history. All the research papers must contain a statement about the existing knowledge on the topic concerned so that there is no repetitive research. This should include preferably the following:

- a. Any work(s) previously done on the topic ? State in a paragraph.
- b. Why is it necessary to write about the topic ?
- c. How is it going to contribute to the exiting body of knowledge?
- d. What purpose this paper is going to serve?

The Mirror follows the documentary-note styles(=bibliographical citations in footnotes or endnotes) and not the author-date system(=citing sources in the text, usually in parenthesis, by author's last name, date of publication, Publishers and page number). Endnotes should be given in running numbers, beginning with 1 and the followed consecutively throughout the article.

1. 'S.L. Baruah, A comprehensive history of Assam, New Delhi, 2005, P....
2. Research Paper should be written within 3000-4000 thousand words.
3. Research paper(s) should submit only in MS-Word, no other format is accepted.
4. An abstract is essential including keywords for each paper. It must not exceed 250 words.
5. The main text of the paper should be 12 point and reference in 10 points.
6. Only English language is preferable in this Journal.
7. Plagiarism in any form is not acceptable under any circumstances. A declaration of original work must be submitted with the final article, failing which the article will not be considered for editorial screening. Author/s must ensure the authenticity of the articles. Any unethical behaviour (plagiarism, false data etc.) may lead to the rejection of the article at any stage (peer review, editing etc.), published articles may be withdrawn if plagiarism and/or falsifying results are indicated.
8. The Journal is print Journal only. But it is available in Academia edu and in www.cinnamaracollege.org(Journal link page is <https://www.cinnamaracollege.org/Publication/-journals.php>).
9. Email of the Journal : themirrorhistoryjournal@gmail.com, dr.ansaikia@gmail.com
10. The Journal is not paid Journal.

Notes : The editorial board has the whole right to accept or reject the papers for publication as per recommendation of the reviewers.

I have been reading successive issues of your journal The Mirror for some time now. I have deep admiration for your Journal. It reflects the diligent endeavour, sincere work and honesty of purpose of your team who has been consistently bringing out a journal of history on their own in these hard times.

Professor Sajal Nag
Professor and Head, Department of History
Dean, J N Sarkar School of Social Sciences
Assam University, Assam
Charles Wallace Fellow, Centre for South Asian Studies
University of Cambridge (2008)

The publication is a welcome addition to the Social Sciences fraternity. The editorial team deserves special admiration for selecting quality articles in a logical and systematic way. The editing works has been carried out meticulously keeping global standard. No doubt, this journal will be an asset to any educational/research institution. It is really a wonderful initiative.

Prof. (Dr.) M. R. Biju
Editor, South Asian Journal of Socio-Political Studies
Dean, School of Legal Studies, Central University of Kerala

I'm glad the mirror has successfully continued its onward march and is emerging into a Journal of repute and great insight. Journals usually assume significance when they are printed regularly for a considerable time and I am sure The Mirror is gradually achieving the same.

Professor Ishrat Alam
Chairman, Centre of Advanced Study
Department of History,
Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh

'The Mirror', an annual peer-reviewed journal with an impact factor provides a great platform and opportunities for academicians and scholars to publish their research work, resulting in the growth of our disciplinary(History) which in turn enhances the welfare our Society. The mix of editorial board members from across the country ensures that the journal truly reflects the diversity of our nation. The uncompromising nature of accepted articles immensely helps the upliftment of academic research in history and related disciplines.

Dr. T. Asokan
Associate Professor
Department of History
Bharathidasan University, Tamil Nadu

I am happy to say that I have been associated with this research journal since its inception as chief Advisor. I have noticed that the journal has continued to improve academically by publishing substantial research papers, based on archival material and other verifiable historical data. It has also included a review section on the recent research publications. The last few issues, especially, volume numbers 6, 7, and 8 have come up with important research papers from the faculty members of Delhi University which are very substantial and are heavily based on primary data and offer new interpretation.

Professor S.Z.H. Jafri
Department of History
University of Delhi

Subscription Price - Individual - 300/- / Library & Departmental - 400/-

Published by Cinnamara College Publication, Cinnamara, Jorhat-8, Assam

Website- www.cinnamaracollege.org,

e-mail- dr.ansaikia@gmail.com, themirrorhistoryjournal@gmail.com

ISSN 2348-9596

