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Theme of the Cover



Pandemic history of the past world

Pandemics That Changed History

- 430 B.C.: Athens
- 165 A.D.: Antonine Plague
- 250 A.D.: Cyprian Plague
- 541 A.D.: Justinian Plague
- 11th Century: Leprosy
- 1350: The Black Death
- 1492: The Columbian Exchange
- 1665: The Great Plague of London
- 1817: First Cholera Pandemic
- 1855: The Third Plague Pandemic
- 1875: Fiji Measles Pandemic
- 1889: Russian Flu
- 1918: Spanish Flu
- 1957: Asian flu
- 1981: HIV/AIDS
- 2003: SARS
- 2019: COVID-19

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N.B. The views expressed here are those of the authors and do not reflect the views of the Editor or Publisher.

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Editorial

Research in History and its Allied Disciplines in Post-Covid-19 Pandemic Period

The Covid-19 has made a serious impact on our lives. A large section of people got infected and many have even died worldwide so far due to this dreadful disease. The governments of advanced economics are struggling to maintain a balance between lockdown, economic downturn, and rising joblessness. It can be argued as the existential event for humanity that will change the nature of globalization and the structure of international capitalism. We do not know when normalcy will prevail. But we can expect that an enlightened day will emerge very soon.

The issue of history and the role of historical research are incredibly significant and interesting and it has far-reaching implications in post-Covid-19 pandemic period. Turning to our current issue, let us focus on research. The meaning of research denotes to an enquiry or search for new knowledge and challenge of the existing ideas based on richly documented evidence and empirical sources. At the same time, research can be defined as methodological scientific paradigm. More broadly, it is to be noted that research is a window through which new winds of knowledge breeze out. It is respected in the society because it symbolizes a high level of intellectual and supposedly moral growth of the person. The social standing of researcher in Spain is so high that only researcher, Grandees and Dukes can sit and cover their heads in the presence of the King. Research represents the intellectual capital which is most important for any country's growth. So far in many cases, at present among a section of researchers, it seems, research wisdom is yet to be emerged. More apparently, people with sub-standard research degree through shortcut methods, occupying such academic positions will cause greater damage to the discipline, students, institutions, and country at large. In this context, our erudite scholars will raise this vital issue in the broader perspective based on their research observations.

Another challenging factor is seen in the growth of the information technology related service sector; the nature of the historical research has changed dramatically. In recent years, there is a high demand for IT-related courses of study such as electronics engineering, computer sciences, management courses, and a decline in the demand for courses to do with the liberal arts, humanities, social sciences, and natural and physical sciences. Even within engineering sciences, the first or second choices of

the students are not mechanical engineering, civil engineering, or electrical engineering, but they prefer computer sciences and electronics engineering. The decline in the demand for other areas is so steep that several universities have been forced to think about closing some of their faculties and departments and most new institutions-mainly private- offer only management and IT-related courses of study. It is feared that all this will result in an unbalanced development of history and its allied research. But in this context, it may be focused that those candidates who opt to pursue their civil service examinations, most of them, prefer to choose the subjects of history and allied disciplines as subject combinations for the examination. These are also vital questions in the context of history and its allied disciplines.

Despite languishing of historical Research, the Covid-19 has broadened the prospect of history and allied research than before. It is seen that the unique diversity of the country in terms of ethnicity, cultural practices, environment, erosion, livelihoods, history of conflicts, languages, social institutions, employment, disease, education, women empowerment, health etc. makes it a challenging area of the study of the historical researchers. Noteworthy that, although there has been a prolific growth of printed matters relating to these issues during the last few decades, most of these are devoid of solid academic contents. It is therefore, strongly felt that the historians who have their research expertise based on such issues should bear the responsibility of projecting and analyzing them by adopting appropriate specific techniques. It is argued that Indian society is horizontally and vertically situated in the class-caste categories. Yet our coming generations of researchers may pursue new research in the light of Marxist, Neo-Marxist, Post-Modernism, Nationalist and Subaltern paradigm of the aforesaid issues in the backdrop of historical research in post pandemic period. In fact, history and its allied research are multi-dimensional approaches from the historical past to the historical present, from the elite to the masses and salient sufferers. In addition, the death of history is the death of man not in physical terms, but in terms of identity and roots. Apart from it, it must be stressed that collaborative research will be more fruitful than single research in the present context.

Anyway, it is our eighth and humble approach to publish this volume of Journal of the department of History 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 endeavor to popularize the strong root of history and its research for today and for tomorrow and to establish the link in academic and true research reciprocity among the colleges, interested and learned section of the country and beyond. In this context, special expression of our gratefulness goes to our founder Principal Sjt. 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, Dr. Girish Baruah, one of the prolific philosophers of north-eastern India and Dr. Jogen Chandra Kalita, Professor, Gauhati University 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 learned section,
With regards,*

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

Editor

Mahabodhi Temple

A symbol of Buddhist South East Asian Religious Interface

Dr. Ranjana Mishra

Former Professor and Head

Department of History

Shri M.D. Shah Mahila College of
Arts and Commerce, Mumbai

Email : Ranjanamishra10@gmail.com

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Abstract

Mahabodhi Temple is a unique testimony to the ancient history of Buddhism in India, raised by Emperor Ashoka in the 3rd century BCE. The author tries to analyze Southeast Asia's background in cultural contacts with Indian civilization such as multi-ethnic unity in diversity. The research monologue is based on various primary and secondary sources of history. The travelogue of various Chinese travellers served as the primary source. The various books, autobiographies, articles in Journals related to South East Asia and contemporary period of India served as secondary sources. The Glass Palace, Chronicle, PA, a compilation of all historical works about Burmese rulers commissioned by king Bagyidaw(1819-1837), 1829 helped the author in substantiating the hypothesis that movement of pilgrims, artisans, merchants, masons, craftsmen etc contributed in its architecture and in preservation of Mahabodhi heritage. The author spent a few days in Bodh Gaya and interviewing other Western Buddhist pilgrims and Dr. David Geary authority on Buddhism from Ohio University America and gathered information related to the style of architecture, blending of heritages on sculptures, inscriptions and architecture. For this research work the author has made cultural approach, wherein the comparison of foreign temples of the Sri Lanka, Burma and Thai characteristics related to the art and architecture have been used to make varied and interdisciplinary comparison.

Keywords: *Southeast Asia, cultural contacts, India, Sri Lanka, Burma and Bagyidaw.*

Introduction

Mahabodhi Temple is a unique testimony to the ancient history of Buddhism in India. India's contact with the outside world is from ancient times. Historically, it has its origin in culture and trade right from about the middle of the third millennium B.C.E. Despite of geographical boundaries by sea on three sides and the Himalaya in the north, it could not stop migration and interaction with the rest of the world.¹ The original shrine is believed to have been raised by Emperor Ashoka in the 3rd century BCE and the present temple dates from the 7th Century C.E, late Gupta period. The temple was built in front of the Bodhi Tree, under which Buddha obtained enlightenment but the existing Bodhi tree is probably the 5th succession of the original tree which was earlier destroyed several times by man-made misery and natural catastrophes.² In 250 BCE Emperor Asoka visited Bodh Gaya to establish a monastery and shrine on the diamond throne (Vajrasana) to mark the exact spot of Lord Buddha's enlightenment. The huge pyramidal edifice was built during Kusana period in about 2nd century C.E. The archaeologists opine that by 7th century C.E. the original structure got completed during Gupta period. It underwent numerous overhauls in succeeding age in which the Burmese significantly contributed. The Gold gilded Buddha statue seated in Bhumisparsha Mudra (Earth touching posture) in the sanctum shrine is made of Black stone built by Pala kings of Bengal between 8 and 12th century C.E. Temple is surrounded on all four sides by stone railings, about 2 meters high made of sandstone and coarse granite during 2nd to 1st century BCE, and the 7th century C.E. respectively. Its pillars, cross-bars, and copings etc. are decorated with Jataka scenes, Buddha's life events, Demi-deities figures, zodiac signs, historical and folk scenes, lotus design as well as yakshis, amorous couples, winged horses and centaurs. Some inscriptions of Brahmi recorded the names of donors. Trans-regional excursion and benefaction has had predominant importance in Asian religious interfaces from ancient times till the present. Intermingling with different people, culture, and tradition resulted in new ideas, impressions, customs and traditions. The most remarkable feature of this migration was no political conquest or threat to life of an individual or society but of voluntary acceptance of cultural and spiritual values. The outstanding feature of this exodus was taking the positive factors from foreign cultures and preserving national identity by localizing those familiar factors.

In the folklores and Jatakas, Bodhgaya has been mentioned as Mahabodhi, the place of great importance and in some scriptures as the navel of the earth. This is the only place that abode the power of the Buddha's

enlightenment. The style of the edifice was built primarily to form a monument, not a shrine of Buddha. Fa-hien, had mentioned in his travelogue about some statues of the Buddha in the open pavilion of Mahabodhi temple and also about some monasteries, flooded with monks. Hiuen-tsang, who visited India around 635 C.E., had mentioned in his travelogue that Mahabodhi stupa was surrounded by various smaller stupas, containing statues of the Buddha, and flanked by a large monastery on the north side.³ According to some historians some of the monasteries were constructed by the King of Ceylon (Sri Lanka). The uniqueness of the monastery was having six courtyards with thirty to forty feet high wall surrounding it along with three stories high buildings. A noted scholar G. Coedes in his book, *Ancient History of Hinduised States in the Extreme Orient*, aver that there was spread of an organized culture, which was based upon the Hindu concepts of royalty, characteristics defined by the Hindu and Buddhist worship, faith in Dharma and using Sanskrit and Pali as a means of communication.⁴

The kings of Java and Srivijaya made religious endowments to monasteries at Nalanda and Nagapattinam; Burmese rulers especially had close associations with Bodhgaya.⁵ The long-term Burmese connections with Bodhgaya are exhibited through buddhapada ('Buddha footprints') The monasteries, chaityas and stupas at Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand with Indian heritage unveil the long relationship between South East Asian countries and India and their inclination towards Buddhism.

Myanmar being situated on the route to China, people from Amaravati and Tamralipti, often found it easier to settle down in Myanmar. The recent excavations of the Pyu settlements in present day Myanmar and Mekong Delta corroborate the fact of earliest South-East Asian contacts with India. Indian influence is evident on Pyu architecture, coinage, and sculptures. Till recent times court astrologers, soothsayers and teachers were known as *ponnas*, who were descendents of Manipuri Pundits and were revered in Myanmar for knowledge of science, medicine, and astrology.

The Glass Palace Chronicle and the Epyin (historical ballads) assert that the kings of the Myanmar were descendants of the solar dynasty of the Sakiyas (i.e., Sakyas).⁶ According to the chronicles Alaungsithu (1112-1168) visited Mahabodhi. The veracity of it has not been confirmed but the mention of missionaries visited India from Myanmar by Mon Sangha is confirmed by Asokan edicts.⁷ The king Dhammaceti's 15th century inscriptions of Bago had described his desire to imitate the pious kings of ancient times such as Asoka.⁸ The inscriptions of the last ruling king of Konbaung dynasty, had averred that his dynasty had

contributed a lot in making important Buddhist centers like Varanasi, Sravasti, Vaisali.⁹ The style of Buddha statues at different South East Asian Countries speak volume about the close cultural religious connection as for example swastika in Buddha's chest in China, fire flame like Indian halo in Sri Lanka and Thailand, broad face with thick lips of Indian and Cambodian Buddha. On the basis of these sources one can enunciate that apart from political kings, the ascetic pilgrims and traders' network played a significant role.

Methodology and Approach

The research monologue is based on various primary and literary sources of history. The travelogue of various Chinese travelers served as the primary source. The various books, autobiographies, articles in Journals related to South East Asia and contemporary period of India served as secondary sources. The Glass Palace, Chronicle, PA, a compilation of all historical works about Burmese rulers commissioned by king Bagyidaw (1819-1837), 1829 helped the author in substantiating the hypothesis that movement of pilgrims, artisans, merchants, masons, craftsmen etc. helped in preservation of Mahabodhi heritage. The author spent a few days in Bodh Gaya interviewing other Western Buddhist pilgrims and gathered information related to the style of architecture, blending of heritages on sculptures, inscriptions and architecture. The interaction with the Buddhist monks of Myanmar and Dr. David Geary authority on Buddhism from Ohio University America provided graphic details on cultural connection between the South East Asian countries and Bodh Gaya and contribution of the migrant labors in the repairing of the Mahabodhi temple.¹⁰

For this research work the author has made cultural approach, wherein the foreign temples of the Sri Lanka, Burma and Thai, distinctive cultural characteristics related to the art and architecture inside and outside the temples have been used. The special focus is on Bodhipada. For primary data is based on authors' visit to field trip to Bodhgaya in January 2016. This data comprised of photographs, interview and observed details and personal reflections on altars, Bodhipada, railings and various architectural construction.

To get more information about the temples the author searched the internet for webpages, tourist sites, official and non-official information about the temples at Bodhgaya. The other source was Trip advisor and You Tube, where tourists share their experiences and pictures of Bodhgaya which along with books, articles and journals of different libraries of Mumbai and SNDT Universities complemented primary source of study which are authors own photographs. The author chose Buddhist Viharas at Anuradhpur, Pulunarrowa, Dombilla, Kandy to make varied and interdisciplinary comparison.

Features and Archaeological relevance of Mahabodhi temple

The archaeologists aver that historically and archaeologically, the 50m high Mahabodhi Temple of the 5th-6th centuries is one of the earliest brick temple constructions, covered with stucco in the Indian sub-continent. The sculpted stone balustrades are an outstanding specimen of sculptural reliefs in stone. There are four towers at the four corners of the main tower with statue of Buddha. The entrance of the temple has 11 meter height and from east to north there are cellars with decorations ornate with honeysuckle and geese designs.

It is surrounded by a quadrangular stone railing that dates to the 2nd century BCE. The railing was extended in later periods and the posts are either made of sandstone or coarse granite and are decorated with carved medallions with naturalistic and mythical animals, lotus designs and scenes from the life of Buddha, which can be seen in the albums of Markham Kittoe (1808-1853).¹¹

The Main Temple has entrances of eleven meter height from east to north and has cellar with decorations ornate with honeysuckle and geese design. Directly above this is a succession of vocations containing imageries of the Buddha. Further upstairs there are moldings and chaitya niches and then the curved shikhara or tower of the temple surmounted by kalasha (pitcher). At the four corners of the parapet of the temple are four statues of the Buddha in small shrine chambers. A doorway leads into a small hall, beyond which lies the sanctum, which contains a gilded statue of the seated Buddha of over 5ft high. From the east side there is a flight of steps which leads to a long central path to the main temple and the surrounding area. Along this path there are significant places like Bodhi Tree, Animeshlocha Stupa, Ratnachakrama (the Jeweled Ambulatory), Ratnagar Chaitya, Ajapala Nigodh tree now marked by pillar, Lotus Pond, Rajyatna tree associated with those events that followed Buddha's enlightenment. The whole area is strewn over with votive stupas and shrines.

There is a platform attached to the Bodhi Tree known as Vajrasana (the Diamond Throne), installed by Emperor Asoka to mark the spot of Buddha meditation. Despite of the neglect and repairs in various periods, it has retained its essential features.

Evidences of construction of replica of Mahabodhi temple by Burmese kings

The rulers of South East Asian countries were totally enamored by the new religion. In order to establish themselves more fervent Buddhists, they had started sending their emissaries to visit all the places associated with Buddha and to get Buddhist scriptures translated in their languages. In later years when Indian

monks were victimized by foreign onslaughts the Buddhists monuments were endangered, these neo converted countries not only gave refuge to the fleeing monks but took onus of reconstructing and beautifying the temple. During the 11th century, Burmese rulers undertook restoration of the temple complex and surrounding railing wall. They sent their workers along with their traders, who not only came here for trading but for religious gratuity. The Ethnic minority group of these countries brought with them the culture, arts, literature, religion and all the skills of their heritage and took back Indian traditions, culture along with them. The king Anawratha or Anawmyathazi is credited with the founding of Pagan or Bagan kingdom.¹² The evidence of the inscriptions show that the Buddhism of Pagan was mixed up with Hindu Brahminic cults specially Vaishnavism. The oral tradition suggests that Sri Lanka had contact with Buddhism via seafaring as early as the 3rd century B.C.E. The earliest concrete evidence of Indian culture in Myanmar is a Buddhist inscription from Pyè (Prome) dated c. 500 C.E.¹³ A smaller canopy with its large rectangular block was crowned by the characteristic of pyramidal storied tower, was built by Anawratha's craftsmen. It is the consequence of a splendid profusion of architecture and decorative works of both the countries.

The 13th-century Gawdaw palin temple at Pagan, for example, consists of a rectangular hall with a large closed entrance porch with carved wooden screens, panels, and brackets used inside temple halls have Indian features. The decorative gold wares and silverwares, which use much typecast decorative scrollwork, are also based on standard Indian iconography. After 1287, when Myanmar was attacked by the Mongols, they came in direct contact with Sri Lanka.

In Paya complex in Myanmar there are various buildings which are replicas of Indian Mahabodhi temple and there are depictions of Mahabodhi on seals, and plaques. A.B. Griswold opined that there were various religious reasons for its similarities and departures from the original construction.¹⁴ According to him all these replicas should not be considered just the copies of Mahabodhi but should, be understood as re-creations.¹⁵ There are two known replicas of the Mahabodhi temple in Myanmar i.e. Mahabodhi Paya and Shwegugyi Paya. There are various chronicles which give evidences that king had sent artisans to Bodhgaya to make accurate plans and models of Mahabodhi.¹⁶ These types of replica are not only in Myanmar but similar types of temples are also in China i.e. Wu-ta-ssu and Pi-yun-ssu, in Patan, Nepal and Wat Chet Yot in Thailand.

Historian Tilman Frasch opines that apart from the re-creations of the Bodhgaya temple, the square, the pyramidal tower of the Mahabodhi type can be seen in various Pagan temples such as Wetkyi in Kubyaukkyi.¹⁷ Frasch advocates that the Mahabodhi temple at Pagan was perhaps built because of Turkish invasion.¹⁸ This suggestion is persuasive. But according to Upender Singh Myanmar had a long-standing tradition of building, revamping and renovation of temples as for example, Kuthodaw Paya in Mandalay and the Mahalokamaraze in stupa are modeled on the Shwezigon Paya. There is a model of Shwedagon Paya within the Shwedagon complex in Yangon. In Bago, the Mahazedi Paya contains 'replica' of the Ananda Paya of Pagan.¹⁹

The bhumisparshamudra of Buddha's sculpture of the Pagan period can also find similarity of Bodhgaya's Buddha's sculpture. One can trace immense resemblances between images found in eastern India and Myanmar. Susan Huntington a leading historian acclaimed that there is fusion of Burmese and Indian style and has coined it as Burmo-Bengali style of carving.²⁰ Huntington aversthat during Pala regime the depiction of Maravijaya, with the Buddha sitting in bhumisparshamudra is, in fact, the most popular theme of Pala art.

Movement of Burmese and Singhalese workers and artists between 11th to 13th centuries

There is dearth of inscriptions during the 7th and 8th centuries that speak about the temple and the migrants from different South East Asian countries. Among the very few records the most important is the Plate XXVIII, also known as Brahminical inscription, which is found on the back of a statue. There are a few letters, masons' marks, on some of the pieces of the blue basalt throne inside give no evidence of their date. The thermoluminescent test aver it to be later than the latest Gupta inscriptions.²¹ The bigger Burmese inscription is carved on a black stone, which is fixed on walls of the Mahant's residence. A copy of this inscription has been found in Vol. III. of the Archaeological Survey, Plate XXXII.²²

Alexander Cunningham was allowed by the priest to remove the stone from the wall for the purpose of clearing the letters from the accumulated grease and dirt of many years. A few translations of this important inscription have been published by Ratna Palaa Pali scholar from Ceylon,²³ and by Colonel Burney.²⁴ A Tibetan monk who visited around 1235 in India had mentioned that he had witnessed 300 Singhalese monks in residence.

It is difficult to state exactly all the different portions of the work done by the Burmese but the following appear to me to be quite certain that Burmese have done the complete repair and restoration of all the walls, including stucco facing and the widespread renewal of the pinnacle of the Temple. This is proved

by the discovery of a short Burmese inscription on one of the bricks of the conventional amalaha fruit or crenellated wheel of the pinnacle. Other bricks were also inscribed with short records in Bengali letters of two lines. These names are Gopapdle and Dharmasinhe, which are believed to be simply masons' names. From 11th and 13th century the Burmese sent masons and worker to restore the temple, despite their own country being invaded by the Chinese. In the 11th century, two Burmese missions came.²⁵ In 1035, the Burmese plaque was put on the temple. During this time, local kings also patronized zealous monks who wished to do repairs.²⁶ The most aesthetically satisfying works of the Burmese sculptors were the reliefs ornamenting the sutra chests, to store the sacred texts of Buddhism.

The first epigraph referring to a Burmese 'repair-mission' to Mahabodhi is a long Mon inscription of Kyanzittha (reigned c.1085-1111) at the Shwesandaw pagoda in Pay.²⁷ Three inscriptions speak about Burmese kings sending various workers and artists for repair of the temples, digging tanks, embankments for irrigation, candle making, sending musical instruments and various singers and dancers.

In one of the inscriptionson a grey basalt slab of 20 inches by 18 inches atBodhgaya 13th century had language and script of Burmese.²⁸ Gordon H. Luce read it that a repairing mission was dispatched by the King of Dharma or the Lord of the White Elephant'.²⁹ Griswold suggested that this could be a reference to king Tarukplyi, or more probably, his son Kalwcwa, or a crown prince named Kalcwa.³⁰ The inscription articulates that one of the chaityas (temples) got built by Siri Dhammasoka,king of Jambudweep.³¹ The king of Myanmar had to send Acarya Dharmarajaguruand Siri Kassapa again to repair it.³² But this time the donation was inadequate, which was supported by a local ruler named Putasin Man i.e., Buddhasena. The work was resumed and lasted from 1296 to 1298³³

J.D.M. Beghar unearthed an inscribed copper gilt umbrella which was 'buried 8 ft. underground'.³⁴ It has been described both by Baruaand Cunningham.³⁵ The umbrella has two short inscriptions, one in Mon or Talaing and the other in the Nagari characters with Bengali elements.³⁶The one line Burmese inscription was damaged. Alexander Cunningham had stated that though date was there but he could only read the name of one Dhama Radza Guru. If that reading was correct then the donation of bell did not correspond to the dates of either of the two Burmese repair missions, and in fact it predated them. Deepak Kumar Barua, a noted historian, on the other hand thought that the date on the umbrella was 1567 C.E.³⁷ whatever maybe the correct reading and interpretation of the date, the inference was that dignitaries from Myanmar visited Mahabodhi in between the documented repair missions.

Cunnigham referred to a short Burmese inscription on one of the bricks of the of the Sikhara of the temple, which bore testimony to the Burmese repair.³⁸ There is a long 19th century Burmese Inscription No. 1177 in Burmese and Pali, at Bodhgayanear the Bodhi tree which recorded the repairing of the shrine in 1821 by king Bagyiwad.³⁹ Another Inscription No. 1178 of 1821 C.E. also found at Bodhgaya recorded the donation of gold and silver. Charles Duroiselle practical grammar of the Pali Language has given the list of the inscriptions No.1228 and 1229 and there is mention of the donation list of precious gems like diamonds, emeralds, rubies, and pearls, umbrellas, banners, and certain other items to the Bodhitree by Burmese king in 1874.⁴⁰ For some time after 1878, the Burmese negotiated with the mahant and the Bengal government about certain 'repairs'.⁴¹ Near the pillar, there is a brass bell donated in early 19th century by the pilgrims from Myanmar. There is a beautifully curved gateway which was probably built around the eighth century Common Era. At its base on each side, there are two figures of ladies/deities which were claimed to be built by the Myanmar Missions around mid-1800s.

All these evidences leave no doubt that over a long period of time (between the 11th and 19th centuries) at several junctures, Burmese kings belonging to various dynasties connected themselves with Mahabodhi in order to enhance their prestige as the temple had great religious significance.⁴² The ruling kings not only sent the royal missions but also non-royal Burmese in large numbers. These people got various portable art efacts like temple models, sealing and stone plaques from India to their countries. The various interventions by Burmese for repair make it difficult to ascertain what exactly the temple looked like at different points of time.⁴³

Foot print worship in South East Asian Countries and Bodhgaya

The veneration of the Buddha's footprints which is called set taw in modern Burmese has been an important and enduring element in Burmese Buddhism. In 1930s, U Mya observed that Burmese children were taught to recite a prayer before going to bed in the honor of the Buddha's footprints.⁴⁴ Although the antiquity of footprint worship in Indian context can be traced back a long way. The footprints of the Buddha abound throughout Asia, dating from various periods. The footprint as a sculptural object has a long history. These footprints are meant to remind that Buddha was present on earth and left a spiritual 'path' to be followed.⁴⁵ A depression upon of Sri padaya in Sri Lanka is among the largest and most famous footprints. The footprint of the Buddha havinga concave image of his foot (or feet), supposed to have been left by him on earth to

purposefully mark his passage over a particular spot convex image which represent the actual soles of his feet, with all their characteristics.⁴⁶

But the footprint at the base of the hill at Shwesettaw, which is devoid of any sculptural embellishment, has a dateable evidence of footprint worship in Myanmar. According to U. Mya the footprint worship must have begun by 8th century but became popular by 11th century when it came from Pagan.⁴⁷ The paintings of Buddha footprints on the roofs of certain Pagan temples, for instance at footprints on Jinalankara-tika and Anagatavamsa-attakatha corroborate the facts. The footprint worship became increasingly popular during the succeeding centuries in various parts of Myanmar and is visible at many Payas today. Buddha footprints continued to be venerated even after the advent of anthropomorphic images.

There are differences of opinion about whether the Vaisnavas got the idea of footprint worship from the Buddhists or vice versa, however we cannot ignore the fact that the footprints of Vishnu are the central object of worship in the Vishnupada temple at Gaya. According to Rajendralala Mitra, the footprint that is the central object of worship in that temple may have originally been a Buddhist emblem, although he admits that there is no proof of this.⁴⁸ Debjani Paul has questioned Mitra's hypothesis and has argued that the Vishnu's footprints usually occurs as a pair, whereas the Buddha's footprints occur as a single print or as a pair.⁴⁹ Debjani Paul and B.M. Barua regarding Antiquity of the Vishnupada at Bodhgaya pointed out that the footprint at Gaya was represented by stepping posture of the god (his three strides), and not a sitting or standing posture. He also stated that the Vishnu footprint in the Vishnupada temple and elsewhere is marked by a symbol of the conch (Sankha), wheel (cakra), mace (gaddi) and lotus (Padma).⁵⁰ Mitra in his book Buddha Gaya has mentioned five Buddhapadas carved on the surface of black hemispherical stones area in front of the temple, which had been subsequently rebuilt.⁵¹ Mitra writes that four stones were recently excavated by the Burmese and been brought to Calcutta. According to him all footprints were of one foot and have carvings of conches on the toes which are unlike Vishnu's feet.⁵² The fact that there are several similar Bodhgaya Buddhapadas suggested that the conversion of the small stupas into Buddha Padas represents a process. This could have been a process initiated either by Burmese Pilgrims or one of the early repair missions, perhaps the 11th century. This is suggested by the fact that almost all the categories of motifs on these Bodhgaya Buddhapadas occur among the symbols found on Burmese Buddhapadas and Burmese affinities can also be seen in the style of representation of shrines, mountain clusters, and human figures.⁵³

These include the elephant, umbrella, crown and various kinds of structures, flowers, rivers, mountains, animals, and birds that occur on Burmese Buddha footprints. There six sets of whorls, arranged around the symbols i.e. four above (two large and two small) and two below (both large) represent the Burmese features.⁵⁴ This is an issue that needs careful examination. There is no doubt whatsoever that these Buddhapada was made in Myanmar and was brought to Mahabodhi from there by royal Burmese missions as the stone on which they have been sculpted are from Myanmar.⁵⁵ In an around Gaya one cannot find this type of stones which make historians believe that though the worshipping of feet may have been in ancient India but this type of glorified feet worshipping must have been their ideas.

Conclusion

The people from South East Asian countries were coming to Bodh Gaya very frequently not only because of geographical proximity but because of its spiritual association with Buddha. The epigraphic evidence substantiates the fact of interactions of Burmese kings with Mahabodhi began from Kyanzittha's reign.⁵⁶ It is possible that the beginning of these interactions could be traced before his time. Anawrathais described in the chronicles as an aggressive conqueror, who acquired Buddha relics from lower Myanmar and brought 30 sets of Pitakas from Thaton on 32 white elephants and patronized Buddhism. He laid the foundation of the state Sangha alliance and the ideology that became the hall-mark of the Pagan polity. Historians opine that Mahabodhi temple would not have been untouched by such zealous king of Buddhism. It establishes the fact that the connection must have been much before the mission for repairing had landed in India. The availability of Buddhapadas at Bodhgaya corroborates that early Burmese repair missions or pilgrimage activities must have been responsible for the promotion of Buddhapada worship. A practice that was very popular in Myanmar.

It had become symbol of sacredness for all Buddhists across the world. After the end of Pala rule, the decline of Buddhism set in India but the Burmese came back again in 1874, with lots of gifts for the Govt. of India, to encourage them to offer assistance to Buddhist pilgrims, and to pay for the restoration of the temple. They saved the World Heritage in creating new meanings and forging new global public spheres across cultural, national and religious difference. Since 1953, Bodh Gaya has been developed as an international place of pilgrimage. Buddhists from Sri Lanka, Thailand, Myanmar, Tibet, Bhutan and Japan have established monasteries and temples close to Mahabodhi compound. The site of the enlightenment attracts a large number of Buddhists and tourists from all over the World. One could notice the blending of South East Asian elements in Bodhgaya.



Mahabodhi temple



Author is seen at Mahabodhi temple



Photographer: Garrick, Henry Baily Wade
http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/apac/photocoll/a/019pho000001003u00058000.html



Diamond throne, built by Asoka c.250 BCE.

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Darjeeling District in the Study of Regional History

Dr. Anil Kumar Sarkar

Professor of History

University of Kalyani, West Bengal

Email : anilcob.2012@gmail.com

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Abstract

Dorjeling, later anglicised as Darjeeling, was 'discovered' by Captain Lloyd and J.W. Grant in 1829 as a respite for the British from the tropical climate. This small town, under the shadows of Kunchendzonga range, also called the 'old Gorkha Station', then deserted by the original tribal inhabitants known as Lepchas and Limbus after the suppression of a rebellion, had less than 100 inhabitants. Darjeeling and its surrounding region share a complex history with Bhutan, Nepal and Sikkim passing from one kingdom to another finally being annexed by the British empire in 1866. The present article attempted to review critically the historiography of Darjeeling and to some extent, traced the question of regional history writings of the colonial and post-colonial period largely influence the writings on the hills. The latter constitutes a remarkable diversity not only in terms of approach but also in terms of technique. Therefore, there are ample scopes to dig out the new research arena.

Keywords: *Anglicised, Tropical Climate, Historiography, Diversity, Research Arena.*

The local or regional history is four hundred years old but its real positive swing could be visible from the Second World War. This surge is, ascribed to the rapid spread of education and as W.G. Hoskins said 'as the modern world becomes bigger and more incomprehensible people are more inclined to study something of which they can grasp the scale and in which they can find a personal and individual meaning'.¹ The radio and television programmes helped to boost up the popularity of local and regional history. The Camden History Society; the Finland Historical Society; the Offa's Dyke Association; the High Wycombe History Society; the Warrington and District Archaeological and Historical Society; the Durham County are examples of local history's popularity and came into being to cater to the local needs. The concept of 'Leicester School' first coined

by A. Briggs did emerge to popularize the study of Local History in England. The study of communities particularly the smaller communities, and obviously on social entities helped to develop such trends. It declared its maiden goal 'to re-enact in his mind, and to portray for his readers, the origin, growth, decline and fall of a local community'.²

The establishment of colonial rule in the Indian sub-continent demanded the creation of imperial ideology and as a corollary to this dogma, the birth of imperial historiography was quite a natural phenomenon. The establishment of the Asiatic Society in 1784, the inauguration of oriental studies gave an immense boost for the study of oriental works of literature and the production of history books, not for academic pursuit but to cater to the needs of schools children at the outset became the primary objective. Charles Stuart's *History of Bengal*, John Clark Marshman's *Outline of the History of Bengal Compiled for the Youths in India* can be cited as an example in this respect. Francis Buchanan Hamilton's *Statistical Description of Hindoosthan 3 Vols*, Walter Hamilton's *The East Indian Gazetteers of Hindustan 2 Vols*. Montgomery Martin's *The History, Antiquities, Topography and Statistics of Eastern India 3 Vols* (Based on the reports of Francis Buchanan) London 1838 were published with the explicit Imperial administrative needs. In the later phase, W.W. Hunter's *Annals of Rural Bengal* received much appreciation. His gruelling tour of districts in Bengal produced a monumental *Statistical Account of Bengal* in 20 volumes. This spirit of the administrative exercise was replicated in William Hunter's *Imperial Gazetteer, Bengal provincial Series 2 Vols*. Oxford. These can be treated as primary sources for the construction of local histories. Kev. G.R. Gleig's *Memoirs of Warren Hastings*, Rev. James Long's article on the Banks of the Bhagirathi published in *Calcutta Review* can be cited as fine observations of villages, towns in Bengal.

On the northern frontier of India, the development of Himalayan Studies also had imperial designs. Although Tibet remained stubbornly inaccessible to British observers, the Himalayas from the Sutlej to the Brahmaputra had come under increasingly rigorous scientific scrutiny since the 1820s, its geology, meteorology, botany and (due principally to Hodgson) its zoology and ethnography subject to ever-close observation and more exciting analysis.³ From the 1830s to 1850s, the whole Himalaya region became a vibrant ground and frontier of colonial knowledge. Joseph Dalton Hooker's *Himalayan Journals or notes of a naturalist in Bengal, the Sikkim and Nepal Himalayas, the Khasia mountains* published in 1854, Brian Houghton Hodgson's *On the Physical Geography of the Himalayas* can be seen in this perspective. While Hodgson was a strong belief about the necessity of establishing a white colony in the Himalayan regions,

Hooker followed this ideal with some sort of enthusiasms'. In an article written in 1856, Hodgson expressed that 'I feel more and more convinced that the encouragement of colonization therein is one of the highest and most important duties of Government'.⁴

Bengal in particular had a rich legacy of local history observations. *Riyaz-us-Salatin*, *Ramcharita*, *Ballal Charita*, *Mangalkavya* provided quite a formidable backdrop. At the end of the nineteenth century, Bankimchandra's expression of frustration about lack of interest in the study of history was followed by initiatives taken by Rajanikanta Gupta, Satish Chandra Mitra, Akshay Kanta Gupta, Akshay Kumar Moitra, Durgachandra Sanyal, Dinesh Chandra Sen, Rakhal Das Bandyopadhyay. In the introductory portion of Akshay, Kumar Moitra edited the short-lived journal *Oitihāsik Chitra*. Rabindranath Tagore gave much importance to the study of village rumours, folklore. This was a statement that was vindicated by Claude Lévi-Strauss nearly after a century. Akshay Kumar Moitra, author of *Gour Lekha Mala* to retrieve the past glory of Ancient Bengal made meticulous research and translation of inscriptions. In this respect, he did not subscribe to the interpretations previously offered by Willkins, Colebrook, Shultz, Rajendralal Mitra and Haraprasad Sashtri. He was also instrumental in publishing a trilateral journal named *Oitihāsik Chitra*. In 1910 to solidify regional historiography, he established *Barendra Anusandhan Samiti*. Further, he planned to publish *Gour Bibaran* in different volumes. In an introductory note to Ramaprasad Chanda's '*Gour Rajmala*,' he emphasized giving more importance to '*Desher Abastha*' (the condition of the country) than emphasizing the nature of *Jati* (caste) of Pala, Sen kings. In the colonial period, nationalist local historians gave much importance to historical truth. Rajanikanta Gupta devised certain guidelines for the budding historians- a) to educate the people and in this perspective, there should be always vindication of truth and attractive historical writings, b) there should be discipline in the method of historical writing, c) the nature of history writing should not be polluted by the use of local dialects or rural products, d) a historian should always give judgments and e) a historian while writing local history should not be tempted to glorify his localities.⁵

Historiography generally refers to studies, sources, critical methods and interpretations used by scholars to explore the past of human beings of a particular region. It is neither solely political, nor social, nor moral nor literary history, but in a way a combination of all these into one. In recent times there has been a drastic change not merely in approach, treatment and technique but also the digital volume of historical literature. Therefore, 'Historiography is nothing but the history of history'.⁶ Attempts have been made to explore the past with a

more vast perspective of inter-disciplinary approaches. Therefore, historiography not only appeared in estimating the contribution of a historian but also in recent times, tended to reflect the development of 'historical consciousness' and aims at developing a 'historical consciousness'; rather it is a process of identifying the facts making an intelligible 'sense of continuity' to understand an existing identity or to develop one for the future of the society.⁷ The present article made an attempt to review critically the historiography of Darjeeling and to some extent, traced the question of regional history writings of existing works of literature and focus on the region as well as its inhabitants. The historians of the colonial and post-modern periods largely influence the writings on the hills. The latter constitutes a remarkable diversity not only in terms of approach but also in terms of technique. Creation and writing history of Darjeeling - both are credited to be initiated by the British. The modern district of Darjeeling was originated by the annexation of a 138 sq. mile area from the Sikkimputte in 1835. It was followed by several boundary reorganizations before it got its present form. The Morang and Kalimpong areas were annexed in 1849 and 1865 respectively. And finally, Darjeeling deserved its present form in 1866.⁸

In 1876, W.W Hunter's first writing in the form of a book on Darjeeling namely Statistical Account of Bengal Vol, X.⁹ It is one of the parts of a series of 'Statistical Account of Bengal'. Before this, a few articles were published from some reputed journals such as the 'Calcutta Review', 'Bengal Past and Present' etc. Though J. D Hooker's Himalayan Journals volume II came into existence before Hunter it is not of this kind. Hunter's account is the first of this kind to deal with the history of Darjeeling in detail from 1835 to 1876.

Fred Pinn had written and edited books on the early history of Darjeeling; including 'The Road of Destiny; Darjeeling Letters 1839' during 1852. It is a collection of letters that recounts the slow and laborious construction of the magnificent Himalayan resort, Darjeeling. Gleaned from the confidential consultations of the Supreme Council of the British in Calcutta and the public correspondences sent to newspapers of the period, these letters provide a valuable portrait of the social, economic, and ethnographic factors influencing 19th-century Indian urban development. On the planters' history, only one authentic work is credited to Fred Pinn.¹⁰ 'Darjeeling Pioneers The Wernicke-Stölke Story'; in this book, he describes the fascinating story of three generations of two of the great Tea Planting families of Darjeeling: the Wernickes and the Stölkes; from the 1840s through to the end of the British Empire in India.¹¹

The important works (Bengal District Gazetteers Darjeeling) had done by O' Malley and Arthur Jules Dash on Darjeeling District. Both authors dealt

with the history of people, health, flora and fauna, improvement of industries, agriculture, the establishment of administration, expansion of trade and commerce, development of education, transport and communication, etc. But they do not give any extra emphasis on the history of socio-economic activities. A third gazetteer was published in 1980 by the West Bengal Government. It does not exceptional but follows the former's tradition.

There was some tourist guide book wrote by the writers which are also important information about Darjeeling for her beauty and commercial perspectives. These are- R.D. O'Brien wrote Darjeeling, the Sanatorium of Bengal and its Surroundings in 1883, Mitchell Edmund wrote Thacker's Guide Book to Darjeeling and its Neighborhood in 1899, W. Newman wrote Newman's Guide to Darjeeling and its Surroundings in 1913, Percy Brown wrote Tours in Sikkim and Darjeeling District in 1922, L.A. Waddell wrote Among the Himalayas in 1900. A Concise History of the Darjeeling District Since 1835 by E.C. Dozey is something of a history, something of a guide and pleasantly encyclopedic. The author tells all about old Darjeeling describes the various hill people and gives an account of trips out of Darjeeling. It also contains small chapters on industries, flora and fauna, shikar and reminiscences of the author. It also gives the list of tours and description of Kurseong, Kalimpong and Siliguri. It provides a small chapter on the trade and commerce of Darjeeling town and its neighboring areas.

E.C. Dozey wrote the book entitled, A Concise History of the Darjeeling District Since 1835. He discussed in his book on the businesses that developed in Darjeeling hills in the colonial-capitalist hegemony. In general, the book focused in the sense of commercial trade or financial activities that occupy time, attention and labour of human beings and the investment of capital for the sake of profit to the improvement of society, the economy of any country. Those who engage in these constructive works are generally known as businessmen. A business or enterprise or sometimes firm is an organization engaged in the trade of goods, services, or both to consumers. No economy- capitalist or socialist can thrive without business. In capitalist economies, businesses are in most cases privately owned and administered to earn profit to increase the wealth of their owners whereas in the other it is predominantly state-owned.¹² Besides these firsthand accounts written in English one or two books had been found in Bengali. Darjeelinger Itihas had been written by Harry Mohan Sannyal in Bengali in 1880. The author of this book also gave some general history of this district.¹³

There are ample unpublished archival sources that partially provided important information regarding the history of Darjeeling such as 'Selections

from the Records on the Bengal Government', 'Consultations, Fort William' 'General Report on Public Instruction in the Lower Provinces of the Bengal', the 'Annual General Administration Report of Darjeeling', 'Municipal records', 'Proceedings of the Bengal Government, Report on the Trade Frontier Stations in Bengal' 'House of Commons papers: Great Britain, Parliament House of Commons', 'The Law times reports: containing all the cases argued and Determined', 'the correspondence of the industrial department', 'Colonial and Foreign Department; Transactions and proceedings of the Botanical Society of Edinburgh', and 'Report of the Statutory Commission'. The journals are also regarded as important documents such as the 'Calcutta Review', the 'Bengal Past and Present', the 'Journal of the Society of Arts', the 'Tea and Coffee Journal, etc.

The colonial historians tried to identify the ethnic origin of the Nepalese and to some extent masculinity of the race in a strange way to highlight their racial superiority and cultural differences. Hunter described them as a 'pushing and thriving race', and O' Malley identified them with the Mongolian race. The Gorkha as a 'martial race' was first identified by the colonial historiographers and the epithet largely used after the Great Rebellion of 1857. The British Administrator and intellectuals tried their level best to understand the racial, cultural, and own regional variations to rule them by their national traits and create a rationale feeling among the indigenous to continue their economic exploitation in the disguise of improvement of the district.

Jahar Sen has written the book entitled 'A Favoured Retreat.' His research is an authentic but partial research work of the author in this sense that it only dealt with the history of commercial interaction of the district with its neighbouring Trans- Himalayan states like Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim, and Tibet, etc. By the turn of the 19th century Darjeeling had attained maturity as an urban centre by any definition; be it population, or political/administrative role, or availability of civic amenities or economic/institutional role.¹⁴

Some scholars have attracted to research the urban development of Darjeeling. Kashinath Ojha has done his Ph.D. thesis (unpublished thesis, North Bengal University) on 'Nineteenth Century Darjeeling: A study in Urbanization 1835-1890.' He traced the process of urbanization in Darjeeling up to 1890s.¹⁵ Karubaki Datta's edited book is Urbanisation in the Eastern Himalayas: Emergence and issues'. This book has not only explored the process of urbanization based on historical perspective but also they analyzed the inner texture of urbanization and its impact on socio-economic sustainability based on inter-disciplinary approaches.¹⁶ K.C Bhanja wrote the book entitled Darjeeling at

a Glance' merely encyclopedic work dealt with the general history of the region. Both Descriptive and Historical of Darjeeling and Sikkim with Thrilling Accounts of Everest and Kanchenjunga Expeditions by Land and Air.¹⁷

Tanka Bahadur Subba's book is Ethnicity, state, development: a case study of the Gorkhaland. He has given an account of the history of Gorkha ethnicity, cultural distinctiveness, and evolution of the Gorkha self-identity.¹⁸ Mahendra P. Lama wrote the book, Gorkhaland movement: the quest for identity. He has explained the causes of the upheavals and portrays the political, economic and social consequences.¹⁹

A.C. Sinha and T.B. Subba wrote the book are Indian Nepalis: Issues and Perspectives. This compendium of twenty-five papers, presented at a national seminar, organized by the Indian Nepalis Study and Research Forum, addresses the problems of the nationality of Indian Nepalis. Examining the conceptual and theoretical issues related to the identity of Indian Nepalis, the contributors deliberate on their search for Indian national identity without losing the regional and local perspectives that are equally important because Indian Nepalis live under different circumstances in different parts of India. They also deal with the identity crisis of Indian Nepali youths, trafficking of Nepali women in India, the herbal medicinal culture of Nepalis, and linkage between India and Nepal with special focus on history, literature and people.²⁰ 'Regional movements: politics of language, ethnicity-identity volume 76 of Monograph (1992) (Indian Institute of Advanced Study) Sajal Basu, 'Ethnic Unrest in India and Her Neighbours: Also Includes Europe, West Asia' (1998) by Pannalal Dhar, 'Gorkhaland Movement: A Study in Ethnic Separatism' (2000) by Amiya K. Samanta, 'Peace as process: reconciliation and conflict resolution in South Asia' (2001) RaGabîraSamâddâra, Helmut Reifeld, Konrad-Adenauer-Stifting 'Martial races: the military, race, and masculinity in British' (2004) by Heather Streets 'The unrest axle: ethno-social movements in Eastern India' (2008) by Gautam Kumar Bera, 'Ethnicity and regional politics of Eastern and North East India' (2014) by Anil Kumar Sarkar. The authors reconstructed the story of the community based on historical as well as ethnographic data and explain forces that led to the consolidation of social and cultural life towards the formation of Gorkha national identity. In which one important article of Anil Kumar Sarkar is 'ethnic identity' and separate statehood movement in Darjeeling.

Barun Roy has written the book entitled 'A Socio-Political Study of the Gorkha People and the Gorkhaland Movement'. He has focussed Gorkhas and Gorkhaland. This is one of the most comprehensive books to be written on the issue of the Gorkhas in India.²¹ The political history of Darjeeling Hills where the

Gorkhaland Movement is centred is meanwhile comprehensively dealt. Romit Bagchi authored the book 'Gorkhaland: Crisis of Statehood'. The main focus theme of the book is Gorkhaland is an attempt by a journalist to unravel the various layers of the ongoing crisis in the Darjeeling hills, where the Nepali-speaking community is locked in a political struggle with the state of Bengal, of which it is a part. The author endeavours to delve into the deeper recesses of the psyche of the Gorkha community settled in these restive hills and attempts to put the prevailing stereotypes under a subjective scanner.²² Moxham Roy's book is *A Brief History of Tea: Addiction, Exploitation, and Empire*. Behind the wholesome image of the world's most popular drink lies a strangely murky and often violent past. When tea began to be imported into the West from China in the seventeenth century, its high price and heavy taxes made it an immediate target for smuggling and dispute at every level, culminating in international incidents like the notorious Boston Tea Party.²³

Parimal Bhattacharya has written the book *Darjeeling: Smriti Samaj Itihas*. Encrusted with British nostalgia and Bengali romanticism, Darjeeling is a melting pot of tribes and communities. Bhattacharya went to work there in the early 1990s when things were cooling down after a long and bloody agitation.²⁴ Two decades later, the pot is on the boil again. K.C. Bhanja's book is *History of Darjeeling and the Sikkim Himalaya*. Darjeeling and Sikkim Himalaya, with their sublime snowy ranges and the fabulous Kanchenjunga, have no parallel in their physical charm and the mountaineering challenges it offers. Explorer and writer K.C. Bhanja has depicted the land and the people, the legends and expeditions, the religions and rituals of the region in authentic colours. He has delved deep into the mystique of the Himalayas, bringing out yet unknown historical facts and figures, including the expeditions by brave men who came here for the love of adventure and opened the virgin territory for others to see and enjoy.²⁵

Nandini Bhattacharyya Panda has written the book *Culture, Heritage, and Identity: The Lepcha and Mangar Communities of Sikkim and Darjeeling*. This book is about cultural politics and the quest for identity of two marginal communities of Sikkim and Darjeeling – the Lepcha and the Mangar.²⁶ Sharing insights into the knowledge, aesthetics, aspirations and dreams of two marginal communities who have been innovatively and differentially appropriating 'culture' to exploit the politics of difference, it is a narrative about their ethnocultural consciousness, notions of identity and anxieties over being minority communities in a pluralistic democracy. The narrative is essentially presented in the form of a field-trip diary, with observations and comments which try to situate the issues within a larger perspective. Based on two years of intensive field study, the book

chronicles the endeavour of these two communities to reclaim their cultural past, and forge an identity that would ensure material security, self-esteem, dignity and also the fruits of 'modernity'.

A.S.D Campbell wrote the book *On the Tribes Around Darjeeling*. This work has been selected by scholars as being culturally important and is part of the knowledge base of civilization as we know it.²⁷ Parimal Bhattacharya wrote another important book *No Path in Darjeeling is Straight: Memories of a Hill Town*. *No Path in Darjeeling Is Straight* is a memory of his time in the iconic town and one of the finest works of Indian non-fiction in recent years. He evocatively describes his arrival, through drizzle and impenetrable fog, at a place that was at odds with the grand picture of it he had painted for himself. And his first night there was spent sleepless in a ramshackle hotel above a butcher shop. Yet, as he tramped its roads and winding footpaths, Darjeeling grew on him. He sought out its history: a land of incomparable beauty originally inhabited by the Lepchas and other tribes; the British who took it for themselves in the mid-1800s so they could remember home; the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway once a vital artery, now a quaint toy train built-in 1881; and the vast tea gardens with which the British replaced verdant forests to produce the fabled Orange Pekoe. In the enmeshed lives of his neighbours of various castes, tribes, religions and cultures lived at the measured pace of a small town, Parimal discovered a richly cosmopolitan society which endured even under threat from cynical politics and haphazard urbanization.²⁸

Sanjoy Mookerjee wrote the book *Train to Darjeeling & Other Railway Tales*.²⁹ His narration, turn of phrase, language and excitement and love for the railways all come together into delightful tales. In the end, one craves for more. Railways in India may have been used by the colonialists to exploit the country, but it has so seeped into the very culture of India that stories about the railways are akin to stories of India. Townsend Middleton and Sara Shneiderman (ed) book are *Darjeeling Reconsidered: Histories, Politics, Environments*.³⁰ The book analysed the colonial excesses, labour movements to the Gorkhaland agitation and after, Darjeeling continues to live in anxiety and to understand the history of Darjeeling from the time of its transfer to its existential crisis in the post-colonial period through the prisms of history, politics and environment. The editors wish to avoid the stereotype of Darjeeling as a 'hill station' to present a more 'grounded understanding' of the town as a geo-political space by connecting history with the present through ethnographic and political analysis. The early history of Darjeeling has been presented well, though the quest of the people of the hills for autonomy

in the last century has not been properly analysed. These quibbles apart, the book is a welcome addition to the small corpus of academic books on Darjeeling.

There is huge scope for the scholars to research on Darjeeling. Current politico-geographical identities of Darjeeling from the crust of knowledge are largely inadequate in the writings of the post-colonial and post-modernist scholars. Nevertheless, a commendable academic and non-academic discussion of the contributions of the social and cultural reform movement and elsewhere towards the establishment of Gorkha identity still eludes us. Therefore, there are ample scopes to dig out the new research arena. Topics that are intimately interwoven with regional studies- regional character, its ethnic communities; socio-cultural settings, religious rituals, sentiments, the status of women, nature of economic activities, rise and growth of the tea companies and nature of exploitation, condition of the tea-labourers and so forth.

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Dissemination of Buddhism in Contemporary West Bengal

Dr. Rup Kumar Barman

Professor, Department of History

Jadavpur University, Kolkata

Email:rupkumarbarman@gmail.com

&

Dr. Juthika Barma

Assistant Professor

Department of History

Nabagram Hiralal Paul College, West Bengal

Email:juthikabarma@gmail.com

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Abstract

Since the inception of Buddhism, the people of Bengal have maintained a very close relationship with the Buddhist philosophy, ideologies and culture. In fact, Bengal once appeared as an abode of Buddhism both for its acceptability as well as for royal patronage. Buddhism was a popular cult in Bengal where many cultural features of the lower caste Hindus had entered through a distinct historical process. However, with the fall of royal patronage and conversion of the Buddhists and the lower castes Hindus into other religious faiths, Buddhism gradually lost its prominence in Bengal. Buddhism again started reviving in different corners of Bengal with the beginning of the twentieth century. However, the 'Partition of Bengal' in 1947 [as an essential precondition of independence of India and Pakistan] had again appeared as a serious setback for the fate of Buddhism of Bengal. Along with other religious minorities, the Buddhists had migrated in large scale from East Bengal to West Bengal. The East Bengali Buddhists had started a new episode of struggle for survival in West Bengal as 'refugees' or as 'asylum seekers'. They built up several monasteries and Buddhist institutions in different places of West Bengal. At the same time, the Scheduled Castes (lower Caste Hindus) of West Bengal have showed their utmost interest to the Buddhist culture and philosophy. Hence, several Scheduled Caste organisations of West Bengal have

adopted the cultural features of Buddhism [Buddha, Dharma and Sangha]. Thus Buddhism is being disseminated in West Bengal in two distinct ways: (a) growth of Buddhist institutions by the Buddhists, and (b) dissemination of Buddhist culture by the 'non-Buddhist Scheduled Castes.' In this paper, I'll highlight all these features of dissemination of Buddhism in contemporary West Bengal with somewhat objective outlook.

Keywords: *Buddhism, Migration of the Buddhists, Buddhist Institutions, Buddhist culture, Bengal, West Bengal.*

Spread of Buddhism in Bengal Precolonial Bengal

Bengal has a very close relation with Buddhism since its introduction by Gautama Buddha [623BCE-543BCE] in Magadha. After attaining Buddhahood (588BCE), Gautama Buddha was engaged in the propagation of Buddhism with his followers and Sangha.¹ So it is probable that Bengal, being an immediate neighbour of Magadha, was induced by Buddhism. But due to the lack of concrete historical evidences, it is very difficult to establish the argument that Buddhism was embraced by the people of Bengal in Buddha's time. However, the Burmese (Myanmar) source of Buddhist history suggests that Gautama Buddha had visited Sudharmapur of ancient Myanmar in 580 BCE.² Naturally, it is often argued by the historians of Buddhist Studies that South-eastern part of Chittagong and Chittagong Hill Tracts [and their people] were influenced by Buddhism by the sixth century BCE.

From the days of the Haryanka dynasty [c 546 BCE- 4th century BCE] to the Mauryan rule (320 BCE to 200 BCE), Buddhism became very popular religion in different regions of Bengal.³ In this context, Pundravardhan [North Bengal] was a prominent one. The archaeological evidences show that Buddhism became so popular in Pundravardhan that several monasteries were constructed in that region in the pre-Christian Era.⁴

During the reign of the Mauryan King of Ashoka [273-232 BCE], Buddhism took a new dimension. After the Battle of Kalinga [261 BC], Ashoka had embraced Buddhism and took royal initiatives to spread the messages of Buddha in different parts of the world. The 'Third Buddhist Council' [Buddhist *Sangeeti*] was held [247 BCE/253 BCE] under his initiative. The Ashokan inscriptions and pillars had used different languages including *Prakrita* and Greek [in *Brahmi* and *Kharasthi* scripts] to spread the message of Buddhism among the subjects.

The most significant outcome of the Third Buddhist Council [247 BCE] was the unification of different sects of the Buddhists and the *Tripitakas* got a complete written form.⁵ Moreover, this Council had suggested the king for sending Buddhist Missions in different countries including Sri Lanka [Simhala], Myanmar [Subarnabhumi], Syria, Macedonia, Egypt, etc. However, there was no Buddhist mission for Bengal. It establishes the fact that during the period between 6th Century BCE and 3rd Century BCE Buddhism became popular in Bengal. Moreover, the Mahasthangarh Inscription [3rd Century BCE], Karandaran Monastery, etc. prove that Buddhism had prosperous condition in Bengal.

In the post-Mauryan period, Buddhism got a temporary setback from the Sungas [187 BCE- 30 BCE]. However, the Buddhist ideology was evolved further during the rule of the Kushanas in India [1st Century BCE]. During the kingship of Kanishka [78 CE-103 CE], Buddhism got the most prosperous shape in the Indian subcontinent. During his rule, the 4th Buddhist Council was held at Kuban Bihar [Jalandhar] in 78 CE.⁶ Along with the translation of *Tripitaka* in Sanskrit, several commentaries and treatise were written in that Council. However, the Fourth Buddhist Council had accepted two different ways of attaining *Nirvana*. They were *Hinajana* and *Mahajana* order. In later period, the *Hinajanis* had identified themselves as *Therabadis*.

With the suggestion of this Council, Kanishka sent Buddhist religious missions in different countries of East and Central Asia including China, Tibet, Nepal, Korea, Japan, Turkey and Afghanistan [Gandhara]. The Kushanas brought prosperities in Buddhism in the Indian sub-continent. They popularized Buddhism in East Asia and Central Asia what eventually inspired the Chinese Buddhist scholars to visit India during the Gupta period [320 CE to 500 CE] and during the reign of Harshavardhana [590-647]. At the same time, the Kushanas had popularised the worship of image of Buddha in different forms.

Because of political changes in Northern India in the 4th Century CE and lack of state-patronage, Buddhism could not attain much prosperity in Eastern India during the pre-Pala rule in Bengal. However, the Chinese traveller those who visited Bengal in Pre-Pala period like [Hieun Tsang (Yuan Chawan), and I-Tsing] had recorded the prosperity of Buddhist monasteries [*stupas*, *Sangharams*] as well as the followers of Buddhism in Samatata, Karnasubarna, Tamralipta and Pundravardhana.⁷ Like the early Gupta rulers [4th – 6th Century CE], King Sasanka of Gauda [606-636 CE] had opposed the Buddhism. Even he attempted to destroy the Buddhist monasteries and institutions. It eventually gave a temporary setback to Buddhism in Eastern India including Bengal. However, Bengal had

produced a very significant Buddhist scholar in the 6th Century CE named Silabhadra [529-554 BCE].

Buddhism again got royal patronage with the rise of Palas as a ruling community [750-1200 CE]. The founder king of the Pala dynasty Shri Gopala [750-770 BCE] had founded several Buddhist monasteries in Nalanda and other places of his kingdom for reviving Buddhism. His son Dharmapala was the greatest Pala king [770-810 BCE]. Along with the Buddhist monasteries he founded Bikramsila University. Both Nalanda and Bikramsila had received attention of Buddhist scholars from different Asian countries. The patronage to Buddhism was further carried out by king Devapala (810-850). However, after the death of Devapala, the Palas could not maintain their prosperity. Internal conflicts and invasions from outside had contributed to the decline of the Palas. However, they could maintain their rule till twelfth century CE.

During the rule of Palas, Buddhism had experienced different changes including the introduction of *Tantricism* within Buddhism.⁸ Different group of *Trantricism* like (i) *Mantrajan*, (ii) *Bajrajan*, (iii) *Kalachakrajan*, and (iv) *Sahajajan* got prosperity in Bengal under the Palas through the writings and propaganda of the Buddhist 'Siddhyacharyas' of Bengal. The Buddhist Siddhacharyas had eventually contributed to the growth of different Buddhist sects in Bengal [like Nathadharma, Kaulyadharma, Abadhuta, Sahajia and Baul]. All these trends had encouraged the so- called lower caste communities of Bengal to embrace Buddhism as per their choices.

The most significant contribution of the Palas to the growth of Buddhism was their patronage to different Buddhist universities and institutions [like Nalanda, Bikramshila, Odantapuri, Sampur Mahabihara, Jagaddal Mahabihara, Bikramshila Mahabihara, Devikot Bihara, Halud Bihara, Sitakot Bihara, Salban Bihara, etc.]. These institutions got international attention in those days.

The prosperity of Buddhism began to decline in the post- Pala rule. The rise of the Sena rulers [1095 CE- 1207 CE] and later the establishment of Muslim rule [1207 CE to 1772 CE] had appeared as a serious challenge for the existence of Buddhism in Bengal. The Sena rulers of Bengal had attempted to revive Brahmanical Hinduism in Bengal. Naturally, the Buddhist deities, institutions and scholars lost the royal patronage. On the other hand, the Brahmanical Hinduism got direct 'state-sponsorship' from the Senas. Thus the Buddhists gradually lost their prosperity.

Almost in the same time the invasion of Bakhtiyar Khilji [1207 CE] had appeared as a very serious challenge both for the Brahmanical Hinduism and the Buddhists of Bengal. Bakhtiyar Khalji himself had destroyed Nalanda, Bikramsila

and many other Buddhist institutions which were filled with Buddhist texts. Many Buddhists monks and scholars fled from the country and took shelter in Nepal, Tibet, Odisha and Myanmar.⁹ The Buddhist monasteries were deserted. Many of them eventually were transformed into mosques.¹⁰ And under the rule of the Bengal Sultans [1200 CE to 1538 CE], the Mughals [1576-1707] and Bengal Nawabs [1707-1772], the Buddhists and Buddhism did not get any support from the state.

In spite of opposition, torture, conversion and apathetic attitude, the Buddhism had survived in certain remote pockets of Bengal especially in South-eastern part of present Bangladesh. The Chakmas, Arakanese, Marmas, Rakhains and the Mag Baruars had maintained the Buddhist traditions in their own way. On the other hand, the Tibetan Buddhism had influenced the Himalayan kingdoms of northern side of Bengal [especially in Sikkim and Bhutan].

Buddhism of Bengal under the British Rule

The establishment of British rule in Bengal [and later in India especially after the Battle of Plassey (1757 CE), Battle of Buxer (1764), Grant of Diwani (1765), the Anglo Maratha Wars [1775-1881], the Anglo Mysore wars [1767-1999], the Anglo Sikh Wars [1824-26], and Anglo Burmese Wars [1823-26] gave a new life to Buddhism in Bengal. The Orientalists especially the British administrative scholars had started studying and reinterpreting the Buddhist texts and Ashokan inscriptions. Simultaneously, the English educated Buddhist scholars of Bengal as well as non-Buddhist Bengali scholars had started writing the history of Buddhism. These trends eventually had initiated a process of rejuvenation in Buddhism. Here, we find two basic trends: (a) foundation of Buddhist institutions, and (b) publication of Buddhist literature.

The early initiative for establishing Buddhist monastery in modern Bengal was started in the second half of the nineteenth century. It was Saramedha Mahasthabir from Arakan who propagated the *Therabadas* among the Buddhists of Chittagong in 1857.¹¹ With the support of Rani Kalindi [of the Chakmas] Saramedha Mahasthabir laid the foundation of a Buddhist monastery at Rangunia.¹² Vikshu Chandramohun [Punnachar] was entrusted the change of this monastery. Later (in 1874), another monastery was founded at Pahartali.¹³ Along with the Buddhist monastery; Rani Kalinda had introduced a Buddhist festival in her locality for popularising Buddhism among the people. Incidentally, a few Buddhist monks from Chittagong had participated in the Fifth Buddhist Council held in Mandalay [Burma in 1871].

Table 1: Buddhist Organisations of Bengal (from 1879 to 1929)

Sl.No	Foundation year	Name of the Organisation	Founder Leader
1	1879	Chattogram Bauddha Samity (Chittagong)	Krishna Chandra Choudhury
2	1890	Bauddha Dharmankur Sabha (Calcutta)	Kripasaran Manasthabir
3	1891	Mahabodhi Society (Calcutta)	Anagarika Dharmapala
4	1899	Chattogram Bauddha Bihar (Chittagong)	Bhagirath Chandra Barua
5	1903	Kalikata Dharmankur Bihar (Calcutta)	NA.
6	1919	Chattogram Bouddha Arakan Samabay Bank (Chittagong)	NA.
7.	1929	Buddha Samagam (Chittagong)	Umesh Chandra Mutsuddhi

Source: Compiled by the author.

Within a span of fifty years (1879-1929), the Buddhists of Bengal had founded several organisations for reviving their culture and religion as well as for compilation and circulation of texts. From 1872 to 1947, the Bengali Buddhist had published several works in Bengali and English. In this context, we must recognise the contributions of Phul Chandra Barua [*Buddha Ranjika* (1873)], Dharmaraj Barua (1860-1894), Ram Chandra Barua (1847-1922), Nabaraj Pandit (1866-1896), Sarbananda Barua (1866-1908), Agrasar Mahasthabir (1863-1942), Pragnalok Mahasthabir (1878-1970), Bangsadwip Mahasthabir (1883-1971), Bhikkhu Silabhadra (1887-1974) and of course the name of Dr. Benimadhab Barua (1888-1948). They not only had aspired to organise the Buddhists of Bengal but also popularised Buddhist teaching in Bengali language.

The Buddhist organisations of Bengal had also started publishing periodical and magazines from Calcutta, Chittagong, Rangamati and Rangoon (Burma). Among them, Mahabodhi Society (Calcutta), Bouddha Dharmankur Sabha (Calcutta), Bouddha Mission Press (Rengun), Bangiya Bouddha Samiti (Calcutta), etc. were very much prominent.¹⁴

With all these initiatives, the Bengali Buddhists had established their contacts with the Buddhists of other countries including Myanmar, Thailand and Sri Lanka. In this context, Myanmar and Sri Lanka were very much helpful for the growth of Buddhist culture in Bengal.

Partition of Bengal and Displacement of the Buddhists

The Partition of Bengal in 1947 [as a precondition for independence of India and Pakistan] had appeared as a very serious challenge for the religious minorities including the Buddhists of Eastern Bengal. Being threatened by the majority community, the Buddhists of Eastern Bengal had started migrating to India as ‘voluntary’ and ‘forced migrates’.¹⁵ The Buddhist population of East Bengal [mainly the Mogs, Chakmas and Marmas of Chittagong Hill Tracts and Barishal and the Bengali-speaking Buddhists of Chittagong] had started decreasing in terms of percentage. In undivided Bengal, Buddhist population-wise top four districts were Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), Chittagong, Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri. While Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri [except the territorial limits of five police stations] had/ have remained with India, CHT and Chittagong had become the parts of East Bengal/ East Pakistan (present Bangladesh). From the census data, it appears that the percentage of Buddhist population in CHT was 78.19 % in 1951 which declined to 51.15% in 1981. Similarly, the Buddhist population of Chittagong was decreased to 2.23% (1981) from 3.70 % (1951). A similar trend has been noticed in Bakherghaj, Patuakhali, Coomilla, Bandarban and Barguna.

Now the question is ‘why had the Buddhist population declined in East Bengal/ East Pakistan/ Bangladesh’? A historical study shows that there were a few causative factors for the creation of such trends. These were: (i) insecurity and apprehension of persecution on the religious ground, (ii) economic deprivation and state policies, and (iii) conversion of the Buddhists into other religious faiths. The first one is a much discussed causative factor of ‘partition-induced displacement’ [both forced and voluntary migration]. Like other minorities, the Buddhists could not escape from the curse of the Partition. The second one was related to the settlement of the Muslim cultivators in the CHT with indirect ‘state support’ which increased the population of the non-Chakmas. The third factor was/is conversion of the Buddhist into other religion. Here, we find the conversion of the Hill Buddhists into Christianity.

All these factors had generated the forces of voluntary and forced migration of the Buddhists from East Pakistan/ East Bengal to India. Many of them had migrated to Mizoram and Tripura while a section them took shelter in West Bengal. Since the Buddhists of Chittagong had a very good social connection

with Kolkata/ (Calcutta) in the colonial period, many of them had voluntarily migrated to West Bengal.

West Bengal had/has received the Buddhists from the northern side especially from Tibet. With the Chinese intrusion to Tibet and the outbreak of the Indo- China War (1962), the hilly regions of West Bengal [especially in Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri and Alipurduar districts] had/have received the Buddhists migrants from northern side of West Bengal.

Spread of Buddhism in post-colonial West Bengal

West Bengal had started its journey in 1947 with a very minor Buddhist population. According to the census of 1931 only Darjeeling district had a noticeable Buddhist population [with a total 58,943 (18.43%)]. And Jalpaiguri had a Buddhist population of 7,563 (0.76% to total population of the district). On the other hand, Calcutta and its adjacent regions had a few urban middle class Buddhists before the partition. In the following section, I'll briefly discuss about the spread of Buddhism in West Bengal.

Spread of Buddhism in North Bengal

North Bengal [especially Pundravardhan of ancient period] was the heart of Buddhism in the pre-Muslim period of Bengal. But there was no trace of the Buddhists in this region [except the archaeological remains of Buddhist *stupas*, monasteries and *Mahabihars*]. However, the Buddhists (Kagupa sect) of Tibet had maintained their contacts in the hilly zones of Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri districts. In fact in 1920, a Buddhist monastery (called Gandhamadan Bihar) was founded in Darjeeling by Kripasarana Mahasthabir especially for the Theras. After the Partition of Bengal, many Buddhist from Chittagong had migrated to the Duars region of Jalpaiguri. Shrimat Atul Sen Vikshu had started organising the Thera Buddhist of Jalpaiguri (from 1949). Within a year, he founded 'Uttarbanga Bauddha Sanghashram' (in 1950) at Malbazar. It eventually appeared as a centre for inspiration of the Buddhists of that region. Being inspired and induced by Uttar Banga Bauddha Sanghashram, the Buddhist of Nagrakata (Jalpaiguri district) had founded Buddha Jayanti Bihar in 1956. It was followed by the establishment of the Buddhaharati Bihar [founded in 1963 at Siliguri]. Another Buddhist Bihar was founded at Nagrakata in 1968 [under the guidance of Gnahotta Mahasthabir]. This trend of foundation of Buddhist Viharas was further maintained by the Buddhists of Jalpaiguri and Alipurduar. Altogether 12 Buddhist Viharas have been founded in North Bengal in the second half of the twentieth century.¹⁶

Photo 1: Uttarbanga Bauddha Sanghasram, Malbazr, Jalpaiguri**Photo: Anju Tete, Asst. Teacher, Ananda Vidyapith High School, Mal, Jalpaiguri.**

The Buddhists institutions are now being supervised by the Uttar Banga Bikkhu Parishad (1985). Simultaneously, North Bengal Buddhist Forum (1999) is working for establishing solidarity among the followers of *Mahajana* and *Therabadi* orders. On the other hand, the Tibetan Buddhists, after their migration to Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Karseong and Alipurduar districts have started organising themselves under different Buddhist temple and monasteries. Among them, the Mahajani Buddhist monasteries founded by the Tibetans, Tamangs and are very much significant.

Buddhism in South Bengal

It has been already indicated that Calcutta once emerged as a centre of Buddhist Studies (because of foundation of several Buddhist organizations during the colonial rule). These organizations are actively engaged in the dissemination of Buddhist culture in South Bengal. The Buddhist migrants from Eastern Bengal have also founded several new Buddhist monasteries and ashrams within the territorial limits of Kolkata. Among such organizations, 'Tollygunge Bouddha Samity' is a prominent one. It was founded in 1950. The Buddhists have also established a Buddhist temple at Garia (Kolkata) in 1965 called 'Garia Buddha

Mandir'. In the northern outskirt of Kolkata, they have founded Dharmachakra Vihara (at Dumdum) in 1967. In 1975, Dharmasar Mahasthabir (a Buddhist monk) had founded Vedarshan Siksha Kendra at Pottery Road of Kolkata. It is basically a centre of Buddhist education. These newly founded Buddhist organizations have appeared as the markers of Buddhist culture of the Buddhist migrants from Eastern Pakistan/Bangladesh. Apart from Kolkata, the Bengali Buddhists have also founded several Buddhist organizations in different districts of South Bengal. In this context, we may cite the examples of Buddhist organisations of North 24 Parganas and South 24 Parganas districts. We have noticed that the largest number of Buddhist temples and *viharas* (altogether 11) have been founded in North 24 Parganas district. These are located in certain municipal towns of this district such as Dumdum (1), Barrackpore (1), Shyamnagar (3), Icchapur (1), Sodepur (2), Madhyamgram (1) and Dutta Pukur (2). There are three notable Buddhist centres in South 24 Parganas like Maheshtala Bouddha Vihara (founded in 1968), Akra Buddha Samity (near Akra Railway Station) and Sakyamuni Vihara (founded in 1970). The Buddhists have also founded several other organizations in Howrah, West Medinipur, Hooghly, Burdwan and Birbhum districts of southern West Bengal.

These Buddhist organizations are very much active for spreading the message of Buddhism. They are not only symbolising the Buddhist culture but also playing a significant role for the structural integrity of the Buddhists of West Bengal.

The Scheduled Castes and Buddhism in Contemporary West Bengal

Since the inception of Buddhism, the so-called lower caste communities have embraced Buddhism with great enthusiasm. The social philosophy of Buddhism was a 'rational code of conduct' for them in the ancient period. Buddhism again appeared as a matter of alternative culture as well as a tool of social justice in the late colonial period. The social justice movement of the lower caste Hindus [called Scheduled Caste (SCs)] in the second quarter of the twentieth century (1925-1950) had popularised the Buddhist religious philosophy among them. The Scheduled Castes had attracted towards Buddhism in large scale when Dr. B.R. Ambedkar (1890-1956), the Father of the Indian Constitution, had embraced Buddhism (1956). A large number of the Scheduled Castes (mainly the Mahars) of Bombay (now Maharashtra) had embraced Buddhism as introduced by Dr. Ambedkar called *Nabajana* (Neo -Buddhism). The followers of the *Nabajana* began to be designated as Neo- Buddhists. Thus the statistical data show that Maharashtra has the highest Buddhist population in India (65,31,200, i.e. 77% of total Buddhist population of India). Subsequently, the

Neo-Buddhists of Maharashtra have contributed to the growth of 'Dalit Panthers movement' and Dalit Discourse in Western India. Like Maharashtra, the Scheduled Castes of Uttar Pradesh have also embraced Buddhism in large scale.

The conversion of the Scheduled Castes of Western India into Buddhism has its inevitable impact of the Scheduled Castes of West Bengal. Here, a few social organizations founded by the Scheduled Caste communities; are very much enthusiastic to popularise the messages of Buddhism. In this context the 'Poundra Kshatriya Unnayan Parishad' (1970), Champahati Ambedkar Samity (1988), Sudarban Ambedkar Samity (2001), Bharatiya Poundra Society (2006), and Poundra Mahasangha (2008) are very much active in the Sundarban Delta (Coastal West Bengal). At the same time, Mulnibashi Samity (2006) and Gautam Buddha Guidance Academy (2011) are very much active among the Namasudras, Rajbanshis, Jalia Kaibartya and others SC communities of West Bengal. These organizations are popularizing the Buddhist social culture among the Scheduled Castes of West Bengal. To understand this point, here I'll highlight the activities of two such organizations.

Sundarban Ambedkar Samity (SAS)

The Sundarban Ambedkar Samity was founded by Dhurjati Naskar (26th November, 2001). It is located at Ambedkar Nagar, Rajpur (under Mathurapur Police Station limits) in South 24 Parganas district. The motto of this organisation is '*Parun, Likhun, Bojhan, Sanghathan Karun*' [Read, Write, Realise and Organise]. Every year, this organisation observes the Republic Day of India (26th January) along with showing respect to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and prominent Scheduled Caste leaders of Bengal and other provinces of India. It specially shows respect to Gautam Buddha. The main objective of this organisation is to motivate the people of various Scheduled Caste communities of West Bengal along the thoughts of Gautama Buddha and Dr. Ambedkar. The Sundarban Ambedkar Samity also celebrates the Birthday of Dr. Ambedkar (14th April) and Buddha Purnima with great care. The Buddha fortnight (from Buddha Purnima) is a special attraction of this Samity when it arranges a series of discussion on the Buddhism and Dr. Ambedkar. So it appears that SAS has a special role for motivating the Scheduled Castes of Sundarban towards Buddhism.

The Poundra Mahasangha (PM)

The Poundra Mahasangha was founded on 13th December 2008 in Baruipur of South 24 Parganas. The name of this organisation has been taken from the Buddhist idea of 'Sangha'. The constitution of this organisation is called 'Nitikalpa'. The designation of head of various departments likes 'Mahasthabir (Chairman), Karmasthakir (Secretary) have close relationship with the Buddhist

idea of Sangha. This organization is very much energetic about the propagation of thoughts of Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. The Bharmachakra, celebration 'Buddha Jayanti' and reviving the tradition of 'Dharmajal' are closely attached with the Buddhism.

Conclusion

There are basically three trends in Buddhism in contemporary West Bengal. Firstly: The Tibetan Buddhism is being popularised in the hilly regions of North Bengal by the Tibetan migrants. They have mainly preserved the traditions of 'Mahajana/ Kalchakrajana/Vajrajana'. Secondly: the Bengali Buddhists have preserved the Buddhist culture of Bengal. They are aspiring to build up Buddhist Biharas and Sanghasrams in Kolkata, Sub-Himalayan West Bengal and certain other districts of West Bengal. Thirdly: the publication and circulation of Buddhist literature has created awareness on Buddhism especially among the Scheduled Castes communities of West Bengal. Several Scheduled Caste organizations have adopted the symbols of Buddhism in their organisations.

Notes and References

¹At the beginning, the Sangha was consisting of 60 members. They were Bhikshus [Kondiya, Bhaddhiya, Bapap, Mahanam and Ashwajit], Kulaputra Jash, 4 non-Bhikshu members and 50 Kulaputras. They were directed by Lord Buddha for the propagation of messages of *Shila*, *Samaddhi* and *Pragna*.

²Jitendra Lal Barua, *Bangladesher Baudhhdharma O Bouddha Sampraday*, Dhaka, Jatiya Sahitya Prakash, 2017, p.20.

³Among the early principalities and regions of Bengal Pundravardhan, Gouda, Samatata, Harikela, Tamralipta and Radha were prominent where Buddhism became a popular culture in pre-common era.

⁴Jitendra Lal Barua, *op.cit.*, p.29.

⁵*ibid.*, p.49.

⁶The Fourth Buddhist Council was held at Jalandhar under the chairmanship of Basumitra. There is another version that this Council was held at Kashmir under the guidance of Aswaghosha.

⁷Jitendra Lal Barua, *op. cit.*, pp. 66-67.

⁸Different features of Tantricism like spirit (*Bhuta* and *Preta*), *Jaksha*, *Baksha*, *Dakini*, *Pisacha*, *Matra*, *Jantra*, etc. had their prominent existence in the Buddhism in Bengal.

⁹For details see: Haraprasad Sastri: *Bihsay : Buddha Dharma*, edited by Barid Baran Ghosh, 2nd edition, Kolkata, Karoona Prakashani, 2013, etc.

¹⁰Jitendra Lal Barua: *Op.cit.*, p.125.

¹¹Saramedha Mahasthabir was a Buddhist monk from Myanmar (Burma) who met Radha Charan Mahasthabir at Saranath in 1856. He thought the *Therabad* to the Buddhists of Chittagong.

¹²Nutan Chandra Barua: *Chattagramer Bouddha Jatir Itihas*, Rangunia, Kusum Kumary Barua, 2014, pp. 47.

¹³*ibid.*

¹⁴For details see, Jitendra Lal Barua, *op.cit.*

¹⁵For details about the Partition of Bengal and the ‘partition–induced forced migration’ see-Kanti B. Pakrashi: *The Uprooted*, Calcutta, Edition Indian, 1971, Hiranmoy Bandyopadhyay, *Udvastu*, Calcutta, Sisusahitya Samsad, 1970, Joya Chatterjee: *The Spoils of Partition*, New Delhi, Cambridge University Press, 2007, Rup Kumar Barman: *Partition of India and its impact on the Scheduled Caste of Bengal*, New Delhi, Abhijeet Publication, 2012, etc.

¹⁶Data collected through fieldwork during the period between January 2021 and June 2021.

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Social Movement: A study of 19th Century Assam

Dr. Sagar Boruah

Retired Principal

Khagorijan College

Nagaon, Assam

Joint Secretary, North-East India History Association

Email: sbourah7@gmail.com

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Abstract

The 19th century is a landmark in the history of Assam for two different dimensions. First, the Treaty of Yandaboo signed between the British and the Burmese Government in 1826 opened a new chapter in the political history of Assam since it made it possible for the colonial authority to gradually annex the state to the British Indian Territory. On the other hand, the germs of a new social movement were slowly taking its roots in the society which was initiated by a small group of elites. The new born elite section started social reform movement in the province. Persons like Jaduram Borbhandar Barua, Gunabhiram Barua and Hem Chandra Barua started movement in favour widow remarriage. Haliram Dhekial Phukan, Hem Chandra Barua and Gunabhiram Barua made campaign for women education in the 19th century. Hem Chandra Barua write article in Orunodoi under caption Stri Siksha (women education). The elite group started campaign for modern medical system with the help of Missioneries in Assam. They were concerned with the social issue like abolition of child marriage etc. Although they could not take the shape of the movement an organized movement under any well-organized social institution it left remarkable impact on the Assamese society in 20th century.

Keywords: 19th Century Assam, Social Movement, women education.

The 19th century is a landmark in the history of Assam for two different dimensions. First, the Treaty of Yandaboo signed between the British and the Burmese Government in 1826 opened a new chapter in the political history of Assam since it made it possible for the colonial authority to gradually annex the state to the British Indian territory. On the other hand, the germs of a new social

movement were slowly taking its roots in the society which was initiated by a small group of elites. It may be referred to here that on the eve of the arrival of the British, the society of Assam was practically collapsed due to the internal disorder and conflicts among the official of the Ahom Court. The Moamaria uprising already damaged the socio-economic structure particularly of Upper Assam. Narrating the misery of the people Sir Edward Gait writes, 'Where the Moamarias held sway, whole villages were destroyed, and the inhabitants, robbed of all their possessions, were forced to flee the country, or to eke out a precarious existence by eating wild fruits and roots and flesh of unclean animals. The country between Dergaon and Rangpur once so highly cultivated, was found desolate by Captain Welsh, and many large villages had been entirely deserted by their inhabitants'.¹ The Internal conflicts among the Ahom officials subsequently led to the Burmese invasion in the early years of the 19th century. It is mentionable here that the Burmese invaded Assam three times in between 1817 to 1821. These invasions, better known in Assam as *Manar Akraman* was so horrible that it is beyond imagination. It was marked by blood-shed, rapine, plunder and devastation. Chang Ang, a Burmese Army officer narrates that 'The roads became red with blood (of the slain). The crows and the vultures dragged the corpses and had their food in abundance. Hundreds of wounded, half dead, and dead were to be found everywhere in the road and jungles. There were corpses without hands, some without legs and waists and some were with wounded bellies and entrails out. Men and women with their babies in arms fled to forests but they could not escape the swords of Burmese soldiers and died a terrible death'.² J. M'Chosh mentions that 'it was dangerous for a beautiful women to meet a Burmese even on the public road. Brahmanas were made to carry loads of beef, pork and wine. The Gossains were robbed off all their possessions. Father of damsels whom the Burmese took to wives rose speedily to afflux page No. 2ence and power'.³ It is known that the inhuman atrocities made by the Burmese 'destroyed more than one half of the population which had already been thinned by intensive commotions and repeated civil wars'. H.K. Barpujari mentions, 'This (Burmese invasion) resulted in wholesale de-population, industry collapsed, agriculture was neglected and trade, if any, was at a standstill'.⁴ It was in this worst hour of peril that the British appeared as the 'deliverer' of the people of Assam and they established their rule in Assam flushing out the Burmese from the territory. The British authority amalgamated Assam with Bengal and this amalgamation developed impervious relations between Bengal and Assam giving a new dimension to the socio-intellectual movement of the state of Assam.

It is worth mentioning that as there were no higher educational institutions in Assam the sons and relatives of well to-do families were mostly sent to Calcutta for higher education. Some of them even received Government scholarship. Moreover, a small group of rich people from Assam established their business in Bengal and Orissa with head offices in Calcutta. Needless to say that the persons who went to Calcutta either for higher education or business came into contact with the leaders of the Bengal 'Renaissance' and were highly inspired by their social and intellectual activities. A number of Government officials of Assam also maintained close relations with the social movement of Bengal. They read the papers like *Samachar Darpan* and *Chandrika* regularly and also financially contributed to those papers. Bankim Chandra said that Haliram Dekhial Phukan (1802-1832), father of Anandaram Dhekial Phukan made a financial contribution to his *Banga Darshan*.⁵ The *Samachar Darpan* was so well circulated in Assam that the paper commented on 30th July 1831 that 'in no district of Bengal are found so many subscribers to our newspapers as are found amongst the people of Assam. Moreover, while from half the districts of Bengal no letter is sent and appears in newspapers, hardly a week passes without a letter being sent from Assam to us or to other newspaper editors of this province'.⁶ Joggoram Khargharia Phukan (1806-1838), brother of Haliram, maintained contact with Bengali periodicals and newspapers. While he had been in Calcutta, Joggoram translated 'Lucy and Her Bird' into Bengali and published it in *Samachar Darpan* in 1831. Praising the work of Phukan, *Samachar Darpan* published a new item under the caption *Assam Deshe Gyan Bridhi* (Growth of Knowledge in Assam).⁷ He was inspired by the social and Page No.3 intellectual movement of Bengal to such an extent that he believed that the social movement could be expected in Assam by the implementation of English education. Explaining Phukan's mindset Amalendu Guha writes, '... he took initiative in bringing English teacher with him from Calcutta to Gauhati in 1835 ... Though he had no contribution to the Assamese literature, he will be ever remembered as the fore-runner of English education in Assam'.⁸ It is reiterated that some members of the elite class particularly those who were well equipped with western education and inspired by social movement of Bengal played a vital role in the social movement of 19th century Assam. Assamese journals or periodicals like *Orunodoi* and *Jonaki* were used by the social reformers as platform for the social reform movement.

In the context of discussion on social movement it may be argued that a section of the Bengali elite of 19th century who came into close contact with the western education and culture started to give a new thought on the contemporary social institutions. The social problems which came first to their sight were the

issues on women. It was a fact that the status of women even in the 19th century Bengal was by no means a pleasing one. In the patriarchal families women were always dominated by men. Narrating the position of women, Raja Rammohan Roy said, 'The men acknowledge their wives as *ardhangini* (better-half) at the time of marriage but in practice their treatment towards their wives is more vile than that of animals. Every housewife is bound to perform 'slave-duty' in her husband's house'.⁹ Moreover, *sati*, child marriage, *Kaulinya* (polygamy) and such other social evils adversely affected the lives of women. On the other hand, widow re-marriage was strictly prohibited in the society and women education was one of the neglected aspects till the first-half of the 19th century. Expressing the anxiety Vidyasagar wrote, হা অবলাগণ, তোমাৰ কি পাপে ভাৰতবৰ্ষে আসিয়া, জন্মগ্রহণ কৰ, বলিতে পাৰি না।¹⁰ However, some members of the growing elite class of Bengal started their movement for the cause of the women under the leadership of persons like Raja Rammohan, Vidyasagar, Keshab Chandra and Akshoy Kumar Dutta. They fought against the social evils like *sati*, child-marriage, polygamy, child infanticide and advocated for widow re-marriage and women education. As elsewhere in India the status of women in Assam was not pleasant. In the patriarchal society of Assam women were supposed to be subordinate to men in every aspect of life. The Page No. 4 widely prevalent proverb *nari patar talar laow* (women are like the gourd covered with leaves) is the reflection of disregard of men towards women. So far the marriage of girl was concerned, the girl could not raise any question on her own choice of her proposed husband. Narrating the social condition of women Miles Bronson wrote, '.... The daughters have no choice in matter of choosing their husbands. She is married and taken to husbands Zenana after much against her wishes. She knows little of him and he her. The husband buys his wife as he does a beast of burden and afterwards in the pretty much same light...'¹¹ Prohibition of widow re-marriage was another kind of social evil in the province. There was a rare occasion of widow marriage in rural society, but not formally. It was also kind of handing over of the widow to a person by her paternal family or by her in-law's family unceremoniously. Usually women were allowed to marry only one, not for the second time in the society. Regarding widowhood, Bronson mentioned, 'The *sastras* forbid their ever marrying a second time. On the death of a husband their ornaments were stripped off and their heads shaved. They became the drudge and the servant of the family where they dwell. How cheerless is she to such'.¹² Although *sati* was unknown to the Assamese society, the child marriage was practiced in the province. Usually girls were given in marriage before attainment of puberty.¹³ On the other hand, education was almost completely denied to women. The modern education could hardly attract the

female of the province. In this context Robinson wrote, 'female are not included within the pale of education, every ray of mental improvement is carefully kept from the sex. As they are always confined to domestic duties, and excluded from society of the other sex, the people see no necessity for their education. A women's duties are comprised in pleasing her husband and cherishing her children'.¹⁴

It has already been mentioned that in the 19th century the new-born elite section particularly in the Brahmaputra valley started social reform movement in the province. After passing the Hindu Widow Re-marriage Act, 1856, the movement in favour of widow re-marriage became more strong at the initiative of people like Jaduram Barbhandar Barua, Gunabhiram Barua and Hem Chandra Barua. Jaduram Barbhandar Barua (1801-1869) a Government official opposed the *sati* and advocated widow re-marriage even by marrying a widow himself.¹⁵ He used to write in *Bengali* the cause of reform. Gunabhiram Barua, another stalwart of Assam, Page No. 5 believed that no progress in society is possible without emancipating women from social evils. Barua had been drawn towards Brahma Samaj during his student days at Calcutta Presidency College. He was impressed by the widow remarriage movement of Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar. Barua was present in the historic widow remarriage ceremony in Calcutta on 7th December, 1856 where Srishichandra Vidyaratna married Kalimati Devi. The marriage was organized by Vidyasagar.¹⁶ Barua was so moved by the spectacle of this function that he published an article in *Orunodoi* under caption *Dujani Bidhava Swalir Bibahar Katha* (a tale of marriage of two widow girls)¹⁷ Interestingly even before his participation in marriage ceremony of Vidyaratna, Barua wrote a letter in *Orunodoi* in 1853 under the title on Marriage supporting the reform of Hindu marriage system and introduction of widow re-marriage.¹⁸ He studied number of Bengali dramas like *Bidhaba Bibah* of Umesh Chandra Dutta and *Bidhaba Monu Ranjan* of Radha Madhav Mitra which prompted him to write a drama namely *Ramnavani* encouraging widow re-marriage in society.¹⁹ Gunabhiram Barua, a practical man, set an example by marrying a widow, Bishnupriya Devi in 1870 after he had lost his wife Brajasundari Devi in 1869.²⁰ Following Gunabhiram's example his daughter Swarnalata also got re-married with Khirode Chandra Roy of Calcutta on the death of her husband Dr. Nanda Kumar Roy.²¹

Hem Chandra Barua (1835-1896), a pioneer of social reform movement of 19th Century Assam was deeply influenced by the activities of intellectual world of Bengal. Interestingly, Barua never received any formal school education, nor did he go to a Calcutta for higher studies. But he had close contact with Anandaram Dhekial Phukan and made correspondence regarding the activities

of *Young Bengal*. Inspired by the activities of *Young Bengal* and reformatory activities of Vidyasagar, Barua raised his voice against social injustice towards women particularly the prohibition of widow re-marriage. The influence of Vidyasagar's social movement is reflected in his speech, 'Vidyasagar did not remain silent saying the widow marriage is in consonant with the rules of scripture. He even arranged marriage of his son with a widow...' Barua justified the re-marriage of widow with the rational argument that 'considering the condition of our society today, the whole idea of a man re-marrying after the death of his wife is repulsive. I have thought it over: Suppose it was me who was dead, not my wife, then what would have been her condition? She has died, and if I wish, I have the liberty to marry thrice or *Page No. 6* more. But if she had ever thought of re-marrying after my death, she would have been socially ostracized. How unjust and irrational this system is ! Therefore, I should not marry again.'²² Thus, Barua himself 'refused to marry a second time after the death of his wife in protest against the prevalent social injustice to women in Hindu society'.²³ Supporting the widow remarriage Barua said if a women was debarred from re-marriage why the same would not be applicable to men also.²⁴ Encouraging the widow re-marriage Hem Chandra Barua wrote in his autobiographical sketch 'One can see that there is no harm in widow re-marriage even when one comes to reason. The revered Vidyasagar did not keep quiet by simply proving that widow marriage is sanctioned by religious works of Hindus, but he got his son married to a widow. He had drifted away in the current of age, but the footprints which he has left on the sands of time will remain forever and never be lost'.²⁵

Over the years there was a debate in Bengal too regarding the women education. Topics like women education and widow re-marriage were objects of derision and held up as warning about the arrival of the apocalyptic *Kalijuga* where everything was upside down. It was rightly observed in an official report that absolute and hopeless ignorance is in general their (womens) lot. The notion of providing the means of instruction for female children never entered in to the minds of the parents; and the girls equally deprived of that imperfect domestic instruction which is sometimes given to boys.²⁶ In the words of Ranjit Sen, 'not giving education to women was the greatest stereotype of life and routine acquiescence to it was a part of the general defense of the country's heritage. At the level of the general folk there was the belief that women, if given education, were bound to fall a prey to widowhood'.²⁷ The situation in Assam was more or less the same. Even a section of people having modern education opposed the women education. In 1835 John M'Chosh wrote, 'Learning was thought too dangerous a power to be instructed to female, and no man would marry a girl if

she could read or write'.²⁸ That some persons having modern education were not enthusiastic for the spread of women education is evident from an article written in *Mau*, a contemporary periodical which reads as follows, '.... Who will accept a woman as his wife, if sitting along with a patient she feels his pulse, examines his tongue, touches his lower part of his body and makes queries not befitting her modest so essential for a women? . . . Western culture, higher education of women in *Page No. 7* particular, it was feared, would produce a greater disaster than the invasion of Burmese in Assam'.²⁹

Although, with the establishment of colonial rule some educational institutions were established in Assam in a gradual process, such institutions could hardly attract the female community of the province. However, persons like Anandaram Dhekial Phukan, Hennchandra Barua, and Gunabhiram Barua made a campaign for women education in the 19th century Assam. Anandaram Dhekial Phukan showed his liberal view in imparting women education even by educating the female members of his family. Phukan said, 'wife and husband both human being. But if a woman remains uneducated one part of the body of her husband will suffer from disease'.³⁰ It may be mentioned here that Haliram Dhekial Phukan, the father of Anandram wrote a number of anonymous letters in Bengali news paper to create public opinion in favour of women education.³¹ Attacking the attitude of men towards women and emphasizing on women education Gunabhiram Barua said, 'There is no possibility of prosperity of society as women folk is not given free atmosphere through imparting of education. Now a good wife at the arrival of her husband says the *dangaria* (Lord) has come, and finds a corner of the house for herself as if a cow is frightened by a tiger. The lord (husband) too does not address his wife with a smiling face thinking that it may look like a signal of indulgence . . . Those who talk and laugh with their wives freely are called henpecked husband and the wives are called devoid of bashfulness . . . Till these are maintained in the name of custom-, there is no scope of uplift of the country'.³² Giving much importance on women education Gunabhiram Boruah said 'education is a door to knowledge' and 'women and men alike should strive together for knowledge'. He further said, 'if God not wanted women to acquire knowledge, he would have created them simply as other animals with hunger thirst and sleep as only their attribute... But this was not the intention of our Lord who has provided men and women alike with intelligence'.³³ Suggesting the Assamese people to make the women educated Hem Chandra Barua wrote articles under caption *Stri Siksha* (women education) in *Orunodoi*. 'The Assamese people do not give knowledge to their daughters if their sons are competent to acquire knowledge, similarly their daughters are also

competent. Therefore, if both of them are made knowledgeable it would be benefit for all'.³⁴ Hem Chandra Barua further writes, 'Men and Women Page No. 8 are equal, hunger, thirst, sleep,... birth and death in both are alike. How unjust, it is to say that only one can have the rights and not they other-this is what anyone with common sense should well understand'.³⁵ So he gives much importance on women education.

In the 19th century the Assamese society was not totally free from some of the social evil and superstitions which were targeted by the social reformers in Assam. Treatments of patient by the application of *Kabiraji* system and worshiping of invisible spirits for protection from deadly ailments prevailed in the society. It was reported in Orunodoi in 1847 that the Assamese people worshiped *Bura Dangaria* (an invisible spirit) for protection from disease like cholera. Explaining the reaction to such kind of treatment, the Missionaries wrote, '... we think that the people did not profit from worshipping *Bura Dangaria*'.³⁶ It is recorded in *Orunodoi* that, 'these practices have not eradicated cholera, people are still dying, the Assamese method could not save a single soul, but the method of the *Padree Saheb* saved some people'.³⁷ Both Gunabhiram Barua and Anandaram Dhekial Phukan, never indulged in such practices and they took up their pen against the social evils of superstitions. Anandaram wrote, 'in most part of the country, incantations, charms and amulets are substituted in place of medicines and the number of death caused by ignorant and opposite treatments is prodigiously great'.³⁸ Anandaram appealed to A.J.M. Mills to establish a medical school to save Assam from deadly disease like cholera.³⁹ Gunabhiram wrote several articles in *Assam Bandhu* against the superstitions.

Hemchandra Barua started a movement against prejudice and superstition. He was a stern believer in the power of the western education to bring about radical reforms in the Assamese society. He was so rational in his thought that once he said, 'The lifeless dead body is like a log of wood; it is simply unnecessary to spend money and energy in order to cremate the dead body with due care'.⁴⁰ Though he was born and brought up in a Brahmin family, he stood against the caste system and accepted food from non-Brahmin families for which he was insulted by the orthodox section of Brahmins who kept him aside from the society calling him as apostate Brahmin.

While persons like Anandaram Dhekial Phukan, Gunabhiram Barua and Hemchandra Barua made a campaign against the social evils persons like Ratneswar Mahanta (1864-93) did not show a positive thought towards the social issues like abolition of child marriage and page No. 9 introduction of women education. Mahanta directly or indirectly patronized child marriage. It is reflected

when he said, বৰ সুখৰ কথা, আজিকালি আমাৰ ইয়াত প্ৰায়ে দহ-বাৰ বছৰীয়া ছোৱালীকহে বিয়া দিয়ে। (it is matter of pleasure that now a days parents of the girls give their daughter in marriage at the age of ten to twelve).⁴¹ Mahanta even argued that the bride should be roughly 1/3 of the age of groom and girls should be given in marriage before attainment of puberty. He further suggested that, 'girls be sent to the house of the groom immediately after the marriage function is over'.⁴² Ratneswar Mahanta wrote a series of articles in *Jonaki* arguing the child marriage quoting some religious texts. However, in the same journal, articles were published protesting the views of Mahanta. One Kamal Chandra Sarma attacked Ratneswar Mahanta even for his misinterpretation of *Manu*. He asked the people of Assam not to give their girls in marriage before 16/17 years of age in order to avoid the adverse effects of the child marriage.⁴³ To Mahanta, 'The prime duty of a wife is to serve the members of her family. 'He further said, 'The traditional daughter-in-laws, having no school education are excellent than the daughters-in-law having modern institutional education'. Again he said that, 'he felt an immaculate joy when he had seen their (daughter-in-laws) emotion to their *gurus* (elders)), inclination to religion, attachment to their duties and love for their family'.⁴⁴ One Purnachandra Sarma wrote an article in *Asam Bandhu* in 1886 under the title *Stri Siksa* (Women education). In this article he explained his view on women education that as there is no question of earning money on the part of women, there is no need of reading books for them and no need to go to the school for acquiring knowledge. Oral education is better for women. They should be given oral education.⁴⁵ The consumption of opium was one of the major social problems in Assam. The habit of opium consumption had been deeply rooted among the agricultural population and some of the hill tribes of Assam.⁴⁶ It was also consumed by the affluent class during marriage celebration and other social functions.⁴⁷ But the social reformers of the 19th century Assam could not take any bold step against this social evil on individual level.

In such a manner a section of growing elite people of 19th century Assam stood as barrier against the social reform movement. On the other hand, the movement at the initiative of Anandram Dhekial Phukan, Gunabhiram Barua, Hemchandra Barua and such other members of elite society could not take the shape of an organized movement under any well-organised Page No. 10 social institution. Moreover, the reform movement of 19th century Assam could not touch in a bold manner some other social problems like caste distinction, colonial labour exploitation and superstition. Not only that, it is evident that sometimes some persons hesitated to openly express their views against the social injustice, rather, published their thought in the form of letters, articles etc. using their pen-

names For example, *Jonaki* published an article in 1811 *Saka* without citing the name of the contributor under the caption পাশাৰ বল নে নৈতিক বল (brutal strength or moral strength) wherein the anguish and protest of the author was reflected against the proverb কটাৰীক খাৰ কৰে শিলে, তিৰোতাক ভাল কৰে কিলে (knife is sharpened by stone, women is taught by beating).⁴⁸ Practically, such persons were not in a position to freely come out from the traditional social bondage. They could not make themselves free from the fear of the social orthodoxy. In the second half of the 19th century a number of social and literary organisation emerged in the province of Assam. The *Gyan Pradayini Sabha* was formed at the initiative of Anandaram Dhekial Phukan and Gunabhiram Barua in 1857 at Nagaon with the object of spreading advanced knowledge among the people. In 1886, through the endeavors of Priyalal Barua, a Deputy Inspector of Schools, a literary association called the *Assam Desh Hitaisini Sabha* was formed at Sibsagar. Again in 1890 there appeared in the province a very useful social organisation called the *Kanee Ntharani Sabha* (Association for the eradication of opium evil.)⁴⁹ With the establishment of such socio-literary organization the social reform movement in Assam gradually took a new shape in the last decade of the 19th century.

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Deforestation and Its Impact On Society And Environment: Perspective Of North Bengal And Beyond

Dr. Kartik Chandra Sutradhar

Associate Professor

Department of History

Cooch Behar Panchanan Barma University, West Bengal

Email: ksutradhar77@gmail.com

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Abstract

Forests or trees are backbone of the living world because it maintains the ecological balance of the world. Without trees no life can survive. Since ancient period people of different communities or religion worship and protect trees and forest. They had rights and liberty on forest. In the pre-colonial period ruling class people would not disturb the indigenous people or so called tribal people for using the forests as their livelihood. But in the colonial and post-colonial period indigenous people lost their rights on forests. It is relevant to mention here that a class of timber merchants or traders including Maphias were created many years ago in the whole areas of Northern Bengal and Assam who had deep and hidden relation to the heavyweight timber merchants in the different parts of the country. They purchased timber illegally or unlawfully not going through the legal procedure of Auction system of the forest and would sent it in the different parts of the country mysteriously and in this task they used local people who collected or thieved timbers from forest and sold it to the merchants at minimum cost. It is unfortunate that in these inhuman, greedy and destructive works many covetous and dishonest forest officials, local political leaders and some anti-social persons were involved and it is more surprising that in these inhuman tasks different tribal people including poor people were/are being used who only were/are being involved for poverty and this opportunity are taken by the Maphias. As a result of the deforestation many natural calamities are taking place such as temperature is increasing, rainfall is decreasing which affected the agriculture, landslides are causing in the hilly areas etc.

Key words: Forest villagers or tribals, North Bengal, Deforestation, Joint Forest Management, Rainfall.

It is said, 'God makes village and men makes town'. Nature and all the natural things were created by God or power whether it may be called which is universal true and on the question of creating nature or natural things men are helpless and powerless. The creation of God or power or nature is such a scientific and universal method that everything has been taking place on the basis of universal law which men cannot alter where all the things whether living or material is going on through a super natural law and in this context all the natural creation have equal right. But covetous men are breaking the natural law by imposing their power on the nature and always creating problems and dangers.

Trees or forest are the best friend of all the living souls without which no one will survive. All most all the essential things of lives are afforded by trees through the ages, best things of living those of which Oxygen, food, clothes, materials of household, medicine etc. In spite of knowing the universal truth men are destroying forest and creating deforestation which is dangerous for existence human being as well as the balance of the ecology and environment of the world. If we go through the history of our past, it is found that the men in everywhere of the world honoured and respected trees, particularly in our country our predecessors worshiped trees or forest considering the trees as their deities or God's creation. But with the rising of imperial power the covetous and selfish people; particularly the powerful ruling class people imposed power on nature as their own property. These powerful men in the wave of time entering the modern age with the coming of industrial revolution, scientific revolution and rising of science and technology started to create township and urbanization destroying trees and forest as well as the villages and day by day this process of modernization are increasing tremendously. Some years ago Charles Malamoud showed the dividing line between the grama and the aranya and in this context he linked it to the Vedic ideology. He also argued that the forest is a part of the aranya even though it is not empty space.¹

We are proud of our predecessors that they would love and respect nature and natural resources and they knew how to protect environment and nature even being uneducated there were many communities who were treated as neglected people or lower graded people or untouchable by the upper strata of the society, as for example Aryans in the Indian society, so called civilised, treated the non-Aryans as Das, Dasyu, Danav, Nisad and Kirat etc. who were aware of the environment. It is true that the common people of ancient India had no formal education but they had nature-based consciousness, they respect nature worshiped nature treating everything in the nature as God or creation of God, There were many social customs, rituals, usages relating to nature and environment which

proves that they were keenly honoured and loved nature and natural creations. Even our traditional literatures like Upanishad which teaches us that everything in the Universe animate or inanimate, are the creation of God and in everywhere there is God or God's touching. Our Rishis or saints in ancient India would live in ashram and love nature, accordingly the Indian tradition different animals are the conveyance of God or Deities which proves that the ancient Indians placed the nature and natural creations even plants and animals to the God or Deities.

It is relevant to mention here that the rural landscape of Mughal India was covered with cultivated land huge number of barren land, forest- jungles and innumerable villages. One of the important features of the village society was existence of village community which was out of the ambit of the so called civic society comprising with elite class people or ruling class people about those of which there were many instances for their existence and which were discussed and analysed many historians, scholars and sociologists.² It is true that in the Mughal period the large areas were covered with forests, deserts, hills, rivers and waste lands which was uncultivated and beyond control of the rulers. Manucci writes, 'There are also in this empire other lords who call themselves zamindarsSuch men do not maintain cavalry: the greater number live in the midst of jungles and these usually pay no revenue, unless it is taken by force of arms. At this day, taking the whole Mughal Empire, these rajas great and petty and the zamindars, exceed five thousand in number'.³

The Mughal rulers had no rigid policy to the different tribal chiefs in the different corners of India. Among the different tribal chieftaincies many of them had accepted Mughal suzerainty, or even been incorporated into its military structure; but many tribal communities, particularly in the remote areas from the capital of the Mughal empire kept themselves beyond the Mughal suzerainty, rather they ruled themselves under their leadership of own community that was the ethnic culture. In the pre-colonial period, people in the Deccan region lived in an eco system which had evolved historically with a complex but mutually sustaining relationship between agricultural, forest and pastoral zones. We have seen the antiquity of the cultural, economic and political contours of this interface after the sixteenth century.....An important point is that peasants and pre-colonial rulers did not develop a 'commercial' attitude towards forests; the control of tribal groups over forests was recognised by the rulers as their unquestionable natural right.⁴

It cannot be denied that the Mughal rulers like the rulers of ancient period were fond of nature; they would love and like nature and natural beauties which were evolved in the art, architecture and paintings of the Mughals. On the other hand the Mughal rulers and princes used forests as their entertainment of hunting.

It is no exaggeration to say that Jahangir was the most astute observer of nature among princes. His eclectic mind made him weigh his trophies, dissect game birds, and keep an accurate record of his bag. He stated that from the time he was 12 years old when he started hunting, to the time he had attained the age of 50 and had been on the throne for 11 years (i.e., 1616) 28,532 head of game had been taken in his presence of which 17,167 animals were killed by him with his 'gun or otherwise'. This mighty record included 86 tigers and lions, 9 bears, cheetahs, foxes, otters, and hyenas.⁵

After coming of the British and established their rule in India they not only dominated on the people, but also imposed their control over the nature and natural resources. They introduced new laws and policies in capturing the nature and natural resources for their heavy financial benefit. Mahesh Rangarajan and K. Sivaramakrishnan in their book 'India's Environmental History' highlighted mainly in the two issues (1) the relentless documentation of colonial deforestation and (2) the impact of this deforestation on the people of India. Makhan Lal in his article shows how the forest would destroy clearing trees or jungles for the agricultural cultivation and other purposes of the human beings.⁶

Different communities so called tribal people in North East India including North Bengal like other parts of India enjoyed the rights on the forests and resources of forests for their livelihood and entertainment which may be called ethic culture according to their customary law but after the establishment of colonial imperial rule they imposed their rules and regulation on the customary laws of the tribal people. The custom of cultivating wastelands known as shifting cultivation or tungya cultivation in the forest lands in North Bengal by villagers 'without authority' was banned by converting wastelands into 'reserved lands'. For implementation of such types of rules on the forest snatching the rights of the tribal people they envisaged in various problems and crises for their livelihood and existence. The state claimed a monopolistic right to alienate these lands, 'under the wastelands sale rules', basically to the propertied classes. The same was true for trees: these were converted into 'reserved' trees; the right to sell them was entrusted to the Forest Department, which in turn sold them 'at higher rates than those charged for unreserved trees'.⁷

Since long past, tribal people or ethnic people of different groups and communities had close relation with forests. Forests were their life and livelihood. After coming of the British, they occupied the forests as their property of income. Naturally, they snatched the rights and liberty of the tribal people from the forests. The discontent of the tribal people was the abolition of customary laws for introducing modern laws, policies and techniques as a result their traditional customs

and culture even the household relations have been hampering. According to the traditional culture of the tribal society the child's socialisation was the women's role. Modern education requires money which some like the Angami and Dimasa would earn by growing cash crops. In the case of Angami it was a second crop of potatoes'. Since they had this source, they had preserved their forest when their neighbours were destroying them. But they began to cut forests in order to earn money when their sons reached the college going age.⁸ Anthropologists and social activists have observed that tribals and other forest dwellers generally used to protect not only individual trees but also forests as they loved forest or trees, and even their entire ecosystems because they have deep rooted vested interests in doing so. Such vested interests are usually institutionalised in the form of well-established practices enforced by various social control mechanisms. This is because, for the tribals and many other forest dwellers, their forests are essential for their very survival.⁹ In this regard Fernandes, Menon and Viegas has pointed out that all the data at our disposal showed that traditionally the tribals had a vested interest in the preservation of forests. They had, therefore, developed a culture that ensured a proper balance between human and ecological needs. They treated the forests and resources of forests as a important source and as a life support system that had to be preserved. In order to achieve this, in some cases they preserved entire ecosystem, in other instances they banned the use of axe and sickle on species that were economically important, restricted the use of other useful species through social control mechanisms, and ensured equal distribution of varieties that could be cut without restriction. The eco-system and the banned species were linked to the continuity of the tribe through the totem and creation myths, thus making the preservation of forests coincide with the conservation of their village or tribe.¹⁰

Like North-East India the tribal of North Bengal also lost their rights and liberty from forest. Rabhas were nature lover and they protected the nature. I have collected some information by going through the Rabha villages situated in the Atiamochar forest at the village of Paglikuti Forest Basti and Rashikbill in Tufanganj Subdivision of Cooch Behar district. It is known after discussing with the villagers that they started to dwell in these forest villages since 1959 where 20 families were settled in Rashik Bill and 20 families were settled in Paglikuti at Atiamochar forest. The said Atiamochar forest was established in 1916 during the reign of Koch king. They had been settled in the forest mainly for looking after and protecting the forest. They had no salary or wages for their hard work in the forest; only 7.5 bighas of lands were allotted them for their livelihood. Beside the works of guarding forest they had to work hard of growing new

plants and cleaning forest without any wages. For this intensive labour and exploitation many of them left the forest. After coming of Left Front Government the system of non-wage was left out and they had been provided some wages for their labour in the garden. At the initial stage they would obtain Rs 3 only per day and thereafter it increased to Rs 6 and Rs. 73.92 at the time of taking interview in 2007.¹¹ But problems were created after one or two decades because the allotted lands of the Rabha families (7.5 Bigha/family) were divided into their successors and naturally after division among the successors after one or two generations it is found that they have no lands for cultivation. Naturally they had to depend on another sources of income for their livelihood; many of them have been working as a labour in different sectors, many Rabha women collected fuel-wood and sold it in the market, many of them have been going outside their periphery and different parts of the country. Since 1959 after settlement in the forest basti up to the date of taking interview on 22.10.2007 only one person, Bijay Rabha was involved in Government job.¹² The same picture is followed in the other forest villages of the Duars which were established in pre-independence period for looking after the forests by settling the tribal people at a low cost taking the opportunity of poverty and simplicity of the tribals. In this respect Dr. Pankaj Debnath writes, 'The beginning of conservation of forest in Bengal in the year 1864 initiated the concept of forest village. Paucity of labour forces was felt inside as well as near the forest area for various forestry works like raising of plantation, protection works etc. These factors together with sparse population and absence of communication facilitate necessitated in the stationing of labourers inside as well as near the forest. Thus, the door for establishment of forest villages deep inside the forest or in the fringe areas was opened up. The main objective behind the establishment of forest villages was easy availability of work force at little cost.'¹³ The motive of the British imperialist power was to usurp the natural resources that rightfully belonged to the local communities. Thus the British colonial masters usurped huge tracts of forest land all over the country through the 'para-military' bureaucracy of forest department. The local forest dwellers, mostly adibasi tribals, who had been traditionally protecting forest and using forest products for their livelihood- as a part of the forest ecosystem itself- lost their traditional rights.¹⁴ But unfortunately, the post-independence forest departments inherited the colonial para-military framework. A pervasive nexus with contractors and mafia further vitiated the situation.¹⁵ So, for the following of colonial policy the problems of the forest, the indigenous people dependent and related to forest have not been solved during the post colonial period. In these circumstances, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MTA) has proposed a

Scheduled Tribes (Regulation of Forest Rights) Bill, 2005 where proposes to bestow twelve specific heritable but not alienable or transferable rights to the forest village tribals. The bill enunciates that 'forests have the best chance of surviving and protecting from the de-forestation by the participation and involvement of the tribal people and the traditional system.'¹⁶ But the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MOEF) protested against the bill; they asserted that the bill will destroy India's forest land and that the failure on the development front should not be compensated by gifting away India's forest heritage.¹⁷ So a contradiction was going on between MTA and MOEF. Such type of forest villages are Nimati-Dabri Forest village, Garam forest village, Chunabati forest village etc. There are more forest villages in the Northern Bengal and Assam also; more or less the condition of the people of all forest villages is same; they are now in various financial crises, for want of job they are affected by poverty.

It is relevant to mention here that a class of timber merchants or traders including Maphias were created many years ago in the whole areas of Northern Bengal and Assam who had deep and hidden relations to the heavyweight timber merchants in the different parts of the country. They purchased timber illegally or unlawfully not going through the legal procedure of Auction system of the forest and would sent it in the different parts of the country mysteriously and in this task they used local people who collected or thieved timbers from forest and sold it to the merchants at minimum cost. In the decades of 1980s and onwards huge number of timbers of different categories have been stolen from the forests of Northern Bengal and lower Assam. Different types of timbers from the forests of Hemaggri, Daldali, Haldibari (Kumargram Duar) under Bhalka Forest Range were stolen and these timbers were passing over the river Raidak II at night, sometimes in the day light and these were reached at Shaldanga from where timbers were loaded in the truck and sent different places. In the same way from the different forests of Buxa, Damanpur, Rajabhatkhawa, Jayanti, Madarihat, Jaldapara etc. situated in the Western Duars timbers were/are being stolen every day and passed out different places of the country. Along the Sankosh river in the same way timbers were passing from the forests of Bhalka range and also from the forest of lower Assam. Huge number of timbers of Shipra forest situated in the bank of Raidak- I near Mahakalguri Gram Panchayet has been stolen and passing out, anybody can realise the picture of the forest that most of the areas near the river Raidak- I became completely vacant means without trees. Still today these stolen timbers locally known as 'Wood no. 2' (Du numbari Kath) is available in the Duars region.¹⁸ Some of the officials of Forest Department, administrators, local leaders of different political parties, goons all know it. But

no protest or voices from any corner are being raised which is unfortunate and mysterious. The timber merchants or maphias were mainly benefitted and became the owners of crores of rupees as a result; many forests in the Northern Bengal and Assam have been destroyed. It is unfortunate that in these inhuman, greedy and destructive works many covetous and dishonest forest officials, local political leaders and some anti-social persons were involved and it is more surprising that in these inhuman tasks different tribal people including poor people were/are being used who only were/are being involved for poverty and this opportunity are taken by the Maphias. Dr. Pankaj Kr. Debnath again writes, 'The forest villagers themselves are regularly involved in cutting of forest trees and selling the head loads of woods in the nearby locality. As there is no gainful economic activity available to the villagers, they have to take this illegal opportunity. The outsiders taking help of the forest dwellers are involved in different illegal activities such as illegal cutting of trees, illegal selling of NWFP and firewood, poaching of wild animals, boulder collection etc'.¹⁹ It is found in the book of Rajib Handique: 'In the session of the Legislative Council held in March 1928, a resolution was moved by Maulvi Munawwarali recommending the appointment of a Committee to enquire into the alleged oppression and corruption of forest officers to suggest remedies.....The Committee was appointed by a resolution No. 3529 R, dated 16th October, 1928..... In course of the enquiry, the committee found that there was widespread corruption prevalent among the officers, especially of the lower grades in the forest Department.²⁰ They know everything; in spite of that the covetous people including some of the higher and lower officials of forest department destructed forests and nature as a result different natural calamities are being taking place.

From the above discussions it can be said that due to deforestation and heavy influx of population, growth of new townships with constructing huge number of building-industries in the un-planned and un-scientific way for the benefit of the covetous and greedy people, increasing huge vehicles tremendously etc. all these things affected environment as a result, different types of natural calamities are taking place such as flood, draught, earthquake, landslide, air pollution, noise pollution, land or soil pollution, green-house pollution. All most all the above mentioned natural calamities including increasing temperature tremendously and decreasing rainfall gradually are related to deforestation. As a result of these natural calamities most of which are men-made and related to deforestation thousands of lives are being destroyed. It cannot be denied that some natural calamities such as earthquake, tsunami, cyclone etc. take place due to natural reasons, here everything depends on nature beyond human capacity; but many of

the natural calamities such as draught, flood, landslide, air pollution, land or soil pollution, green house pollution, decreasing of rainfall, increasing of temperature or global warming, various types of diseases of human body are man-made; as a result, human body are being infected and affected in their day to day lives. In the Duars a major problem in the context of environment was/ is deforestation and occupation of forest lands which is related to many crises and problems of the society and environment. The pressure on forest increased considerably. The killing of wild animals became a sign of bravery, which got glorified with the advent of Europeans. The concept of wild animals trophies and their presence in drawing rooms became a symbol of honour. The increasing population with changing morals led to the death of many wild animals. Forest shrunk considerably to meet the need of sea boats, railway sleepers, furniture etc. The ruling elite introduced legislations of reserve forest, protected forests, un-classed state forests etc. to meet their own needs or deny people's need.²¹

The forest (Conservation) Act 1980 permitting local forest communities to utilise forest products (like leaves, seeds etc.) could now be put to good use. The forest policies of 1988 laid more emphasis on forest management for satisfying the minimum needs of people and strengthen the tribal-forest linkage. In pursuance of the above policy, Govt. of India issued guidelines in June 1990 to all states to adopt a new policy that of 'Joint Forest Management'. Joint here means the Department, local people and NGO. It is a policy which states that people protect forest lands and help in their regeneration and in return, grant the right of collection of fire-wood and non-timber forest produce and a share of the final produce, as decided by the respective state Government.²² In fact, the emergence of three tiers, elected PRIs (Panchayet Raj Institutions), in West Bengal provided the framework for the local community to participate in forest management. A. K. Banerjee, a forester with a refreshing different viewpoint launched the Araabaari experiment of Joint Forest Management in Midnapur. Hailed globally, this shifted the forest protection and management strategy from a bureaucratic to a community mode. The vibrant PRIs in West Bengal could ensure local community involvement in forest management and regeneration through the gramsabhas and gramsansads.²³ In spite of that the policy for participation of the local tribal people in protecting the forest and forest resources, rather the cutting of forests and deforestation was continuing. In this backdrop, therefore, the 2005 bill gives a real boost to the traditional function of Madhab Gadgil's 'Ecosystem People' to protect forest.

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Wild Life and Hunting in Mughal Period and Ecological and Environmental issues: Case study of Pre-Colonial Upper Gangetic Valley

Dr. Jaya Kakkar

Associate Professor

Department of History

Shyam Lal College

University of Delhi

Email :jkakkar@shyamlal.du.ac.in

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Abstract

In the pre Mughal and Mughal time, Indian sub-continent had a thick forest cover which was inhabited by wild animals, some of them exclusive to India. However, by the onset of seventeenth century the Doab area was well cleared of these forests. The writings and memoirs maintained by the Mughal rulers, as also those of the court writers and travellers, give us a vivid account of the ecological and environmental issues of the Mughal period. During most of the Mughal reign hunting of the game like lion, tiger and cheetah was the royal privilege and the nobles in case wished they had to seek permission from the royalty. Consequently wild life abounded. But after their disappearance, and arrival of the Britishers, there was little protection available to wild animals from indiscriminate killing by hunting. Paintings of the Mughal times, of animals, birds and nature provide us glimpse of flora and fauna of that period which apparently was quite rich. But thereafter the decline set in due to multitude of factor, such as deforestation, widespread hunting etc. This was bad news, environmentally and ecologically speaking.

Key Words: *Environment, Ecology, Mughals, Forests, Wild animals, Hunting, Babur, Akbar, Jahangir, Lion, Tiger, Saras Crane, Rhinoceros.*

It is difficult to ascertain the precise forest coverage, notwithstanding the availability of extensive sources, while mapping Indian subcontinent during pre-Mughal times. The information available is very sketchy. In the 13th century forest

spread along the Aravalli range southwest of Delhi. This made the army work extra hard to ensure over control over the area. Controlling the Doab politically was also an onerous task again chiefly due to the same factor. Substantive evidence supports the claim that rebelling peasants used to find escape in these thick forests with impunity. Travellers were often attacked by wild animals if they ventured to travel between Badaun and Delhi, and would avoid doing so if possible.¹ Even in the latter half of the 14th century Katehar (modern Rohilkhand), the area north of Badaun was covered with thick forests. Firoz Shah Tughlaq used to go inside these forests, hunting herds of wild buffaloes and Indian Bison (Gaur). However during 17th century Doab was well cleared of these forests; indeed the whole area was extensively deforested.

Babur established the great Mughal dynasty alone. This remarkable achievement ensured that his name was permanently etched in Indian history. Though he survived only for four years after conquering Panipat, while alive, he would maintain a diary and continuous record of his memoirs which he wrote in his indigenous native Chagtai Turki. When his grandson Emperor Akbar (1542-1605) and later his great grandson Jahangir (1569-1627) decided to commission imperial accounts (Akbar) and personally write in his own hand in Persian, the court language of then as Jahangir did, the Babur's writings became the forerunner. The personal accounts of Babar and Jahangir are an excellent source of the frank and honest developments recorded of their respective times. Jahangir has extensively referred to Babarnama in his own memoirs. He adds that while his great-grandfather vividly penned what he saw and experienced, sadly he did not support his writings by any visual records.² In *Ain-i-Akbari* Abul Fazl wrote the official gazetteer of the provinces of Akbar's Reign. The account provides a unique and detailed description of physical and human geography of the provinces ruled by Akbar. This account is later corroborated by Yusuf Mirak's gazetteers for Sindh, Mazhar Shah Jahani's account (1636), Munhta Nainsi's detailed village wise survey of Marwar (Marwarri Qanganan ri Vigat, c1664) and Muhammad Ali Khan's account in Gujrat in his *Mirat-i-Ahmadi* supplement (1761).³

In fact Mughal official histories as a matter of routine used to provide topographical description of any region into which the Mughal army could make any in roads. That is why Akbarnama of AbulFazl and Padshah Nama of Lahori contain extensive and geographical description of the territories in which Mughal armies operated during the 16th and 17th centuries. The texts and the records of this period clearly mention details of forests in different locations. Habitats of wild elephants being recorded further reinforce the existence of dense forests

since wild life can survive there only. Mention of wild cheetahs implies grassland and scrub. While the camels would breed in the scrubs bordering the desert, the 'gunt' horse would do so in grassland and forests of the cold mountains.⁴

During Mughal period, the government made a claim only on grain surplus. Besides, if the animals reared by farmers exceeded a threshold number, a tax would be levied. But no tax was levied on horticulture, sheep rearing, fisheries or on forest holdings. Indeed, when the Mughal governor in Kashmir attempted to tax sheep rearing and fishery he was removed from his post in face of strong protests by the locals. The emperor Shah Jahan declared any tax on the sheep and fishing as being against the custom, through an edict and prohibited its levy. This edict is still carved upon a mosque in Srinagar. During these times the state could not take away a peasant's land nor did it have any direct claim on it except hunting preserves.⁵ The local population was allowed to gather other material but could not do hunting of games, on the tracts which were declared as emperor's property.

The local communities enjoyed the right to control and manage local resources and they designed a variety of practices for effective resource conservation. However, certain things were acquired by the state from non-cultivated land, elephants being one of these prized possessions. The ever growing demand for elephants in fact caused their gradual disappearance from one forest after the other. While during the time of Kautilya's Arthashastra there is mention of presence of elephants in Punjab and Saurashtra, nearly 1000-1500 years later, in the Mughal period these areas were bereft of them.⁶

The 16th and 17th century texts still mention the presence of wild, or the wild animals being inhabited. Due to human agency intervention borders of some zones got altered. In deltaic West Bengal the local ruler decided to release some elephants into the wild when Bengal was being conquered by Sher Shah (d.1545). In the eastern and south eastern Gujarat, large number of elephants survived in the 17th century. However by 1761 this area was connected with main central Indian forest and the elephants lost their habitat due to human settlements. But for Mughal elephants were the most prized possession from the forest since they were extensively used in wars and for carrying loads. The demand for elephants always exceeded their availability. It is estimated that Akbar establishment alone had a presence of 5000 of these beasts. The ruler of Assam had in his possession nearly 1000 elephants. Every year many were caught there. Some of these were transported from there to the Mughal Empire. While the life of elephants in their natural habitat is very long, they breed with difficulty in captivity. Hence, the major source of replenishment of supply always remained the elephant population

in the wild. Naturally therefore Akbar would get his supply of elephants from the special elephant capture expeditions in forests. Abul Fazl gives an account of these hunting places situated at Agra, Allahabad, Bihar etc. Of course some animals were received as gifts or revenue collection. Only the emperor had the privilege to hunt for the elephants. Others had to buy them sold by either the imperial establishment or by those who might have captured them from forests outside the imperial control in India or South East Asia. While these elephants were occasionally used to carry loads of people and luggage or to pull heavy weights like cannon carts, they were mainly deployed in ceremony and wars. As Barani and Abul Fazl pronounced, a single elephant could replace 500 horses in battle. In C 1600 total domesticated elephant population perhaps exceeded 20,000 if we count those possessed by empire, private persons, other rulers, chieftains and including in the areas of peninsular and north eastern India that lay outside the Mughal domain.⁷

Babur called Indian region as Hindustan to distinguish it from Afghanistan and Central Asia. He has extensively detailed the country and its inhabitants in his memoirs. He was an ardent hunter and was very fascinated by the new animals and birds that he encountered for the first time here, these being nonexistent in his own native land. He provided a unique account of the Indian flora and fauna. Later Jahangir in his writings provided his own description in the foreground of what his great grandfather had already written. It is difficult to surpass Babur's description of animal and birds perhaps even now.

Miniature painting of the Mughal started getting shape when Humayun returned to Kabul from Persia. He reappointed Mir Sayyid and other painters from the court of Shah Tahmasp as his principal artist. When he reestablished himself in India in 1555 he brought Mir Sayyid Ali and Abdus Samad along.⁸ Since paper was available in plenty from Sialkot, Lahore and Daulatabad in continuous supply, there was no difficulty in painting on large scale. Akbar set up an atelier at his court and brought Mughal paintings to their maturity. But it was Jahangir during whose rule these reached their pinnacle. Animals and birds were extensively the subject matter of these paintings. Later Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb perhaps wanted to record for posterity the glimpse of their lifestyle, including hunting in numbers. All these writings, paintings and other accounts enable us to recreate and trace not only the wildlife and hunting during the Mughal times but also the environmental and ecological history of our medieval past.

Babur makes no mention of lion and says little about tiger, though he records having killed a tiger.⁹ Probably he was familiar with these animals before he landed on Indian soil since these were not peculiar to Hindustan. But he makes

no mention of any lion being pursued. Likewise, the accounts pertaining to Humayun's times also make no mention of accounts with lions. During Akbar's time there used to be a large entourage for hunting. Sir Thomas Roe, Ambassador of King James I, gives vivid details of such camps. When Mughal emperors hunted with such large entourage naturally their hunting areas could not have been far away from their camps. So naturally these hunting grounds would be located in plains. Rogers and Beveridge in their account state that Jahangir had estimated that it would require about 100000 buffaloes and Banjara tribesmen to meet the food requirements of the large army in its march from Multan and Kandhar since the regions covered by army's march had little cultivation.¹⁰

Prof Irfan Habib counts sixteen places where Mughal entourages would camp for hunting. These included Jodhpur, Merta (Rajasthan), Rupbar, Bari (Agra), Bathinda, Sunam (Punjab), etc. This highlights the fact that they were moving about in or near the most preferred habit of the lion that is the grassland and scrublands of the northern India. Likewise as Constable mentions (Constable: 1934, p.375) Francois Bernier gives a graphic account of the Mughal hunting grounds during the time of Aurangzeb based on his travels through the Mughal empire between 1656-1668.

There used to be different methods for hunting. Thus in Qamargha the army used to enable the emperor and his chosen nobles to hunt from the horse back. In Shakhband, a stockade, for example Akbar hunted for five days in 1567 and the catch included chital, nilgai, hare, hyena, and many more (Beveridge, 1909, Vol-II, p.422-24) other techniques involved coursing with trained cheetah, and hawking.

Lions were royal games and could be hunted only by the emperor and with his permission by the nobles in the empire. Thomas Roe had to seek Jahangir's permission to tackle a rogue lion. (Devyabhanu Singh, 2005, p.216). Constable (Constable, 1934, p.379) quotes Francois Bernier '.... of all the diversions on the field the hunting and the hunting of the lion is not most perilous but is peculiarly royal; for except by special permission, the king and the princes are the only persons who engage in the sport'.

According to Welch (Welch 1986), Thomas Roe reports that the imperial standard reported a couchant lion and a rising sun. In Padshahnama the chronicle to Shah Jahan's reign by Abdul Hamid Lahori, a painting by Payag shows a siege of Qandhar by the emperor's army headed by Nasiri Khan. The imperial standards are scarlet pendants with green borders and a lion with rising sun behind it (Deach and Koch, 1997:18).

Such symbolism since ancient period was commonly found in legacy Persian imagery. But it also reflects the Hindu's sun worship on one hand and the symbolism of lion with Hindu royalty and divinity. Of course the Mughals adopted these symbols from their own cultural heritage. Yet they could not have been unaware about the symbolic place of lion and sun already stationed in the royal traditions even before they stepped into India.

Emperor Akbar would keep a record of the number of game he hit as also that of the guns used for hunting (Constable, 1934, p. 379). Jahangir too loved to be equally meticulous. Thus he mentions in the eleventh year of his reign that during the last 39 years 25,532 animals and birds were hunted in his presence out of which 17,167 were preyed upon by Jahangir himself. According to him he had shot 86 lions, a matter of pride for him (Thackston 1999, p.216). Bernier says, 'You must know that it is considered a favourable omen when the king kills a lion, so is the escape of the animal portentous of infinite evil to the state' (Constable, 1934, p.379).¹¹

Akbar's bravery and courageousness finds a mention umpteen times by his record keepers. It is said that he would prefer to aim at lion from his horseback with an armoury of bows and arrows and at times even on foot although gun power was available to him for safer hunting. His successors not an adventurous opted for safer mode of elephants, etc. while hunting the lions.

Jahangir was not only an avid hunter and chaser of his catch but was an acute observer of flora and fauna. This he would accurately record in his memoir; these now provide an excellent account of this fact of his life and time for posterity. Interestingly he would show compassion in ordering that elephants be bathed in warm water during winters or in building a grand monument for his favourite blackbuck Mansraj at Shaikharpura (Lahore). And yet at the same time, could, without a blink of the eye, could order the killing of a servant who unknowingly came in the way of his hunting expedition. In 1611 he is said to have hunted one lion in one week continuously. This pointed out that these cats abounded during those times. Of course unlike their predecessors, Mughals allowed no one other than nobility to hunt. The royal cat without their specific permission. After all a lion embellished on Mughal's imperial standards, symbolising regal power. Although their successors in the 18th century continued hunting progressively the pomp and show was gradually fading. Indeed later Mughals were only a pale replica of true blue blood forefathers, adding nothing to the royal hunting practices of the past. Eventually of course the last Mughal Bahadur Shah Zafar was exiled to Rangoon in 1859 thereby bringing to an end the story of Mughals in India.¹²

Ibn Battuta, as early as in 1330s, mentions the presence of rhinoceros while he was crossing the Indus near Multan and near Bahraich in East Uttar Pradesh.¹³ Of course he sighted elephants, lions and tigers as well. 200 years later Babur again mentions the presence of rhinoceros in abundance in Peshawar, Hasthagar, and at other places, providing credence to what Ibn Battuta had written. Abul Fazl notes its presence in Northern Rohilkhand in his accounts in *Ain-I-Akbari*.¹⁴ But apparently by the early decades of the 17th century the animal had vanished from northwest Panjab, since Jahangir does not talk about them in his hunting expedition accounts. It was present within Uttar Pradesh till late 18th century but not anymore. The composition of wild life has been changing due to multiplicity of factors. Indeed a worrying factor.

Somewhat similar is the story of the wild buffaloes who were found in Gangetic basin. Large herds of the animal were present in Katehr (Rohilkhand) during the late fourteenth century. During Mughal period they were present in the province of Awadh (Central and Northern U.P), Tirhut (Bihar), near Burdwan and in Sunderbans. But now the specie is found only in some parts of northeast India, Orissa, Chhattisgarh and may be eastern Maharashtra.¹⁵

There arises a typical problem in decoding the Persian texts as regard, lions and tigers since the Persian languages use the word *sher* for both these animals. In Mughal paintings tiger appears more often, although lion, and even less often a lioness, too finds a depiction once in a while. One can make only a safe and reasonable conjecture that tiger was present in Gangetic basin and lion ruled the area in the Indus basin and Gujarat. Cheetah (Leopard) was there too from the cat family. But the reign of Akbar proved to be fatal for it. Cheetah has great capacity to hunt down its prey. This quality was hugely acknowledged by Akbar. And he decided to train nearly 1000 cheetahs for chasing animals while he was hunting them. *Ain-i-Akbari* lists many places from where cheetahs were captured. Ten of these places are located in a broad belt near Pattan (Panjab), Sunam (Haryana), and Jodhpur and Merta (Rajasthan). There were also places on both banks of river Chambal (Dholpur). In *Mirat-i-Ahmadi* there are other cheetah location like in northern Gujarat and Northern Saurashtra. All the cheetah habitats were located in desert scubby area or slightly rocky countryside. Perhaps the use of this animal for hunting purposes by Mughals proved to be its nemesis, since cheetahs do not breed in captivity, and they were kept like that by Mughals. Whatever remained of them was also destroyed by British hunters and their Indian followers in post Mughal period. Result: the tribes of cheetahs is now well and truly found no more in wilds; it has become extinct.¹⁶

On Animals and Animal Behaviour

(a) Wild Assess in Haryana and Punjab : Accounts by Shams Siraj Afif 1400 the wild assess live in the countrywide in jungles, such as between Dipalpur and Sarasti (new called Sirsa). The land is mostly devoid of ground water, with wilderness extending in all directions. The water may not be available even after digging 100 yards deep into ground wild assess can survive in their environment. When they become thirsty they can travel a distance of even 80 *kuroh*, to drink water and then come back to their original place of habitation. During winter season they scatter apart as also in rainy times, so can't be hunted. During summer they become a target since they assemble together at one place. So when emperor Firoz Tughlaq (1359-88) wished to hunt this animal, he established his camp between Sarasati and Abohar.¹⁷ Gradually he narrowed his catchment area to a circle of four *kurohs*. That is how countless wild assess were encircled. Once done, the king went on a hunting spree right from early morning till late evening. When evening prayer time came the circle was lifted and the king returned to the camp. This is how hunting was done.

(b) The rhinoceros description by Babur (1526): Karg or rhinoceros is another Indian animal, very bulky and humungous in size, equal to three buffaloes. The anecdotal saying, perhaps wrong, is that it can lift an elephant on its horn. It has one horn fixed upon its snout, with a width not larger than a Wajah (distance between tip of human thumb and little finger). It has a very thick hide, which is very difficult to penetrate. It was said that if one shoots from a strong bow, fully extending the arm and drawing the bow to its full length, and if the arrow strikes well, then it can penetrate its hide up to three or four finger breadth, though from some specific spots the arrow may pass through into the vitals of the animal. On the thighs, folds fall down which appear from far as being something draped on the body. In its body structure rhinoceros resembles horse. Thus both don't have a large stomach, both have only one piece of backbone below their ankle, both have hoof in their foot. It was a fierce nature, more than an elephant, and cannot be tamed or obedient. The animal is found in great number in jungles of Peshwar and Hashtghar; it is also resident of the tract between the Indus and Bhera in the jungles.¹⁸ In what is known as Hindustan, now it is found in large numbers on the banks of the Saru (old course of kauriala). Abdul Rahim says 'during (my) the expedition into Hindustan, the rhinoceros was (hunted and) killed by us in the jungles of Parshawar and Hashtghar. These animals use their horns so effectively that during these hunts, they gored with their horns several persons and several horses. During one hunt, it threw the horse of a youth Maqsud by name to the distance of a spear length' (Note: The above is a translated version of Abdul

Rahim's Persian translation of Baburnama made of Akbar's behest. it is contained in British Museum. M.S. br 3714fa 37. a-b).

(c) The Saras Crane: An Observation Recorded by Jahangir: In Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, ed. Syed Ahmad, p. 238 (as quoted in the translated form in A People's History of India, 36, The Ecological History of India by Irfan Habib, Aligarh Historians Society, Tulika Books Delhi, 2010) an account by Jahangir was quoted who was at Ahmedabad, Gujarat.¹⁹ He had brought a pair of saras cranes himself. The female saras had laid eggs for the first time). The account (paraphrased by the present author) goes something like this: from Sunday the 3rd Shahrivar (August 23, 1619) till the right of Thursday it poured incessantly. Normally, on other days the pair of saras cranes would take five to six times to sit on the eggs. But during these rainy days and nights, when the air was somewhat cold, the male sat on the eggs from early morning till mid-day continuously. Thereafter the female would take turn till next morning. This was perhaps due to the inherent knowledge embedded in the animals that otherwise cold and humidity could have ill effect on hatching of the eggs. Apparently while man attains understanding by the guidance of reason, animals too naturally get it too by God's wisdom (hitkmat-i-azali). Interestingly, while in the earlier days of the sitting bird kept the eggs close together under its breast, after 14-15 days it set these eggs apart, again with the innate feeling perhaps that too much closeness could lead to high temperature which again could spoil the eggs.

Overall we can surmise that writings and memoirs of historians, court writers, and emperor themselves of medieval era provide us interesting and useful glimpse into the environmental and ecological history of that period. They enable us to reconstruct the existence of flora and fauna of the time.

Thus Shams Siraj Afif, the historian was engaged in organising Firoz Tughlaq's hunting expeditions. From his personal observations, he recorded a striking account of wild ass in the dry zones of Haryana and Punjab.

Babur (d. 1530) went even further in the splendid memoirs he attempted to conduct scientific enquiry. He would look at the bones of animals and seek similarities. Thus he argued that rhinoceros shared some common features with the horse in their anatomy and foot bone and hoof. This conforms to the standard zoological classification where under rhinoceros is placed alongside the horse. Babur approach to his description of flora and fauna was very systematic. He suggests that a number of mammals, birds, and aquatic animals, including of course rhinoceros were peculiar to India. It is interesting that he could find times to arrive at such insightful conclusions while he was continuously engaged in military campaigning during 1526-1530. His observations were first in the line about many

animals then found in India particularly his passage on the Gangentic dolphin (khuk-i-abi, the water pig).

Akbar, the Babur's grandson, not only inherited his interest in animals but in his fairly long rule have the resources to establish a large stables for many animals like mules, oxen, elephants, horses etc. He also gathered cheetahs, caracals, dogs buffaloes and hawks which he would train to help him in his hunting expeditions. He got Babur's memoirs translated into Persian. This version now in British Museum had profuse illustration by the court painters. These illustrations provide fairly accurate depiction of the animals described by Babur.

Jahangir (reigned 1605-27) was not only acute observer of animals but also took pain to translate these observations into words in his memoirs. He could cut open the stomach of a killed bird, snake or fish to see what it ate. In our essay we have described how he observed the eggs hatching process of saras cranes. Jahangir had also commissioned his best painters including Mansur to draw different animals and flowers.²⁰

We can surmise that perhaps two parallel threads were running which united to generate passion for animals among Mughal rulers. On one hand they became interested in animals because they were committed to hunting. But on the other hand they also became interested due to their growing sense of compassion for all animals, hunted or otherwise. They tried to domesticate many of them. It would be not incorrect to say that they were partly influenced by the Indian traditions of ahimsa, not only for the sake of rearing cattle but also in line with Jain tradition, for all animal life. In fact in Islam to the Sufi (mystic) tradition exhorts that we should avoid all meat and fish and eat only vegetarian diet called ta'am - i - sufiyana. In fact in May 1578 Akbar had organised a huge encirclement in Salt range by deploying thousands of soldiers to entrap wild animals. But at the last moment when he was ready to begin hunting he had the encirclement lifted and freed all the catch ready for hunting. Not only that he named this place as 'little Mecca'. Akbar and Jahangir also prescribed that on certain days every week as also during specific periods during the year no animal slaughter would be allowed. They also forbade cow slaughter in many areas under their control.

Abdu'l Qadr Badauni wrote a work on ethics, Najatur Rashid, in 1590's. He was an orthodox scholar and critic of religious views held by Akbar. In the book he quotes from the Prophet: God puts a curse on him who slaughter a cow, cuts down a tree and sells a human being. He laments that while many Muslims ascetics and mystics never indulge in partaking meat yet common Muslims have the common practice to have their religious faith confirmed only when they have consumed beef. Then he exclaims God be praised! It is spectacle

(tamasha) to see where Islam has to go! In other words contrary to popular belief all Muslims were not compulsive meat eaters many of them were animal lovers and keepers of them.

The great Mughals replicated many practices of, and policies of, their predecessors they were no different. However unlike the earlier ruler they were very clear that lion was a royal game. A lion could only be hunted by royalty no one else except when someone was granted a specific permission to chase it. Lions to Mughals, stood for regal power and it sat proudly on their imperial standards. Their hunting expeditions were grandly organised, as everything else. In the Mughal Empire there were huge tracts of land where lions resided and in great numbers. Everywhere the Mughals advanced they could find their game in cultivable wasteland and uncultivable tracts. India was truly a preserve of the royal animal. Yet since there was a restriction imposed on hunting of lions by the royalty the animal survived.

However 200 years after Jahangir died lions had almost vanished as a tribe in India. For obvious reasons as pointed out earlier Unlike the Sultanate predecessors the Mughals did not allow free hunting of game animals and birds. Even for the smaller creatures which would be easily killed their set aside large hunting grounds. But after their rule started seeing sunset protection remained no more available to these animals. Lion was a prized and easy target because of its gregarious and diurnal habits. Not only was it constantly pursued by the hunters its natural habitat was also encroached upon by human beings. India's population is estimated to have grown from 116 million (1600) to 159 million (1800),²¹ according to Guha (Guha, 2001:34, 58). While, Emperor Jahangir was a zealous hunter with all the resources at his command is estimated to have killed 86 lions in a span of 39 years. Not a very large number in comparison with overall lion population. But once he died the successors was not very protective.

And after the Mughals disappeared from the scene, the animal kingdom was all available for decimation. Only the last Mughals in the 18th century lacked resources to continue hunting with royal fervour. But it is rumoured that just before the last Mughal was to fade out of the stage with curtains drawn, a single British officer shot as many as 300 lions. Presumably we can accept this figure with a pinch of salt. Still there is no gain saying the fact that the hunting field had become free for all with little protection available to the animal kingdom. This could have perilous effect on the ecological and environmental life in India subsequent time.

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Early Tamil Cinema: A Historical Perspective

Dr.T. Asokan

Associate Professor

Department of History

Bharathidasan University, Tamil Nadu

Email : asokan.bard@gmail.com

&

Dr. S.Anbalagan

Former Research Scholar

Department of History

Bharathidasan University, Tamil Nadu

Email: Abu.history@gmail.com

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Abstract

Cinema is one of the powerful modern innovative technologies that evolved in the world at the end of the 19th century. Though the techniques were emerged from the western world, it was immediately imported and adopted to India. Particularly, Tamil Nadu is the place known for its remarkable growth for its earlier cinema. Some of the notable pioneers such as Samikannu Vincent and Rangaswamy Nataraja Mudaliar played a leading role in this connection. Hence, this article is going to analyze the growth of early Tamil cinema, and how these technologies were imported from the western world, and also the contributions of the forerunners for the growth of early Tamil cinema.

Keywords: *Electric Theatre, Silent film, Samikannu Vincent, Rangaswamy Nataraja Mudaliar, Variety Hall, Valli Thirumanam, The Indian Film Company, Tamil Cinema, Edison Theatre.*

None of the techniques or technology, employed in cinema, was invented overnight. The evolution of cinema is a history of more than a century. In a similar vein, no technology used in early Tamil cinema had its origin in Tamil Nadu, not even in India. In fact, the evolution of cinema cannot be attributed to a single person or even a single country. Even before the term and industry called 'Cinema' came into existence, different people had invented various techniques, which at some point of time became part of cinema. In the early Tamil cinema, Samikannu Vincent and Rangaswamy Nataraja Mudaliar played a pivotal role in

the development of films in the Madras Presidency. This article going to discuss the early Tamil cinema, and how various technologies came to the Madras Presidency, and also the consistent efforts of the early pioneers.

In 1897, Cinema made its appearance at Victoria Town Hall, Madras and no one had an idea that they were witnessing the birth of a novelty. Before long, in some parts of the city, small roadside shows appeared, screened, with the help of magnesium lamps and hand-operated projectors. Short pieces such as *Arrival of a Train* and *Leaving the Factory* were shown. These short films consisted of simple visual gags, lasting a few minutes and an entrance fee was collected. Lanternists were trying novel ideas to attract people. The exhibitors, most of them were Whites, using open spaces in the parks, and beach. In the first few years, cinema shows were looked upon as a mere curiosity of pictures that moved. There was no anticipation or indication of it emerging as an entertainment giant. By 1900, feature films from the West were screened in regular shows. However, there was no permanent place to show them. Then, permanent cinema houses came up and the first was Electric Theatre in 1900, built by one Warwick Major, which still stands in the *Anna Salai* post office complex.¹

It was also the time when many scientific inventions were slowly but steadily influencing the lives of the people of Madras. Motor cars, with excessive noise, had become a symbol of status. Tram services were started two years earlier. Telephone service was made available, though rare. Music records were available, and cinema was being shown to the people. During those years, the elite of the city could enjoy their weekends in diverse ways. They could go to the Electric Theatre or Gaiety to watch a silent film, enjoy a play at the Lyric Theatre on Mount Road, appreciate a Western music concert, dance a waltz or a foxtrot, visit the National Art Gallery, attend a Carnatic music recital at the Music Academy or enjoy a Bharatanatyam performance at the famous Kalakshetra.

Samikannu Vincent

Madras stepped early into the world of movie-making. Samikannu Vincent, an employee of the South Indian Railway, was one of its first eminent film personalities. He was born on April 18, 1883, in Kottaimedu,² Coimbatore. Samikannu worked as a draftsman in the Railways in Trichy.³ In 1905, quite by accident, he met Dupont, a Frenchman, who was returning from Sri Lanka after holding film shows. This turned out to be an inflection point in the history of Tamil cinema. For a sum of Rs. 2000, Dupont's equipment, along with a copy of the forty-five-minute short film, *Life of Jesus Christ*, changed hands. Vincent

screened the first show at St. Joseph's School in Tiruchi.⁴ He called his unit Edison's Cinematograph and toured Madurai, Tirunelveli, and Rameshwaram, holding shows of the film, using carbide jet-burners for projection. He came to Madras and screened the film for seventy-five days. Soon he tied up with Pathe of the United States, a well-known pioneering film all over the Presidency. During 1905, electric carbons were used for motion picture projectors, and during the same year, Vincent established his first tent cinema at Madras, called Edison's Grand Cinema, with a megaphone from Esplanade and equipment bought from Kement Company of London.⁵ The electrically lit tent and the new equipment attracted large crowds. The shows were a huge success. Hence Samikannu took his tent cinema to Bombay, Lucknow, Lahore, Peshawar, Burma, and also traveled to Malaya, with his equipment. By 1909, he started using electric carbon for projection.⁶

Aware of the advantages of having a brick and mortar cinema house, he built one in his hometown, Coimbatore, in 1914 and called it 'Variety Hall'. It was the first cinema theatre in Coimbatore and also became the first theatre of the then Madras Province, which included the present Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, and Andhra.⁷ Ronder Guy, 'He brought cinema to south' in *The Hindu*, April 29, 2010. Vincent imported films from abroad and also dealt with movie exhibition equipment.⁸

Later, when talkies arrived, it became Variety Hall Talkies. This institution turns 100 this year, and it still functions as a movie hall, now called Delite Theatre. Winfred Paul, Samikannu's grandson, who spent close to 10 years with him, explained how Variety Hall Theatre initially screened only Tamil films. The audience sat on a sand floor. Chairs were put up only for important people. As the silent film unfolded on the screen, a person with a microphone stood in front and explained the sequences. 'When talkie films came, two floors - a floor for benches and another one for backbenches were added. Then came the balcony with chairs and it then gave way to sofas'. The Hall could hold 700 people. The ceilings were arched and were fitted with fans. Paul remembers how *zamindars* from the neighbouring *Uthukuli Zamin*, came in their plush cars, to watch the films.⁹

Later, when Central Studios was established in Coimbatore in 1937, Samikannu joined the board as one of the directors and involved himself in its activities for some time.¹⁰ In 1933, *ValliThirumanam* was based on a famous tale about Lord Muruga (Tamil God).¹¹ The National Movie tone of Bombay also released a film titled *Valli*, during the same year, starring T.S. Santhanam and Pankajam but that film failed. However, this *ValliThirumanam*, jointly produced by Pioneer Film Company of Calcutta and Coimbatore-based exhibition business

magnate Samikannu, achieved a grand success. Heroine T.P. Rajalakshmi's popularity soared after this film and she was hailed the "*Cinema Rani*" (Queen of the Movies) by the media and masses. This was a big box office success and the first money spinner of Tamil Cinema, introducing a craze for mythological films. The film was made in just 10 days. When the prints were taken out of the laboratory at Calcutta for dispatch to Madras, it was found that one of the negative reels was missing. As the release date was already announced, the film was released without that reel. The first major box office success in Tamil cinema, it had three shows in theatres, which was unusual at that time. It was also played in noon shows, at New Elphinstone Theatre, on Mount Road, Madras. When the film was running well, the missing negative reel was found in Calcutta. The producers made prints of that reel and sent it to Madras to be added to the prints already in circulation. He used this opportunity innovatively and brought out wall posters, announcing that the missing reel had been found and the film would now be screened with the additional reel. This created another sensation and even people, who had watched it earlier, came back to watch the film again, thus adding to the box office collections. This innovation of adding a missing song or an additional song to an already running film is followed even today for new films in Tamil Cinema.¹²

ValliThirumanam was probably among the films, shown in the tent cinemas in Burma, Malaya, and other places.¹³ After the roaring success of *ValliThirumanam*, Samikannu Vincent was eager to produce another movie, with the active association of the Pioneer Studios in Calcutta. They did *Harishchandra* (1935). This familiar tale of the truthful King of Ayodhya had been made many times (even a silent one) and in several languages.

The talking picture version in Tamil of this stirring story was produced in 1932, under the title, *SampoornaHarishchandra*, in Bombay, by Sagar Film Company. One of the early noted filmmakers of Tamil Cinema, Raja Chandrasekhar directed it. Samikannu Vincent's version was produced in Calcutta, with the famous stage and screen star of the day, V.A. Chellappa, and T. P. Rajalakshmi in the lead roles. It was directed by noted filmmaker, Prafulla Ghosh, who had made quite a few Tamil films in Calcutta, during that period.

The next film, Samikannu Vincent produced in association with Pioneer Studios, was *Subhadra Parinayam* (1935), under the banner, 'Variety Hall Talkies. Sambur Vadagarai Subbaiah Bhagavathar was the first trained Carnatic musician to enter Tamil Cinema.¹⁴ Besides production, Samikannu was also interested in theatre management and equipment distribution. Realizing the need for a printing press to produce quality handbills and other materials, he promoted the printing

press (around 1916), which was located in a house near his theatre. He expanded the activities of the press by installing additional machinery, types, and printing accessories in another building. Called Electric Printing Works, he used the cinema house's electric power plant to run the printing press too and created history of sorts.

In 1922, the then Government of Madras permitted him to supply electric power to the famous Stanes European High School. With the encouragement of Sir C.P. RamaswamyIyer, a member of the Governor's Executive Council in charge of the Electricity Portfolio, he was given enough support by the Government.¹⁵ His application was approved and the license to set up a powerhouse was granted. The streets of Coimbatore and the residential buildings in the heart of the City had electric lights.

In 1927 when Edison's Theater came up for sale, Vincent bought it. He screened English movies at Variety Hall and Tamil films at Edison's Theater. In 1927, movies began to 'talk' in America, with 'The Jazz Singer'. Vincent kept up with the progress, improvement, and inventions that took place in the international motion picture industry and ordered sound projection machines for Variety Hall and Edison's Theater. Coimbatore beat Madras by becoming the first city in South India, to have talkie equipment. In 1936, Vincent got a third theatre, Palace, just to screen Hindi movies. By 1939, after Central Studios went full steam into production, Samikannu Vincent retired. Son, Paul Vincent, and others took over the businesses. Samikannu Vincent passed away in April 1942.

Rangaswamy Nataraja Mudaliar

Another important pioneer of early Tamil cinema was RangaswamyNatarajaMudaliar. He was born on January 26, 1885, at Vellore.¹⁶ After his school education, Mudaliar relocated to Madras, to make his way into an automobile spare parts dealership in the provincial capital.¹⁷ In the city, he set up a bicycle business in partnership with his rich cousin, S. M. DharmalingamMudaliar under the name and style of 'Watson & Company'.¹⁸ A cycle was then sold at Rupees 25. In 1911, the partners acquired a foreign firm, Romar, Dan, and Company, dealing with the import of American cars and automobile spares. Thus, Mudaliar was the first Indian to sell American cars, which were available at Rs. 1,000 per car.¹⁹ Besides business, he had a lively interest in photography and the new medium of moving pictures. Inspired by the films of DadasahebPhalke and R.G. Doornie, he was drawn into the medium of cinema.

Lord Curzon was then the Governor-General and the Viceroy of India and his 'durbars' and social activities were being filmed as a newsreel by British

cinematographers. Mudaliar established contact with one of them, Stewart Smith, who owned a cinema company in Poona (now Pune) and succeeded in persuading him to teach the basics of cinematography.²⁰ Armed with limited knowledge and unlimited enthusiasm, NatarajaMudaliar brought in some of his business associates and friends as investors and built a studio, 'The Indian Film Company' at Miller's Road, Purasaivakkam Chennai, in the year 1915.²¹ Mr. Moopanar of Thiruvaiyar, who had brought a Williamson camera and printer from England, was on the lookout for a buyer for them. NatarajaMudaliar grabbed the equipment by paying him a sum of Rs. 1800²² and also bought film roll from London.²³

He sought the advice of his friend, PammalSambandamMudaliar, one of the founding fathers of the Renaissance of Tamil Theatre, and he suggested that he should picturizethe well-known story of Draupadi and Keechaka. Interestingly, some relatives objected to it for they felt that for the first venture, it was not the proper story.²⁴ However, Mudaliarpursued and engaged a stage actor, RajuMudaliar, to play the role of Keechaka, and a stage actress, Jeevaratnam for Draupadi. This film was shot in thirty-five days in his studio, The India Film Company, on Millers Road, Purasawalkam, in Chennai.²⁵

Nataraja Mudaliar had printing and editing of the film roll laboratory, at Bangalore, for all his silent movies. He imported the techniques of printing and editing to Narayanasamy. He was the first laboratory worker and he stayed in Bangalore. NatarajaMudaliar sent the film roll immediately to Bangalore, for editing and printing as soon as the shooting was over. He went every Sunday, to Bangalore, to supervise his laboratory. K.A. Achari, who had been trained in processing methods, was put in charge.²⁶ In 1916, R. NatarajaMudaliarlaunched his maiden movie, *KeechakaVadham* which screened at the Elphinstone theatre.

It was the first silent film in Madras City, in whichNatarajaMudaliar was the writer, camera operator, editor, producer, and director of the film. The 6,000 feet long *Keechaka Vadham* was a success, both critically and with a box-office collection.²⁷ Though the film was silent, people could easily understand it because of its mythological nature. There were inter-title cards between shots, explaining the dialogue or action. They were written in several languages, including Tamil, Hindi, and English. The Tamil inter-titles were written by Pammal Sambandam Mudaliar, who was a City Civil Court Judge.²⁸ The Hindi inter-titles were written by Devdas Gandhi, who was the Son of Mahatma Gandhi.²⁹

In 1918, Mudaliar selected the story from a small part in Mahaparatham, for his second film, 'Draupadi Vastrapaharanam'.³⁰ It featured an Anglo-Indian actress named Violet Berry because, at that time, Indian cultured women believed that bad luck would befall them if they were photographed. RangasamyPillai explained the shot sequences in English to the heroine properly,³¹ and the film

became successful. He has also made films, having the features of mythology like *Lava Kusa* (1919),³² *Kalinga Mardanam* (1920),³³ *Rukmini Satyabhama*, or *Rukmini Kalayanam* (1921),³⁴ *MayilRavan* (1922), and *Markendeya* (1923). All these films were 6000 feet long each. He went to Vellore for the technical controversy of his partner cum associates. Except for the *Keesagavatham* and *Draupadi Vastrapaharanam* movies, all the above movies were produced and directed by NatarajaMudaliar.³⁵

R. NatarajaMudaliar was very eager to challenge the British through his movies, especially to emphasize the importance of the Kadar clothes, made by Swadhesi Indians.³⁶ But at that time, his financial status was critical and no one was interested in producing this type of movie. Hence, he stopped directing the movie and ran into the motorcycle business.

Contributions of Others to the Development of Early Tamil Cinema

While Nataraja Mudaliar was the first to establish a studio in South India, it was Ragupathy Prakasha and A Narayanan who strengthened the cinema industry and took it to the next level. Prakasha was trained in cinema production in English and he came back to Madras and founded the Star of the East Film Company. He debuted with the production of *Bishmarin Sabatham* and went on to produce many more films. Even though the company was in existence only for four years, its contributions were vital and long-lasting.³⁷ Narayanan started Exhibitor Film Services and imported American movies and distributed them to Indian theatres. Padmanabhan, who worked with Narayanan, started Associate Films and produced some movies. Venkaiyah, who owned a photo studio in Madras Mount Road, was attracted by these initiatives and wanted to get into cinema production. He imported Chronomegaphone to synchronize movies and music. He was successful in that venture.³⁸ Undeveloped camera film rolls were sold by Kodak in the 1930s. Its executive officer was Ramamoorthy.³⁹ Germany's Agfa was another company that sold undeveloped films.⁴⁰ *Vishnuleela*, produced by Prakasha and released in 1932, was the last silent film produced in Madras.⁴¹

When silent films were screened, subtitles were added for the audience to understand. However, there were illiterates and hence storytellers were hired to explain the story alongside the screening of the movie. These storytellers were paid Rs. 50 per month and they were provided with accommodation and food.⁴² They stood at the corner of the screen and loudly explained the story behind the scenes.⁴³

The cinema industry was an all-men industry then. Women did not volunteer for a career in cinema because women's acting in films was considered taboo. This was a big challenge for the directors and men usually played the role of

women in films. This challenge was partially overcome by bringing Anglo-Indian women. For example, Natarajamudaliar employed an Anglo-Indian lady called Violet Berry.⁴⁴ Gradually, they played the heroine roles. Fashion Cooper was the first such Anglo-Indian to play the female lead.⁴⁵ They even changed their names, suiting the native names. For example, Ree Nee Smith became Sita Devi, Beryl Classen became Mathuri, and Elfie Hippole became Lalitha Devi. One such significant person was Ruby Meyers, who became Sulochana and was awarded the Dada Saheb Phalke award in 1973.⁴⁶

As observed earlier, American films were imported in large numbers and they were also available in a large number of prints. This meant that the rights fee for these films was lower. For obvious reasons, the quality of the stunt scenes and frames were higher and thus attracted a larger audience. Films produced in Madras found themselves in a quandary over the availability of cinema halls. This made some of the Indian producers conclude that competing with quality was the only way to face this competition. Mythological stories became the first choice because of their reach and familiarity. The British Government's approach was also not encouraging because the Government encouraged films made in England. Indian producers requested that like in Germany, the Government should prioritize and support local-made movies first but the Government did not heed this request. The decision to make mythological movies and the arrival of talkie movies turned out to be the saviour for the Indian producers.⁴⁷

Between 1916 and 1934, around 125 silent movies were produced in the Madras Presidency. There were 43 cinema theatres, most of which screened foreign movies. On the other hand, around 265 drama troupes were actively staging across the Madras Presidency. Calisburi was a merchant, based in Madras, bought some short talkie movies and screened them in the tents of Curson Circus. This turned out to be the beginning of the end of silent movies.

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Select Organizations and Associations for Women Emancipation in Colonial Punjab

Dr. Parneet Kaur Dhillon

Assistant Professor

Department of History

Punjabi University, Patiala

Email - hparneet@yahoo.com

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Abstract

The nineteenth century was a period in which the rights and wrongs of women became major issues: if early attempts at reforming the conditions under which Indian women lived were largely conducted by men, by the late nineteenth century their wives, sisters, daughters, protégées and other affected by campaigns, such as that for women's education, had themselves joined in movements. The education policy of the British was made primarily to procure clerical staff for themselves. Indian educated men started working against different social evil customs of society-child marriage, dowry system, purdah, enforced widowhood and others. They were now convinced that to get rid of these evils there was only one alternative-spread of female education. These educational experiments of the late nineteenth and early twentieth produced a 'new woman' with interests that went beyond the household. Even the social reformers were forming different associations for fight against social evils and for the spread of female education. Between 1900 and 1920 the "new women," that is women who were the beneficiaries of the social reforms and educational efforts of the nineteenth century, stepped forward to begin their own schools and later formed their own organisations and associations. These organisations and associations played a major role in emancipating women in the Colonial Punjab.

Keywords: Women Emancipation, Women's Activism, Social Evil Customs, Educational Experiments, New Women, Women Education, Propagation of Education, Sikh Educational Conferences, Vernacular Press.

The experience of colonial rule was one of the most formative influences on the feminist movement of the early twentieth century. The nineteenth century was a period in which the rights and wrongs of women became major issues: if early attempts at reforming the conditions under which Indian women lived were largely conducted by men, by the late nineteenth century their wives, sisters, daughters, protégées and other affected by campaigns, such as that for women's education, had themselves joined in movements. By the early twentieth century women's own autonomous organizations began to be formed, and within a couple of decades, by the thirties and forties, a special category of 'women's activism' was constructed.¹

The British came to India primarily for financial gains. But slowly and steadily they started to interfere in the internal affairs of the people of India and that led them to adopt and implement new policies which were favorable for their own interests. They made efforts to teach people so that they could get people who would work for them on clerical posts. On the contrary, that education made Indians aware about the right and wrong happening around them. This led them to get united and they started to work together. They also joined various jobs and even established numerous associations, clubs and societies for the welfare of their fellow beings. They started to fight against the social evils which had crept in the Indian society like widowhood, child marriage, dowry system, purdah, and others. The only solution to get eradicate those evils was to impart education to the girls. 'Indians supported female education because they wanted social and religious reform; or social and financial mobility, or both'.²

The education brought change in the society and a 'new woman' was created who not only worked in their houses but also was ready to work beyond their thresholds. The socio-religious reformers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century started to form their own organizations for eradicating the social evils and worked hard for the spread of female education as well. And later the women who were the beneficiaries of the efforts of those reformers came forward and began to open their own educational institutes and later organized many associations and societies for the welfare of other women of India. Similarly, Punjab was no exception. It also witnessed same type of emergence of organizations and associations led by the women themselves.

In Punjab, Dayanand Saraswati's movement grew rapidly from the 1880s, moving from a criticism of orthodox Hindu customs to their replacement with 'Aryan' ceremonies. The Amritsar Arya Samaj in 1882 was especially active in performing widow remarriages.³ Arya Samajists played a pivotal role in spread of female education in Punjab during the mid 1880s. In 1890, Arya Kanya

Pathshala was opened at Jalandhar. Lala Lajpat Rai and Lala Dhuni Chand both were the main reformers who worked tirelessly for the emancipation of women. The Arya Mahila Parishads were also started to form in the colonial Punjab. Hence, Arya Samajists contributed a lot for the women welfare.

In 1873, the Sikhs under Sardar Thakar Singh Sandhawaliya formed the Singh Sabha Amritsar. The main objectives of this organisation were propagation of Sikhism; propagation of education for boys and girls; making society free from all social evil customs; progress of Punjabi language; and others. In 1879, Sikh leaders of Lahore formed Singh Sabha Lahore on the pattern of Amritsar Sabha. In 1880 both the sabhas joined hands and started working jointly.⁴ This sabha then started opening schools in the different parts of Punjab. In 1892, the Sikh KanyaMahavidyalaya was opened in Ferozepur by Bhai Takht Singh and his spouse Bibi Harnam Kaur. Then the Singh Sabha within their branches also formed Women Associations (Istri Dal) for women emancipation. Women were appointed as *Updeshaks* (preachers) who used to go to other regions and made people aware about the need of women education. These *Updeshaks* inspired the women to join the Singh Sabhas and work for women cause.⁵

With passage of time, the Singh Sabhas formed Women Cells in almost all the parts of Punjab. Even the head office of those Singh Sabhas was also formed in Punjab. The Singh Sabha of Lahore, Gujranwala, Sialkot, Sargodha, Amritsar, Jhang also worked for the emancipation of the people. However, the Chief Khalsa Diwan was also established in Amritsar in 1902 as the main organizing body and the various Singh Sabhas were affiliated to it in 1902.

The print media also played a major role in propagating the cause of the Singh Sabhas. Various vernacular magazines, journals, newspapers, and others were started. Some modes of the print media especially worked for the cause of women emancipation like *Punjabi Bhain* (of Sikh KanyaMahavidyalaya), *Istri Satsang*, *Phulwari*, *Istri Rattan* and others propagated for women emancipation and informed about the formation of organisations, especially for women, through the columns of their issues. 'Sikh IstriJathebandi' article in January issue of *Punjabi Bhain* in 1931 asked women to come together and form organizations mainly for women causes and help the reformers of Punjab.⁶ In the following paragraphs the emphasis will be laid on the formation of organizations and associations for the women cause.

The first paramount organization in the field for working for the women cause was the Chief Khalsa Diwan. 'The Chief Khalsa Diwan was established on 30 October 1902 at Amritsar. It was registered on 9 July 1904 under the Act XXI, 1860'.⁷ Twenty nine regional Singh Sabhas got associated with the Chief

Khalsa Diwan on 30th October.⁸The organization was formed mainly to promote the spiritual, intellectual, moral, social, educational and economic welfare of the people. To promote the teachings of the Sikh Gurus was also the aim of Chief Khalsa Diwan. For the women, the scope of its activities was confined to maintenance of Sikh widows and to advocate widow remarriages among the Sikhs. Orphanages and infirmaries for orphans (both males and females) and handicapped children were also established for their upbringing, development and education.⁹It also drafted rules to open schools for girls for propagation of female education.¹⁰

Khalsa Diwans were conducted in other parts of Punjab viz. Baluchistan, Gujranwala, Anandpur Sahib, Lahore and others to promote the Sikh ideals, informed the people about the social evils pertaining to women and even motivated people to get rid of them through the mode of education. It also started different kind of funds for raising money and used it for many progressive works. Later various funds were raised like Preacher's Fund, Help fund, Khalsa orphanage fund and many more for the welfare of people in the society. 'Preacher's Fund was started for paying the salaries of the preachers, Help Fund for social work in society, Khalsa Anathalaya(YateemKhana) fund to help the needy and poor orphan girls and boys, Hospital fund was collected to buy medicines to give at religious places and fairs free of cost'.¹¹The funds were not only raised in cash along with that there were few funds which were raised were in kind like Atta Fund . It was flour fund which was started to encourage especially women to keep boxes or drums at their homes, in which they were asked to put handful of flour every day and the flour was then to be donated in *Khalsa Anathalayas*.¹² Later the charity boxes and money were kept at the shops to collect money for the social welfare works.

In 1903, the Chief Khalsa Diwan started the publication of their weekly newspaper *Khalsa Advocate* in English but later on Punjabi medium was used.¹³*The Monthly Circular of Chief Khalsa Diwan* from Amritsar was also started which used to publish the monthly financial report showing the expenditure from the funds raised by the Chief Khalsa Diwan.¹⁴ The *Khalsa Advocate* became a potent vehicle to inform the people about the working of the organization for the social welfare works.

On 11 April 1904, the Chief Khalsa Diwan opened a *Yateemkhana* (Orphanage) in Amritsar for taking care of orphans (both males and females). In 1903, a group of four Singh Sabhaites went to Sindh for preaching Sikhism and there they came in contact with a child of 6 years age whose mother had died

and father was too poor to take care of him. So those Singh Sabhaites brought the child to Amritsar. Hence, a concept of orphanage was started from there. Thus, on 18 November 1906, the Executive Committee of Khalsa Diwan passed resolution number IV for opening *Central Khalsa Anathalaya (YateemKhana)*, *Chief Khalsa Diwan*. The orphanage became a place for the orphans and needy people to stay, their care was taken, religious, professional practical and commercial education was imparted to them which could help them in earning their living. The organisation even had the right to marry girls and boys staying in the orphanage whom they thought eligible and all the expenditure of the wedding was the responsibility of the *YateemKhana*.¹⁵ For the proper functioning of *Yateemkhana*, Chief Khalsa Diwan decided to start a permanent fund in 1912. All the money was collected and was deposited in the bank and with the interest of that money the Anathalaya was managed.¹⁶ The Chief Khalsa Diwan even provided instruction to the *Central Khalsa Anathalayato* open more orphanages in the different parts of the province of Punjab. Many technical schools, factories, and mills were started by the *Central Khalsa Anathalaya* for the orphans and sometimes they were also sent to other schools in the neighbourhood as well.

By 1912-13, there were one hundred and twenty six boys and three girls residing in this orphanage. They were given primary education in the institution itself and for higher education, the male students were sent to Khalsa College, Amritsar while the girls were sent to Sikh KanyaMaha Vidyalaya, Ferozepur.¹⁷ Even the care of the widows of the preachers was done in the *Central Khalsa Anathalaya*. Sometimes widows were also encouraged to remarry and the expenditure of their weddings was borne by Anathalaya. Thus, the *Central Khalsa Anathalayawas* not only a place for the orphans irrespective of their gender to stay, but it also was a place where it was tried to eradicate the various social evils like widowhood. By the second decade of the twentieth century the *Central Khalsa Anathalaya became* so popular that many families of the province of Punjab started to marry their children to the orphans of that institution.

The institution even appointed women to take care of girl orphans and for preparing the food for the residents of the *Central Khalsa Anathalaya*. Hence it can be seen that the institute even provided employment to the needy women of the society. To encourage women to get education number of scholarships were started for the education of the girl and boy students for higher studies and even needy people like widows. By the third decade of the twentieth century there were few girl students in the *Central Khalsa Anathalaya* and the institute was trying to help women in gaining education and

removing social blots like widowhood.

The Chief Khalsa Diwan after forming *Central Khalsa Yateemkhana* also worked for forming *Central Vidwa Ashram* for the welfare of widows. It wanted to tackle the problem of child marriage and wanted to encourage widow remarriage.¹⁸ In the *Central Khalsa Anathalaya*, even women worked for collecting funds in both kind and cash. The wife of Sardar Aaya Singh Jaj collected food grains for the *Yateemkhana*.¹⁹ The Secretary of Chief Khalsa Diwan, Sardar Mehar Singh Lahore donated rupees hundred to *Khalsa Yateemkhana* for imparting the technical and vocational education to girls. He also donated food and clothes for the girls.²⁰ The institution worked hard to emancipate the status of women in society.

Another organization which took up the cause of women emancipation was *Soorma Singh Ashram*. The Chief Khalsa Diwan on 30 June 1935 passed a resolution number three hundred ninety six in the meeting of the Executive Committee for the formation of *Soorma Singh Ashram* at Amritsar. Bhai Vir Singh of Amritsar, another Singh Sabha protagonist donated rupees four thousand for opening this Ashram. It was mainly opened for blind students where students irrespective of any gender, were taught 'braille' and weaving and stringing of chairs and cots. This ashram had only five students in 1935 when it was started.²¹ By 1947, the number of students in the Ashram increased to twenty.²² Hence, the Chief Khalsa Diwan made efforts in every field to help the womenfolk of the Punjab.

By 1906 the Chief Khalsa Diwan also started to send jathas in the form of groups of the preachers to other parts of Punjab. When one of the jatha went to Sindh and Karachi, it witnessed that Muslim community was organizing Educational conferences so they also thought to organize such conferences in the various parts of the province of Punjab. Based on that idea on of the important leader Surinder Singh Majithia called for a meeting of all important officials of the Chief Khalsa Diwan on 19 January, 1908 in Amritsar and it was decided to organize an All India Sikh Educational Conference.²³ So the First Educational Conference was conducted on 17-18-19 April 1908 at Gujranwala and that was presided by Sardar Baghel Singh Raees Kulla of Lahore.²⁴ The main purpose of the Sikh Educational conferences was to propagate western science and literature among Sikhs; to develop Sikh literature; to help financially and reform educational institutions, to encourage to open new schools; to provide scholarships to poor and eligible students, to promote female education among Sikhs and others were the main aims and motives of this conference. The Educational Committee of the Chief Khalsa Diwan was constituted with thirteen members in 1908 and

rules and regulations for the Sikh Educational Conference were made.²⁵

The sessions of the Sikh Educational Conference were organized annually in the different parts of Punjab till the country achieved its independence. In Amritsar, Lahore and Rawalpindi, the conference was held for four times each. In 1935, the Silver Jubilee celebrations of Sikh Educational Conference were done at Gujranwala in the province of Punjab.

The education committee was working for the propagation of education by opening new schools in Punjab and used to meet the officials of the Department of Education to revise the curriculum for boys and girls separately. Girls and boys were granted scholarships from the committee fund. Girls were encouraged to participate in the exhibitions conducted during the educational conference.²⁶ The delegates to the conference were elected through four channels - the Khalsa Diwan, the various Singh Sabhas, public meetings where no Singh Sabha existed, and through the various Sikh educational institutions. However, the wives of the educated elite, many of whom were fore-runners in the education of females, through their gratuitous efforts, also participated in the later sessions of the conference.²⁷

This Educational Conference gave a great impetus to the female emancipation through the propagation of female education. In 1909, it passed a resolution regarding the curriculum for girls' schools. It demanded from the government that girls be taught cooking and midwifery in Punjabi language in their respective schools.²⁸ The main focus of the education for the girls was to make them perfect home maker. The Sixth Educational Conference at Ambala in March 1913 witnessed the Presidential address of Diwan Leela Ram Singh of Sindh describing the importance of girls' education more than boys and requested each delegate present to work for the female education.²⁹ Under the guidance and influence of the Educational Conference, Sardar Sunder Singh, Science Master of Gujranwala Khalsa High School established *Sardar Balwant Singh Istri Sahayak Vidyalaya* for widows from his own property.³⁰ Hence, the people of Punjab were establishing new organisations and founding new schools for women emancipation. In the twentieth session of the Conference of Sargodha from 29-31 March 1929, a women meeting was organized in the form of an *Istri Conference* and after that women conferences on regular basis were conducted in the different parts of Punjab.³¹

In 1932 in the twenty second session of Conference, *Sikh Istri Conference* was held under the presidentship of Srimati Shivdevi of Sialkot. In her presidential address, she spoke the importance of professional education for girls so that they could also share the burden of their husbands in running the

house. But simultaneously, she also wanted the girls to be perfect home makers.³² By the end of 1930's, these Educational Conferences started to focus on the political issues, primarily emphasizing on the need of the independence for India. It wanted and encouraged both men and women to participate actively in the struggle for freedom or by using the modes of print media especially vernacular press for creating awareness amongst the people.

Hence, the main ideal of the Educational Conference of the Chief Khalsa Diwan was to impart education to every girl, boy and adult, whether rich or poor. The resolutions passed in the sessions of the Conference were further sent to the Director of Public Instruction, Punjab and other important Deputation used to meet the higher officials of government of Punjab and Vice-Chancellor of Punjab University.³³ Thus they laid stress on women emancipation through the medium of education.

In the first decade of the twentieth century, there were many Young men Christian Associations which propagated Christianity. So to reduce the impact of these associations on youngsters in Punjab, Sardar Sunder Singh Majithia and Bhai Vir Singh formed *The Youngmen Sikh Association* in Punjab. Initially this association was mainly formed to counter attack the Christian associations but with the passage of time it also started propagating against the various social evils of the society.³⁴ This association also started the publication of a journal, *The Khalsa Youngmen's Magazine* from Amritsar. It was published after every three months in 'Punjabi' language with annual subscription of rupees one.³⁵ The association was also held the responsibility to publish various tracts, books, pamphlets describing the ill-effects of the social evils like female infanticide, child marriage, forced widowhood, and was against the propagation of Christianity. The tract namely *Achraj Kautak, Maapeyan Da Vair and Daango Dangire* presented the condition of society before and after the Sikh Gurus ; inter caste marriages and inter religious marriages and their impact ; the social evils like widowhood, child marriage. All these tracts were published by this association in 1905.³⁶ The association tried to make people aware about the importance of female education through the columns of their journal. It was mentioned in this way, 'without female education everything is incomplete, an educated females could become well-versed in the religious scriptures, could teach her children, could also fulfill her household duties. And that kind of women would be liked and praised by everyone in the society'.³⁷

The members of the Khalsa Young Men's Associations also sometimes visited different educational institutions in Punjab and made people aware about new developments in the field of education. The Sikh Kanya Mahavidyalaya,

Ferozepur was frequently visited by the members and importance of female education was highlighted.³⁸ The association regularly published the articles relating to female education in their journal. Special issues for women were encouraged and all the recent developments in the field of education for women were mentioned. The members of the association also delivered lectures in various conferences, institutions regarding the emancipation of women. They regarded vernacular education as the most important source for the progress of women in the society.³⁹

There was also emergence of various women organizations which organized annual conferences as the other organizations were doing so in Punjab. *The Bhujangan Council* was formed in the early 1900s in Kairon, Amritsar with the help of the Chief Khalsa Diwan. This Council was open to all women of the Punjab and its annual membership was rupees three per person.⁴⁰ Bibi Livleen Kaur, Bibi Milap Kaur and others were the active members of this council. 'Bhujangan Ashram' as a female education institution was run by this Council. In 1916, the Council started the publication of a monthly journal *Bhujangan Pattar* in the month of September with Bibi Livleen Kaur as the editor.

Gehne Nasak Sabha was also working under *the Bhujangan Council* which used to publish books, tracts, poems and others relating to female emancipation. The themes of the books primarily focused on the ill effects of jewellery and propagated that one should lead as impale and sober life. Women were for the women of the Punjab.⁴¹

In 1916, *the Bhujangan Council* organized the first 'Sikh Women Conference' at Kairon, Amritsar. This 'Sikh Istri Conference' became a platform for the Punjabi women to speak for the rights and needs of the women.⁴² Women were encouraged to present papers in this conference on each and every aspect important for girls. On the first day of the Conference Bibi Livleen Kaur and Bibi Milap Kaur of Amritsar, Doctor Ramindar Kaur were the few ladies who presented their papers in this conference. Gyan Kaur (wife of Master Chanda Singh editor *Panth Sewak*) read her paper in the conference. Bibi Jaswant Kaur, Bibi Shivdevi (wife of Banga Singh Inspector Police), Mohinder Kaur of Lahore, Gyan Kaur (wife of Narian Singh Barrister, Lahore) were the regular participants of the conference.⁴³ The three days conference used to begin with welcome of the President by the Reception Committee of the conference with a great procession which escorted the President to the venue. On the second day the lectures of many women from every nook and corner of the region of Punjab were conducted on the issues of female education, other social evils like superstition, female infanticide, child marriage and many more. The third day was the last day on

which special competitions and Khalsa Diwans were conducted.⁴⁴ Competition for healthy child was too conducted and medals were given to the winners. The most healthy baby of the day was selected and given a gold medal. The main purpose of doing this was to make women more and more aware about the health of their babies and ladies were taught about the science of child care. Baba Khem Singh 'Bedi', another Singh Sabha reformer, was the first to start this competition in this conference.⁴⁵ Religious Diwan was also conducted in which the girl students of different schools used to participate. Finally, on the third day and the last day, all the resolution discussed by the delegates was passed.⁴⁶ There was a *Bhujangan Pattarin* which detailed information about the working and expenditure of the council was published.⁴⁷

Another organization working for the women emancipation was *The Punjab Temperance Federation* with its headquarters at Amritsar. It worked with a threefold objective of health, general and adult education.⁴⁸ The main objective was to make people know about the ill-effects of effects of alcohol on the different parts of the body. It also tried to help the orphans and widows of the people who lost their lives due to alcohol. Females were provided with the financial aid. Sometimes they were also given vocational and technical training so that they could earn their livelihood.⁴⁹ Special meetings in the form of Nagar-Kirtan, processions and fairs were organized. The free distribution of tracts, songs, stories, dialogues, poems, mottoes and charts in Urdu, Hindi, Gurmukhi and English was made. The members of the Federation had used to deliver lectures in the Punjab, Delhi, UP and Punjab. Different schools, colleges, corn markets, Mandis, Cantonments and religious places were visited and short speeches, addresses and discussions with the people were held.⁵⁰

The Federation also organized the 'Temperance conference' annually where aims and objects were well furnished.⁵¹ *Temperance Magazine* was also started in 1903 for advocating their cause. It chiefly devoted to the federation's mission and movement and had articles, poems, songs, dialogues and reports of the meetings. It had a nominal subscription of rupees one and half and two thousand copies were circulated monthly. All the female issues like female education, position of widows whose husbands died due to excess intake of intoxicants were discussed regularly. The victims were helped by this Federation.

Hence, these were the few organizations which were formed by the socio-religious reformers of Punjab during the colonial period working for the emancipation of womenfolk directly and indirectly. The organizations following their main ideals as propagation of their respective religious beliefs advocated for the emancipation of their counterparts. The main motive to aware the society to work for women emancipation was fulfilled through these organizations.

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Understanding Reportage of Violence by the Regional Print Media: The Assam Movement (1979-1985) in Context

Dr. Alankar Kaushik

Assistant Professor

Department of Journalism and Mass Communication

EFL University, Regional Campus, Shillong

Email : alankar@eflushc.ac.in

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Abstract

The regional press has played a crucial role in the projection of Hindu-Muslim communal violence in post Independent India. It will be not be appropriate to discuss Assamese nationalism bypassing the broader Indian Nationalism as the Assamese media was also involved in the modernist programme of the Government of India. During the peak of the Assam movement (1979- 1985), the press played a substantial role in strengthening the Assam movement by defining its enemy within and outside. During the movement the regional media took an ambivalent position between profit making and maintaining an ideology to support the movement while reporting the violent incidents. This ambivalence played by the Assamese media owned mostly by the middle class led to silencing of certain violent events. The silencing eventually created a positive image for the supporters and a negative image for the opponents and non-supporters and it raised an important question 'What and whose purpose does it serve?' This paper will attempt to question the reportage of violence by the regional press during select events of Assam movement (1979-1985).

Keywords: *Violence, Assam Movement, Regional Press, Assamese media.*

Introduction

When the newspaper market in the west is showing a declining trend, the east is displaying a staggering growth. Data from the Price water house Coopers' Indian Entertainment and Media Outlook 2011-15¹ reveals a considerable decline in the newspaper markets of the United States and United Kingdom in one hand

and exponential growth in the newspaper markets in China and India on the other hand. According to this report in case of India and China, newspaper markets are growing firmly, fuelled by robust economic growth and demand from an emerging urban and literate middle class that is enjoying higher incomes and rising standard of living.

According to the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers World Press Trends in 2010 edition, China accounts for 25 of the world's top 100 paid-for daily newspapers and India for 22.² *The Economist* in 2011 in a *Special Report: The News Industry*³ says that there is certainly no sign of a news crisis in India, which is the world's fastest growing newspaper market. In 2008, India overtook China to become the leader in paid for daily circulation with 110 million copies sold each day.⁴ According to the Indian Media and Entertainment Industry Report 2011 by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, a trade body, and KPMG, a consultancy institution, India is one of the largest newspaper markets with more than 107 million copies circulated daily, more than China, and accounting for more than 20 per cent of all dailies across the world. *'The total literate population in India is estimated to be 579 million with over 30 per cent readership penetration. The Indian print market is well off in comparison to the global market, which is witnessing a decline in print revenues over the past few years. Developed regions such as North America and the U.K. are witnessing a significant decline in newspaper circulation while India defies the trend. In contrast to the U.S., U.K. and global trends, print circulation numbers in India continue to be on an uptrend. Furthermore, given rising literacy levels and no immediate threat of new media platforms, the trend is expected to sustain over the next five years'*.⁵

In this context, Robert Picard (2012) says that people with disposable income buy newspapers, start thinking about social issues and seek out more entertainment. 'They start looking for products that would be of interest and the newspapers are filling that role right now and so there's great growth going on in them [China and India]'⁶ Picard further maintains that the economic, social and demographic changes are coming together in a way that makes newspapers very attractive. In this regard Hooke comments, 'they also have such large populations that it's easy to get half a million or a million people to read a publication and when you're doing that you're starting to get real economic viability'.

The newspaper in India has been essentially an urban middle class phenomenon.⁷ But, in a democracy where the middle class emerged because of sustained economic and literary growth, it becomes important as a social convention on a citizen's part to stay informed about public affairs. Therefore, to

buy a newspaper becomes a more attractive proposition for the individual citizen.⁸ Even for the advertisers it becomes an attractive platform to invest more money considering the size of the reading public. The 2011 national census data showed an adult literacy level of 74 per cent, up nine per cent from the last census a decade ago. *'As soon as a person becomes literate, what they get is a newspaper- even before they buy a phone, it's the first luxury a man affords'*, said A.S. Raghunath, in a report by *The Globe and Mail*⁹. Mr. Raghunath, a veteran editor who advises new entrants in regional markets remarked that the newspaper retains an aura of respect in India and the newly literate like to be seen with one. *The Globe and Mail* in this context reports, *'with a cover price of one, two or at most four rupees, new-reading households will often subscribe to not just one paper, but two or three'*. Along with growth in literacy, the number of newspaper readers in local languages also grew. The Hindi newspapers got a huge boost in circulation since 1990's. In 1982, the Second Press Commission complained, in its majority report, about the urban bias of the newspaper industry. But it incorporated a dissenting note in which three members of the Commission wrote, *'The fact of the matter is that papers are not being read in the villages because of illiteracy, lack of purchasing power and lack of communications. Whenever this situation changed, they added, newspapers would blossom in the rural hinterland without any prodding from the Government of the day. In other words, the market would be there to tap the rural readership'*.¹⁰ In many countries, the most important newspaper sector has been the local and regional press.

Media, Modernity and Propaganda

The modern mass media is often regarded a mixture between a trivial waste of time and resources, and a dangerously subversive system tending to promote social division and community breakdown.¹¹ The quintessential aspects of modernity include a respect for individual freedom, the belief in human beings' ability to decide their destiny, and the adoption of science and technology, which was accepted without any opposition. For instance, the local press has adopted the latest technology as a key instrument of growth and expansion. They now provide an alternative platform of participation to those who have been overlooked by English-language newspapers. Robertson has critiqued the idea of modernity that supports *'a general homogenization of institutions and basic experiences in a temporal, historical mode'*.¹² Appadurai and Breckenridge similarly contended that *'most societies today possess the means for the local production of modernity'*.¹³ Likewise, Therborn¹⁴ identified the autonomous development of

modernity in areas outside Europe. What is distinct about the experience of vernacular modernity produced as a result of the rise of Hindi newspapers was their ability to draw from local cultural resources while adopting state-of-the-art technology, often imported from the West.

John Thompson in his work *The Media and Modernity* (1995)¹⁵ highlights the use of the word 'mass' and claims that most of the media today are not produced for people but for niche markets. He adds, The term 'mass' is especially misleading. It conjures up the image of a vast audience comprising many thousands, even millions of individuals. This may be an accurate image in the case of some media products, such as the most popular modern-day newspapers, films and television programmes; but it is hardly an accurate representation of the circumstance of most media products, past or present'. In this context, we need to understand what wars and violence exactly mean to the newspapers and other organs of the media. At one level, the media must know the facts, understand the truth and disseminate information to the readers or listeners or viewers. At another level war helps boost circulation. *'Indeed, the combination that seems best to increase circulation involves local people in great events. Wars are excellent. Readers are fired with the thrill of the contest, and they also have friends and loved ones in the army: people at home want to know what is happening. War often provides the impetus to carry newspapers beyond the circles to which they were previously confined'*.¹⁶ Studies all over reveal that newspapers have gained in circulation whenever there had been violent conflicts, wars and terrorism. Robin Jeffrey quotes a number of studies regarding this and he gave the instance of the famous steam driven cylinder presses in Britain, which was introduced in November 1814, partly in response to the demand for news generated by wars with Napoleon.

In twentieth century, the exploitation of media for political purposes became common place. Totalitarian states such as the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany provided striking examples for propaganda that was by no means absent from democratic societies. A major difference in official approaches to use of propaganda was willingness as opposed to reluctance to 'label' activities aimed at persuading or influencing the minds and political behaviour of others. In their rise to power the Nazis attempted to make use of established media. The party acquired a Bavarian newspaper in the early 1920s but did not succeed in establishing a wide circulation and failed to attract many journalists or writers. Nazi Germany was a propaganda state, and Joseph Goebbels (1933) was a key

figure in making it to happen. Goebells 'felt that Propaganda should continue to play an important role even after the Nazis had come to power. Propaganda would be necessary to mobilize the masses in support of the new state and its ideological foundations'.¹⁷ Thus, propaganda was a vital means of converting citizens to Nazi ideology, and, as in the Soviet Union, when propaganda failed to achieve its objective, terror was used as an additional instrument of the state. Aiming to politicise all aspects of society the Soviet and Nazi regime could afford to bring propaganda as a central role in political and social life. Whereas in Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia the content of propaganda was directly controlled by the regime, in liberal democratic countries the propagandist's task was more complicated. Democratic Governments did not usually enjoy the benefits of direct control of the media but relied instead on censorship and regulation. In such societies, not all propaganda are Government propaganda, people who controlled and worked in media organisation often had their own ideas as to what messages were best calculated to encourage public support for the war. In liberal democratic societies, the need for systematic propaganda comparable to that of the totalitarian regimes was recognised by the democracies only in wartime. During World War I, countries on both sides of the war employed propaganda to mobilise the domestic mass support essential for war and to even influence opinion in neutral and enemy countries. For the same purposes, at the start of the World War II, allied Governments established propaganda agencies like Office War Information and Ministry of Information in Britain. The use of euphemism 'information' in these cases reflected the negative view of propaganda prevailing in the liberal democratic societies, where it was regarded as something that could be justified only in extreme circumstances and only as a necessary evil.

In the late 1970's, India witnessed a revolution in Indian-language newspapers. But it went unnoticed by India's English speaking elite and was virtually unknown to outside world. Harold Innis (1951), a Canadian scholar, has made a strong observation pertaining to the changing role of print. According to him, the communication industry was largely responsible for facilitating the consolidation of the emergence of nationalism, vernaculars and new eruption of savagery in the twentieth century. He traced the origin of the print media to the savage religious wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As per his beliefs, the evolution of communications technology had played the most important role in shaping the history of human beings. However, Innis also had the opinion that the book, the newspaper and the printing press variously shaped and spread the idea of nationalism but the role played by them was not enough. The printing press primarily popularized the idea of national identity and citizenship. Innis thought

that the connection between Governments and capitalism had to undergo a significant change and only then the conditions would become suitable for the printing press to work in the most effective manner. Marshall McLuhan (1962) and Benedict Anderson (1983), the intellectual successors of Harold Innis, adapted and furthered his ideas on nationalism, national identity and citizenship vis-à-vis media.

Newspapers have the potential to promote ethnic nationalism and secessionism. It is possible to imagine that powerful proprietors of Indian language newspapers contribute to political movements calling for sub-national identities based on a region's language and culture. This is what happened in Europe in the nineteenth century, where printers and newspapers were vital in propagating nationalisms. In the 1990s, in India many vernacular newspapers fuelled the passion for autonomy movements in different parts including North East India. Like other cases in history, India also faced imposition of 'thought control' through the National Emergency declared in 1975. It was done not merely by controlling the Indian mass media but also by moulding the media to the purpose of the Government in power. During the emergency period, most of India's vernacular dailies, almost gave up the battle for press freedom. Their pages were 'filled with fawning accounts of national events, flattering pictures of Indira Gandhi and her ambitious son, and not coincidentally, lucrative Government advertising'.¹⁸ But two tough, prominent publishers of English language dailies - *The Indian Express* and *The Statesman* - fought courageously against Indira Gandhi's efforts to muzzle the press.

The Ethical Turn

Among the cardinal principles of media ethics, fairness, impartiality, along with humanity constitutes the central piece of ethical reporting. After and during the Vietnam War many journalists raised their voices against America's unethical war against freedom. Since then the independent press if not always free from biased reporting has shown guts to provide impartial reporting through investigative journalism. The ethical turn in journalism has exposed double standards of some Governments as well as many scandals against very powerful people for example the Watergate scandal in the United States.

However, writing a trauma story can be as challenging as interviewing the victims because these stories are always different. Journalists acknowledge that their fingers hesitate over the keyboard on trauma stories, and they sweat out finding exact words and putting up pictures that might do justice to the person and the topic. One helpful starting point is remembering that a victim's story really is a story. That is, it is not simply a news 'story', but a true account about a particular,

real human being and the traumatic events in that life. Like any well-told story, it has a beginning (lead), middle, and an end. Unlike novels and fairytales, it probably does not have a happily-ever-after ending; it may have a 'kicker' in more than the usual journalistic sense of a news story climax with a twist or jolt. After all, it is a real person's story, with all the potential for toil and trouble, trauma and tragedy, and drama and inspiration that a real life can bring.

When the Nellie violence took place in Feb 1983, one of the eyewitnesses to the violence from the journalist's fraternity was Hemendra Narayan from *The Indian Express* along with Bedabrata Lahkar from *The Assam Tribune*. When Hemendra wrote the story that particular evening to file in the *Indian Express*, he said, 'It was absolutely horrible. Though impossible to describe, I will try' (Feb 18, 1983).¹⁹ The Headline of the story was 'Horrible Doesn't Describe It: How Many Deaths? Difficult to Say'. So writing a story of violence and killing is very challenging for a journalist.

Media is not a monolithic organization. How we characterize one newspaper, may not necessarily be true about the other. Each newspaper, radio or television network has its own culture and tradition. Ownership patterns, structures and the kind of commitment to journalism, all count to characterize and differentiate one newspaper from another. At one level media is considered a pillar of democracy. In theory, it stands for equality and social justice and is concerned with knowing social, political and economic reality and communicating the same to the public. In a democracy its role is to provide unbiased, trustworthy information to the citizens so that they can form informed opinions and participate in the democratic process. No participatory democracy, where elections are not just periodic rituals, is possible without a vibrant media. It would be unreasonable to say that media builds only negative stereotypes. Media could be a major source to build public opinion for reason, justice and peace. A pertinent question in this regard is, do media determine norms and values while transmitting information by overt or covert means? What happens in case of violent conflicts? The news media is expected to perform a vital task to build public consensus and people's mind need to be won at all costs.

While reporting any violent incident, the reporter and photographer at the scene have unusual power to shape what we remember about violent stories, and what they depict may remain in our minds forever. The stories that we don't remember for very long; still help shape our perception regarding crime, violence, public preparedness, and builds our capacity to deal with these things. Thoughtful reporting can prepare readers and viewers to respond intelligently to subsequent

events. A journalist at the scene must avoid the traps such events set for the unwary. Reporters and photographers rarely are 'ready' for what they face. Journalists may hear themselves voicing the effect-venting-along with other people there. No two scenes are alike. Unfamiliar places challenge the most ingenious journalists. 'Parachute' reporters-those sent from distant cities to the site of a crash or natural disaster-and local reporters often have different objectives. But to some extent it won't matter whether the journalist comes from two blocks or two thousand miles away; the disaster or accident requires quick and sensitive action. Some sections of the media are not always working for mass audiences or for money. They have other social objectives too. Public sphere journalism still plays an important role in many countries, though commercial considerations are becoming too excruciating to sustain it.

One common point is that media in its various forms is not only an instant record of events but it is the main communicator in technology driven societies. 'The narrative of the media culture offers patterns of behavior, moral messages, sugar coating of the social or violent events besides political and ideological colours. These are seductive forms of popular entertainment culture. Media and consumer culture sometimes subvert the old cultures and create celluloid images. It helps activities such as sports culture, film culture and cyber culture and integrates people into the established societies. It offers meanings, pleasures and creates identities'.²⁰ In fact, the purpose of journalism is to provide meaning to events as they unfold everyday. This would be possible if journalists have a clear understanding of the events and are able to place them in a proper context. It becomes all the more imperative while reporting any violent conflict. This would in turn require a degree of concern. Every headline tells a story, but stories rarely tell the whole truth.²¹ So, readers of newspapers, who spend the better part of their mornings or evenings, are often misled. If some meaning has to be added to journalism, striving for truth, howsoever hard it may be, is the sine qua non.

Media reporting of the daily events is all-important. But its importance can never be understated when it is reporting conflict, violence, wars and terrorism whether by the State or groups or individuals. There is a growing body of evidence to vouch for this importance of the power of the media with regard to conflicts; particularly armed conflicts where media persons are significant actors. The Governments and political leaders besides the armed forces clearly understand this. They make an all out effort to win the propaganda battle first and war later. So, it is important to watch the media as it watches the world around and reports. Thus it is crucial that this "first draft of history" honestly presents the record of

events and their causes, and adds to our understanding. It is bound to leave a significant imprint on human destiny and history.

Newspaper and Reportage of 'Violence'

It is reasonable to say that violence has an enduring presence within the fabric of our human world. Its space of occurrence ranges from the most daily expressions to those of exceptional cases, which are specific to the phenomenon of war. The topic of Genocide emerged as a field of scholarly inquiry as historians, political scientists and other social scientists began analyzing the causes and methods of Nazi violence in the years after World War II. It was an interest that was reinforced by public fascination with Nazism and Fascism. Nevertheless, this was a slow and uneven process: most early researches on genocide was devoted solely to the Nazi extermination of Europe's Jews and few studies sought to place the holocaust in comparison with other cases of mass violence elsewhere in the world.

The symbiotic relationship between the media and terrorism/political violence has been the subject of several studies.²² There is a constant struggle between state and non-state actors to ensure that their versions are prominently covered by the news media. Given the close relationship between the news media and political violence, Hansen's²³ underlines 'politics as permanent performance' that is useful to understand and unpack major contemporary events. Journalists negotiate a minefield of situations while covering conflict. Their own religious and cultural identities are often called into question-even if it is not to their liking. The culture of intolerance or dissent even makes the mere presence of reporters resulting in the messenger himself or herself becoming a target of attack. For example, the coverage of the Gujarat riot (2002) marked a departure in the way the Indian media approached communal clashes. It also highlighted the disjuncture in the news cultures of the English-language news media and the non-English variety. In this context, Windmiller (1954)²⁴ observed that India's English language press is the only national press and is paramount in the world of 'Indian journalism'. It is also true that this was one of the many instances where the English-language press disconnect with the wider Indian realities showed up. It will be incorrect to generalize that the entire English-language press is balanced and impartial or that the non-English language press is biased and one-sided. There are instances of biased reporting in the former and instances of impartial reporting by the latter. But, during events of such magnitude-such as the events after the mosque demolition in Ayodhya-influential sections of the non-English language press are known to have provided biased coverage while major sections of the English-language press made efforts to provide critical reporting by covering different versions.

As such, the role of media in understanding the nature of violence is crucial. It helps in defining its own role also. And, if the journalists are able to conceptualize and contextualize terrorism, they are in a better position to present before the public the issues of violence, terrorism, ethnic violence, militancy and war. Media helps the public to deliberate on these issues with a better perspective.

Media critics assert that objectivity is a myth. It is not possible as journalists are political actors and cannot be neutral observers. Interpretation and judgment are inherent in all reporting. Upton Sinclair (2003) says, '*When you pick up your morning newspaper or evening newspaper and think you are reading the news of the world, what you are reading is propaganda which has been selected, revised, and doctored by some power which has a financial interest in you*'²⁵ This could be true when media is reporting armed conflict; here the interests are different and often more than financial. It could be to subvert public opinion to the requirements of the state or by the militants to suit their propaganda needs. In any violent situation, the first and the main source for information are the security forces. Journalists largely depend upon sources inside the security set-up. The details about the violent incidents and the context are provided by the police, para-military outfits or by the armed forces. Most of the time, this kind of coloured information presents a partisan story from the point of view of the security forces. It is natural. But this way the job of the journalists to find the truth becomes very difficult. By their very nature, single source news stories are dicey. There could be deliberate leaks, plants and heavy dose of disinformation. Alternative sources for collection of information are important, but difficult given the hierarchical and highly regimented nature of security organizations. Outside the security outfits, there are either political leaders or the militants and sometimes eyewitnesses that can provide some leads and hard information too. While the militants are an interested party and would stick to their point of view, they mostly remain anonymous and rarely available in person. They might ring up a journalist or a media house or their sympathizers might like to go to the press. It is rare that journalists are able to meet these invisible fighters face to face. But sometimes this happens. Whenever this happens, it is mostly to seek publicity and these are well-calculated moves on the part of the militant leaders. However, McLuhan (1964) has a different perception on the role media played as part of publicity and how ownership determined its content. 'As forms, the media, the book and the newspaper would seem to be as incompatible as any two media could be. The owners of media always endeavor to give the public what it wants; because they sense that their power is in the medium and not in the message or the programme'.²⁶ His observations on media and his theoretical understanding of

different types of media and technology had a profound impact on the thinking about the newspapers, radio and television, besides other modes. But, somewhere he has been carried away when commenting what determines the content. The readers, listeners or viewers do not determine what appears in the newspapers, radio and TV. The content is determined by the patterns of ownership, structure of a particular kind of media, ideology or business interests of the publishers and editors. In addition, the advertisers and the Government also play their role in determining the content of the media. In the case of reporting terrorism and war or even ethnic violence, journalists depend to a great extent on official briefings. Most of the time what happens in Kashmir or other troubled spots across the country is reported, based on briefings in Delhi or other headquarters of the security forces. But majority of the Indian newspapers have developed a style of working over the years that depends heavily on official sources only. It is a common practice to rely on either on the version of Home or Defense Ministry. The bulk of newspapers do not have their own reporters in the troubled areas. They depend on news agencies: *Press Trust of India* or *United News of India* and these agencies depend again on the official versions.

The Indian Press and Reportage of Violence

The print media includes press and the word 'press' technically denotes the newspapers, pamphlets, magazines, etc. The press in our country was a pillar of national strength and aspirations until the early 1930s. After the partition, the language newspapers adopted an anti-Muslim bias in reporting communal violence. The language newspapers have played an important role in disseminating raw prejudices against Muslims and have published provocative materials against them. On the other hand, the English press still occupies the pre-eminent position; its approach to communal problems is much more sedate and sober than that of the language press. For example, The Marathi daily *Saamna* has been regularly publishing inflammatory material. It is unfortunate that during the period of communal violence, some sections of our so-called 'National Press' have also aggravated the tense situation by publishing irresponsible reports. Even during the Jabalpur riots (1961), a local Hindi newspaper carried a headline that in a particular mosque there is a transmitter and they are receiving instructions from Pakistan on that instrument. The police officials and others rushed to the mosque but did not find anything, but the damage was already done.²⁷ 'In October 1974 in Aligarh, when the district administration and police were working assiduously to prevent the outbreak of violence in the aftermath of a quarrel between Hindu and Muslim students at the AMU, all important dailies from Delhi, Agra and Lucknow carried a news item that Hindu girls inside the University were molested and

attempts were made to rape them'. This news was utterly fictitious and could have easily been disconfirmed by any conscientious reporter. At this point in Aligarh, when the institutionalized riot network was in full operation, the press became a part of it.²⁸

Politics and political violence in India are framed against the shifting quicksand of religion, caste, community, language, gender, region and individuals belonging to influential groups or families. As Nandy (Nandy, 1970)²⁹ observed, *'it is possible to interpret the political process in India as a continuing attempt to reconcile older categories of thought and social character to the demands of nation-building and political culture as a complex of continuities'*. Generating collective moods, particularly during elections, has been a key method of political mobilization. More often than not, such mobilization also involves violence – indeed, violence has been central to electoral politics in northern states such as Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. Today in states across Asia, a range of different forms of violent political transactions operates through the mass media. This includes separatist movements driven by various ethnic, nationalist and religious factors; revolutionary groups seeking to subvert the state; inter-communal violence; and terrorist groups pursuing a variety of national and regional objectives. The majority of these conflicts are indigenous in nature, involving national groups seeking specific national objectives, although the interconnections between combatant groups in different countries in Asia were progressively strengthened during the 1990s, partly as a result of the expansion of the Al Qaeda network.³⁰ The nature, origin and trajectory of these conflicts are often very different, but what each type of conflict has in common is the role that the media plays as an interlocutor between the Government, combatants and society.

Assam Movement

In the context of Assam, particularly during the Assam movement from 1979-1985, the regional media took an ambivalent position while reporting the violent incidents of 1983. Assamese media was also involved in the modernist programme of the Government of India and therefore we cannot talk Assamese nationalism bypassing the broader Indian Nationalism in this context. During the peak of the Assam movement, the press played a significant role in strengthening the movement by defining its enemy within and outside. The ambivalence played by the Assamese media led to silencing of certain violent events where a positive image was created for the leaders and supporters and a negative image for the opponents and non-supporters. Most of the highly circulated newspaper published from Guwahati and Jorhat were owned mostly Assamese middle class. Hence, the ambivalence between profit making and maintaining an ideology to support

the movement raised an important question 'what and whose purpose does it serve'? During the 1983 elections to the State legislature, the Assamese newspapers were flooded with news of the arrival of Bangladeshi in Assam through helicopters and rivers to attack the indigenous people and their villages. The press avoided taking a critical stand except few opinion pages like Hiren Gohain's *Kalakhar*, Syed Alam Bora's *Janakranti* and few others. Another weekly newspaper, *Sadiniya Nagarik* edited by Homen Buragohain in the early stage of the movement took a democratic and secular position, unlike the Assamese middle class press. When the sectarian and divisive role played by the Assamese middle class press became clear, a good number of democratic and progressive individuals came together collectively to form a new cultural organization Gana Sanskriti Bikash Samity and started publishing a new Assamese weekly tabloid *Saptahik Janajivan* under the editorship of Nirupoma Buragohain. It would be worth mentioning here that Mrs Buragohain was forced to leave *Saptahik Janajivan* because she dared to express her resentment against the treatment meted out to the non-Asamiya victims of the North Kamrup carnage.

During the Assam Movement, one interesting turn that took place was the decline of high caste members within the ranks of the Congress party. With that the Assamese middle class press changed their editorial approach.³¹ They started deviating from the largely nationalist ideology to the intransigent nativist ideology with strong anti-Left tendencies. But during the Janata wave in 1977 - 78, they responded positively as there was no visible regional party to represent class interest. Later on with the crumbling Janata Party, the press went in for popularizing localism that suited an ideologically guided Assamese ruling class. Gradually the major dailies of Assam viz. *Dainik Asam*, *Asam Bani* took a pro-Janata stand and later transformed their stand to pro-Assamese.

In 1983, when Assam experienced unprecedented crisis in the wake of elections to the state legislature and curbs were imposed on the normal activities, the number of blasts and victims increased drastically. On 18 Feb 1983, over 3000 people who belonged to religious minority were butchered by neighboring tribes at Nellie about 70 kms from Guwahati. The incident attracted a lot of national and international media attention. Unfortunately, there was very less reporting and analysis of the massacre in the Assamese media. On the following day of the massacre, the regional dailies had no news of the massacre except for a single column in *The Assam Tribune* newspaper. In the entire episode of the Assam movement, the principle of exclusion guided by the movement leaders and supported by the section of Assamese media led to violence. The Assamese nationalism that was invoked across the state except in the North Cachar Hills

and Karbi Anglong was mostly through the use of regional newspapers. It was moreover quite exclusive unlike Indian nationalism that calls for accommodative policies. Hence, there was an ambivalence to the inclusive principle inherited from the idea of India, but within that concept when there was tremendous subterranean forces attempting to manufacture an exclusive agenda among the Assamese that gave rise to multiple issues in the Assamese society vis a vis the nation. Here, the media acquired an edge to sensationalize ongoing issues during the Assam movement. The sensationalisation created by the press contributed to the rise of violence that targeted a particular community across the state resulting in indiscriminate violence.

Conclusion

The amount of violence that takes place in the world in the 21st century creates a challenge for the news organizations. They must determine how much information to share with the readers and viewers. Not all events that occur will become news and as such, not each violent incident will receive coverage. Those that do receive coverage are assigned a level of newsworthiness by television producers, newspaper editors, and other media executives that determine where and how the events are presented. Some of the considerations involved in such a decision include the journalistic style of the media organization, its intended target audience, and whether coverage of the event will increase ratings or sales.

The news is essentially a product that media outlets want to sell to consumers. Following the economic principle of supply and demand, this creates a need to produce news both quickly and efficiently. The media rely on a number of official sources, which may include law enforcement and criminal justice personnel. These sources serve a number of functions. First, they are able to provide the media with consistent and credible information. Second, they are able to provide the information at a limited cost or time. These factors also contribute to the decisions regarding which stories become the most newsworthy and which stories receive less or even no coverage. Constructing news is a dynamic, fluid, and ongoing process. When a story breaks, media organizations collect information, construct the story, and disseminate it to the public. From there, members of the public consume the story and then relay their approval or disapproval back to the media organization. If the audience favours a particular story, the media organizations will likely continue to produce stories on the same or on a similar topic in an effort to keep the audience interested. However, if there is disapproval from a large contingent of the news consumers, the media organizations may turn to other stories.

Further, rise of nation states in the late 19th century provided another impetus to violence and wars as states pursued aggressive agenda to expand or protect their territories and sovereignty. Two major World Wars and smaller wars declared or undeclared, and countless armed clashes have caused large-scale deaths running into several millions and all around destruction of human and material wealth. Science and technology with its weapons of mass destruction have become handmaiden to man's propensity for destruction of life and environment. When so much is involved in any violent conflict and war, information about them is naturally hard to come by. Those who operate the war machines and those who supervise such operations have a strong, long established predisposition to withhold information or tailor it to suit their requirements. In defense establishments what goes on there is closely guarded. There is always some kind of debate that goes on how much public must be told. Information has always been treated as part of the weaponry. The news media, with its new technologies and wider reach, is increasingly indulging in misinformation, manipulation or suppression having interests seeking to profit from the violent conflict.

Moreover, in the era of media proliferation, the importance of the news has increased. The proliferation of television channels and growing viewership, rising literacy and the increasing circulation of newspapers indicate that barring notable exceptions of blatant bias, the Indian news media will continue to play the role of a watchdog in the world's largest democracy. Since the early 1990s, there are apprehensions that the news media will not be able to highlight the abuse of power or signify weaknesses in society due to the gnawing march of corporatization.³² But, the bold and independent coverage of Gujarat 2002 provides ground for some hope because Indian journalism's ability to hold the state accountable, when power is abused, has not been obliterated by infotainment yet.

In Independent India, it is obvious that the media has been deeply implicated in the production of communal violence. It has been found that certain types of media elements have highlighted minority communities particularly Muslims on communal lines. Besides, the political class and related segments of Indian society have contributed to communal violence time and again. Some media houses have been charged with manifesting communal frenzy along with politicians among the various communities. Once communal violence breaks out it is the responsibility of media to deescalate the situation. Media is the main source of information regarding the occurrence of communal violence. People are influenced by what they read and what they see on screen. In the context of communal violence, media has a strong pull on mass awareness. Instruments of media play very important role for communal propaganda and persuasion-messages. What

is required is an ethical and non-partisan reporting on such events of human tragedy. It is hoped that Indian media shall rise up to the occasion and serve the people with the message of peace and harmony.

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White Revolution in Contemporary India

Dr. Om Prakash

Faculty Member

School of Humanities and Social Sciences

National Law University, Jodhpur, Rajasthan

Email: omprakashnlu@gmail.com

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Abstract

In contemporary India there have been a number of political movements and revolutions which paced the direction of the nation building process in India. One of such apolitical revolutions which gave a great impetus to India's nutrition problem and food deficiency was white revolution. It is interesting and relevant to trace the history of this revolution which made India the largest milk producer in the world. The paper aims to bring a narrative of the revolution and its origin. It has further looked in to the various aspects of Operation Flood and its various stages which ultimately made India the largest producer of milk in the world.

Keywords: *White Revolution, Operation Flood, Amul, Dairy Development.*

Introduction

British left in 1947 a malnourished, food deficient, famished and poverty stricken India. However in a matter of almost three decades the green revolution and white revolution completely changed the face of the country. This apolitical revolution gave a great impetus to India's nutrition problem and food deficiency and made India the largest milk producer in the world. The paper aims to bring a narrative of the revolution and its origin. It has further looked in to the various aspects of Operation Flood and its various stages which ultimately made India the largest producer of milk in the world.

During the year 2015-16 India produced 155.49 million tonnes of milk which is approximately six percent higher than the previous year. During the same period the per capita availability of milk was 337 grams a day which was a rise of 4.7 per cent compare to the previous year.¹ The Government is hoping to increase milk production in India to 180 million tonnes by 2021-22 through the

National Dairy Plan drawn up by the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB).² In order to reach the estimated demand of 180 million tonnes by 2021-22 daily milk production per cattle would need to increase suitably. India contributes 9.5 percent in the global milk production.³ Yet, her per capita milk consumption is around 250 gm per day.⁴ In the decade of 1960s, the milk production in the country was about 20 million tonnes and it increased exponentially to 33 million tonnes by 1982. The production reached to 54 million tonnes in 1990-91 and by 2000 there was a spiral rise of production which touched the level of 80 million tonnes.

Production growing at only three per cent and consumption growing at more than double the rate is going to lead to a mismatch between demand and supply. This will create opportunities for foreign investment in dairy industry. After independence India was a major importer of dairy products now it has become an exporter. The true heroes of our rural transformation are the women and men who have raised the productivity of our nation's cattle and buffaloes.⁵ The milk production was made possible by 70 million dairy farmers from a milch herd comprising 57 million cows and 39 million buffaloes. The average milk yield reached to 1,250 kg.

Almost the entire quantity was produced in the rural sector. Merely 10 per cent of the milk produced passed through a processing process in dairy plants. First automated dairy plant of India having a daily production capacity of one million litres was the Mother Dairy set up at Gandhinagar in Gujarat in 1996. Amul with a total installed capacity of 1.5 mlpd, was commissioned in 1974.⁶ Out of total milk consumed in India, a substantial part is used for making coffee or tea.⁷

Origin of the Revolution

India's White Revolution originated in Gujarat. Before independence in the year 1946, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel suggested the farmers in Kaira district to form a cooperative union to supply milk directly without any middleman to the Bombay Milk Scheme (BMS). The Kaira Union famously known as AMUL began under the chairmanship of Shri Tribhuvandas Patel.⁸ Kaira District experiment was done by other unions in Gujarat and thus a Federation of Unions was created to market their milk and milk products.

The process follows the way in which every village having a cooperative society and its members bring their milk every morning and evening. Not only the quantity of milk is measured but a sample is taken from each farmer to test the fat content. Every society is provided with technological device in form of an electronic fat tester. Payment is done based on the quantity and fat content. The

Payment process is also quite swift like for morning milk payment is made in the evening and for evening milk payment is made the following morning.

Prime Minister of India, Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri, visited Kaira district on October 30-31, 1964. He visited there at the invitation of Kaira Union to inaugurate a modern cattle feed plant. He saw the transformation brought about by the Anand pattern of milk cooperatives. On his return to Delhi, he set in motion the effort to create Anand experiment in all parts of India. The National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) came into existence in 1965 with the objective of building cooperative dairies in India on the pattern of Anand experiment.

The Anand model was structured on two tier, the primary village Dairy Cooperative Societies (DCS) of milk producers at the base, with a cluster of such societies forming a District Milk Producers' Union having the task of procurement and processing. The entire organisational set up at each level are governed by their own bylaws and are managed by elected boards and entirely owned by the farmers.⁹

The rapid growth of AMUL could be witnessed that by 1965-66, Amul had 518 DCs with 110,000 members. It collected 65,905 tonnes of milk and processed 500,000 litres of milk every day. The products sold were of Rs 92.2 million. The products comprised milk to baby food, milk and skimmed milk powders, condensed milk and cheese etc.¹⁰

The village level societies provided micro level inputs such as compound cattle feed, fodder seeds, veterinary first-aid, and artificial insemination services. The unions are responsible for the transport, processing and further marketing of milk and milk products under the two-tier system. The district unions have been managing the facilities at the district level. An important function of the district unions has been consistently to guide, supervise and control the village level societies in accordance with the by-laws and guidelines. The Anand pattern implied a network of marketing services linking rural areas to the urban markets.

The National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) was created in 1965 by the government of India as a registered society with the purpose of helping to replicate co-operative milk unions on the Anand pattern. The Indian Dairy Corporation (IDC) was set up in 1970 under the Indian Companies Act of 1956 to achieve the objective of the Operation Flood project. The union ministry of agriculture is in informal control of the IDC. The IDC disbursed the Operation Flood funds. It had the authority to approve plans prepared by NDDB on behalf of the state federations and unions for implementing Operation Flood. Since beginning V Kurien remained the common chairman of NDDB and IDC and in 1986 he became the chairman of the National Co-operative Dairy Federation.

Operation Flood I

Operation Flood launched in 1970 was the programme to crop Anand model and create a surplus milk production in India's villages. The Amul story had laid down the guiding principles for dairy development: a three-tier cooperative structure entirely owned and controlled by farmers, professionally managed, providing the inputs, for production enhancement, purchasing all the farmers' milk, processing and marketing it in urban areas. As the World Bank recently acknowledged, there was thus already a model in place to implement dairy development and the programme involved institution building as distinct from institution creation.¹¹

Aims for the first phase of Operation Flood included: organising village level dairy cooperatives with the required physical and institutional infrastructure to support production and procure milk; creation of modern production enhancement owned and managed by the union, processing and marketing facilities; establishment of metro dairies. There was plan to link Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi and Madras with the country's 18 best milksheds, capturing major shares of these urban milk markets.

The objectives of Operation Flood I were: (1) to meet the urban demand for milk; (2) to earn a larger share of the consumer rupee for the producer; (3) to improve the productivity of dairy farmers in the rural areas; (4) to improve the income of small farmers and landless people; (5) to remove dairy cattle farms from the cities where they represent a growing problem of genetic waste, social cost and public health; and (6) to establish a broad basis for accelerated development of the national industry in the project period as well as in the post-project per the World Food Programme (WFP). The reach of Operation Flood I was 22 districts involving 1.4 million rural families.

It has been amply demonstrated that the Indian dairy industry is capable of making products of a standard equivalent to the best in the world.¹² Operation Flood emerged as one of the largest and most successful rural employment generation schemes in the world. Cooperative dairy plan ensured regular income to millions of small farmers. The entire operation was not only meant for the modernisation of milk production but includes technological, economic and social dimensions also. The democratic structures were laid down at grass root levels.¹³

Operation Flood is the largest single dairy development project launched in India. The basic concept behind the project was to increase the rate of commercialisation of milk production by providing on the one hand an assured market for milk to the rural producers by linking rural milksheds with urban milk markets and on the other side to extend to them inputs like artificial insemination

for crossbreeding and upgrading, compounded cattle feed, veterinary care, etc, for enhancing the productivity of milch animals.

A chain of marketing and processing network and infrastructural facilities for extending inputs to producers were established with milk producers as primary members. The first phase of this project began in 1970 and was completed in 1981. The total investment of this phase (about Rs 1,000 million) was met from the European Economic Community (EEC) donated dairy commodities channelled through the World Food Programme. In the allocation of funds among various activities, about 64 per cent was given for building up milk processing and marketing capacity.¹⁴

Achievements

The major achievement of Operation Flood (OF) I were: (1) About 9,000 village dairy co-operatives with 1.3 million farmer members were established. The estimated number of animals in the co-operative ambit was 2.1 million. (2) About 1,800 village co-operatives were provided with artificial insemination facilities. In the eighteen milksheds, about 200 veterinary clinics were also established. (3) Every day procurement capacity of 2.15 million litres of milk was developed in these milksheds. Simultaneously raw milk processing capacity of 3.1 million litres per day was also created. (4) Indigenous production of milk powder increased from 22.4 thousand metric tonnes in 1970-71 to 64 thousand metric tonnes by 1979-80. Consequently the commercial import of milk powder was stopped from 1975-76. (5) Work was in progress to bring in nine more districts into the fold of OF I. (6) In the mega cities of Bombay, Madras, Calcutta and Delhi 2.9 million litres of milk was created per day. Thus the progress of OF I was very impressive. The same viewpoint was endorsed earlier by the UN/WFPA Evaluation Missions.¹⁵

Operation Flood II

The second phase of Operation Flood came into operation during 1981-85. It targeted 136 milksheds linked to over 290 urban markets with a total population of over 15 million. The numbers of societies, members and volumes of milk procured got doubled. The third phase of the operation during 1985-1996 sought to strengthen the basic infrastructure, measures for production enhancement and animal healthcare and nutrition. Thus it aimed to consolidate the gains of the first two phases.

With the launching of the second phase of Operation Flood in 1981 the dairy sector gained a faster momentum.¹⁶ About 160 districts distributed over 16 states are covered by this programme.¹⁷

Table 1 Milk Production in India		
Year	Production (Million Tonnes)	Per Capita Availability (gms/day)
1991-92	55.7	178
2000-01	80.6	220
2005-06	97.1	241
2008-09	108.5	258

Source: Department of Animal Husbandry Dairying & Fisheries Ministry of Agriculture.

The main features of the strategy adopted are the following: (1) Raising a special herd of milch animals known as the National Milch Herd numbering about 10 million. This National Herd were to be produced by using the advanced breeding techniques of artificial insemination and progeny testing. (2) A comprehensive programme for rearing the calves of these superior milch animals with emphasis on adequate nutrition and health care. (3) In order to meet the feed requirements of the National Milch Herd, a comprehensive fodder production and feed milling scheme is also contained in the strategy. About two million hectares of irrigated area were to be diverted by the farmers for the production of green fodder.

The practice of Western design of dairying ensures that milch animals are fed with grain, oilcake supplemented with green fodder. For maintaining the energy balance in the food system it is important to go with an 'integrated model' keeping aside the western practices. In order to make the 'integrated model' more effective, efforts should be directed towards minimising the pressure of animals on land and at the same time helping increase the productivity per unit of land resulted in also livestock productivity.

The objectives of OF II were: to enable 10 million rural milk producer families to build a viable sustaining dairy industry by 1985; to enable the milk producers to rear a national milch herd of some 14 million cross-bred cows and upgrade buffaloes during the 1980s; to erect a national milk grid which will link the rural milk-sheds to the major demand centres with an urban population totalling some 150 million; to reallocate the infrastructure required to support a viable national dairy industry, including a national frozen semen system, vaccine production

and delivery system, etc; and to enable milk and milk products to contribute to nutritional adequacy.

Strategy

The main features of a strategy to achieve this objective may include the following: (1) Community management of wasteland to produce fodder and wood, (2) Community management of village ponds to increase of production and that of aquatic plants for fodder, (3) Introduction of gobar gas plants to lessen the need to burn cattle dung and straw as fuel, (4) The introduction of smokeless stoves to reduce the amount of fuel needed for cooking, (5) Larger crop production and hence larger crop by-products by improved manuring through gobar gas plant slurry, (6) Treatment of straw with chemicals to increase its feeding value, (7) Re-allocation to calves of some of the concentrate feeds given at present to cows and bullocks, and (8) Preferential health care to calves. It should be possible to increase livestock productivity substantially without encroaching on any cultivated area specifically for feed production.

Operation Flood II plans undertook several noteworthy trends in comparison with the first phase of Operation Flood. During first place, the objectives of OF II did not explicitly mentioned the vulnerable groups in the cities and the small farmers and landless people in the rural areas as specific target groups of the programme. On the other hand, the OF II objectives envisaged a supplementary infant-feeding programme in rural areas. Secondly, the removal of dairy cattle from the cities, once an important objective of OF I, did not figure in the OF II plan of action. Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, OF II programme involved a shift from two-tier co-operative structure of organisation to a three-tier structure.

Operation Flood III

Operation Flood II was allowed to extend into Operation Flood III by 1994. The budget estimate for Operation Flood III amounts to Rs 8,766 million. More ambitious targets have been set under Operation Flood III, such as the formation of an additional 15,000 village dairy co-operatives, an extension of the number of milk-sheds to 173 and an extension of the number of towns to be served to 200.

A very important element in the Operation Flood III project document is the stress on viability of the co-operative societies. The strategy of NDDB/IDC clearly is to give priority to investments to those milk-sheds where milk procurement may be built up faster. The OF III document sharpens the political choices already made by the NDDB. The official ideological thrust of OF has more and more become one of 'liberating', the co-operatives from the ill influences of state interference in price-setting, ownership of plants and the freedom to dismiss and

employ their personnel. The NDDB argues that milk producers have the right to organise their own business co-operatively.¹⁸

National Milk Grid

The major thrust of the Operation Flood programme has been to set up a national milk grid which links the rural milk producer to the urban consumer through milk tankers, chilling stations and feeder balancing dairies. It has been noticed that there are allocation of more money to marketing structure than to increase the production, and has several times exceeded estimated expenditure on the milk grid.

The milk tankers which link the grid require smooth roads as in the affluent countries which are being imitated, although many parts of rural India have no roads at all. If tankers are widely put to use, they will require frequent and expensive repairs, with consequent increase in marketing overheads, further exacerbated by the deterioration of milk in transit over rough roads, and by the ever-escalating price of diesel oil.¹⁹

As milk gets bacteria quickly under tropical conditions and turns sour, preserving milk during its long journey through the grid becomes a costly and risky business. Even the simplest techniques of chilling milk are problematic and expensive, because in many areas the water required in the chilling process (and even for the basic purpose of keeping containers clean in order to prevent spoilage) is a scarce resource, and the price of ice increases rapidly. These factors suggest the need for fundamental development measures to precede the introduction of high level technology, as well as the injudiciousness of transferring technology to rural India from countries where ample infrastructural facilities exist. Again, milk production in India is characterised by sharp seasonal fluctuations, because of its relationship to agriculture which in turn is dependent on an unreliable monsoon in most parts of the country. The dairy plants that are linked to the national milk grid face challenge of underutilisation in summer and over utilisation in winter.

Conclusions

The increase in milk production in the 1960s was mainly because of increase in stock, while the increase in the latter period was associated with improvement in yields. V G Kurien, the chairman of the NDDB has emphasised that Operation Flood is not an all-purpose poverty removal programme due to its focus on a single productive activity, dairying.²⁰

The milk production enhancement strategies of Operation Flood, as much as the efforts of the Intensive Cattle Development Project and other veterinary programmes of the government, have accelerated growth in milk production. Doubts have been raised by critics about the efficacy of the cross breeding strategy.

It has been stated that Operation Flood's over-emphasis on cross-breeding of indigenous milch animals with European strains will result in animals with poor adaptability to Indian conditions, put further constraints on feed resources in the country, and accentuate class differences.²¹

Thus India has overtaken the United States to become the world's number one milk producer. Milk is India's number one farm commodity, surpassing even rice in terms of the value of its output to the national economy.²² The success of the White Revolution lies in clear and tough implementation strategies and careful planning along with access of modern technology and management skills for effective monitoring and co-ordination.²³

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Working of the Imperial Service Troops of the Sikh rulers of the Punjab States

Dr. Sandeep Kaur

Assistant Professor

Department of History

Punjabi University, Patiala

Email : sdkaur74@gmail.com

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Abstract

The Imperial Service Troops were formed in 1888A.D. by the Government of India. These troops were to be recruited by the local rules but were to be supervised, trained and equipped by the British military officers. The Sikh rulers of the Punjab States joined this scheme and took pains to improve the efficiency of their troops. These troops played commendable role whenever any enemy threatened the British empire.

Keywords : Imperial Service Troops, Lancers, Sappers and miners, brigade, allowance, ammunition, depot.

The first military unit of the East India Company was established in 1748 A.D in Madras. This unit was formed by Major Stringer Lawrence who is known as the father of the Indian Army. Gradually four military formations *i.e.* the Indian Army, the British Army, the Frontier Scouts and the armies of the Princely States were developed which became the backbone of the armed forces of the British Empire.¹ Towards the end of the year 1888 A.D the British Government had formed Imperial Service Troops in which twenty-three Princely States of India joined and these troops played a very important role in the various wars which the British fought within and outside its frontier territories. The Sikh rulers of the Princely States of Patiala, Nabha, Jind, Kapurthala and Faridkot readily joined the scheme of Imperial Service Troops and took pains to keep their forces well-trained and well equipped.

Major Howard Melliss was appointed as the Chief Inspecting Officer of the Imperial Service Troops of the Punjab States. He was to function under the direction of the Foreign Department. Captain J.W. Hogge of the 14th Bengal

Infantry and Major F.H.R. Drummond of the 11th Bengal Lancers were appointed as Inspecting Officers of the Punjab States Armies who were to train the selected troops of Infantry and Cavalry respectively.² These officers were required not only to inspect and train troops of the Princely States but also to advise the States in improving the efficiency of their forces.³ The rulers of the Princely States had the right to make appointments of the officers of their forces but it was expected that the Inspecting Officers should be consulted regarding the suitability of those appointments as these appointments were concerned with the wellbeing of the Imperial Service Troops.⁴ The salaries and other allowances of these officers were to be borne by the British Government. The ordinary pay of the Imperial Service Troops and all its expenses under ordinary circumstances was to be paid by the Princely States but the charges incidental to the move of the troops and their employment outside their States was to be defrayed by the British Government.⁵ The Governor-General-in-Council on October 21, 1891 issued orders that in event of the mobilization of Imperial Service Troops for active service, expenditure under the following headings was to be defrayed by the Government of India *viz.* extra allowances in the field (while on active service, in accordance with the rules regarding such allowances laid down for observance in the Native Army for the time being in force), transport by rail or sea, food and forage, ammunition and maintenance of special equipment subsequent to mobilization and during the period of active service.

The States to which the mobilized troops belonged were to meet the other charges in such a way, the ordinary pay of the troops, transport by road and all the articles of special equipment required on mobilization for Native cavalry and infantry by the Field Service Equipment Tables.⁶ The armament of the Princely States was the same as that of the Indian army and in 1906 A.D. they had reached a high standard of excellence in training, discipline and efficiency.⁷

The Princely States which maintained Imperial Service Troops were to meet subsidiary and incidental charges connected with the training, instruction and inspection of these Corps. So the Government of India decided to constitute an excluded local fund to provide for this expenditure. The formation of this fund was sanctioned on October 15, 1894 in accordance with the Indian Resolution No. 37961 dated October 24, 1894 and the fund was known as 'Imperial Service Local Charges Fund' which was administered by the Inspector General of the Imperial Service Troops. The sums were to be deposited by those Princely States which maintained Imperial Service Troops.⁸ Sir H. Melliss in 1897 A.D. recommended that the Princely States should slightly increase their present subscription of the fund from Rs. 5 to Rs. 10 per month so as to meet the half

salary of the Chief Civil Master Armourer who was in India to inspect annually the arms of the Imperial Service Troops. So the States agreed to increase their subscriptions per month as:- Patiala-Rs. 8, Jind-Rs. 5 to 10, Nabha-Rs. 8, Kapurthala-Rs. 5, Faridkot-Rs.5.⁹

First of all permission was granted to the State of Hyderabad to form a corps of Imperial Service Troops. Then the Phulkian States were permitted to follow the footsteps of Hyderabad. The Faridkot State got the permission to form troops for the Imperial Service on June 12, 1889.¹⁰ The Kapurthala State also joined the scheme and raised forces for Imperial Service Troops. Kalsia being a small State was not included in the Imperial Service Troops.¹¹ Imperial Service Corps or Imperial Service Troops was officially designated by the Government of India Circular No. 2660-1 of August 9, 1890. On February 11, 1891 a report was submitted to the Secretary of State, in which the Government of India explained the principles of the scheme of Imperial Service Troops. These principles were (1) Not to pressurize any Princely State to join the scheme (2) the contribution made by the State should not be a burden for it (3) the Corps were to be organized and equipped on a uniform plan which could bring them at par with the Imperial forces (4) the selected troops were to be inspected and trained (but not commanded) by the British officers employed under a Chief Inspecting Officer.¹² The training of the Imperial Service Troops was very beneficial as it helped in bringing the troops closer to the British officers and Instructors.¹³ Sir George White in his Note of July 28, 1893 had expressed the appreciation and usefulness of Imperial Service Troops. He opined that many of the British officers strongly considered that the Imperial Service Troops were a source of strength for the British Government. They supported this scheme as they considered that the Imperial Service Troops was composed of the best fighting material of the State to which they belonged. During general mobilization, these Corps could be sent to the headquarters of the British forces in the field and could be used as a guarantee of the loyalty of the remaining State forces. Also these troops were often commanded by the representatives of the most respectable families of the Princely States which further increased their value.¹⁴

The organization of Imperial Service Troops witnessed a shift in the policy of mistrust and isolation of the British Government towards the Princely States. This scheme, so far policy of the British Government was concerned, was implemented only in those Princely States the loyalty of whose rulers was beyond any doubt.¹⁵ The Imperial Service Troops of the States were required to remain ready at twenty-four hours' notice to move from headquarter at any time that

mobilization may be ordered.¹⁶ The Princely States of Patiala, Nabha, Jind, Kapurthala and Faridkot were impressed upon by the British Government the necessity of keeping their troops fully equipped with all requisites for active service.¹⁷ In the sanctioned plan of the organization, contribution of the Sikh rulers of the Princely States of the Punjab was as:

State	Infantry	Cavalry	Total
Patiala	1000	600	1600 ¹⁸
Nabha	600	150	750
Jind	600	150	750
Kapurthala	750	150	850 ¹⁹
Faridkot	150	50	200 ²⁰

The Quarterly Progress Report of the Punjab Government highly appreciated the progress in the organization of the selected troops of the Faridkot, Kapurthala, Patiala, Nabha and Jind. The troops of Patiala, Nabha and Jind States were brigaded near Patiala on the occasion of the Viceroy's visit in October 1889 A.D. and he inspected the troops and was much pleased to express his favourable opinion of their appearance and marching.²¹ Major Drummond and Major Hogge submitted their reports on the progress made by the Imperial Service Cavalry and Imperial Service Infantry of the Sikh rulers of the Princely States of the Punjab till December 1889 A.D. in which Major Drummond remarked that the Imperial Service Cavalry of Patiala State was up-to full strength and that the new recruits were Jat Sikhs who were young and able bodied. Abdul Majid Khan, the newly appointed commandant of the regiment had not only gained the confidence of his men but had also proved himself to be an able and energetic officer. He also eulogized the organization and discipline of the Nabha Lancers. The first Patiala Lancers was organized on April 11, 1889 and had a uniform of dark green colour with facings of scarlet and the flag of Patiala Lancers was red and white in colour whereas the Jind Lancers was organized on May 1, 1889 and had a uniform of dark blue with facings yellow and flag of blue and yellow colour. The Nabha Lancers was reorganized in May, 1889 A.D. and also had a uniform of dark blue colour with red facings and their flag was blue and red. The Kapurthala Lancers and Faridkot Lancers were both reorganized in May, 1889 A.D. and had dark blue uniform but Kapurthala Lancers had white facings and had blue and white, white crest flags whereas Faridkot Lancers had facings of drab while it

had flag of red, white and blue colours.²² Major Hogge's report on the progress of the Imperial Service Infantry of these States till December 1889 A.D. was satisfactory except for the Faridkot State where he found that the Raja was not properly supporting the scheme but in his Report on progress from January to April 1890 A.D., Major Hogge wrote that the Raja had started taking huge interest in improving the efficiency of his regiment which was placed under the command of Sardar Bicheter Singh who was the brother-in-law of his eldest son.²³ The Patiala Infantry had also greatly improved its efficiency for which commandant Bahadur Ali was given the credit. Satisfactory progress was made in the organization and equipments of the Imperial State Troops and much interest was shown by the Sikh rulers of Princely States of the Punjab in 1891 A.D.²⁴ In 1891 A.D. the rulers of Patiala, Nabha and Kapurthala offered their services in Manipur. But their offer was not accepted. The camps of exercise provided an opportunity to the Imperial Service Troops of brigading with regular troops for a short period. Detachment of cavalry from the Phulkian States, Kapurthala and Faridkot attended a Cavalry Camp at Muridke and these states also sent their infantry to attend a camp at Meean Meer. In all the cases the Imperial Service Troops acquitted themselves with credit.²⁵ In 1899 A.D. the British Government made an important decision in respect to the Kapurthala State. The Inspecting Officers had reported that the Kapurthala Imperial Service Infantry had a good material but as they get lesser salaries they could not be very efficient. On the other hand the squadron of the State cavalry which was 150 in number had reported it to be constantly deteriorating. So the Inspector-General of the Imperial Service Troops suggested that the Cavalry of the State should be disbanded which will save the funds of the State and which could be used to increase the salaries of the infantry and so improve their efficiency.²⁶

In the year 1904 A.D. the ruler of the Kapurthala State requested the British Government that as his State contributed a total sum of Rs. 2,51,000 which almost amounted to one-fourth of the revenue of the Kapurthala State towards Imperial Defence and service, so the cash commutation of Rs. 1,31,000 paid by the State in lieu of military service should be reduced by a sum equivalent to that spent on Imperial Service Troops namely Rs. 1,20,000. But the British Government was of the opinion that the ruler's obligations in the matter of the annual cash payment and of the payment for the Imperial Service Troops rested upon totally different grounds. The former was a legal obligation which had arisen from the conditions upon which the possessions of the State was confirmed by the British Government. The latter was a moral obligation arising from the duty

common to every ruler in India of sharing in the defense of the Empire which was voluntarily undertaken by the Kapurthala Darbar and was being voluntarily maintained by it. The British Government laid down that if in future the cost of Imperial Service Troops proved to have developed into a real burden upon the resources of the Darbar, the Government of India would certainly consider an application for reduction. However such a contingency would never arise in the case of Kapurthala which was a prosperous and well managed State. Also the ruler had made a declaration that he would not, under any circumstances, wished to forego the honour of maintaining his Imperial Service Regiment of which he was justly proud. The British Government fully recognized the ample manner in which the Kapurthala State discharged its duty and the valuable example set by it to the other States.²⁷

Maharaja Rajinder Singh of Patiala proposed the British Government to add 200 men to the Infantry and to break it up into two regiments each of 600 men. This addition of 200 soldiers involved an extra expenditure of Rs. 30,000 per annum on account of the salaries of these soldiers and their Commanding Officer and besides this charges for uniform and other military stores, promotion to old soldiers after every five years, charges for building additional barracks and their repairs etc., transport charges and charges for building hospitals were also an additional expenditure which the Patiala State readily accepted to bear as a mark of loyalty towards the British Government. The full cost of the two regiments with a strength of 1200 men was estimated to be Rs. 1,50,000 per annum.²⁸ This proposal was accepted by the British Government. So in 1892 A.D. two regiments of Infantry, First Patiala Infantry (Rajindar Sikhs 586 strong) and the second Patiala Infantry (589 strong) were formed along with the Cavalry named Patiala Lancers (592 strong). The total authorized strength of the whole of the Imperial Service Troops was a little over 18,000 i.e. Cavalry 7,100, Artillery 421, Sappers 570, Infantry 9,384, Camel Corps 665, besides 6 transport Corps and 2 signaling units and they were provided by the most of the important Princely States of India. The Cavalry consisted of 17 Corps of different sizes in which Patiala State provided 1 regiment²⁹ and also provided 2 battalions of Infantry. Jind, Nabha and Kapurthala States each furnished a battalion of infantry whereas the Faridkot State provided a company of Sappers.³⁰

The Maharaja of the Patiala State took keen interest in improving the efficiency of Imperial Service Troops and also got built military cantonments at the cost of about seven lakhs of rupees. The total army expenditure (both Imperial Service Troops and local army) amounted to rupees ten lakhs annually.³¹ The States of Patiala, Nabha and Jind were also exempted from maintaining sowars

(100 in case of Patiala and Nabha whereas Jind maintained 25 sowars) because of their contribution to the Imperial Service Troops scheme.³² Faridkot was also formerly required to furnish a contingent of 10 horses but it was remitted after the Mutiny. Kapurthala State did not furnish any contingent.³³ When Lord Lansdowne left India in 1894 A.D., the Imperial Service Troops had been placed on a sound footing. His successor Lord Elgin also conveyed his satisfaction at the steps which were being taken by the rulers to develop this scheme in their respective States. Bakshi Wali Muhammad Khan of Nabha and Bakshi Ganda Singh of Patiala were granted on the recommendation of the Chief Inspecting Officer and the Lieutenant-Governor, the titles of 'Khan Bahadur' and 'Rai Bahadur' respectively in connection with the efficient working and organization of Imperial Service Troops in their States.³⁴ The Raja of Faridkot in his letter dated February 26, 1900 had made a desire to convert his Imperial Service Infantry into a company of Sappers. Captain H.D. Watson, the Inspecting Officer of Punjab Imperial Service Infantry was of the opinion that the cost of the Faridkot Cavalry and Infantry in 1900 A.D. was Rs. 36,000 per annum whereas the cost of Imperial Service Sappers would not be greater than the force of Infantry and Cavalry maintained by the Raja. The initial annual cost of the Sappers was to be Rs. 30,400 while the ultimate cost was fixed at Rs. 31,900. The conversion of the Faridkot Imperial Service Troops into a double company of the Sappers was considered as economically more advantageous. Captain Watson stated that a company of Sappers would cost:-for pay-Rs. 23,400 and for contingencies-Rs. 7,000-Rs. 30,000 per annum, excluding extra pay after 5 and 10 years of service, which would never exceed Rs. 1,500 per annum at any time. The sum of Rs.7,000 for contingencies included cost of upkeep of equipment, mules and cost of stores for instruction etc but did not include the arrangements necessary for transport purposes. The Raja of Fardikot agreed to purchase engineer equipment to the value of about Rs. 3,000 during the first year and the reminder was to be provided later.³⁵ The Government of India, Foreign Department in its letter No. 1683 I.B, dated April 29, 1901 conveyed its sanction to the scheme whereby the Faridkot Imperial Service Infantry and Cavalry was abolished and a double company of Sappers was to be maintained.³⁶

The Fardikot Imperial Service Sappers was generally composed of the Jat Sikhs. The system of recruitment of the Imperial Service Corps was followed according to the Imperial Service Troops Regulations. First of all the measurement of the chest of the soldiers was done as laid down in the Regulations. Then the physical fitness of each recruit was certified by the Medical Officer who was attached to the Corps. Thirdly every recruit was required to obtain a certificate

of good character from the Lambardars of the place of his residence. Afterwards the recruits were instructed in drill and musketry according to the Military Rules and Regulations. Those who passed in drill and musketry were confirmed in those posts and those who failed were dismissed. The cost of maintaining Imperial Service Sappers for the year 1901-02 A.D. was Rs. 33038/0/4. Mules and ponies were kept for the purpose of transport. Pensions were granted to the Corps as laid down in the Imperial Service Troops Regulations and were paid monthly.³⁷ Captain D.L. Mallaby was appointed as Inspecting Officer of the Faridkot Imperial Service Sappers. When the British were involved in a war on the North-Western Frontier in 1897 A.D., the Sikh rulers of Patiala,³⁸ Nabha,³⁹ Jind⁴⁰ and Kapurthala⁴¹ provided their Imperial Service Troops for their utilization and had also earned appreciation from the British Government. Patiala sent one regiment of cavalry and 2 regiments of infantry, of whom the cavalry took part in the campaign of 1897 A.D. Nabha, Kapurthala and Jind also sent a battalion of Infantry.⁴² The Faridkot State had also offered its Imperial Service Troops for service in Tirah Campaign.⁴³ But the Government did not employ the Imperial Service Troops of the Faridkot State as they were not considered to be fully equipped for the field service.⁴⁴ But on July 15, 1904, Sir Charles Montgomery River received a letter from the Faridkot Darbar in which the Faridkot ruler claimed that the Faridkot Imperial Service Sappers had obtained a perfect course of military training under the supervision of General Stuart Beatson, the Inspector-General of Imperial Service Troops in India and the Inspecting officer and so were fit for active service in any part of the British Empire. He also got built new cantonment for the Imperial Service Sappers.⁴⁵ Lord Curzon sent a letter on April 27, 1904 to the rulers of the Princely States in which he expressed that the Imperial Service Troops had performed fairly well and that the efficiency of these troops had also enhanced. These Corps were employed on the frontier campaigns and rendered valuable services to the British Government.⁴⁶ So during the Viceroyalty of Lord Curzon, it was decided for the first time to send Imperial Service Troops for employment out of India.⁴⁷ So these States offered the services of their Imperial Service Troops when the British were involved in a war in South Africa in 1899 A.D. and in China in 1900 A.D. In the South African War, the services of these States were utilized but in China War their offer was declined. Lord Curzon also organized Imperial Cadet Corps which was composed of twenty men who belonged to noble families and had received their education from the ruler's colleges. These men were trained so that they could be appointed as officers in the Imperial army and could provide well trained officers to the Imperial Service Troops.⁴⁸

The British Government made agreements with the States of Kapurthala (October 30, 1899), Faridkot (December 16, 1899), Nabha (June 26, 1900), Patiala (July 1, 1900) and Jind (July 19, 1900) under which arrangements for the control and discipline of the Imperial Service Troops while serving beyond the State territories was made.⁴⁹ It was decided that whenever the Imperial Service Troops were employed beyond the State frontiers, the Governor-General in Council would have the power to appoint one or more British officers to command the said troops who would administer the military laws and regulations to which the troops were subjected under the laws of their States.⁵⁰ He had the authority to convene all such courts, to issue all such orders and to pass all such judgments as the State authorities could do when the forces were serving beyond that State but the execution of any sentence passed in the British India was to be carried out under the orders of the name and title of the ruler concerned.⁵¹ These agreements were approved and confirmed by the Government of India in 1901 A.D.⁵² In 1903, the rulers of Patiala, Jind and Nabha offered the services of their Imperial Service Troops in Somaliland which were not accepted by the British Government and again the offers of the rulers of Patiala, Jind, Nabha and Faridkot to employ their troops in Tibet expedition of 1904 A.D. were refused as they were not required.

The Princely States of Patiala, Nabha, Jind, Kapurthala and Faridkot made every effort to improve the efficiency of their Imperial Service Troops and provided tremendous assistance to the British during the time of emergencies. So the establishment of the Imperial Service Troops proved to be a boon for the British government and these troops gave evidence of their worth with the magnificent display of their courage, bravery, loyalty and discipline in the various War fronts of the First World War.

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Origin and early development of the Post-Sankaradeva and Narowâ sattra

Dr. Biman Hazarika

Principal, Dhing College, Nagaon, Assam

Email: history.dc123@gmail.com

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Abstract

The origin of VaicGava sattra and history of their expansion and growth can be traced back to the midst of the 16th century A.D. The sattras established by the early group of neo-Vai°Gavite saints and their immediate followers played a great role in the social life of the people and as a social force this institution were received strength for continuous acceptance of faith by some rulers and ruled alike. When sattra institution got bifurcated, the royal authority began to acknowledge it as a fait accompli. From Jayadhaja Simha (1649-1663) to the reign of Ramadhaj Simha (1679-1681) the monarchs and the nobles became adherent followers of VaicGava gosâins and the large number of sattras were established. Emergence of a new sub-group called 'nâti sattra' affiliated to the Caturbhuja's line includes Visnupura (Caturbhuja), Bardowâ (Damodara), Narowâ (Ramakanta), Kowamora (Anantaraya), Dighali (Sarangapani), Camaguri (Cakrapani) which were put under a new group Narowâ established in eastern and central Assam. This group succeeded in identifying itself as the core one amongst the 'câri sattras' of the Purusa samhati, emerged and grew within one hundred and fifty years (1650 A.D.-1800 A.D.) When Dâmodara, the founder of the group was implanted into the Caturbhuja's gotra when he was died without a male heir. As the legal heir the term 'Narowâ developed with its founder.' Here, na (new) means new and rowâ means planted when the first two sattras were established or he was planted in the male lineage of Caturbhuja of the Purusha Samhati. Henceforth, the sattras established by Dâmodara, adopted son of Caturbhuja became to be known as Narowâ in the sattra circle of Assam since 16th. century. These sattras received royal patronage but maintained minimal relations with the Courtly classes but contributed immensely in carrying the flame of the Post Sanakardeava neo-Vaisnavism and particularly radiating Bardowâ, the abode of the saint and Vâsudevar Thâân and some other establishments in between 17th-18th century Assam.

Key Words: Sattra, Narowâ, Âtâ, VaicGava, Purusa saAhati, Câri sattras.

Within the discipline of historical study, *sattras*¹ institutions of Assam (17th–18th centuries) have come to occupy a distinct and most honorific position. The origin of VaicGava *sattras* and history of their rapid expansion and growth can be traced back to the midst of the 16th century A.D. The *sattras* institutions established by the early group of neo-Vai°hvite saints and their immediate followers played a great role in the social life of the people and as a social force this institution were received strength for continuous acceptance of faith by some rulers and ruled alike. The *sattras* were extremely important centre in Assamese society as they acted as custodians of the rich heritage of Vai°Gavite religion art and culture.

The present study seeks to find the traces associated with the growth of a sub-sect when certain new groups of *sattras* sprang up and inter relations between the royal court and *sattras* attained a significant height under a changed socio-political situation of the 17th century. By the end of the 17th century, the most fruitful period of the VaicGavism came to an end and the galaxy of VaicGava stalwarts disappeared from the religious firmament of Assam.² The VaicGava religion and *sattras* institution by this time got bifurcated, but firmly rooted and the royal authority began to acknowledge it as a *fait accompli*.³ From Jayadhaja Simha (1649-1663) to the reign of Ramadhaj Simha (1679-1681) the monarchs and the nobles became adherent followers of VaicGava *gosâins* and the most important *sattras* of eastern Assam were established.⁴

Against this back drop an investigation is made to know the role played by the *sattras* and *sattriyas* that helped in maintaining a liaison between the *rajaghar* and *sattras sabha* at a time when the kings and nobles came forward to patronize the *sattras* institutions showing allegiances primarily to royal *câri sattras* or some other groups. Towards the latter half of the Ahom reign prompted by political motive, an official *sattriyâ Barua* was appointed who was looking after the functioning and management of *sattras*.⁵ Royal patronize within this period placed many *sattras* on a sound economic footing who extended support to preach religion and culture under the Ahom territory.

Following Mâdhava's death in 1568 A.D., his creed developed certain sectarian divisions and within a short span of time, four main branches developed belonging to Brahmanical followers and descendants. A schism in neo-VaicGavism surfaced because of ideological and personal differences among the latter group of leaders that finally put the *sattras* as an inheritable institution, and a kind of personal and communal property. When Dâmodaradeva seceded from the original order, Mâdhavadeva, Nârayanathâkur, his friend and colleagues were too old to shoulder the responsibility of wielding together different sections of devotees and

neophytes. Naturally, therefore they went on forming separate groups under Gopala Ata, Purusottama Thâkur and Mathuradâs respectively.⁶ It is said, 'the towering personality of ĆaEkaradeva binds the entire early group of devotees, but following his death germs of divisive forces crept into it.'⁷ It is said and accepted fact that in the third stage of *gurubâd*; four divisions emerged within Assam-VaicGavism. Mentionable, ĆaEkaradeva never dreamt of it, who laid the foundation of the religion devoting his energies with tireless efforts and established a secular forum for philosophical and religious discussion only.⁸ During his life time ĆaEkaradeva's granddaughters and daughters of the great grandsons there arose certain new points of difference of smaller magnitude. D. Nath rightly observes, 'this division weakened the old unity and strength of neo-VaicGavism, but created a force within each of the sects, to compete with each other for expansion of its own organization, in different parts of the state.'⁹ The newly installed Âcâryas were in firm conviction in maintaining the two basic principles namely *guru âgya* (guru's enjoin) and *Bangsânukram* (theory of inheritance) on the basis of which the new cult grew and developed. *Barjhuna* or '*etaka mahantar jhuna*',¹⁰ a literary account gives a picture of the early history and development of the post-Sanskrite *sattras* where he enlisted *sattras*, apostoles' names belonged to different *samhaties*. In due course of time, these *samhaties* became wholly independent and garnered own strength and established scores of big and small *sattras* with the royal patronage.

The Narowâ group of *sattras* of our review emerged out of the broad group the Caturbhuja's line-of Purusa saAhati and became wholly independent which further carried the flame of the neo-VaicGavite movement to new areas and ethnic groups. In Purusa saAhati, their staunch followers believed Purusottama Thakur to be the real successor of ĆaEkaradeva on his male lineage. Being the eldest grandson of Ćankaradeva Purusottama stood as the third claimant for the leadership of the samhati after Mâdhavadeva. The Bardowâ group of *sattras* affiliated to it claimed that Mâdhava nominated Purusottam Thâkur as his rightful successor.¹¹ Some accounts says, he claimed the direct descendant of the originator urging his followers to be acknowledged him as the leader.¹² An orthodox circle of this group however explains it differently which held the term *purusa* derived from *purusa* Nârâyana, supposed to be the first initiator.¹³ According to the VaicGavite tradition, *purusa samhati* lays special importance on '*nâma*', one of the four fundamentals of the *ekasarana nâma dharma*.¹⁴ The Bardowâ *bar-bara-janiyâ*, *saru-bara-janiyâ* and *Kanaka-bara Janiyâ* group constitute the *purusa saAhati* order.¹⁵ At his death bed, Thakur nominated Caturbhuja as his successor in 1619 A.D.¹⁶ who raised an ideal *sattra* called Vishnupur at a place

surrounded by Tamranga lake.¹⁷ On assuming the charge of *dharmâcârya*, Caturbhujâ nominated twelve principal deputies to preach and propagate the tenets of his sub-sect in some localities under the Ahom territory. For this mission, six deputies were selected from the Brahmin and the rest from the non-Brahmin community called as '*sarubarejaniya*'; the junior twelve. Besides propagating *eka sarana naam dharma*, Purusottama sent his emissaries and trusted disciples to revive the eclipsed glory of ĀEaEkaradeva and his tenant.

This paper aims to trace out the stay history of the bifurcation of the original sect into sub-sects that developed in a quick pace after the death of the great grandsons of ĀEaEkaradeva or the end of the guru's early line of inheritance. The period between 1650-1800 may thus properly be called as the era of the growth of the branch *sattras* (*sakha-sattra*).¹⁸ It has been observed that during the period of our survey, a gulf of differences seems tended to grow even within the '*purusa saAhati*' group. Numerous branches were springing up under the family members and disciples of the principal religious proselytizers of the early groups. With the death of Caturbhujâ the direct lineage of the ĀEaEkaradeva's family virtually came to an end. The *sattras* established by descendants of Purosottama and Caturbhujâ's daughters and the latter's sister, Govindapriyâ, are known otherwise known as '*nâti-sattras*,' 'grandson's establishments, *thâkur-nâpta sattra* (establishments of Purosottama and Caturbhujâ) thakuras' grandsons' or '*sri sankarâr jiyâri vamsar sattra*,' establishments belonging to the line of the Sankara on the female side.'¹⁹ Being assumed the charge of the head of the *sattra* after her husband's death Kanakalata alias Lakshmi Âi, the senior wife of Caturbhujâ who became successful in discharging her duties. At first, she intended to leave Vishnupur to rediscover Bardowâ, the earliest shrine and birthplace of her great grandfather in law buried under deep jungle since the time of ĀEaEkaradevas' migration in 1568 A.D. It was for the first time in the history of Assam VaicGavism a woman came forward and acted as the religious head and appointed deputies. She shouldered the responsibility for a considerable furtherance of the faith of ĀEaEkaradeva and Mâdhavadeva in eastern and central Assam. The *sattras* established by the followers of Kanakalata were known as *Kanakâbârejaniyâ sattra*. At the advice of Kesava Âtâ of Korchung *sattra* who was at that time with Damodara, Âi Kanaklata appointed few more apostles. Maniram Dewan in his work '*Buranji Vivek ratna*' however takes the Kanaka group of apostles having been established by Dâmodara of Narowâ and gives another list with variable facts. However, the list of the apostles of Kanakalata has been referred in Vibhunatha's '*Barjhuna*' as '*Kanaka-barejaniya mahanta*.'²⁰ However, account of Dewan makes us believe that despite the

presence of a strong lady like Kanakalatâ, Dâmodara asserted his power in appointing the other âcâryas in a male dominated society.

Question arises, was it because of the fresh invasion of the Mahammadans or any other reasons that hastened Kanakalata's migration to Ahom territory? One account²¹ clarifies that while staying at Bhella sattrâ in Kocbehar the female members of the Thakur families had to face persecution at the hands of the later Koch king and following which they left their original abode.

However, the vital cause of this eastward migration is learnt to be different. It is said, Dâmodara went to the Ahom capital on a request of his friend Bhagavan with a view to enlisting king's permission and aid for reclaiming Bardowâ, while the woman folk and other followers stayed at a place Âibheti, five miles east off Bardowâ.²² At that time, Jayadhaja Simha was dissatisfied with a group of VaicGavas because of their petty differences and some of their leaders were put into jail. On appearing at the court, Dâmodara explained the causes of the four-fledged cleavage in the orthodox religion and the causes of their differences. He explains, 'all these four samhaties follow Sankara's faith by worshipping Krsna, abstaining from the cults of other deities and celebrating *nâma-kirtana*.²³ Listening it, King said, 'I liked your liberal speech and have understood that your sect has no friends or foes'. One Niranjana of Âuniâtî sattrâ, who was present there praised his explanation thus, 'I am happy to state that the grandson of Sankara has no feelings of discrimination in mind, so the King granted his prayer.²⁴

Thus, the *nâti-sattras* founded by Dâmodara and some others under the Ahom territory attained special and honorific position in the latter history of the neo-VaicGavite movement. In its conceptual form, this new branch sprang up that owes origin to *dui Thâkuras* (two thâkuras).

Dâmodara was also known as Vaikunthapuriyâ Âtâ who built and lived for some years in a sattrâ named Damarajar known as Vaikunthapur. A detailed list of apostles appointed by Dâmodara Thakur is given in the sixth phases of the chronological order of H.N. Dutta Baruah's work. The newly emerged sect mentioned above also came to be known as '*prabhur jiudharâdâlar dharma prâcar*.' (Establishment belonging to the line of Sankara on the granddaughter's side.²⁵ Among these groups, Dâmodara's Narowâ group had set up first few sattras in the extreme parts of eastern Assam in the first half of the 17th century.

That the Narowâ sattras were highly popular has been proved by its ample references derived from scores of folklores, folk songs, and other vernacular literature. One such lore speaks, 'upstream Narowâ (that is *Narowâ thâân* of Dhemaji), Bardowâ in downstream, in the middle stands Vâsudevar thâân. (Narowâ sattrâ Vâsudevar Thâân)²⁶ The three main sattras refereed here raised

on both banks of the river Brahmaputra. The second line tells, 'a growing tree could not grow into fruition, premature or idly twisted and broken, *lâgani birikh-oi lâgiboloi nâpale muskâi bhângile dââl*.' It means, the prevailed political turmoil of that time when the Burmese hordes attacked that area and ransacked some of the newly established *sattras* including Narowâ. In another widely circulated lore exists in greater Bardowâ area goes like this-*Vaisnavpur calcali, Bardowâ simhâli, Bâlisatra mâje kuh, neusâkhuâ Râmpur*.²⁷

It gives some important information about the overall condition of *sattras* of Bardowâ when some differences cropped up among the leaders of that group. When Caturbhuja's only son Daivakinandana ²⁸ died premature, he adopted Dâmodara as scion and successor. Ratikanta Dwija's gives an elaborate account of the episode of the adoption when Caturbhuja declares, 'on an auspicious day, she (Govindapriyâ) gave birth to a boy and after being detaching the umbilical cord by Âi (Mukundapriya) the *protusthi Jagya* (a special rite) was performed. 'I purchased the boy on gold- value and the newly born was taken to my fold, for bringing him, as he went on saying 'I handed him over to Mukundapriyâ, my second wife. After completion of the customary birth rites, he was implanted into my gotra (*attri*) as Damodara.²⁹ When Dâmodara got implanted into the Caturbhuja's gotra that resulted to the emergence of the term 'Narowâ.' Here, *na* (new) means new and *rowâ* means planted. Henceforth, the *sattras* established by Dâmodara became to be known as Narowâ in the *sattras* circle of Assam since 16th century. Finding out its origin *Santâwali* ³⁰ presents a comprehensive account from verse 2683 to 2686. A group of *mahantas* of different *sattras* assembled to witness the investiture ceremony of Dâmodara. On that occasion, Âi Kanakalatâ declares, 'he (Dâmodara) is my cousin's son, staying with me; who perform funeral rites (*shradha*) of his Caturbhuja. Listening her prayer, *mahantas* present there accorded installation of minor Dâmodara Baruah as the new *âcârya* at Vishnupur *sattras*. As per the existing tradition at first, *bar bârejaniyâ mahantas* offered *nirmali*. Henceforth, my nephew-son got implanted', he made it public. With this background Narowâ *sattras* emerged in the month of Puh (December) (*pakhya muni bana candra sake*) on the first death anniversary of Caturbhuja.³¹ Caturbhuja died in 1648.³² Bhadracar's 'Anantarâm carit' describing how before went for his last pilgrimage Caturbhuja introduced Dâmodara as his immediate successor and urged others to introduce him in the same manner even before the invaders or Bangâl, if enquired. Even if the King intended to make a query, he (Dâmodara) would come forward as my regent.³³ Henceforth, *saka* 1571 or 1572 or A.D. 1649 or 1650 may be accepted as the establishing year. K.D. Goswami maintains that Dvarika's work describes an account of the life and career of

different Vaisnava leaders appears to be authentic. While extensively describing the evolution of the saAhaties, it earned for him a distinct position among the biographers of the VaicGavite apostles. After being handed over the charge of the family and responsibilities, Thakur advised, 'If men fail to regard you, finding difficult to obey you, do come forward with the help of Dâmodara, my son. 'Santâwali, the most comprehensive and voluminous account of the latter history of the neo-Vai°Gavite movement describes Dâmodara's investiture ceremony. Dâmodara on becoming an *adhikâra* at Vishnupur *sattr*a in 1650 A.D. initiated twelve apostles whom he sent emissaries to preach in Eastern Assam. *Thâkur carit* also mentions the twelve apostles appointed by Dâmodara (*âtâ dâmodare pââtâ*) in '*Buranji vivek ratna*'. Thus, when Caturbhuja nominated a minor, he put other disciples to the care of Kanakalatâ. Renowned VaicGavite scholar Neog writes, 'with the advice of the Dâmodaradeva, another *âcârya* who was then at Koch capital, their daughters, Damodara made their way to the Ahom kingdom'.³⁴

During the invasion of Abdus Salam in 1635 A.D. Vishnupur abode got demolished which led to the flee of Dâmodara and Kanakalatâ from western Assam abode. The other members of the team were dwij Bhagavan, their twelve deputies, accompanied by woman folk and some *bhakatas*. They might have come upstream from the mouth of Barnadi (probably Kurua) through the river Brahmaputra and reached Bardowâ ghât.³⁵

The first two *sattras* of this group were Lâomuri and Cârbbhâgi, established by newly planting bamboo grooves, trees, and banana plants.³⁶ So they were otherwise known as Narowâ. Later on, during the reign of Siva Simha (1714-1744), when royal patronage received these two Narowâ *sattr*a were shifted, to a new site near câmpara river where the present Narowâ Vâsudeur Thâân, a Mahâpurusiyâ *sattr*a is now stands. In 'Geographical sketch of 1800', Dr. John Peter Wade, gives an elaborate account of the place and the *sattr*a read as, 'Narowâ is a smaller district which does not exceed eight miles in length and six miles in breadth. It is chiefly noted for that a temple or Takoorbari (Thâkur-bâri). It is bounded by a much larger district, Manipur. Sowpara river falls from the mountain of Miri and flows through Coticoosi, its water contributes to enrich the estate of Narroowah Gossain or Goswami and after very long course join the Brahmaputra about sixty miles below Sudiya'.³⁷

During our initial survey we have come across *sattras* established by Dâmodara and his descendants in seven locations viz, Vaikunthapur (Damarâjâr), Vaisnavpur (kuji), Bardowa, Bali-sattr, Narowâ-sattr (Vâsudevar Thâân), Lâomuri and Cârbbhâgi.³⁸ According to Dvarika, with the patronage of Jayadhaja

simha, Damodara built the first two Narowâ *sattras* in the valley of Suvansiri (North Lakshimpur).³⁹

Strictly following the tradition of ‘*Mahâpurusiya*’ and *dui thâkurs*, the apostles of this group started proselytizing activities by setting up new *sattras* in eastern and middle Assam. Descendants of Dâmodara became famous as Narowâ Goswami or *gosâins* who established *sattras* and put all possible efforts to radiating the glory of prabhu CĒkaradeva. Some well-known *sattras* established by the Narowâ Goswami are Vâsudeu Thâân-Narowâ *sattra* (North Lakhimpur) Bâlisatra (Nagaon) Râmpur *sattra* (Nagaon), Batadraba thâân (Nagaon) Bhâtîali *sattra* (Nagaon) 6) Kuji *sattra* (Nagaon) 7) Pâtâusi (Kamrup).⁴⁰ This entire group followed Caturbhuja’s line of order including Salaguri (Kowâmora) *sattras* of Bardowâ, known as Narowâ *barphâl* or *bar hissâ*, the senior side and *saru phââl* or *chota hissâ*, ‘the junior side’.⁴¹ In ‘*The Neo-Vaigavite movement and the Sattra Institution of Assam*,’ S.N. Sarma gives a list of the *sattras* in the appendix-v.⁴² where we may trace out eleven *sattras* belonging to *nâti sattras* originated from the Purusa saAhati. Out of these, he identifies four as Narowâ.

Immediately after the death of Damodara (1665 A.D.), when Kanakalata allegedly hatched an internecine quarrel trying to put Anataraya, her own grandson, as the successor. Both Ramakanta, son of Dâmodara and Anantarâya, grandson of Kanaklata from her daughter’s (Subhadra) side claimed the leadership of Bardowâ that resulted birth of some spurious and apocryphal works or *caritas*.⁴³ It is said that in all such accounts, much importance was paid to Kanakalata who was trying to establish the line of her daughter’s son, Anantaraya. This long-drawn dispute got settled during the reign of the Ahom King Kamaleswar Simha (1795-1810) who received his ordination from Salaguriyâ gosâin of Kowamora *sattra*. Prime Minister Purnanada Burhagohain, and the chief of the judiciary, Bhadrakanta went to Bardowâ and settled the long-drawn dispute amicably. By the order of Barbaruah, the site of Bardowâ got partitioned between the families of the Narowâ mahanta (Râmdeva) and the Salaguri mahanta (Râmacarana).⁴⁴

H.N. Datta Barua in his monumental work ‘*Pracin kamrupiya kayastha samajar itibritya*’ elaborately presents some salient features and conditions of the câri *sattras* which includes Narowâ as a core *sattra*. He writes, ‘People used to believe and majority of them still believes that Narowâ, Dighali, Salaguri and Câmaguri are the chief câri *sattras* (four-sattras) of Nagaon in middle Assam. During Ahom period the condition of these *sattras* was satisfactory. As the descendants of the CĒkaradeva they were held in high esteem and reverence by the people. Although they were known as the four household *sattras*, their economic condition were not so sound in comparison with the royal câri *sattra*,

as a result we never find any significant changes and any outward transformation in their behavior and features. Earlier, when the gosâins or adhikâras set out to visit some sattra villages at least 50/60 bhakatas accompanied them. Now the figure comes down to a meagre number of six or seven. During Ahom period, the kings raised some camps for their temporal lodging, and they easily accommodate themselves in the village Nâmghars. No formal permission is required to meet sattriyâs of these sattras. Disciples may meet adhikâras or gosâins without any emissaries and can receive initiation and ordination maintaining mere formalities. In comparison to câri sattras of upper Assam the relations between the disciples and the superiors of these sattras were more cordial and friendly. Sometimes adhikâras deliberated some religious lessons and sermons among disciples of other sattras. During these discourse sattriyâs sattra stays in their houses for one or two nights'.⁴⁵

Giving the list of the Purusa Samhati *sattras*, S.N. Sarma also writes about emergence of a new sub-group called *nâti sattra* affiliated to the Caturbhujâ's line or cult. In a list the author includes the *sattras* along with their first apostles namely Visnupura (Caturbhujâ), Bardowâ (Damodara), Narowâ (Ramakanta), Kowamora (Anantaraya), Dighali (Sarangapani), Camaguri (Cakrapani) were put under this group.⁴⁶ This list includes 2/3 *sattras* founded by Dâmodara and his descendants. Citing the position and status of this group and quoting from the pages of *Buranji-vivek –ratna* S.N. Sarma explains thus, 'while allotting the seats to the sattra heads in the royal Court the third row was allotted to *Narowâ, Kowâmara, Dighali* and *Câmaguri sattras*.⁴⁷ From this account, the position of the Narowâ *gosâins* can be estimated and termed as more honorific, as they were allowed to sit on mattresses with the pillows.

Being the first Adhikara, Dâmodara tried to revive the lost glory and reputation of ĒaEkaradeva's shrine which he newly built at Bardowâ lighting the lamp of Bhakti and culture. The relations maintained by the superiors of the sattra with the royal houses were noteworthy. In 1772 A.D. (Saka, 1694) Ahom King Lakshmi Singha handed over the charge of Bardowâ along with Narowâ to Râmadeva Mahajan, the strongest sattra head and thereby *dharmottara* entailed on his race.⁴⁸ A inscription issued on that occasion describes Sri Ramadeva, Mahajana of Narowâ (originally in the Lakshimpur district in the same place as is known as Basudeva thâân) the *adhikâri of the Pâtâusi sattra* of ĒaEkaradeva. This endowment records the allocation of *dharmotara* which was entailed on his race. These events connected with the early history of the Narowâ sattra exemplified its importance, glory, and dignity in eastern Assam and sattra circle.

Discussions and analysis made in the preceding pages testify that the Narowâ *sattras* succeeded in identifying itself as the core group amongst the ‘câri *sattras*’ of the Purusa samhati in central Assam, similar with *Rajâghariyâ câri sattras*, emerged within one hundred and fifty years (1650 A.D.-1800 A.D.) S.N. Sarma refers this period as the rapid growth of the branch *sattras*. By the time of the death of Dâmodara and Âi Kanakalata, Narowâ secured a firm foothold in some locations of the Brahmaputra valley centering round mainly in three locations Vishnupur (Goalpara), Bardowâ-Bâlisatra (Nagaon) and Narowâ Vâsudevar thâân (North Lakhimur). Besides, it played a pivotal role in radiating Bardowâ and establishing a new group called Bardowâ *Thul* (group) with some distinct features.

It has been safely concluded that in the post-Sankarite era, Narowâ group of *sattras* played an important role in spreading the ideology of ĀEaEkaradeva and neo-Vaigavism where various histrionic art forms like miniature painting, wood craving, dancing, and prayer services etc. were practiced and developed. The crave for power and prestige and love of wealth which gradually tended to replace simplicity and sincerity of the latter group of *sattras* was conspicuously not found in the Narowâ group. Materialistic condition was not so sound in comparison with some of their counterparts. However, as the establishments of great grandsons of ĀEaEkaradeva they received due and unflinching honour from the people and laities. Courtly atmosphere was also not discernible in their functioning. As these *sattras* were functioning in far off places, their heads were not found in constant touch with the courtly classes in comparison to other groups.

Notes and references

¹The Sanskrit-Assamese Abhidhan describes ‘sattrā’ as ‘satah sadhun trayate itri traih kah-’means protects the righteous. S.N Sarma translated the aphorism of satra and explains ‘supreme place adored by gods and Vaigava where ardent devotees perform duties pleasing to God and nine-fold Bhakti prevails, Vaigava residing here are naturally prone to Harinama, Sarma S.N., ‘The neo-Vaigavite Movement and the sattrā Institution of Assam (NVMSIA), p.104.

²S.N. Sarma, *NVMSIA* (2nd ed) Guwahati, 1998, p.248.

³*ibid.*, p.262.

⁴*ibid.*, p.256-257.

⁵S.N. Sarma, *op.cit.*, p. 257 quoted from Govinda dasa’s ‘*santasampada*, chap.v.

⁶*ibid.*, p.93.

⁷Sivanath Barman, *Srimanta ĀEaEkaradeva and terar uttar suri sakal*, Guwahati, 2004, p.101.

⁸D. Nath, *Sattras in Colonial Assam*, 1st ed. 2007, Guwahati, p.3 cited in S.N. Sarma, *op.cit.*, p.94.

⁹*ibid.*, p.3

- ¹⁰ ‘*Etaka mahantar sattra thâpanar Jhunâ*, incorporated in Vaisnavi Kirtan, 1st ed., Jorhat, 1962.
- ¹¹ Purnanada, *Gopladevar carit.* ff27a-ff; Dutiram Hazarika, *Dihing sattrar Buranji*, 29-ff.
- ¹² S.N. Sarma, *op.cit.*, p.94.
- ¹³ K.D. Goswami, *Post Ēankaradeva Vaishnava faith and culture of Assam*, 1st ed., Delhi, 1988, p.46.
- ¹⁴ S.N. Sarma, *op.cit.*, p.131.
- ¹⁵ M. Neog, *Ēankaradeva and His Times*, 1st ed. 1965, Guwahati, p.155, Harinarayana, v.v. 379-381, Diciaryal Carit, f.14(b) Dvarika, v.v.2464,2482; Ratikanta, v.v.127-129 cited in PSVFCA, p.48.
- ¹⁶ Harinarayana, v.v. 379-381, *Diciaryal carit*, f.14 (b); Dvarika, v.v.2464,2482; Ratikanta, v.v.127-129 cited in PSVFCA, p. 48.
- ¹⁷ Thakur Carit (ed), v.425.
- ¹⁸ S.N. Sarma, *op.cit.*, p.263.
- ¹⁹ *ibid.*, p.46.
- ²⁰ S.N. Sarma, *op.cit.*, p.151.
- ²¹ *ĒaĒkaradeva and his Times*.
- ²¹ S.N. Sarma, *op.cit.*, p.263.
- ²² M. Neog, *op.cit.*, p.151.
- ²³ *ibid.*, p.153.
- ²⁴ Santawali, v.1124.
- ²⁵ H.N. Dutta Baruah, *Pracin kamrupiya kayastha samajar ittibritya* (1st. ed. Nalbari, 1941) p.77.
- ²⁶ This lore describing sites of the Narowâ *sattras*, ‘*ujâi Narowâ bhatiâi bardowâ mâjat Vâsudevar thâân*’.
- ²⁷ One Premalata Mahanta (37) of Kandhulimari village, Dhing (Nagaon) first explains the meaning.
- ²⁸ Harinarayana v.392; Naradeva’s genealogy (ms.) p.2 (kha).
- ²⁹ *Punyadine subhksanye âi prasabilâ’ âi goi bâlakar nâvisheda kailiyâ “ putrosthi jagyaka kari putra kari lailiyâ ‘Subarna mulakya diyâ Tahanka kinolo’âmar dwitiya bhâjya Mukunda priyâka /dilâ niya âi pâse putra tulibako// nâm gotra diyâ Sausa kriyâka dharilo/tâhar nâma jâna Dâmodara thailiyâ’ “*.
- ³⁰ This verse gives an account of the birth and adoption of Dâmodara.
- ³⁰ A biographical work on the life and activities of the Vai^oGavite Santas, compiled by Dwaraka Nath Dvija Mishra. It throws some new lights on various aspects relating to the emergence of different *samhaties*.
- ³¹ Santâwali, v.v. 2683-2687.
- ³² According to some accounts, Thakur died on the Ganges in *pausa*, saka 1570 /1648 A.D. at the age of fifty-four.
- ³³ *âhmâr bhâgin jânâ Dâmodara putrasame itu âse’ihâka samaste putra buli kaibâ bangâle jadi pusaya/râja âgya aile ehi haibya âgabolilo moi nisaiya.* (Bhadracâru: *Anantarâm carit*).
- ³⁴ M. Neog, *op.cit.*, p.151.
- ³⁵ H.N.Dutta Baruah, *op.cit.*, p.193.

- ³⁶*Lômuri Câribhâgi nâme dui sattra Bângsa, bikshya, Kandali nabin kori rui, Narowâ sattra buli dilek âkshyân samasta lokat itu bhailekya byâkhan* (Thakur carit, v.470) .
- ³⁷Reproduced from 'An account of Assam (ed.),' p.p.351, Benudhar Sarma, 1972, 'Dakshinpat sattra, Benudhar Sarma, Guwahati, (ed.), 1967, p.p.14-15.
- ³⁸Benudhar Sarma, *op.cit.*, p.55.
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Narmada and its land in Ramayana

Priya Sharma

Research Scholar

Department of History

Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, Amarkantak

Email- priya.sharmadc@gmail.com

&

Dr. Devendra Kumar Singh

Assistant Professor

Department of History

Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, Amarkantak

Email- devendra.singh@igntu.ac.in

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Abstract

Rivers have long been venerated for their piousness and significance in the development of the society. In ancient Indian literature rivers are worshipped as the mother and the land associated are given the same place as them if not higher position. A similar scenario can be maintained in the literature for river Narmada of the central land and its origin place Amarkantak or Amrakoot of puranas. As mentioned in Skanda purana, Predecessors of Rama from the time of Harishchandra, Dhundh and Raghu have paid their respects to the holy river Narmada during their reigns but in the case of Rama no such record is maintained as his most important journey to rescue Sita from the demon king Ravana led him to another path. At the end of his journey after killing Ravana it is recorded in the literature that, Rama along with Hanumana and rest of his army visited the Amarkantak hill where he and his army took bath in the holy water of Narmada in order to penance for their sin of killing the Brahmana Ravana. Later, on the same bank they worshipped lord shiva in Eklinga form. This is observed in the Rewakaand of Narmada Purana.

In one of the later literary work of Ramacharitmanasa, the author states that in the times gone by when Ravana was travelling above the hills of Amarkantak in his Pushpak vimana along with Mareech and

Sarang observed the Narmada (sarovar) and enlightens the other two men about the origin of Narmada from the lord Shiva. The text further states that being great celebrant of Lord Shiva; Ravana long with his company took bath at the river followed by the reverence to the ekkadev at the site. Through the famous epic does not maintains any thrurecord on the concern area but from the recorded evidences it can be stated that if not in the Vedic period, Narmada had gained a place of great veneration in later Purana period. The present paper will throw light on significance of Narmada and its land in Ramayana, absence of tangible evidence of Ramayana despite ample evidence of its existence in intangible form, place of Amarkantak and Maikal hill in Ramayana.

Key Words- Amarkantak, Narmada, Amrakut, Maikal, Ramayana, Rewa, Ravana.

Introduction

Water places an important role in the existence and development of any civilization even in today's fast-moving world. In the ancient times it had much more vital role to play than just being source of water, it was their life line in its truest sense from providing the food, trade route to its place as a pious being for its character indistinguishable from a mother.

In India rivers are praised and worshipped as mothers and are considered to be of sanctified character. Vedas and other ancient literature have in depth provided details on the individual rivers of the sub - continent. Some of the cardinal mentions are of River Sindh, Ganga, Saraswati, Jhelum and Yamuna. Besides these mainly glacial rivers some of the inland and peninsular rivers are also given special place in our texts which includes Narmada, Godavari, Krishna, Kaveri and Tungabhadra. All the rivers carry their distinguish characters not just in the literature but also in their diverse lands. One such river is Narmada with a unique origin in ancient *Puranas* and its history through time.

Geography

Narmada originates from the valley of Amarkantak from a small reservoir *kund*, located in Anuppur district of Madhya Pradesh. it travels along distance of 1,312 km from its origin and flows westward; finally submerging in Arabian sea near the Gulf of Khambhat in Gujrat. The river covers a hilly lush forested area moving towards the plain and finally before meeting the sea goes through the coastal plains of alluvial clay with a layer of black soil. It is one of the few rivers in India which flows westward besides Mahi and Tapi. Narmada forms a natural border between the north and south India. The river is also named as the life line of Madhya Pradesh and Gujrat. Narmada is also significant for its

paleontological records. The land of Amarkantak has its own significant place in ancient tradition of India.¹

Amarkantak (22.6822 N, 81.7532 E) is part of protected bio-reserve area for its diverse bio-diversity and is mainly known for its rare medicinal plants. A small hilly town located as the meeting point of the Vindhya, the Satpura and the Maikal hills and acts as a zonal point between the states of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. The land is of great significance for ethnological studies as it is the home of some of the major ethnic groups of India which includes - Gond, Bhil and Baiga. Geologically, an Amarkantak hill has basalt rock and consists of bauxite and late rite.

History

Besides being of great importance in present time for all the above-mentioned reasons, Narmada and the Amarkantak hills have for time since are placed in high pedestal in our ancient records.² Not much can be observed in the *Vedas* regarding the two but the later works of *Puranas* and epics have given ample space them. The mere significance of the river can be understood by the fact that it is the only river in India which is even today has the pilgrimage circumambulation or the *parikrama* which starts from the river origin by moving on the right bank of the river towards its end in Arabian sea and way back from there to its origin place completing one circle. Adi guru Shankaracharya is believed to have visited the hill of Amarkantak and worshipped shiva on the bank on Narmada along with installing a small Shivalinga at the place.³ Another record mentions that Adi Shankaracharya has met his Guru Govind Bhagavat pada on the banks of the river Narmada.⁴

The river Narmada despite being of such great relevance in ancient our *Vedas* have little to say on the topic as mentioned above but along with our literary works some of the foreign records also mentions Narmada in their work as is observed in by Ptolemy who call it by the name of *Namade* and same can be observed in case of Periplus Maris Erythraei naming it as *Nammadus*. Later the Britishers called it as the *Nerbudda* or *Narbada*.⁵ Some of the later Brahminical texts mentions it as Reva, the giver of pleasure. Mahabharat has many events associated with the concerned land and its rivers but comparatively less information is maintained on the same in the epic of Ramayana. Kalidas in his work of Meghdutam remembers Narmada along with the hills of *Amrakut* or Amarkantak.⁶

The only major source on the river and its lands can be studied from the *Puranas* -*Matsya* and *Vayu* which are later compiled in the course of time as *Narmada purana*. Rishi Markandey mentions in Matsya Purana, '*The Narmada is the foremost among all the rivers. It is the dispeller of everybody's sins*'.

And further continuing he adds that, '*The water of Saraswati purify one in course of five days, those of Yamuna in seven days, of Ganga instantaneously, and of the Narmada at the mere sight of it. The Narmada is the most charming and attractive of the country of Kalinga, the forest of Amarkantak, and of all the three realms*'.⁷

Another Shloka from the same reference mentions significance of the land of Amarkantak, which goes as, '*The resident of Amarkantak remains in Rudraloka for a hundred crore of years. The water of Narmada adorned with froth and ripples are worthy of being saluted. The sacred water dispels all the sins*'.⁸

Along with the *Puranas* the epic of Mahabharata gives a special place to the river and its land as it was the very place where their long duration of exile was believed to have been spent. Later, in Mahabharata when Yudhishtra finally becomes the king after the Great War he reaches to the forest of Vindhya to seek the knowledge of great *rishis* who have made the forest their home which includes Kapila, Vyasa and Markandey. Markandey is the story teller of Narmada Purana for Yudhishtra who wishes to learn great knowledge from the sages.⁹

Ramayana though being of such allegiance to our culture lacks information when it comes to the same topic but there are few instances from the work which again puts heavy emphasis on the place of the river and Amarkantak. It is mentioned in some of the early chapters of Ramayana that the ancestors of Rama have long been great devotee of the river and have visited the Amarkantak hill to give their reverence to the daughter of Shiva, Narmada (Kavyabhushan: Ramayana). Some of the important king of the clan includes Harishchandra, Dhundh and Raghu but during his early life Rama could not make the pilgrimage to the land (Valmiki: Ramayana). Same mention is observed in the *Skanda Purana*.

Another reference can be taken tough in consideration from the *Baal kaand* of Ramayana where the it is mentioned that Guru of Dasharatha's sons is informing his pupils about a river which flows in the *Vindhyadesh* and is of great significance. In another similar encounter the teacher dictates his pupils that, '*As Parvati (Shilsuta) is dear to lord Shiva; likewise, provider of all accomplishments (Siddhi), Narmada is dear to him*'.¹⁰

Besides such conversational references Tulsidas in his work has at places included few lines praising the river and placing her in equal pedestal with the sun's daughter Yamuna.¹¹

One of interesting event recorded in Ramayana associated with the topic describes that, once in times gone by Ravana was travelling in his *Pushpak*

vimana along with Mareech and Sarang over the hills of Vindhya. To quench their curiosity Ravana's companions requested him to tell them about the hill whereupon they have reached. Ravana informs then that this is the land of Lord Shiv's daughter Reva where all *devi, devta, gandgrava, raksha* and *rishis* live together and worships the lord at the bank holy river Narmada.¹²

Record further mentions that Ravana stayed at the hill of Amarkantak where he worshipped shiva after washing all his sins in the Narmada. A similar mention is observed in the *Matsya Purana* to verify the content which mentions, '*King! The devas, the demons, the Gandharvas, the ascetics, the Rishis - they all attain emancipation on the banks of the Narmada. One who follows the prescribed order of religion and observes a complete fast for a day, after bathing in the Narmada, liberates his seven generations for sin*'.¹³

The greatness and piousness of the river Narmada is venerated to the extent in Ramayana that she is considered to be the dispeller of great sins. At the end of the war in Lanka with the death of Ravana, it is recorded that Rama along with Hanumana and his rest army heads to the hills of Amarkantak to wash his sin of killing a brahmana where he afterwards also worships shiv to seek his penance for his sins (Ramcharitmanas): '*O king Yudhishtra! in this way the sacred place of Amarkantak is the most sanctified and therefore one who goes there on the occasion of solar or lunar eclipse and gets the merits ten times more than that of Ashvamedha sacrifice. One attains heaven by worshipping Mahasvara there. The sin of killing a brahmana is driven away by going there on the occasion of a solar eclipse. This is the glory of the sacred mount Amarkantak*'.¹⁴

This event in itself indicated towards the vital place of Narmada in our culture. What is required to be pointed here that Ayodhyay, capital of Rama's kingdom is itself at the bank of river Sarayu which carries a great value in our history.¹⁵

Despite all its glory the river and its land still lack their true value in the epic if it's placed at equal pedestal with other rivers of the plains like Yamuna or Ganga which are provided ample place in epic and its history. There are references in later period from chola dynasty where Narmada is regarded as the Ganga of South which again provides an idea of high placement of the river among others of its kind. (Local legends).

Looking even at the journey made by Rama for his *vanvashor* during the exile period from Ayodhyay which was followed by Prayag and Chitrakut and he stayed a brief period in the forested areas of Dandkaranya. Dandkaranya can be placed in modern days chattishgarh state which has some of the temples

dedicated to Rama but the land has more oral records of the event in comparison to its tangible records. From Dandkaranya, he along with his companions moves towards Panchvati following the steps to rescue Sita reaching Kishkindha situated at the bank of river Tungabhadra which is also given its sufficient mark in the text and finally reaching Rameshwaram where he along with his army venerated lord shiva.¹⁶

Most important journey of Rama's life was never made through the hills of Amarkantak or the River Narmada, the rare instances in which the two are mentioned cannot be compared with their number of references made in another epic of Mahabharata. But again, the question arises in association with places where Narmada is given more importance than any other river which are mostly mentioned in the Ramayana.

A contradictory motion is observed in it that despite having a good number of references in literature associated with Rama and river not much can be observed in the tangible form. Ample numbers of local folk lore and stories have been passed down the generations in the area about Rama but the area lacks any concrete work in structural form.

Government has recently up taken different issue related with our ancient past which are related to Rama or Ramayana, probably this one particular debatable issue could also be further studied by scholars and may reveal new findings on the area. The latest project on *Ramsetu* could possibly prove helpful in understanding this scenario in a different light than what has till date considered to be a work already done.

Conclusion

A river as great as Narmada whose land has been the dwelling place of rishis like Kapila, Vyas and Markandeya, has not been mentioned in any text and it still lacks its fair share amount of recognition in present form and not just to be regarded as the river of *Puranas*. This further work on the topic could be helpful to understand the changing socio - culture aspect of a river.

Narmada had been reverted as the daughter Mahadev; one of the tri-deva which in itself defines its prestigious status among the rivers. Despite all its glory, there has been ample of missing links and incomplete credentials on the river and its land.

From its pre-historic deposition to its veneration in the puranas along with legends believed even today and further carried as home of ethnic groups; nothing can make its position much clearer and yet there is a void in the matter of its situation in our culture and tradition which needs to be contented. Precise efforts with a sight to discover lost civilization of the Narmada will re-shape the bygone

days of this river and its dwellers. Such work could also lead to the discovery of a new page in the history of Indian rivers and how they shaped our world.

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Nationalistic Ideology of Jyoti Prasad Agarwala through Music and Cinema

Dr. Parag Nath

Associate Professor

Assamese Department,

Sankardev College, Shillong, Meghalaya

Email : babaparag@gmail.com

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Abstract

Nationalism is a term not easily defined. However it is strongly related to culture. Also it relates to an ideology, a sentiment or a social movement that focuses on a nation. As an ideology and social movement nationalism is generally accepted as a modern phenomenon originating in Europe .In Assam Nationalism is a post British phenomenon. It took shape in Assam only during the 2nd half of the 19th century. After the Treaty of Yandaboo, 1826 people of Assam had to face numerous problems which continued till 1st half of the 20th century. Since that time onwards , a kind of nationalistic consciousness began to grow in Assam .From the Age of Jonaki to Avahan, nationalistic consciousness was within the literary bounds .Jyotiprasad Agarwala tried his best to advance this consciousness into some other spheres also by putting it in the right direction . He had his own perception of Revolution and understood his best that the message through music, drama, dance cinema etc more easily penetrates into the hearts of the people than through any other means. Thus, music and cinemas were taken as the best mediums to influence the minds of the people of Assam.Although Jyotiprasad is known among us as one of the greatest culturists of the age, he was equally a true patriot, a humanitarian and a person filled with nationalistic consciousness. His love for his native land and India was inborn and hence selflessly rendered service for the betterment of the society and the welfare of the mankind. Such instinct encouraged him to compose songs, poems, produce films and bring up a revolutionary movement. In this paper an attempt has been made to highlight how Jyotiprasad made use of music and cinemas to spread the message of nationalistic ideology and to infuse with a kind of nationalistic sentiment among the people of Assam.

Keywords: Nationalism, Music, Cinema, Assamese.

Introduction

Nationalism is a term not easily defined. However it is strongly related to culture. Also it relates to an ideology, a sentiment or a social movement that focuses on a nation. As an ideology and social movement nationalism is generally accepted as a modern phenomenon originating in Europe. To have a better understanding of nationalism one should also know what is 'nation'. Etymologically derived from the Latin word '*nasci*' (to be born) a nation is ideally a community 'of natives', an extensive aggregate of persons 'so closely associated with each other by common descent, language or history as to form a distinct race or people, usually organizes a separate political state or occupying a definite territory'¹. Historically speaking the concept of nation and nationalism has been playing a vital role in integrating diverse and discrete groups. The growth of nationalism in India was accompanied by the growth of social and political organization. It was an outcome of total impact of the British rule and their policies. The impact of western education and its liberating influence coupled with social regeneration also worked as the motive force for the growth of nationalism. But the base of the Indian nationalism is said to have founded by Rajarammohan Rai. Thereby it can be said that India nationalism is rooted in the Indian renaissance which itself rooted in the concept of westernization.² While establishing Indian nationalism on a strong foundation, a class of poets, artists and dramatists also played a dominant role. Every nook and corner of the country reverberated with the music of such spirits of that many may catch the glow of their inspiration. This ultimately enabled the people at large to be strong to hope, strong to sacrifice, strong to achieve the ultimate goal. In this context, we must refer to people like Rabindranath Tagore, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, Najrul Islam etc.³ They were the singers of nationalism where there was an expression of love for their motherland. In Assam, nationalism was a post British phenomenon. As an ideology and movement it took shape only during the 2nd half of the 19th century. After the Treaty of Yandaboo, 1826 people of Assam had to face numerous problems which continued till 1st half of the 20th century. Since that time onwards, a kind of nationalistic consciousness began to grow in Assam.⁴ From Jorhat *Sarvajonik Sabha*, to Assam Association and Assam *Jatiyo* Congress of the 1st part of the 20th century those were known to be main Assamese national organizations. Jyotiprashad Agarwala who was born towards the last part of such a critical and instable position that Assam had been facing became the pioneering personality to put that growing consciousness in the right direction. J.P. Agarwala is the person who surpassed all others as he not only confined himself within the bounds of music, poems and dramas but also extending his creative works. These works are reflected in his nationalistic instinct

like creation of revolutionary film *Joymoti* at a time when it was something unthinkable for entire North Eastern Region (NER) of India. With these ingredients the paper tries to locate the nationalistic consciousness of Jyotiprasad which are reflected in his cultural works in general and music and cinemas in particular.

Importance of the study

Numerous studies have been taken place among the intellectuals and academicians on Agarwala's life and works. Also a number of scholars have made efforts to study his works from various perspectives. But till now only a little attempt is made to study his works from the nationalistic point of view. Music and cinemas out of his other creations have been given primary importance in this paper to explore nationalistic ideology. It is expected from the study that it will open up new vistas for the future analysis to re establish Jyotiprasad as a true nationalist.

Jyotiprasad as an artist, cultural icon and patriot of Assam

Born on 17th June, 1903, Agarwala is imbued with his own ideology of nationalism. His life indeed is a revolution. To him, revolution is an adventure to dominate all evil powers of the society. His concept of revolution is quite similar to that of Bhagat Singh, another patriot of India who visualizes revolution as the law of the world, secret of human progress but it does not necessarily involve sanguinary strips nor is there any place in it for individual Vedanta. It is not the cult of bomb and revolver. With his believe in revolution, Jyoti himself fostered a kind of revolution in the spheres of music, dance, drama and poems etc.

Jyoti is a saint of age and a true patriot whose love for his motherhood and her people is selfless. He rendered whole life service for the welfare of the mankind. His ideology and activities are thus influenced by nationalistic consciousness. Through his music, plays, essays and cinemas he sought to convey his vision of ideal world where people are free from oppression and follow the path of beauty and culture of nationalism.

Nationalistic perfume in Jyoti's Songs and Music

Jyoti was born at a time when Assam had been passing through a very critical and disturbed situation. The Assamese people gradually began to neglect their age old culture and heritage and intended to blindly imitate the culture of neighbouring Bengal. Same was the case with Assamese music. The Hindustani and the Bengali music started influencing the Assamese music to put to its complete extinction. The local songs like Borgeet, Bongeet and Bihugeet lost their previous love and respect among the people. Such instincts of the Assamese people undoubtedly were going to put the whole class of Assamese music into a dangerous chaotic condition.

Jyotiprasad Agarwala, Bisnuprasad Rabha and Anandoram Boruah, the three saints are born as God-sent gifts during such an adversity of Assamese music. Their constructive spirits heralded a revolution in the field of Assamese music. Till the first two decades of the 20th century it was not so strong in true sense of the term. This is owing to the fact that the revolution mainly centred on gramophone recordings and gramophone was prevalent among aristocrat families. Thus it was not easy to create a widespread movement at that time. Best media to win in this task was the plays as Jyotiprasad accepted. With the concept of stage, songs of Jyoti slowly penetrated people's heart. Thereby the songs of his plays were much more popular than those of others. Modern songs made its first footstep in the world of Assamese music with Jyoti's first drama *Sonitkonwar*—deeply influenced by the Non co-operation movement of 1921.⁵

Bisnu Rabha had rightly stated that the songs of Jyotiprasad can be classified into three ages- i) the age of 'Sonitkonwari', ii) the age of 'Karengor Ligiri' and iii) the age of 'Lavita'.⁶ During the age of Karengor Ligiri, a new stream of songs with deep patriotism started developing. The rousing beat and the melodic lilt of his patriotic songs were designed to effectively rouse the too-often dormant feelings of love for one's motherland that lay in the hearts of the people. The 'Motherland' of one is not simply a land, she is mother, the maternal principle is personified, a selfless women who has been ill-served by her self-serving progeny. In some songs like 'jananir santan', for instance, this point comes out quite clearly 'children of mother, awake, awake'. The songs of the play "Lavita" are also very important from the nationalistic point of view. Lavita is the story of a firebrand nationalist which has its root in a real incident. No wonder, the play is so brilliantly lit with a perfume of patriotism. 'Xaju ha, xaju ho navajowan' is a vital line of a song in the play.⁷ When we observe his other songs composed during his stay in the foreign countries, we find that nationalist thinking is clearly glorified through them. Some small and vital parts of those melodies are translated from Assamese which are stated in such a way viz. *Kune kole tuk Xoktibihin buli* (No one can say that Assamese are lack of energy), *Xonka Nokora, Nokora voi, Joy Mohatma, Mohatmar joy* (Not to fear anyone. Victory of Mahatma. It is the victory of Mahatma) and *Viswa Vijoy Novojoyan* (He asked the youths to come forward to fight for World victory).⁸ All these songs are infused with purely local melodies.

Celebrating Independence Day of 26th January, 1932 at the advice of M.K. Gandhi, Jyoti alongwith Amiyo Kumar Das united a number of people from various parts of Assam at Nikamul Satra, Tezpur in order to make the celebration a grand success. In order to strengthen the feeling of nationalism among those

people he composed another set of songs like *Xoktixali Bharotor, ulai aha ulai aha xontan tumi biplobor, Agebarhi aha xobe/ matri boli hobo loi/ triborno potaka hoke/ bok xahaxra tejor noi* etc.⁹

These types of songs also represent his nationalistic awareness and attitude. The uniqueness of songs is reflected under deep root of valley in his melodies. The melodic features of various songs of the valley are different from the rest of the country. The valley of Assam has assimilated the culture of lands both in the west and east. Yet Jyoti was also open to influences from the west as he stayed for several years in the western countries. All those various skeins contributed to the freshness inherent in the tunes - the secret of his songs. His passionate loves for Assamese people are reflected vividly in his dynamic songs. Love for human beings and society again re-establishes his socialist attitude. But what made Jyoti's songs so unique was that this was highly coloured with a passionate idealism that made him believe in the latent godliness of all men and women. He believed that if the people could break up the bonds of oppression and unshackle themselves from the chains of a dehumanizing imperialism, they would be potential enough to build a so called a Utopian society.

During the time of his creative life, the air was indeed thick with soul stirring calls for freedom and many Indians bestirred themselves and worked towards it in the way that best suited them. It is but natural therefore that freedom and liberty from a strong and recurrent theme is Jyoti's lyrics. Till his dying day in 1951 he kept exhorting his countrymen through his incandescent songs, to shatter existing social mores and create a better life for all people across all social structure.

Cinemas

Nationalistic consciousness of Jyotiprashad Agarwala is also manifested in his film *Joymati* which was released in 10th March, 1935. Here, it will be noteworthy to mention that Jyoti was the founder of the Assamese film industry. He was the person who showed the example of nationalistic cinema for the first time in Assam. In his 'Axomor Film Silpa' he speaks about the purpose and importance of establishing Cinema hall in different parts of Assam where we get nationalistic flavor. He started his career in the film industry in 1933-34 through the film *Joymati*. *Joymati* was adapted from renowned Assamese playwright Lakhinath Bezbarua's play on an Ahom queen, valiant and courageous person the story of whose life had made her into a kind of regional folk heroin. Since that time onwards till 1948-49 (period of one and half decades) he had been rendering his service in this field whether as a filmmaker, producer, director, performer and so on.¹⁰

Indramalati was his second film released in 1939. In 1944-45 he again planned for making his 3rds film 'Manor dinor agnixur'. Unfortunately he could not fulfil his desire due to his severe illness. For this third film he once again took a subject matter from the Assam history. On the basis of this he tried to show the life of the Assamese nation during the reign of the Burmese. Songs of Manor dinor agnixur – 'Luitor parore ami dekalora moribole bhoy nai', 'Janonir xantan jaga jaga' etc. were purely nationalistic in character.¹¹

Jyoti was also very much conscious in the matter of national economy. He constructed Jonaki cinema hall in Tezpur at his own expense. He advised people to keep the country's economy in their own hands. Besides he was also of the view that if each town did not have at least one cinema hall, half of the public money would be drained away by the non-Assamese owners of the halls. Thus business minded Assamese people must think of establishing Toky houses where there was not any.¹² Toky houses might act as a ray of hope to strengthen the country's economy.

Conclusion

Above music and cinemas, his lifelong creative works and the ideal philosophy that had been displayed through them clearly glorify nationalistic sentiment of the icon. Just as his whole entity clearly shows his artistry, so also his thoughts and activities greatly exhibit his nationalistic consciousness. Having observed the miserable condition of the Assamese people he utters Goddess Kamakhya to appear before them so as to protect them and fill their minds with new enthusiasm to build up a strong foundation for Assamese nation.

It is clear from the above discussion that music and cinema of Jyotiprashad Agarwala played a significant role in establishing him as a true nationalist. This paper has just tried to touch the important points and focus on the nationalistic ideology of him. But a deviated analysis in this field may open up new horizon of study for the scholars to establish Jyotiprashad Agarwala as a true nationalist.

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Saint- Vaishnava Alignment In the Context of Guru Tegh Bahadur and Surdas

Dr. Gagandeep Kaur

Assistant Professor in History
Guru Hargobind Sahib Khalsa Girls College
Karhali Sahib, Patiala, Punjab
Email: gaganadesh1982@gmail.com

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Abstract

Devotional literature of Bhakti period contains the writings specifically poetry of Nirguna and Saguna Bhakts (devotees). The Nirguna Bhakts believe in one formless God, whereas Saguna Bhakts worship the incarnations of God like Vishnu, Rama and Krishna. Though they belong to the two different categories of Bhakti but the contrast between them is not as neat as it seems. They are allied with each other on the basis of certain shared ideas. For the understanding of Nirguna exposition, Bani (utterance) of Guru Tegh Bahadur is under use. For Saguna understanding Bani(utterance) of Surdas is used. In this paper an attempt has been made to explore the affinity of symbols and ideas between Nirguna and Saguna on the basis of utterance of above mentioned figures. Both of them (Guru Tegh Bahadur and Surdas) are allied to each other on the basis of certain shared emphasis e.g. recognition of both states of God (Nirguna and Saguna), believe in the fact that Jiva is the creation of God, about the influence of Maya on individual's, the importance of Guru, Satsang and recitation of Naam. But some of their fundamental differences can't be overlooked.

Keywords: *Nirguna, Saguna, Vallabhacharya, Pushtimarg, Sukh, Viyoga, Sali, Singi, Sanayas, Sat, Chit, Anand, Sabad, Gur, Jiva*

Guru Tegh Bahadur and Surdas belong to the two different categories of Bhakti movement i.e. Saint (Nirguna) and Vaishnava (Saguna). However, the contrast between them is not as neat as this taxonomy would imply.¹ Spatial contiguity of the followers of these different categories created scope for both encounters and negotiations between them. In more recent years, two leading

scholars of medieval Saintism and Bhakti devotionism, John Stratton Hawley and David N. Lorenzen, have attempted to break away from the conventional interpretation of the Nirguna- Saguna dichotomy in Medieval North Indian Bhakti.² Hawley cites various instances of mixing up of the Nirguna – Saguna and of the resultant breach in the theological wall.³ To divide the principal figures of this period into Ramaite and Krishnaite Bhaktas on the one hand and Saint on the other is to run the risk of obscuring the important connection that related them to one another and made them in significant ways parts of the same movement.⁴ This paper is an attempt to explore the affinity of symbol on one hand and ideas between Nirguna and Saguna without ignoring their fundamental differences on the other hand. For this purpose the utterance (Bani) of Guru Tegh Bahadur and Surdas is under use.

Guru Tegh Bahadur was the ninth successor of Guru Nanak, who included in the prominent Saints of Bhakti movement during the medieval times. The hymns of Guru Tegh Bahadur were included in Guru Granth under the directions of Guru Gobind Singh. These hymns are total 116 in number. Shabad which are 59, added in different ragas and 57 Sholkas collectively included in the end of the Guru Granth. All these Shabad and Sholkas of Guru Tegh Bahadur are written in Braj Bhasha (language).⁵ Braj Bhasha had acquired the status of a lingua franca of spiritual and secular expression in north India. It acquired a literary character during the 15th and 16th century when it received on the one hand, religious patronage through Vallabhacharya and on the other hand, a place of honour in the courts of local chieftains as well as Muslim Kings.⁶ The earlier Gurus had also used this language in their Bani. Fifth Sikh Guru, Guru Arjan Dev, has used this language in Sukhmani Sahib,⁷ Phunhay, and Chaubolay.⁸

Surdas was perhaps the first writer of Braj Bhasha. As, one hardly finds mention of any Braj Bhasha writer in history of Hindi literature before him.⁹ Surdas is believed to have written three works: Sursagar, Sursarawali and Sahitya Lahri.¹⁰ In the present paper only Sursagar is used which is considered Surdas' standard work. The main theme of Sursagar is the depiction of the divine sports of Shri Krishna as given in the tenth chapter of the Bhagavata Purana. The significance of Bhagavata Purana was taught to Surdas by Vallabhacharya, who initiated Surdas into his Sampradaya Pushtimarg at Gaughata.¹¹ For Vallabhacharya and his followers, Bhagavata Purana is the final scriptural authority to which one may resort in Kali Yuga due to its Bhaktimarga, its expression of Bhakti Bhava, the delightful experience of the emotion of love –permeated, selfless devotion to Bhagavan Shri Krishna.¹²

The verses of the Sursagar were being spread all over North India from Orissa in the east to Gujarat and Sindh in the west.¹³ As the verses spread so must have spread the fame of Braj language and the writers of other languages had also started using it in different parts of the country. With the same reason it may be used by Sikh Gurus specifically by Guru Tegh Bahadur who has used it for his whole *Bani*. After physically examining the Kartar Pothi and observing the placement of raga Sri and raga Prabhati (favourite ragas of the Vaishnavas) and raga Tilanga and raga Suhi (favourite ragas of Sufis) in key points in the Sikh Text, Gurinder Singh Mann points out, 'Guru Arjan's engagement with the two major religious groups i.e. Vaishnavas and Sufis'.¹⁴ This engagement may lead to the citation of couplet of Vaishnavas and Sufis in Guru Granth. On the other side, the Saguni Vaishnava's were not only known to the Saints of their period but to some extent were also influenced by them.¹⁵ Rameshwar Prasad Bahuguna supports this view that the growing posthumous popularity of Kabir and other Saints did not go unnoticed in Vaishnava circles, resulting in changes in certain forms of Vaishnavism.¹⁶ Above mentioned view suggests a strong alignment between Saints and Vaishnavas during medieval times. This alignment served as the base for this paper to study borrowing and sharing of ideas and symbols between Guru Tegh Bahadur and Surdas.

It is amazing how close affinity of some of the ideas of Tegh Bahadur have with Surdas. David Lorenzen draws our attention to the popularity of certain Puranic episodes among both Saints and Vaishnavas.¹⁷ Guru Tegh Bahadur and Surdas have glorified common Puranic devotees like Ganika (courtesan), Ajamil, Gajendra, the elephant and Dhruv for purposes of illustrating and emphasizing spiritual and moral truths. Guru Tegh Bahadur stressed on the recitation of 'Naam' for its power over death by putting the example of above mentioned figures of Bhagavata Purana,¹⁸ a Vaishnavized text. He has employed the Puranic terminology in his Bani perhaps more than any other Guru. Surdas also listed Ajamil, Gajendra, Ganika and Dhruv as the recipients of the Lord's grace, to whom God have saved from death.¹⁹ The respectful mention of Sagun Vaishnava icons of the Puranic past in the medieval Nirguna Santic Banis clearly shows that the Nirguna Saints did not regard the Nirguna-Saguna theological division as absolute and non-negotiable.²⁰

The mention of death is very frequent in the utterance (Bani) of the both especially as the devouring 'snake of time' (Kal-Vyal).²¹ whosoever is born is devoured by Kaal in due course. Both Guru Tegh Bahadur and Surdas emphasized that one has wasted all the three stages of life childhood (Balpan), adulthood

(Tarnpo) and old age (Biradh) in ignorance and ultimately one goes in the mouth of death.²² It is of great surprise that in regard of certainty of death and falseness of worldly relations, one couplet is identically cited in both outlooks (Guru Granth and Sursagar). In Guru Granth it is cited as Sorath Mahala Nine and in Sursagar it is cited in raga Dhansri under the name of Surdas. The refrain of this couplet is that the whole worldly relations are connected for their own happiness. In prosperity many people will gather and sit (with the rich man) encircling him on all side. But when adversity befalls him, all leave him and none comes near him. One's own wife, so dearly loved by and ever attached to her husband, loudly cries out, flies away from him, and says, ghost, ghost; when his soul leaves his body. Such is the behavior of those, whom we love and at the end none comes for rescue. At that time one's only hope is Hari, so one should recite Hari's name (Naam) without wasting time. The only difference is in the end, in Guru Granth this couplet is cited under the signature of Guru Nanak (Ant Bar Nanak Bin Har Ji) and in Sursagar under the signature of Surdas (Surdas Bhagawant Bhajan Bin).²³ How can this be possible? Same couplet is cited under different names in both outlooks. Borrowing is obvious on one side or other.

In spite of the seniority of Surdas, borrowing may be possible on his side because of the variations in the manuscripts of Sursagar. After doing an extensive research on the manuscripts of Sursagar, John Stratton Hawley concludes that the Sabha additions of Sursagar contains poems that are recent additions to the corpus.²⁴ The oldest manuscript of all contains only 268 poems with his signature and they grew regularly with the passage of time.²⁵ Sursagar's shape alerted dramatically to provide a link between it and the Bhagavata Purana.²⁶ Early manuscripts match ill with the Vallabhite conception of Surdas' poetic vocation²⁷ but in the course of time it became common practice to claim that Surdas derived his poetic inspiration from the Bhagavata.²⁸ One more thing is obvious that other poets also wrote under Surdas' name.²⁹ On the other side, Guru Granth (in which the couplet under consideration is cited) is the greatest unaltered and undiluted text pertaining to medieval India. Though, this needs further research before arriving to a definite conclusion.

Even to explain the creation of world from God and its again mingling in God, both have shared the whole proverb of bubble in the water. They mentioned that as the bubble in the water well up and disappears again; so is this world created from God it again mingled in God.³⁰ Both have compared this world to a dream (Sawapan) and called it false (Mitha).³¹

Both of them were against rituals in the religion. Guru Tegh Bahadur announced the uselessness of ceremonial fasting (*Brat*) and going on pilgrimage

to holy places (Tirath) in the absence of Divine refuge.³² In the same way, Surdas also declared that the real happiness (Sukh) is in the recitation of singing of Gopal instead of Jap-Tap and going on pilgrimage (Tirath).³³ They have emphasized to give up passions like Kam, Karodh, Lobh, Moh and Abhimanu and to take refuge in the Name of God.³⁴ Surdas also stressed to leave these passions (Kam, Karodh, Mad, Lobh Parhar).³⁵

Guru Tegh Bahadur has used metaphors from the ideas and practices of Yogis with his own orientation. In his views the real Yogi is that he who has neither praise nor slander for the others. He, who equally considered gold and iron.³⁶ Otherwise there is no use of shaving the head and having put on ochre coloured clothes as Yogis.³⁷ Similarly, Surdas has no appreciation for Yogic practices. In Bhramargit³⁸ from debate between Udho and Gopis, Surdas' view about Yogis becomes clear. Gopis are saying to Udho that they are doing Yoga in the Viyoga (separation) of Lord Krishna. Their hairs have grown as 'Sali' (sacred thread) and they are badly burned by the fire of separation from the Lord. Their heart is like horn (Singi) and their eyes are the Khappar's to beg the Darshan's of the Lord.³⁹ Further, in the voice of Gopis Surdas declared that they (Gopis) are not deserving of Yoga because Udho tell them to close those eyes where the image of Hari lives.⁴⁰

Both Surdas and Guru Tegh Bahadur have no faith in renunciation (Sanayas). Surdas said that Yogi wanders around for whom that is within the heart.⁴¹ In the same way Guru Tegh Bahadur declared that one wanders in the forests to achieve that who is within oneself (Ghat Hi Mahi Niranjan Tere).⁴² One doesn't need to leave the world and go to the forest to realize God. He has used renunciation in different meaning. He asks the seeker to renounce greed, delusion, infatuation or attachment, conceit, ego and the sense of ownership.⁴³ The renunciation must be accompanied by loving devotion to God.⁴⁴ In Surdas' Bhramargit also the Gopi's scores a victory over Gyan with their loving devotion.⁴⁵ For Surdas, the renunciation taken for the purpose of experiencing Viraha in loving devotion is the best. For both of them loving devotion is an important characteristic for Viraha.

Both of them had given emphasis on recitation of the Divine name (Naam Simran). Guru Tegh Bahadur is of the view that with Naam Simran only, one can attain the state of fearlessness (Nirbhay)⁴⁶ and to get rid off from transmigration (Nirvana).⁴⁷ Similarly Surdas holds the view that without Hari Simran, one can't get rid of from transmigration (Bin Har Simran Mukat Na Hoi).⁴⁸ So salvation or liberation is attached to the recitation of Name of Lord. Guru Tegh Bahadur declared that in the dark-age (Kaliyuga), one can be liberated only with Naam.⁴⁹

Surdas holds the similar view that with Naam Simran only one can attain salvation. In a significant line, the Guru points out that singing God's praise, service of the teacher and acquisition of knowledge constitutes the way to liberation.⁵⁰ On the other hand, Surdas doesn't believe that there is any such quality that makes a person potentially the recipient of salvation.⁵¹ It can be achieved with the grace of God (Nadar). Among Vallabhite sect this is called Pushti (grace) of God. It is founded by Vallabhacharya. It is the path in which the only support of the devotee is the grace or the Pushti of Lord Krishna. That's why this path is called Pushtimarga. This path is based on Vallabhacharya's doctrine 'Suddhadvait'. According to this doctrine, Brahm is the embodiment of Sat (eternity), Chit (consciousness), and Anand (bliss). The followers of Pushtimarg strive to merge them in Shri Krishna's Anandlila through love and self-surrender.⁵² Surdas was initiated into this path (Pushtimarg) by Vallabhacharya himself. Surdas holds the view that even the fallen of the fallen can be saved if comes under the grace of the God. He called the Lord 'the savior of the fallen' (Patit-Pavan).⁵³ Guru Tegh Bahadur, also employ this motif of Patit- Pavan with different meaning in one couplet where stress is given to do Satsang because with it even fallen becomes pure (Patit- Puneet).⁵⁴ But in another -couplet it is employed with the sense that God (Har) is the savior of both Patit and Puneet.⁵⁵

Importance of recitation of Name and liberation can only be realized through the advise of the true Guru. Guru Tegh Bahadur placed the service of Guru and the Bhakti of God in the equal plane.⁵⁶ Surdas also mentioned Guru in the same breath and on the same plane as God.⁵⁷ Guru is described as the guide who helps individuals to get rid off from worldly affairs.⁵⁸ Guru Tegh Bahadur mentioned that with the grace of Guru one knows the Ultimate Truth.⁵⁹ Here one important difference must be noted that in Guru Granth Sahib emphasis is given on 'Sabad Guru'. Guru Nanak, whose ninth successor is Guru Tegh Bahadur, clearly states to the Siddha's in Siddha Goshat that his Guru is Sabad.⁶⁰ On the other side, Surdas was a faithful devotee of Vallabhacharya. About this it may be said that in no sect of Bhakti movement Sabad is considered as Guru except in Guru Granth.⁶¹

The word Sant and Satsang also find mention in the writings of both. In Guru Tegh Bahadur's utterance the word Sant is a synonym of Sadha and Sant. The implied meaning of Santa and Sadha in the devotional literature is a man who has found peace in devotion to God.⁶² A Santa of Guru Tegh Bahadur's conception is the one who is at peace even in Sansara, who has stilled his thought and who is in harmony with the Divine scheme.⁶³ Surdas has given emphasis on doing the Satsang of the Sadhas for the Simran of God.⁶⁴ He has also used word Sadhun

and Santan for Santa in his Bani. He also laid stress on the company of Santa (Sadhu- Sang) to get rid off from transmigration.⁶⁵ Surdas has employed the word Harijana in the sense of Santa.⁶⁶ The word Harijana literary means 'Men of God' or 'Divine beings'. He also recommended good company (Satsang) to whom he called Sant Samagam.⁶⁷ For Surdas the only importance of Saints is that they sing the Name of the Lord but Lord is his refuge not Saints. In this respect Surdas is measurably different from his Saint compeers.⁶⁸

About human being (Jiva) Guru Tegh Bahadur is of view that there is no difference between Har (God) and Har Jan (Jiva).⁶⁹ So, human beings are created from God. Surdas also mentioned that God creates human beings out of him selves he explained that the one manifests in different forms. The human soul is a sort of miniature of God.⁷⁰ Vallabhacharya, the spiritual preceptor of Surdas, divided Jivas into three categories. These are Pushti Jiva, Maryada Jiva and Pravaha Jiva. Pushti Jivas are well-nourished, complete and have the Anugraha (grace) of Shri Krishna. Maryada Jivas are within the limits of the actions and live in expectations of the rewards that the Veda promises in heaven. Paravaha Jivas are those who crave riches and sensual pleasures on earth. These Jivas are demonic and have little potential for Uddhar; there are two kinds of demonic Jivas: those that are knowingly evil and those that are unknowingly evil.⁷¹ According to Vallabhacharya's thought Pushti Jivas are the best Jivas. He said that Pushti Jivas are manifested from the body (Kaya) of Shri Krishna, while the Maryada Jivas are manifested by the speech of Shri Krishna, and the Pravaha Jivas are produced from the mind of Shri Krishna.⁷² There is a great deal of significance in the origin of the Pushti Jivas as they originated from the body of Shri Krishna which is made of the Ananda portion of his being. Vallabhacharya considered that Human beings (Jiva, in ignorance of Maya remains immersed in this world and forgets the Lord. The concept of Maya is used in Indian philosophy from Ancient times. Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha in his Mahan Kosh (encyclopedia) according to Gurbani states, 'Maya is the Shakti (Power) of God which is responsible for the creation of the world'.⁷³ Guru Tegh Bahadur is of the view that Maya is not a separate ultimate reality it has come into being at the will of the Divine.⁷⁴ But human beings are serving the maid (Maya) instead of recitation of Name of Lord (Murar).⁷⁵ For Surdas the Maya of God is Agam and Agochar and nobody can know its end.⁷⁶ It brings out the misery of the Jiva. Because of its influence, the individual forgets self nature as a part of Brahma and lives in a painful world of sufferings without uttering the name of Brahma.⁷⁷

Guru Tegh Bahadur and Surdas have recognized the both states of God (Nirguna and Saguna). Nirguna worshippers hold the view that ultimate reality

can truly be worshiped only in the absence of attributes and form. The Saguna bhakats worship God through appearance and attributes. Guru Tegh Bahadur states that God is multi coloured (Bahu Rangi) and has assumed thousand forms (Nana Roop) but still remains different from all.⁷⁸ The Nirguna still remains Nirguna despite having many qualities. Surdas also accepts that the God is both Nirguna and Saguna. Hawley rightly said, 'Suadas seems to place himself in the company of those whose habit is to worship God in the Nirguna manner'.⁷⁹ There is frequent mention of Ram, Kanhai, Gobind and Narayan in bani of Guru Tegh Bahadur. But it should not be taken as anthropomorphic or as resembling the concept of an Avtar, in which the transcendent Lord comes down upon earth in the form of human being.⁸⁰ The Nirguna perception of Krishna, Rama and Hari is that of a non-incarnate, formless, absolute Supreme Being. On the other side, Surdas believed that the Lord came in the form of avtar. Lord lives in heaven, he has come to the world in human form, as Avtar, to end the miseries of the people.⁸¹ In spite of the mention of two states of God by both of them, Guru Tegh Bahadur ultimately is of the view that the Lord is without form and feature.⁸² On the other side, Surdas emphasize on the worship of Saguna Brahma.⁸³ In their views, there is possibility of direct connection between the creator and his creation (Jiva). About Surdas Hawley writes, as far as the transaction between humanity and divinity is concerned, Surdas' faith might fittingly be called Nirguna.⁸⁴ As the Nirguni's of this world, and of medieval India in particular are the one who approached God most directly than their Saguni counterparts.⁸⁵

From the foregoing account it becomes clear that though Guru Tegh Bahadur and Surdas are from two different thoughts of Bhakti i.e. Nirguna and Saguna yet they are allied with each other for sharing of symbols and ideas. Identical verses can be seen in their writings about the falseness of worldly relations and certainty of death. For the creation of the world from God they have shared the whole proverb of the bubble in the water. Further, they are allied with each other on the basis of certain shared emphasis e.g. recognition of both states of God (Nirguna and Saguna), believe in the fact that Jiva is the creation of God, about the influence of Maya on individual's, the importance of Guru, Satsang and recitation of Naam. Both of them do not have faith in rituals and renunciation (Sanayas). They have their own interpretations of Yoga and its practices. For Guru Tegh Bahadur, only that person is real Yogi who is above all worldly pleasures and attachments. For Surdas, the Gopis of Braj are real Yogis who are suffering separation (Virha) in Viyoga of Krishna. Even they shared linguistic affinity as both have used Braj Bhasha in their utterance. But in spite of these similarities some of their fundamental differences can't be overlooked.

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Exploring the Significance of Bezbaroa's Burhi Aair Sadhu, Focusing on Innocence as Projected in Bezbaroa and Shakespeare

Dr. Deepshikha Mahanta Bortamuly

Assistant Professor

Department of English

Daulat Ram College

University of Delhi, Delhi

Email: deepshikha.drca@gmail.com

& deepshikhamahanta@dr.du.ac.in

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Abstract

This article attempts at exploring two basic concerns. The first is to analyze the significance of Laxminath Bezbaroa's Burhi Aair Sadhu, a collection of Assamese folktales. This leads to the observation of significant postcolonial analyses of orature as a community reservoir of myths, morality, society, history and culture, by African authors such as Achebe, Wa Thiongo and Fanon. The second and related basic point of this article is to highlight several similar traits noticeable in Bezbaroa's Burhi Aair Sadhu and some of Shakespeare's plays in terms of innocence and its projection.*

Keywords: Folktales, culture, innocence, projection

Laxminath Bezbaroa (1864-1938), better known as 'Sahityarathi' and 'Rasaraj' in Assamese, was the most prominent litterateur of the Assamese Renaissance of the Nineteenth and early Twentieth century, a prolific author who wrote short stories, poems, novels, essays, songs and research articles, a socially responsible editor who edited and published magazines, a playwright who recreated Assamese history through vivid literary productions-in short did everything possible to rejuvenate the depressed and subjugated Assamese people at a transitional moment. His wit – that ascribed 'Rasaraj' (King of Humour) title to him-was comparable to Chaucer in urbanity. To a certain extent he could be like Pope as well, providing a good laughter at the expense of certain social follies. Through various relentless efforts he asserted the Assamese identity and boosted up the morale of the people to resist negative forces that exerted dominance through various modus operandi. He was particularly instrumental in retrieving history

and culture through writing and publishing the folklores. One such collection is Burhi Aair Sadhu, its literal translation being 'Grandmother's Stories'. The title highlights orature as a recursive activity practiced by the elderly and the experienced as a habitual activity, through the shared bonding of a grandmother with the grandchildren in a typical Assamese household. In this article, my attempt is to highlight certain features of Burhi Aair Sadhu and examine projection of innocence in some tales of this compilation compared to some of Shakespeare's plays.

In the introduction to this compilation of folktales, Laxminath Bezbaroa makes several observations, the most noteworthy of these is that in Assamese, folktales are termed 'Sadhu Kotha'-sayings of the good people or saints. Through this, he rightly asserts that in Assamese collective psychology and culture, folktales were considered not just as mere stories, but collected storehouses of the sayings of the experienced elderly through various contexts rendered in terms of stories. This serves, in my opinion, more than one purpose. Stories are much more interesting than dry advices, stories can be told and retold, with the scenes created and recreated by the elderly grandparents. Their interpretations of the stories soaked in their own individual experiences. Thus, the folktales become very dynamic sources for a smooth transmission of the wisdom and lived experiences of countless previous generations added with more recent and local or immediate flavour. Therefore, they remained ever relevant, ever interesting, an almost habitual reiteration of a past lived through present colourings in terms of personal or group experiences that are more contexts specific. Folktales come alive through every retelling.

Compilation of folktales thus becomes a Herculean task, with numerous versions of the same story existing in various locales. Laxminath Bezbaroa's tireless efforts have streamlined several stories. Though the variants still exist, the different lifestyles, increasing number of nuclear families with very less emotive connections established between the grandparents and the grandchildren, stories are told in less households now, replaced by the wide and all engrossing networks of cartoon channels available in various electronic gadgets. Yet, nearly all the contemporary attempts at going back to the folktales and recreating them in modern day projections always consider Bezbaroa's version in Burhi Aair Sadhu to be a reliable focal point.

While connecting Assamese folktales to the contemporary research works going on in Germany and other centres of research activities, Bezbaroa refers to the fact that along with Philology and Mythology, Folklore gained attention as a very pertinent area of research activities. It is relevant to notice that Bezbaroa

observed this as early as in 1911. During the last one hundred and ten years, folklore, folktales and orature have got a lot more scholarly attention than they used to get. This is particularly true regarding the postcolonial thrust for identity, history and retrieving of the precolonial past, in which folktales have received substantial and at times central focus in expositions across the world.

Noteworthy among these post colonialists were African authors such as Chinua Achebe and Ngugi Wa Thiongo carving a niche through their observations, explanations and depictions. Oral traditions of binding myth, history and identity together have been foregrounded both through novels as well as through scholarly elucidations, such as *Things Fall Apart* and *De-colonizing the Mind*. In *Things Fall Apart*, a conscious attempt is noticeable to counter the Western epistemes of identity formation regarding Africa and the Africans. This is achieved through an assertion of the aboriginal and the indigenous that existed in the precolonial Africa. Folktales, proverbs, myths, customs acquire a central stage here. Folktales are shown to be timeless, ever pertinent episteme that mold activities of the present times through frequent retellings of previous activities, experiences, history and myth, binding them altogether to create a better vision for the future. Whether their visions were right or wrong in the historical perspective is another matter. What concerns here is the similarity of realization that orature carries collective experiences and therefore orature is extremely significant.

Universality, not just in terms of folktales of various places and culture, but in terms of certain themes and concerns can also be noticed in some Assamese folktales through the Bezbaroa rendition. An interesting comparison can be drawn between some female characters created in Shakespeare's plays as against some of them as depicted in Bezbaroa's *Burhi Aair Sadhu*. After all, as Terry Eagleton proclaims, 'Though there are many ways in which we have thankfully left this conservative patriarch behind, there are other ways in which we have yet to catch up with him'.

Innocence and its projection in Shakespeare is multifaceted. The innocence of King Lear's youngest daughter is pitted against the calculated behaviour and activities of her elder sisters. The father figure here is incapable of taking the right decision, as he is psychologically pre-conditioned by the urge to hear linguistic exercise of excessive flattery. The incapability to decipher the vacuity of linguistic expressions of the two elder daughters creates an impulsive overreaction of the father king, only to lead to an almost immediate situation of powerlessness and dependence. The shift is so immediate and overwhelming that the protector father king becomes a homeless poor old man, incapable of reverting the situation. There are few or none in the world of literature as well as

in real life, equal to this enormous tragic universe that Shakespeare creates. There is a huge difference projected between the feminine tenderness of Cordelia, as against the ‘manly’ acts of aggression of the other two – Regan and Goneril.

Masculinity and so-called manly acts of aggression are extended to female souls smeared with greed, jealousy and thirst for power and dominance. This is true of several characters from the plays of Shakespeare, as well as of several characters from *Burhi Aair Sadhu*. Lady Macbeth is the most prominent and immediately remembered instance from Shakespeare. Commenting on masculinity in Shakespeare’s plays, Catherine Belsey says, ‘(In *Julius Caesar*) Portia’s act is usually read as a concession to Roman Stoicism, but isn’t it as a perverse version of the same project that Cleopatra insists on fighting alongside Antony at Actium? Surely a corruption of this compassionate ideal drives Lady Macbeth when she urges evil spirits to ‘unsex’ her, to make her capable of taking an equal part in Duncan’s murder, blocking all natural scruples, turning her life giving milk bitter...’¹

We can easily discern several women in *Burhi Aair Sadhu* who inflict extreme suffering, causing death of their rivals, or people they perceive to be rivals of favour, love, care or opportunities. Things turn out to be even more gruesome when the future of one’s offspring gets entangled with the preferences of the king/husband/father. In *Tula aru Teza*, the second wife, Tula’s mother spells magic bounds on the first wife, Teza and Kanai’s mother to turn her to a turtle. The husband father does not even get to know about this plight of his wife and is scared of enquiring much lest the second wife create a situation beyond his control. The turtle mother still takes care of her children with the help of the water nymph. The rival wife then sends her own daughter as a spy and the discovery follows with a well-arranged plan to feign illness to be cured only when she can eat the flesh of the turtle in the pond. The turtle mother gives in, but makes sure that she gets metamorphosed to trees and keep helping the children in such a way that the king – passing by – gets impressed so much as to offer a proposal of marriage to Teza, the daughter. The narrative is pretty long, with the other wife of the king setting multiple traps to prove Teza to be evil incarnate. Parallel to this lies the various attempts of the frustrated rival mother. Her frustration doubled up, she exhibits excessive love for Teza and pleads to the king to send her back home for some days. This time the wicked stepmother uses a pin to screw Teza into a bird and sends her own daughter as queen to the king. When the king gets to know about this, in an attempt to establish justice, he orders to cut Tula down to pieces and sends the flesh of the daughter to the greedy mother, who feeds unknowingly on them.

Here the folktale comes very close to the dinner scene in *Titus Andronicus*. To quote Belsey again, 'Drawing on the radical incongruity between cookery and carnage, the proprieties of hospitality and cannibalism, this scene represents a double horror: a father killing his own child; the spectacle of a mother devouring the sons that in nature she herself would have once fed'. *Titus Andronicus* is a play where revenge is unfolded with the extremities – a play that heaps violence upon violence, the cause and consequences projected as a chain that brushes aside all concerns of humanity.

In *Tula aru Teza* also, a chain of viciousness followed by more and calculated steps of ferocity leading to the extremities of violence to the extent of cutting a woman to pieces and sending the remains to the family is presented through the intermissions of songs and prose details. The songs, using vivid images and vital truths play a very significant role in carrying forward the horrible consequences of greed and violence.

In fact, several folktales included in *Burhi Aair Sadhu* generously uses songs as a melodious and memorable way of carrying forward the themes, plots and consequences. For instance, *Tejimola*, in the folktale named after her, faces the brunt of her stepmother while the father is away on business. She is as innocent as *Cordelia* and as inexperienced as *Ophelia* in the ways of the world, though their worlds are very different. *Tejimola* dies because of the calculated tormenting moves of the step mother in the absence of the father. However, the soul remains, the soul asserts its identity through singing in the various metamorphosed forms it takes. Soul as invincible, soul as capable of retaining the previous birth, soul as capable of retaking the previous birth, soul as the invincible voice that creates the path for justice – these are some of the aspects that can be found in the *Tejimola*'s story and the multiple narratives that it contains with a singing soul. In another article, I have explored the subaltern status of *Tejimola* and compared and contrasted it with *Cinderella* and *Katniss Everdeen* of *Hunger Games*, three narratives greatly separated by space and time, yet similar in several pertinent concerns.²

Though the soul speaks in *Tejimola*, there is a noticeable difference between this soul and the ghost of *Hamlet*'s father in the way Shakespeare immortalized it. The ghost appears to others initially, creating a haunting scene made so memorable in Act I of the play. However, it speaks to *Hamlet* the son only, that too when he creates a space for the two, away from others. This leads to a chain reaction of *Hamlet* procrastinating on the voice of the dead and the decisions he has to take, which would be both private and public and with far reaching consequences.

In Tejimola, the dead speaks through the metamorphosed self, to anyone that comes nearby. Thus, the scene of crime is made public long before the father arrives and attempts re-establishment of justice. The father only needs the time to identify the metamorphosed flower and turn it to a metamorphosed bird and finally to re-metamorphose this bird to Tejimola. The world created here is much less complex and the consequences of assertion of justice are also not as bloody as in Hamlet. Nevertheless, greed, avarice, lust and power are projected to lead to unnecessary sufferings of the innocent in both.

A prominent projection of innocence is of Ophelia, who is completely inexperienced in worldly affairs, in spite of being the daughter of an influential courtier. Her brother has been given the training to face the world, to be fit for the court along with all the corruption and decadence that it signifies. Laertes, the brother and the man behaves as expected, jumping into action of taking revenge for the death of his father. Ophelia is too timid to accept Hamlet's love for her, does not understand the behaviour of the Prince thereafter, and gets completely shattered when her father is accidentally killed. Her singing herself to death is one of the most unforgettable scenes not only in Shakespeare's worlds but otherwise as well. Ophelia's inexperience and dependence on her father is both similar and different from that of Chilonir Jiyek in Bezbaroa. As the name literally signifies, Chilonir Jiyek is a human child brought up by a bird, a kite. Deserted as a newborn by her mother and brought up with utmost care and affection by a bird, she leads her life on a treetop in the forest, far away from the human world. Obviously, she had no experience of the complexities of human society and therefore was helpless without the guidance of her bird-mother. The fact that she had to enter into the household of a rich merchant and face fierce contention, jealousy and aggressive negative forces combined to destroy her was much beyond her capabilities to master. Help kept coming as long as the bird mother could provide it. Nevertheless, the other wives of the merchant husband started spying on her activities and killed the bird-mother by calling her for help imitating the song and the voice of the daughter. The tale poignantly contrasts the selfish humans against the selfless love of a bird as mother and protector. 'Human' virtues such as caring, love and compassion are shown to be vanishing when placed with jealousy, hatred, profit making, and at times evil for the sake of evil. However, after her bird-mother is killed and she is sold to a fisherman – unlike Ophelia – Chilonir Jiyek escapes a tragic end because she starts narrating her plight, the story of her life, through a song that she keeps singing. Voice and assertion are thus provided to be extremely significant for reaching justice as well as for survival. Nature is benevolent and kind, innocence wins at the end, but only after it asserts itself

against all the evils prevalent all around, whether it is the safe place of a home or the strange outside of a riverbank.

Nature versus nurture, inheritance of the original sin since birth versus the innocence of childhood – these were concerns that were largely prevalent during the Elizabethan England, which was stirred with different religious factions within the umbrella term Christianity. Nevertheless, the image of Chilonir Jiyek as very innocent and pure is something that the critics of Shakespeare have noticed in terms of the children he created, ‘The image of the child in Shakespeare’s plays takes little account of the contemporary religious and educational sense of the imperfections of childhood. These children are tender-hearted and loyal, brave and idealist’.³

A more specific observation is that of Thomas Kullmann, who asserts, while commenting on the Winter’s Tale, that, ‘By constructing children as innocent, Shakespeare positions himself against Calvinist Protestantism which based its theology on the inborn sinfulness of humanity. Amid the conflicting religious and cosmological discourses of Elizabethan and Jacobean England, Shakespeare’s view of childhood innocence – evinced in a number of plays beside the Winter’s Tale – leans towards humanist notions of a natural order, which is considered innocent and when disturbed, will reassert itself naturally’.⁴

At another level, Chilonir Jiyek can be compared to Miranda, brought up alone by her father, far away from human society and its complexities and cruelties. Miranda, therefore, is as inexperienced in the ways of the world as the daughter of the kite in the Assamese folktale. However, even though the kite-mother creates things for the daughter like a magician, the magical spells or activities of Prospero the magician father are way too complex, so is the overall discourse of the whole play. In fact, as Robert Pierce⁵ made it clear, different perspectives on the same play based on two different and contesting orientations, for instance, New Criticism as against New Historicism will yield widely different interpretations of the same text and same characters. For instance, if we focus on the behaviour of Prospero towards Caliban, the fact that Prospero kept him as a servant leads to several interesting expositions. Miranda meets Ferdinand most unexpectedly like the daughter of the kite in the Assamese folktale meets her would be husband. However, this daughter does not express her love like Miranda, nor does the kite mother interfere in magically conjuring the scenes. Shakespeare’s rich story carries ample focal points for a postcolonial critic, such as, ‘In *The Tempest*, otherness is embodied by the ‘master less’ men, Stephano and Trinculo, by the sexuality of Miranda and Ferdinand, and especially by Caliban. The threatening ‘other’ is used by colonial power to display its own godliness, to ensure aristocratic class

solidarity, to justify the colonial project morally, and to 'further its workings' through the reorientation of desire. But by representing the other in terms that suggest its disruptive potential, colonial discourse also indicates the inherent instability of the colonial project'.⁶

The *Tempest*, therefore, is full of ambivalence, a mature product of Shakespeare the word wizard, and it typically exhibits a multi-layered discourse, which is forever contending and contesting in the Bakhtinian sense. Miranda also becomes a befittingly problematic creation, not opening up to any unitary interpretation.

From Miranda, moving on to another character in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, Rosalind, who is both experienced and smart enough to handle any situation on her own. The way she cross dresses and wanders around in the forest only displays a brilliance that shines brighter with every confrontation of obstacles on her path. Her beloved appears too simple and lovelorn to get the better of the situation or to see-through Rosalind/Ganymede in the forest of Arden. Focusing on the play, Wilson says, 'There is an explicit development in the play from the urban polity of the Duke Frederick's court and Oliver's household to the pastoral way of life in the forest of Arden... It is not as Smith made clear, a geographical progress, but rather a shift in attitudes towards the characteristics of the public world. The public world may, I think, be equated with the polity, while the world of Arden, if not precisely private is the condition of several private worlds, which free from containment finds fulfilment there'.⁷

In a way, dragging of all the major characters to the forest for rejuvenation must have been a necessity for the Elizabethan English court with all its intricacies and political complexities of the moment in the larger picture of the Renaissance Europe of bubbling activities, daunting expeditions and unimaginable opportunities for good fortune or equally dire misfortunes.

Misfortunes ring a serious and almost tragic bell in the *Merchant of Venice*. However, here also the saviour is the daughter, smart, practical and worldly wise, who enters into male domains only to conquer. Late sixteenth and early seventeenth century England needed a warning against dangers lurking behind enormous possibilities of material gain. In the *Merchant of Venice*, this danger is presented and negated well through the life-saving smartness of the daughter. Maritime activities demanded a mind ready to discard medieval regard for limitations, because of the fact that huge ambitions paid mostly with material gains of huge wealth and social standing. Nevertheless, the risk factor was equally huge, more so with the cut throat competitions of new economic equations. Notions of morality, justice

as against humanity were dwindling in a tight rope and balancing demanded more than normal brilliance.

The merchant father in the Assamese folktale, Tejimola, though not set in a fervent world of commercial competitions, brings home a prospective husband for his daughter, along with material wealth. The father here is both the provider of material comfort as well as the custodian of a good, livable, golden world. He is almost a magician too, undoing all the wrongs on the innocent girl, undoing even several deaths of the metamorphosed soul of Tejimola.

We can comfortably conclude that contexts can be different in terms of locality, society, conventions, as well as political, social, economic and other constraints for stories and the worlds they create. However, there are certain universal human experiences and realizations that are presented for the purgation of the human mind of all evils. Herein rests the similarities of Shakespeare's world with the world of Assamese folktales as rendered by Bezbaroa. The efforts of both the great visionaries are also similar in foregrounding, distancing and moving into another world, leaving the literature or orature to us for endless hermeneutic discerning possibilities.

Notes and References

*Though there are slight differences in the English spelling of this Assamese surname, this one has been used in this article following Bezbaroa Rachanavali, edited by Nagen Saikia, 2010.

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The Origin and Evolution of Vaishnavism in Bengal: Historical Analysis

Akhil Sarkar

Assistant Professor

Department of History

Nabadwip Vidyasagar College, West Bengal

Email :akilsarkar38@yahoo.in

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Abstract

Vaishnavism is one of the major traditions within the orbit of Hinduism along with Shaivism, Shaktism, and other spiritual ideas. It is also called Vishnuism, its followers are called Vaishnavas, and it considers Vishnu as the Supreme Lord. Although Vishnu was a Vedic solar deity, he is mentioned more often compared to Agni, Indra, and other Vedic deities, thereby suggesting that he had a major position in the Vedic religion. Krishna as a sect of popular Hinduism may have originated in northern India and gradually diffused to the southern and eastern extremes of the subcontinent by the Gupta period. Much later in the 16th century it emerged Bengal a highly organized and recently much-studied sect the Gaudiya Vaishnavas. This distinct religious and spiritual movement will be the focus of the present paper. Because it was phenomenally successful in eastern India but has by no means be confined to that area. In the land of Bengal however, the rise of Gaudiya Vaishnavism came into prominence with the advent of Chaitanya Deva. He, however, united the conclusions of the four Vaishnava lineages and preached exclusive devotion to Radha-Krishna as the ultimate goal of life. Gaudiya Vaishnavism, also known as Chaitanya Vaishnavism and Hare Krishna Mahamantra was founded by Chaitanya Deva in India and it becomes their way of life. So, the emergence of the Gaudiya Vaishnavism Radha and Krishna can be said to have evolved today into an international religion.

Key Words: *Devotees, Ideology, knowledge, Love-Religion, Manifestation and Worship.*

Vishnu is mentioned in several *Suktas* of the *Rigveda*. Although he was the powerful deity there, he was not the main deity. Another name of Vishnu in *Rigveda* is *Cipabistus*. Vishnu has ninety horses, each with four names, from which 360 days and four seasons are named. That is why the world is covered with the dust of his feet raised by his luminous travel across the globe. So, Vishnu is the protector, no one can hurt him. Being the embodiment of dharma, he traveled only three steps. As a result, it can be assumed that Vishnu is full of sun or solar energy.¹ Vishnu is a suitable friend of Indra. As a result, his name is associated with Indra and is called Indra-Vishnu. The eye that does not see as it is judged in the sky.² This world originated from Vishnu and is located in him. Vishnu is the master of the status and control of this world and he is the universe.³ That is, the Vaishnava religion originated by adopting the names of Vishnu, Narayana, Basudev Bhagavat, Krishna, etc. At present, the Supreme Court has ruled that Hinduism is not a religion, 'it is a way of life'. John Dowson writes about the nature of Vishnu "Vishnu, Root, *Vish*, 'to pervade', the second god of the Hindu triad. In *Rigveda*, Vishnu is not in the first rank of Gods. He is the manifestation of solar energy and is describe as striding through the seventh regions of the universe in three steps and enveloping all things with the dust (of his beams). These three phases are explained by commentators as denoting the three manifestations of light-fire, lightning, and the Sun; or the three places of the Sun-its rising, culminations and setting. In Veda, he is occasionally associated with Indra. He has very little in common with the Vishnu of later times, but he is called 'the uncountable preserver'⁴ Dr. Abinash Chandra Das argued that Vishnu occupied a superposition in later Vedic literature, held a subordinate position in the pantheon of the God in the *Rigveda*. He took three steps, one on earth one in mid-heaven and the third in the highest heaven which was invisible to men, but visible to gods like an eye fixed in heaven. It was his dear abode, where pious men rejoiced and where there was a well of honey and where the Gods rejoiced.⁵ This love religion originated from the *Bhagavad Gita*. However, it is impossible to say with certainty when this religion originated, propagated and spread. Some archaeological specimens have been found on how Vaishnavism entered Bengal. In the early phase of the Gupta period, the rock inscription is short in form and consists of only the lines engraved on the north wall of the hill. The inscribed lines occur below and beside the engraving of a wheel (chakra) surrounded by flames. It can be explained either as the Vishnu chakra (the wheel of Vishnu) or Surya. The language of this inscription is Sanskrit and the characters are of the eastern variety of the Gupta Brahmi, during the fourth century. It appears that Chandravarman and his father Sinhaverman had their seat of authority in

Pushkaran, generally identified with the village of Pakhanna, nearest to the Susunia hill.⁶ Besides, Dhanaidah copperplate has been discovered in Rajshahi district, Damodarpur copperplate in Dinajpur district, Mallasharul copperplate in Burdwan district, Khalimpur Script in Malda District, Deopara script in Rajshahi district, Belava script in Narayanganj. Many ancient idols of different incarnations of Vishnu have been discovered in different parts of Bengal and are still being discovered. Based on all this archaeological evidence, it can be said that Bhagavata or Vaishnavism was prevalent in Bengal as the largest part of Hinduism from the Gupta period to the reign of the Sena rulers. As a result, the progress of Vaishnavism along with Buddhism is evidenced by the boundless popularity of Vaishnavism during the reign of the Gupta rulers. This is probably the reason for the assimilation of Buddhism as well as Vaishnavism in Bengal, as evidenced by the writings of Joydev, the author of the *Gitagovinda*, where Gautama Buddha is included as the ninth incarnation of Vishnu. The form of Vishnu that has been adopted by a large number of devout Hindus all over India is Sri Krishna Basudev and because Krishna became outstanding. The two characters of Lord Krishna are mainly established in Purana poetry; on the one hand, he is a skilled politician, diplomat and warrior personality. Parthasarathy Krishna is the main driving force of the Mahabharata war, the founder of the Dharma kingdom and the proponent of the *Gita*. Another of his characters is the son of Yashoda of Brajbhumi and the lover of Radha. Dr. Hemchandra Roychowdhury commented that the pre-historical literature of the Hindus knows a human Krishna, but is silent about a deity Krishna. Buddhist and Jain traditions clearly refer to Vasudeva as a human here, even the Mahabharata preserves traces of the original human character of Krishna. The conclusion, therefore, irresistible that he was a real man. The fact that Krishna was a human teacher was admitted by so many scholars. Krishna certainly lived before the Buddha, as he is mentioned in the Chhandagyo Uponaisad, which is a pre-Buddhistic work. The evidence of the Ghata Jataka, where Krishna is mentioned as a brother and contemporary of Ghata, the Bodhisattva, points to the same conclusion. His guru *GhotaAngirasa* is also mentioned in the *Kausitaki Brahmana* which is also a pre-Buddhistic work. Jaina tradition makes Krishna who is the immediate predecessor of Parsvanatha, the 23rd Tirthankar. As Parsvanatha probably flourished about, must have lived before the closing years of the 9th century B.C.⁷ Thus, Lord Krishna gradually became outstanding in Vaishnavism. In eastern India, especially in Bengal, where Krishna is worshiped, we find Radha as his love power with Krishna. In Gaudiya Vaisnava's religion and philosophy, this Radha is the main important deity but not the goddess, she is held together as a deity.⁸ The first *Gopi* anecdote originated in *Harivansh* and *Vishnupurana*. The more complete form of Gopi bhav flourished in the Padma

Purana and the *Brahmavaivarta Purana*. The *Srimad-Bhagavata Purana* was a combination of spirituality and devotion and it enlightened the glory of devotion which is why *Srimad-Bhagavatam* occupies the seat of superiority among the Vaishnava scriptures. Surprisingly, all the valuable books on *Krishnalila*, such as the *Mahabharata*, *Bhagavata*, *Vishnupuran*, *Harivansha*, etc., do not contain such detailed descriptions of Radha.⁹ Preliminary references to Radha are found in the text *Prakrit Paingal* which was composed between the 7th and 8th century and in *Gathasaptasathi* composed by the Satabahana ruler Hala. Besides, Radha has been mentioned as *Haladini Shakti* in *Brahmavaivarta Purana*.¹⁰ Here Radha is the presiding deity of the soul of the divine Sri Krishna; Radha was dearer to him than his own soul because she came out of Krishna's soul. Here Radha is more beautiful than all the beauties of the world. The various organs of Radha have been praised and described here. Even in this Purana, Radha is mentioned as the married wife of Lord Krishna.¹¹ A pair of idols depicting Radha Krishna's love affair has been found in the Paharpur temple. Scholars estimate that they were built around the tenth century.¹² During the reign of the Pala and Sena rulers, the predominance of Buddhism, Shaiva and Vaishnavism in Bengal as the state religion was the most widespread and far-reaching. Besides, there was affection among the common people towards religions like Shakta, Saura, Ganapathi, etc. During the reign of the Pala dynasty, Buddhism in various *tantric* forms gained popularity in Bengal and *tantric* texts and commentaries were written in the different Buddhist monasteries that were established in Bengal. The authors of *Sahajiya* Buddhist songs were mostly inhabitants of Bengal or adjoining areas.¹³ Scholars agree that the full form of Radha-Krishna's duet was revealed in Bengal. In the pre-Chaitanya era, many books were written in Bengal on the love of Radha-Krishna. *Brahmansarbaswa* and *Vaishnava Sarvasva*, were written by the contemporary of *Halayudas* the texts are not currently in existence. Baru Chandidas composed *Srikrishnakirtan*, *Haricharitam* was by Chaturbhuj Bhattacharya, a poet from Ramkeli village, *Srikrishna Vijaya* was by Maladhar Basu and Aniruddha Bhatta, the guru of Ballal Sen, wrote *Bhagavat Tattavamanjari*.¹⁴ Various theological connections were formed with the Vaishnava religion. Based on Vedas, *Brahmans*, epics, Puranas, etc., Vaishnava ideology, based on mythological devotional stories, this religion gradually flowed into new fields. For the emergence of various great scholars by adopting the mantra of love and non-violence on the one hand the various obstacles of the state power were created and on the other hand, from the social conservatism, the ideals of love, friendship and brotherhood were established in the heart of society.

In the Middle Ages, Bengal was strictly ruled by foreign conquering rulers, especially the followers of Islam. Portuguese writer and tourist Duarte Barbosa came to visit Bengal in 1518. He remarked that the *Bengalis* were embracing Islam in a hurry and even the kings were not reluctant to leave their own religion at the slightest temptation.¹⁵ That is why conservatism in Hinduism had greatly increased. The practice of casteism increased in Hindu society. The impression of conservatism was also observed in the life of Chandidas, the first Vaishnava poet of the Bengali language. It is undeniable that the influence and prestige of the *Brahmins* in society had greatly diminished after the state power was vested in the Islamic hands. It is known from the description of *Brihadharmapuran* that in some cases *Shudras* will also continue to chant the concept of religion as religious gurus. They would worship non-scriptural artificial idols and worship gods against the scriptures by abandoning the name of Krishna.¹⁶ The center of Islamic rule in Bengal was Gaur from the time of Ganesha and Jalal-ud-din, the rulers of Gaur, the *Kayasthas* began to play an important role in governance and their influence continued to grow. During the reign of Husain Shah, the *Kayasthas* established their dominion over the land. According to Abul Fazl, in the last part of the sixteenth century, many landowners of Bengal were *Kayasthas*.¹⁷ The great men say that the enemy can be conquered by love. The rise of Chaitanyadev took place towards the end of the feudal era of Bengal. Sri Chaitanyadev renounced family life at a young age and took the life of a beggar or *Paribraja*. That's why Tridandi Bhikshu Bhakti Prodip Tirtha commented, the supreme lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is not a historical person. His *Leela* or divine deed is eternally enacted on the highest plane of the absolute realm.¹⁸ When Mughal imperialism completely overthrew the feudal system of Bengal, the philosophy and religious thought of Chaitanyadev was influential all around.¹⁹ The practice of devotion was irrelevant to the judgment and priesthood of the caste. But the *mahants* and gurus played an important role in Gaudiya Vaishnavism. Judging by the number in Chaitanyadev's Gaudiya Bhakti movement, the number of Brahmins and Vaidya Gurudras was the highest. Traditionally in Bengal, the Brahmin, *Vaidya* and *Kayastha* communities together formed the second tier in the social hierarchy. And they always lived under the rulers and enjoyed opportunities. In the Pala, Sen and Mughal eras, the rulers had to rely heavily on them. The *Vaidyas* shared Sanskrit knowledge with the Brahmins and they too seemed to be on par with the Brahmins. In addition to the education and major occupations of these three castes, there were rights and controls of land ownership. As a result, it seems that a large part of Vaishnava literature was written in Sanskrit in order to harmonize Gaudiya Vaishnavism with the great

tradition of Hinduism. From Chaitanyadev to all the famous preachers of Vaishnava religion to the rulers, Zamindars, bhuiyans, high ranking bureaucrats, etc. were attracted to Vaishnavism.²⁰ Bir Hambir was a notable ruler of the Malla dynasty of Bankura. He was of Bagdi descent. He ascended the throne in 1586. He sided with the Mughals during the Mughal war with the Pathans. His mention is found in the accounts of historians of the Mughal period. Srinivas Acharya initiated him into Vaishnavism. King Birhambir introduced Madan Mohan puja at Bishnupur. Later, the Vaishnava religion spread from its center at Bishnupur to Manbhum, Dhalbhum, Singhbhum (Chaibasa), Bhattabhum (Ramgarh), Sabarbhumi, etc..²¹ This religion also entered the land of Sikkorbhumi. Vaishnavism was spread by the hands of Srinivas. The erudition of Srinivas was unparalleled because of his personality and popularity. Many sects and sub-sects of Vaishnavism were formed after the death of Sri Chaitanya Deva. Nityananda group, Adwaitya group and Vrindavan had six different Goswami segments. Standing there, Srinivas Acharya tried to unite all these opposing groups. At the time of the emergence of Sri Chaitanya Deva, Nabadwip was established as the greatest Sanskrit center in Bengal and in East India. The main feature of the history of Nabadwip in particular is the history of education in this town. The contribution of the scholars in the field of education, literary practice, religious work, Tantra pursuit, knowledge science, etc. of this place has been remembered with special respect.

Another important aspect of this town is that it reduced the influence of Mithila-based Neo-Logic and established Nabadwip as the main center of Neo-Logic, by the courtesy of renowned philosophers Vasudeva Sarvabhauma and Raghunath Shiromani. Due to the fact that students from different parts of India used to come to Nabadwip to get a *Nyay* education, the fame of Nabadwip was on the horizon. Sri Chaitanyadev also completed his studies and built a toll at Mukunda Sanjay's house in the heart of Nabadwip. For more than five hundred years, the glory of Nabadwip was spread in Bengal and India, by the courtesy of all these great scholars of Nabadwip. But even though the bank of Ganga is embodied in the dry argument of Neo-Logic, there is no harmony among human beings even though there are so many wise and intelligent people. The educated hate the uneducated, the Brahmins hate the non-Brahmins, the rich hate the poor. As a result, Nabadwip became a lifeless town. In each street of Nabadwip town, there were several educational institutions or *toles*. Thousands every day came to the city from all parts of India, some to begin and some to finish their education, and thousands left every day after having obtained their diplomas.²²

It was there that Chaitanyadev established his life here through the introduction of devotional mass movements and human religion. The three main

areas of Gaudiya Vaisnava religion were Nabadwip, Vrindavan and Nilachal and those who were at the center of this religious movement were Sri Chaitanyadev, Advaita Acharya and Nityananda Mahaprabhu. Srivallabhacharya, one of the founders of the Rudra (Lord Shiva) community, and Sri Chaitanyadev, a leading figure in the Gaudiya Vaishnava community, placed great importance on the propagation of Vaishnavism in the early sixteenth century, especially on the worship of Radha-Krishna. The center of Vallabhacharya's preaching was West India, while Chaitanyadev's Vaishnavism was predominant in North East India, and South India. However, there is disagreement among scholars as to which Vaishnava sect Sri Chaitanyadev belonged. It is said that Sri Chaitanyadev received mantradiksha from Ishwar Puri. Ishwarpuri was again a disciple of Madhabendra Puri. *Gauraganadesdeepika*, *Anuragballabi*, *Bhaktiratnakar*, *Premayaratnabali*, from all these texts it is known that Madhabendra Puri belonged to the Madhav community.²³ It is said that at one time Madhabendra Puri was a believer in Shankaracharya's Advaita philosophy (non-duality) but for some special reason he abandoned this ideology and became a fan of Dvitya Vedanta philosophy. As a result, he began to be considered as the original promoter of Gaudiya Vaishnavism or love religion. That is Sri Jiva Goswami called the Gaudiya Vaishnava community a Madhab community. We can know from the Chaitanya Bhagavata of Vrindavan Das Thakur that Sri Chaitanyadev considered Madhabendra Puri as the original preacher of love and devotion. That is to say, Chaitanyadev revived the basis of his Gaudiya Vaishnava philosophy on the basis of the ideals and philosophy preached by Madhabendra and his disciples. Chaitanyadev was the chief pioneer in the history of the Gaudiya Vaishnava religious movement in Bengal. Gauria Vaishnavism was manifested, established and spread in Bengal and other parts of the country through him. But the surprising thing is that Chaitanyadev himself did not write anything about what was the universal philosophical basis of this religion, the method of sadhana, initiation and rituals. Gaudiya Vaishnava's scriptures have been written according to his verbal orders and through his board and devotees. Famous among them were Sanatan Goswami, Sri Rupa Goswami, Gopal Bhatt, Raghunath Das, and many more.²⁴

Sri Chaitanyadev is one of the most widely used names in the history of the religious movement in Gaur and in the world of culture. He once arrived at Ramkeli near Gaur, the capital of Bengal, in 1515. As a result of his arrival, there was a great rise in Vaishnavism in this village. It was here that he met Keshab Chhetri, Sanatan Goswami and Roop Goswami. The story of their meeting has a special significance and sweetness in the history of the Vaishnava

religious movement. The advent of Chaitanyadev also had a profound effect on the conservative social fabric of Hinduism. For this reason, in many cases, infidels or Shudras were also worshiped as Vaishnava religious gurus, such as Ramkeli's great gems Rupa Goswami and Sanatan Goswami.²⁵ Although many people were infidels, inspired by the ideals of Chaitanyadev, they were initiated into Vaishnavism and became the chief priests of the Gaudiya Vaishnava movement. While discussing Roop Goswami and Sanatan Goswami, KrishnadasKabiraj raised the issue of low caste. Some researchers have commented that Kumardev, the father of Sanatan, converted from Hinduism to Islam. According to the account of RiazulSalatin, Alauddin Hussain Shah ascended the throne and invaded Orissa and conquered all the territories from Gaur to Orissa. On the other hand, before the advent of Chaitanya Deva, the fame of Gaur (Malda), as well as Nabadwip as the best center of Bengal, increased. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee commented that the foundation of Bengali culture and Bengali mentality was strong enough when the Turk- Afghans came to Bengal. The Islamic ruling class or the followers of Islam did not want to destroy this culture. The revolutionary ideology that was transmitted by Chaitanyadev in religion, action, philosophy, song, knowledge and literature is considered to be the rarest chapter in history. Foreign Islamic rulers wielded state power. The Zamindars of the mighty Barind were converted to Vaishnavism by the courtesy of NarottamDutt. Even Barendra's bandit Zamindars like Chand Roy, Harishchandra Roy, BanamaliChatta and GovindaBarua were also converted to Vaishnavism. In order to spread and popularize Vaishnavism in North Bengal, Vaishnava gurus organized the Kheturi festival at Kheturi village in the Rajshahi district of Bangladesh. Despite the arrival of Chaitanyadev in North Bengal, Shakto Bamachar was widely practiced in this land. That is why the Kheturi festival was organized to awaken Vaishnava ideology instead of this religion. The Kheturi festival was organized between 1610 and 1620. Janhyobidebi, the mother of Birbhadra and wife of Nityananda, played an important role in this festival. Besides, there were people like poets Gyanadas, KamalakarPipilai, Minketan, Ramdas, poet Balramdas, Vrindavandas, etc. The activities that were undertaken in Kheturi festival were Chaitanya Pujan, Krishna Pujan, Kirtan, Mahatsab, etc. which were celebrated throughout the year. Besides, the recreation of the *Chaitanya Bhagavat* of Brindiban Das and the *Chaitanyacharitamrita* of KrishnadasKabiraj predominated in Vaishnava temples and ceremonies. Vallavi Kant, Brajmohan, Sri Krishna, Radhakanta and Radhamohan were recognized as revered deities.²⁶ Birbhadra Goswami, son of Janyobidebi, played an important role in the propagation of Vaishnavism. Along with Birbhadra, there were many Buddhist devotees who were converted and initiated into Vaishnavism. They were

called *Nera* because their heads were shaved. All these converts at one time caused various problems under the influence of leader Narasimha. Birbhadra brought all these misguided people back into the social stream and initiated them into Vaishnavism. James Wise estimates that 74% of the people in the Dhaka district at that time were associated with Vaishnavism or Krishna worship. As a result, it can be inferred that these *Nera-Neri* had a huge influence in the Dhaka district. On his way back from Dhaka, Birbhadra rested at a place called Gayeshpur in Malda. The arrival of Birbhadra at Gayeshpur on the banks of the river Mahananda caused great arousal among the Vaishnava devotees. As the news of Birbhadra's arrival spread, a large number of Vaishnava devotees arrived and the *kirtan Leela* was started. Durlav Chhetri, son of Keshab Chhetri, came from Gaur. Keshab Chhetri was the head of the Sultan's bodyguards. When Chaitanyadev came to Ramkeli, he met Keshab Chhetri and it is believed that he too was initiated into Vaishnavism. This, Keshab Chhetri's son, was Durlav Chhetri who gave a lot of donations and property to Birbhadra. Later, Sri Ramakrishna, a descendant of Birbhadra, established Sripath here.²⁷

The greatest Bengali great man of all time, Sri Chaitanyadev, appeared at Ramkeli in Malda district in the sixteenth century and consecrated this land. The advent of this great man brought about many changes in the cultural landscape of this region. He sought to restore the declining Bengali cultural trend in a just and democratic way from the accumulated filth of the last five hundred years, the dark events of history and culture, religious bigotry, economic and social inequalities. In other words, he wanted to break the smart social system and the society ruled by devotion. By crushing the Islamic aristocratic royal arrogance, he gave the life-giving mantra of liberation to the neglected, exploited and humiliated common people. That is why democracy was born as a result of his arrival in East India, all this conservatism laid the groundwork for that democratic spirituality. After the demise of Chaitanya, many changes took place in the mainstream of Vaishnava society. Chaitanyadev believed that by advancing on the path of knowledge and reason, he acknowledged the erudition of the pundits, occupying the meritorious ones in the seats of due dignity and employing them for the welfare of human liberation. After Malda, another center of Bengal, namely the Hooghly district, deeply reflected the Vaishnava movement and the ideology of Chaitanyadev. Like Ramkeli in Malda district, Chaitanyadev came to Vaidyabati in Hoogli district. He also came to Chatra and Sialkhola near Srirampur. It is said that Chaitanyadev also came to Guptipara, an ancient town on the banks of the river Bhagirathi. As a result, the Gaudiya Vaishnava religious movement played an important role in the Hooghly district. Raghunath

Das Goswami and Subarnabanik Uddharan Dutta, sons of Govardhan, the revenue collector of Saptagram port, played a leading role in the propagation of Vaishnavism. At one time, i.e. in 1516, Nityananda went to Saptagram. As a result of the arrival of Nityananda, the boundless popularity of Vaishnavism increased. He initiated Uddharan Dutta, a merchant from Saptagram. This UddharanDutt later went to Vrindavan with Nityananda's wife Jahnovidevi and played a major role in the propagation of Vaishnavism.²⁸ Vaishnavism was spread in this region by the lower caste people i.e. Shudras and these were the majority of people of this area. So some lower caste families and Vaishnava Babajis preached Vaishnavism. On the other hand, most of the Brahmins here were worshipers of Shaivism. They were strictly conservative so the propagation of Vaishnavism in this region could not hinder the nobility of the Brahmins or the practice of Sati. That's why we can say: Nityananda was a close associate and friend of Chaitanya and a very powerful preacher preaching Chaitanya's ideas and equality among human beings irrespective of caste Vaishnavism in Hoogly district spread more steadily and quickly than, in other districts of Bengal.²⁹

Vaishnavism was popular even before the advent of Chaitanyadev in the Kulin village of Burdwan and in Shrikhand. Evidence of this is that the ancient Gupta script of the village of Mallasar has been discovered here. A statue of Vishnu with a wheel has been found in this copperplate inscription. Besides, Maladhar Bose was a resident of Kulin village in Burdwan. He composed the poem *Sri Krishnavijaya* based on the story of *Bhagavata Purana*. The period from the sixteenth century to the eighteenth century is recognized as a period of extreme glory for Vaishnavism in the district of Burdwan. The influence of Gaudiya Vaishnavism has been noticed in Kulingram, Navgram, Shrikhand, Katwa, Kogram, Kalna, etc. Places. Due to the arrival of Chaitanyadev in this region, religious harmony and cultural harmony become prevalent in this place. As a result, the lower-class people were attracted to Vaishnavism and they popularized Vaishnavism here. Vrindavan Das, a learned scholar of Vaishnavism, advised Vaishnavas to be respectful of other religions. Ramananda Bose, the grandson of Maladhar Bose, was intoxicated by the love of Chaitanya and he was a devotee of Chaitanya. In Burdwan, three of Nityananda's leading disciples took an active part in the Gaudiya Vaishnava movement. They are Gauridash Pandit of Ambika Kalna, Kalakrishna Das of Akaihat and Dhananjay Pandit of Shital village.³⁰ Vrindavan Das Thakur, a renowned scholar, was born in Burdwan. He was the best poet of Vaishnava literature. For his book, Chaitanya *Bhagavat* is respected as *Vedavasya*. Notable among his other books are *Gopikamohankavya*, *Krishna Karanmrutatika*, *Nityanandajugallastak*,

Rashkalpanasaraswara, and *Ramanujguruparampara*.³¹ Chaitanyaadeva started a Neo- Vaishnava movement by giving a new interpretation to the old faith. He reconstituted the doctrine of *Bhakti*. The adoration of Krishna and Radha is woven around the texture of Bengal Vaishnavism. So, the principal features of Chaitanyaism are devotionism in the life of a *sannyasi* and the charm and beauty of the self-love of the god, who himself accepted a human form due to his infinite compassion for human beings in order to bestow on them something which was denied to them until that time. According to the belief of Bengal Vaishnavism, the 'significance of divine love' was concealed from men until the lord Krishna and Radha became unified. Radha and Krishna were incarnated in the person of Chaitanya, while the other *gopies* became incarnated as his followers. In the sixteenth century, culture was one of the means of Vaishnava's religious consciousness in Bengal. For this, language, literature, music, art, sculpture, etc. received a groundbreaking influence.

After the demise of Sri Chaitanyadev, Gaudiya Vaishnavism was remarkably nourished by his devotees. In this context, the chanting at Shrikhand and the great festival of Kheturi were introduced by the Vaishnava community and the chanting of the names throughout Ashtaprahar (eight hours) and Chabbishprahar (twenty-six hours) under the patronage of Srinivas Acharya, Jahnavi Devi and Birbhadra is also remarkable. Bhagyachandra, the ruler of Manipur at one time, and his sister Bimbavati converted to Vaishnavism, inspired by the ideals of Chaitanyadev. As a result, the people of Manipur were attracted by the ideology of Gaudiya Vaishnavism and adopted it and made it popular. Bhagyachandra came to Nabadwip in 1798 and built the temple of Anu Mahaprabhu here. Totaram Das Babaji (Ramdas Mishra) came here from South India. He came to Nabadwip to study Neo-Logic as he was attracted by its reputation. But he later converted to Vaishnavism. At Nabadwip he built the *Bara Akhra* (big hermitage) under the patronage of King Krishnachandra of Nadia. It was here that he preached the Vaishnava ideology and the Vaishnava religion. Gaudiya Vaishnavism, introduced by Chaitanyadev, existed, in the early stages, among the so-called upper class. But later it was seen that the common and so-called lower castes of the society started adopting Gaudiya Vaishnavism. Traditional Brahmins hated them as low-born and untouchable. People of different classes and castes, therefore, adopted Chaitanya ideology i.e. Vaishnava religion and became *Jat Vaishnava*. Many Brahmins also became *Jat Vaishnava* by rejecting duality in this religious inspiration. Jat Vaishnavism has no descent. But they had fifteen families like Adwaityo family, Nityananda family, Shyamchand family, Jagadish Pandit family, etc.³² As a result,

Brahmins, Kayasthas, Vaidyas and other classes of people in Bengal, *i.e.* Hindus were inspired by the Chaitanya ideology. Bipin Chandra Pal says that ‘This general Vaishnava upheaval created a continental mass movement in India. The movement of Sri Chaitanyadeva helped also very largely to emancipate the So-called lower classes or castes of Bengali Hindus from many social evils under which they had been living in the old Brahminical society... All these had a tremendous influence in making possible the uplift of the Bengali masses’.³³ Gaudiya Vaishnavism can be divided into two stages which can be theistic ideology and atheist ideology. Those in the Gaudiya Vaishnava religion who adhere to the classical rules and practices or those who follow the classical teachings of *Haribhaktibilas* are theistic. Here Sri Krishna Chaitanyadev is the main deity. On the other hand, those who do not follow the scriptural rules and follow the simple and unpretentious path are called atheist groups. It is much like the Sufi ideology of Ba-sara and Be-sara. There is no Jat religion in the love religion of this atheist community, so they chose the simple path as shown by Chaitanyadev. Therefore, the more these Vaisnavas began to abandon the path of classical ideology, the more sub-sects were created in Bengal. More than 50 sub-communities or Sahajia communities were formed across Bengal. That is why it can be said that the religious movement introduced by Chaitanya entered the lower strata of the society and various changes were initiated in the social structure.

Bhavananda Majumdar was the founder of Nadia’s Zamindar rule. He helped Mansingh, a Mughal general, like Bibhishan, to subdue Pratapaditya, the Barabhuiyan Zamindar of Bengal. As a reward for his help, the Mughal emperor Jahangir granted him Zamindari of 14 Parganas in 1606.³⁴ Later, Raghav Roy and his son Rudra Roy established Krishnanagar as an administrative center. It was named the Krishnanagar dynasty. During the reigns of rulers Raghav Roy and Rudra Roy, there was a great change in the construction of temples and religious activities. During this time an abundance of terracotta was noticed in the construction style of the temple in Nadia. As a result, unique sculptures were made on the temple with the touch of the hands of artists. Krishna Leela, various stories of the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, mythology, various beautiful pictures of nature, etc. were created on the temples. The Nadia kings were patrons of the Shakto religion for generations while being fiercely hostile to Chaitanya. The history of the Krishnanagar dynasty was written by Dewan Kartikeya Chandra Roy. In his *Khitish Bangshabali Charit*, he mentions that Krishnachandra Roy hated the Chaitanya lover community.³⁵ *Smriti*, *loyal*, and *Shakto* worshiper, King Krishnachandra Roy did not recognize Chaitanyadev as an incarnation of Vishnu. It is even said that the idol of Chaitanyadev was worshiped by hiding it

under the ground for fear of him. It is speculated that Chaitanyadev's popularity was greatly wide. Through, temples, *akhras* and *ashrams* were not built as a tribute to Chaitanyadev in the centuries-old Vaishnava pilgrimage Nabadwipa for the hostile attitude of the landlords of Nadia. During their reign, Chaitanya devotion or Chaitanya worship was strictly forbidden. Gangagobinda Singh, the founder of the Kandi dynasty and the *dewan* of the East India Company, converted to Vaishnavism and being attracted by the fame of Nabadwipa built a Ratna temple with black granite stone at the birthplace of Sri Chaitanyadev. But he could not establish the idol of Chaitanyadev there on the instructions of the king of Nadia. That is why he was satisfied by setting up idols of Govinda, Gupinath, Krishnachandra, and Madan Mohan.³⁶ Bhagyachandra, the ruler of Manipur, came to Nabadwip intoxicated with love, but he noticed that the idol of Chaitanyadev was being secretly worshiped in the house of Pritambar Goswami in Malanchapara. But after the death of Krishnachandra in 1782, Gaudiya Vaishnavism, as well as Shakta religion, gradually spread in Nadia. In the nineteenth century, one temple after another was built in Nabadwip which has now developed into a city of temples. Although Sri Chaitanyadev is described as the historical man or incarnation of Krishna as the epoch-maker of Gaudiya Vaishnavism, Kedarnath Dutta, Bimalaprasad Dutta and Abhay Prasad Datta are the notable heroes of the second age in reviving this religion or establishing Gaudiya Vaishnavism as an international religion. Due to their relentless pursuit and efforts, the practice of this religion has now turned Nabadwip and Mayapur into holy lands and has reached the peak of its popularity.

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Tipu Sultan and his reforms

Dr. Mustak Ahammad

Head, Department of History
SECAB, ARSI, Arts, Science & Commerce
College for Women
Bijapur, Karnataka State
E-mail: profmainamdar@gmail.com

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Abstract

During the second half of the eighteenth century, the first Muslim rulers of Mysore Haidar 'Ali and his son Tipu Sultan were amongst the first South and West Asian rulers to unleash a process of administrative, socio-economic and military proto modernization. Haidar, a rather cautious and pragmatic autocrat neither who could read nor write, ruled within the framework of the traditional Mughal system of governance. Highly skilled in administrative, military and diplomatic realms, he initiated the proto-modernization of the army and took some important measures towards the establishment of a central state. In turn, Tipu was an educated autocrat, fond of administrative, socio-economic, military, and technological inventions and innovations which he intended to use in the struggle against the British occupying forces in South India. Tipu Sultan reorganized his army along European lines, using new technology, including what is considered the first war rocket. He devised a land revenue system based on detailed surveys and classification, in which the tax was imposed directly on the peasant, and collected through salaried agents in cash, widening the state's resource base. He modernized agriculture, gave tax breaks for developing wasteland, built irrigation infrastructure and repaired old dams, and promoted agricultural manufacturing and sericulture. He built a navy to support trade, and commissioned a 'state commercial corporation' to set up factories.

Key Words : Amil, Paligars, Patwari, Piyada Askar ,Deewan, Patel, chaprasi, Munshi, Qazi, Silahdar.

Tipu Sultan and his reforms

Regional reforms

In the whole of Mysore and South India it was federal types of governance. Each Paligar was independent to rule in his area, while he used to pay a fixed amount to the central Government and help with military forces when needed. These Paligars as they were independent used to collect taxes from the farmers and tax the traders for both import and export apart from many other. As per Colonel Willix, these Paligars were so much within a range of twenty miles there used to be two or three. The travelers who cross the territories have to pay taxes every five to ten miles. Apart from it, these Paligars used to fight among themselves. The same system was in force, even in the famous kingdom of Vijaya Nagar which ruled for three hundred years. Similar system was in force in Bijapur too after it has gone into the hands of Mughals. Aurangzeb tried to take away their areas under him and allotted them the lands mostly uninhabited. His idea was to see that they develop those areas too under him. While the Mughal regime did not stay for long and after the death of Aurangzeb these Paligars increased their hegemony which caused lawlessness.¹

This condition was prevailing during the time of Hyder Ali and he finished off the rule of Majority Paligars but still it was prevailing in a smaller scale all over in the land. Tipu Sultan abolished Paligari system, all the land was owned by the regime. The farmers used to pay taxes directly to the government and it was announced that the land belongs to the farmer who cultivates the land and not the Paligars.

This reformation of Tipu Sultan made the farmers happy as they were crushed under Paligars for centuries and they become prosperous. Tipu Sultan also allotted the uncultivated land to whoever wanted to cultivate it and they should not be taxed until they grow the cultivation. It was established that the land was theirs who cultivate it if they do not cultivate it and pay no taxes the land was taken away from them and given to other who wanted to cultivate it.²

Before Hyder Ali it was a system that the Government officials were in charge of administration and they were allotted jagirs lands instead of salaries. Tipu Sultan abolished this system and he separated the civil and military organization. Again because of this reformation these officers were envious of Tipu Sultan and Mir Moinuddin, Mir Qamruddin and Mir Asif Sher Khan were among them who betrayed Tipu Sultan.

Tipu Sultan used to keep all the administrative powers under him and the officials were not given permanent posts and their families were not allotted those posts after them. So English forces need not worry about them and they might act against us.³

The Mode of Tipu Sultan Governance

Sultan Tipu used to sign every royal order and he formed administrative department under the head of Deewan and other ministers to report him. 'Tareekh Nishan -e- Haideri' History states that there were 99 such divisions and any ruler or announcement was to be finally signed by Tipu Sultan. The reason for keeping 99 units is said to be based upon the 99 names of God Almighty Allah which indicate His Qualities.

All the official orders were written in three languages namely, Persian, Kannada and Marathi. According to the locality sometime it was written in Dakhani instead of Marathi. From long time in Mysore the governance of village was taken care of by Patel and Shanbhag and it is ongoing. In other part of India they are called Patwari and Zaildar. Tipu Sultan ordered to maintain the main highways and erect trees on the both sides of it. The boundaries of the village and the plants bordering them to be maintained too.⁴

Administration of Zilla and Taluqs

Tipu Sultan divided his kingdom into 5000 Taluqs. Each taluq was managed by one Amil on Ten Hun salary, one Sir Rishtadar with five Hun salaries, three Muharrir with two Hun salaries, four Shekhdar with two Hun salaries, Six chaprasi with one Hun salary, one Gilah treasurer with eight film salary, One Sarr of cashier at 8 film salary, One Persian Munshi with two Hun salary and one Nayak Supervisor of chaprasis with eight film salary. Depending upon the area and size twenty to thirty Taluqs hand one Asif stationed at the capital of those taluqs under whom there were:

Consultative Meeting of Government Staff

Tipu Sultan ordered his government staff to assemble every year in the capital Sirangapatana to have a meeting and share the experience in government affairs. The English regime too continued to have this meeting over from Tipu Sultan.

Justice and the Court

In every city there used to be a Panchayat a body upon whose recommendation, Patel the head of the body used to pass the orders on an issue. In every Zilla or a Village Asifs and Amils used to pass on the orders. If the parties were not convinced with the judgment they could appeal to higher

authorities and it could even reach Tipu Sultan himself. The higher court used to have one Muslim and one Hindu judge. For the Muslims there used to be a Qazi to deal with their religious issues and Hindu Pandits use to deal with Hindu based upon their Shastras.⁵

Colonel Willix writes that the Muslim Qazis used to conduct lectures after Jumma Prayers in the mosques on advising Muslims to refrain from intoxication. It was rare to see crimes happening in that period as the perpetrators were punished severely, which encouraged others 'not to commit a crime'. Another historian Raees write in his book on Theft. Before catching they used to look for the stolen material. If not found the administrative staff have to pay for it from their pockets. In other matters any claims have to be presented by both the parties and provide proof with witnesses, while the witnesses were not asked to take an oath. The members of the Panchayat used to investigate the matter and final judgment was given. Before the Judgment the parties have to give an undertaking that they shall abide with the judgment.

With the above quotations it could be noticed that the public was not charged with fees and stamps for placing their grievances and the judgment was given in the shortest possible time.

The Major Reforms introduced by Tipu Sultan in his Governance People's Parliament

A major section does not know that Tipu Sultan had given a representation of the public in his government and the team was known by 'Zamra-e-Gham Nabashad' in Persian language. The purpose was to end the personal hegemony on the government.

Colonel Willix writes in his book *History of Mysore*, 'it was well known during that period about the democratic rule in France and it was not new during the period of Tipu Sultan as every person was enjoying freedom'. The general public was much unaware of this resolution because of the selfish motives of the administrative staff. Historian Kirmani writes that Mir Sadiq the main culprit in keeping the people under the darkness.

Military Administration of Tipu Sultan

All the military administration was under eleven departments such as Infantry, Construction of forts, Cavalry, Gun Troops, Commissariat, Grazing lands, Salaries, Naval force, Construction of Ships, Army Supplies and Inspection department. The military was divided into 22 areas and each area was supervised by a commander with 20 to 30 subordinates. Willix writes that Mir Gulam Ali Langda was minister of Defense as well as the Inspector General of Forts. The total strength of the military was three hundred and twenty thousand.

Bowring writes in his book Tipu Sultan ordered that Infantry be called “Piyada Askar” and it had give divisions and every division had 27 Regiments and every regiment had 1392 soldiers, out of which 1056 were equipped with guns. Every Regiment had two Artillery Guns and gun loaders and several helpers.

The Cavalry had three divisions namely Askar, Silahdar and Kazik. Askar had three divisions and each of them had six regiments and each regiment were 376 in numbers and they were provided with horses. Silahdar used to have their own horses and they were six thousand in numbers. Kazik were eight thousand and they too had their own horses. The army used to have nine hundred elephants, six hundred Camels, thirty thousand horses and four thousand load carrying bulls.

The editor of Modern Mysore outlines that the kingdom had fully organized and equipped one hundred eighty thousand of the army to defend their country. Another one hundred sixty two thousand and five hundred were there to help and carry out other duties they were Permanent Cavalry, Pandar riders, Silahdar with their own horses, Sanna construction workers, Infantry 6. Bodyguards, Fort keepers at different locations, African Army, Detectives, Pioneers engineering staff, Load carrying wing and blacksmiths and carpenters working for armory.

With the above stated divisions of the army, it could be manged how for the military was organized and equipped with armor which was manufactured locally. Tipu Sultan had formed a military school and a laboratory. Each regiment had their own uniform of different colors. Tipu Sultan got a book written under his instructions for the sake of military by title ‘Tuhfatul Mujahideen’ which is now called as ‘Fathul Majhideen’. The writer has seen this original book with Tipu Sultan’s signature on it and it had the name as ‘Tuhfatul Mujahideen’. This book had eight chapters on rule and regulations, fort keeping, construction of forts, preparing weapons, military discipline and the needs of the army and it has the medications for snake and scorpion and dog bites.⁶

Administration of Naval Forces

Nawab Hyder Ali started formation of naval forces and construction of navy and there were few ships available for use at the time of his demise. Tipu Sultan too concentrated on it as he was aware that without such a naval force India cannot be safe from the westerners and to keep an eye on it he wanted to acquire the sea ports of Basra, Busheher, Oman and Eden. Historian Raees writes that, the naval forces were under the Board of Trade and they were responsible to counter the attackers from the sea. Tipu Sultan had cargo Ships which were reaching Iran and Arabian Peninsula. Tipu Sultan realized that his defeat in the year 1792 was because of not having a naval force and for that reason he farmed it so as to counter the English army. In the year 1793 he farmed

a Naval Academy in Bhatkal and it was in the lines of the English Navy. The Navy was formed under a Naval Commission.

Tipu Sultan ordered to construct 100 military navy ships in the year 1794 and he salvaged twenty ships found to be defective. Tipu Sultan Naval forces had ten thousand navy soldiers and five hundred and twenty sailors. He was planning to have a battleship which could handle 72 guns and father has 72 navy boats, another battle ship to handle 46 guns and 26 navy boats. Bowring writes in his book *Hyder Ali- Hyder Ali* had a bright vision to have a naval force and gave instructions in this regard and formed a Board of admiralty. He was planning to have 20 naval ships out of which two were of a bigger capacity so as to carry 76 and 60 guns and another thirty so as to carry 49 guns. Tipu Sultan ordered to have naval bases at Jamal Abad and Wajid Abad in Manglore and one at Majeed Abad and Sadasiva Gadh to have the first two mentioned naval ships. Unfortunately before the plan could be accomplished Tipu Sultan's regime was finished.

Development of Agricultural

'Agriculture is the life blood of the nation. This land, rich and fertile, will reward those who work on it. Famine and want are either the result of sloth and ignorance or of corruption. The 127 Regulations of this Revenue Code are intended for your immediate implementation. In particular, your urgent attention is drawn to the provisions which relate to cash advances to needy peasants for buying ploughs, steps for taking over derelict land and protection to the cultivator and his descendants. The Code is illustrative and not exhaustive. For instance, one Amildar has decided that where peasants are convicted of certain minor offences as are only punishable by fines, such fines can be commuted if the person charged with the fine agrees to plant two mango and two almond trees in front of the village, and water and tend them till they are the height of three feet. We approve of such measures. Thus, Amildars must rely on their ingenuity consistent with local conditions (but without ignoring the rights of the people) to stimulate agricultural growth. Any measures so introduced should be reported so that consideration can be given to their incorporation in the Code as also to reward the Amildars concerned' - from Tipu Sultan's circular to all Amildars, 1788.⁷ 'Anyone who brings under cultivation any uncultivated land and grows crops, vegetables or fruits by irrigating it with water from this dam will be given all encouragement and concessions by the Khudadad Government the newly cultivated land shall belong to the cultivator and his descendants and no one shall dispossess him' -

from Inscription on the foundation stone laid by Tipu Sultan for the dam on the river Cauvery, 1790.⁸

Tipu Sultan, goes the credit of introducing sericulture in Mysore on a large scale. Tipu was aware of the economic benefits of sericulture. He organized sericulture development in his state and benefitted the farmers. He had maintained records about the cultivation of sericulture. He had encouraged the farmers to cultivate commercial crops to overcome poverty and unemployment problems. He had also established widely distributed centers for government-regulated silk worm breeding and rearing in Mysore state. He had several commercial depots in foreign countries such as Pegu, Muscot, Turkey and Istanbul for selling sandalwood. He forbade the selling of salt from Madras, because he suspected the British merchants for spying activities.

Social Reforms

In matters of social reform, we are told that Tipu was a great visionary. Gandhi regarded him as an 'embodiment of Hindu-Muslim unity'. He banned the practice of human sacrifice and the trade of orphan girls and widows. He stopped the criminal punishment of flogging, calling it derogatory to human honor. On the question of banning liquor, Tipu Sultan's reasoning was simple: 'It is not a question of religion alone. We must think of the economic well-being and moral stature of our people and the need to build the character of the youth'. As we talk of wars of 'shock and awe' today, Tipu directed his warriors thus, 'Looting a conquered enemy enriches a few, impoverishes the nation and dishonors the entire army. Wars must be linked to battlefields. Do not carry them to civilians.'⁹ Tipu forbade prostitution and the employment of female slaves in domestic service and he also tried to stop the practice of polyandry in Coorg and Malabar. In some parts of Malabar women did not cover themselves above the waist, Tipu decreed that no woman should go about naked. He abolished the custom of human sacrifice which was practice in the temple of Kali Devi near Mysore town.¹⁰

Conclusion

Tipu had followed the standard system of administration for the development of the farmers, artisans, workers and other disadvantaged sections of society. His economic experiments, industrial plans, trade initiatives, agriculture development approaches, cooperative management activities and other nation building endeavors proved that Mysore state had grown as a model state in the country. The people of Karnataka revere Tipu Sultan as a model ruler who practically humanized the process of development despite his continuous pre-occupations with wars and crises. He was a cross-religion icon who stood by social justice centered administration in Mysore state.

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Dr. M.S. Randhawa's contribution to Art and Punjabi Literature

Dr. Ravidit Singh

Former Research Scholar

Department of Punjab Historical Studies

Punjabi University, Patiala

Email. kang.kangraviditt@gmail.com

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Abstract

The present paper intends to focus on the outstanding role played by Dr. Mohinder Singh Randhawa as a son of Punjab who helped and provided all the facilities to writers and artists of Punjab after partition. In this paper, an attempt has been made to unfold the efforts of Dr. Randhawa after the partition for the promotion of Punjabi Literature and Art. This paper also discusses how Dr. Randhawa as an administrator worked hard to promote Punjabi Literatures and Art as a source of employment and also created places of residence for the writers, helping them to get the financial assistance as well.

Keywords: Art, Literature, Folklore, Culture.

Introduction

Footprints of the great ones pave an everlasting path of success, glory and motivation for the generations to come. Dr Randhawa is that brick in the foundation of development of Punjab which if dissociated will crumble the whole building. Dr Randhawa was one such person of 20th century whose contribution to the state of affairs of Punjab and Punjabiyat¹ is incomparable. It is surprising to see how a man can single-handedly accomplish so much in one life.

Dr. Randhawa gave due respect to the land of Punjab, Punjabi Language, Punjabi literature and culture. As a result, Punjab Arts Council celebrates 'Randhawa Festival-a month long festival in February.'² Dr Randhawa was an ardent reader of literature, art and culture. On his insistence poetry of Bhai Vir Singh *Asa Hut Mehka Di Layi* was inscribed in Punjab Agricultural University and also in Rose Garden Chandigarh. It is important to mention here that the suggestion to inscribe the poem of Prof. Puran Singh *Desh Di Asees* on a copper

plate at the Sukhna Lake, Chandigarh was given by Dr Randhawa to Partap Singh Kairon.³

Dr Randhawa wanted that writers should highlight the real cultural heritage of Punjab as he felt that Punjab is lagging behind in it. He always wanted to see the splendid land of Punjab in full bloom. When Randhawa was the Vice-President of Indian Council of Agriculture Research, he appointed people of Bengali, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu and Punjabi origin to carry out agricultural research in regional languages. The introduction of the Punjabi Tribune was meant to balance the communal frenzy of the vernacular press of those days. The rumour about the Punjabi edition was in the air for a couple of years, but it clicked only after M.S. Randhawa joined as a member of 'The Tribune Trust'. Starting the Punjabi Tribune was not a smooth affair as the Hindi lobby would not yield space for a Punjabi edition unless a Hindi edition was brought out simultaneously. Again, it was the intervention of the resolute M.S. Randhawa that got the matter resolved amicably and it was decided to bring out both the editions.⁴ He then appointed Gulzar Singh Sandhu, a well known writer of Punjabi⁵ as its editor.⁶

Dr Randhawa collected folk songs from the different regions of Punjab and got them published in four volumes. In his book *Punjabi Folk Songs* he writes that the roots of human beings are deeply ingrained in the history of the great ancestors of the past. Social progress of human being is similar to the roots of tree spreading deep into the earth. The human looks at the future while breathing and being inspired by the past.⁷ Dr. Randhawa studied folk songs, folk tales and regional culture in the field of literature and literature exploration which was not an easy task to accomplish. He collected material related to literature, art and culture while also performing his administrative duties diligently. He compiled the selected poetry and prose works of scholars such as Prof. Puran Singh and gave it a book form called *Puran Singh: Jeevani te kavita*.⁸ His immense attachment to literature is evident from the fact that every room in his house contained books. He considered literature a holy thing that is why their writing room was like a temple.⁹

He published his autobiography *Aap Beeti*¹⁰ which is a valuable piece of information on his life. In his autobiography, he has mentioned about the different authors of Punjab whom he praises for their contribution but at the same time condemns society on the whole for its negligence of art and culture in general. In *Aap Beeti* Randhawa narrates the social, cultural and political activities of his day in fair terms. He was an intellectual of highest order and an ICS officer. When it came to choosing a language for writing his own works, he opted for his mother tongue Punjabi. In an interview with Jaswant Kanwal, Randhawa said

that officials have killed Punjabi. This shouldn't cause an impression that he was against the acquisition of skill in English. He believed that forsaking ones mother tongue for another language is equal to slavery. There was a constant dispute over the script of Punjabi Language for a long time. Before 1947, there was rage of Persian-Gurmukhi and later on Gurmukhi- Devnagri. Then it became a debate too that whether the words of other languages should be incorporated in Punjabi language or not? The stance of Dr Randhawa on this debate was clear that every language looks beautiful in its own script. He believed that Punjabi can be written correctly and in its best form in Gurmukhi script only, which is extremely beautiful in itself. He wanted the linguistic progression of Punjab in the sense that it should be a region of multiple language varieties but on a condition that mother tongue should not be tempered with.¹¹ Randhawa's name comes in the list of celebrities of Punjab due to his active involvement in all spheres of art and culture.

Kulbir Singh Sidhu narrates an incident of an accidental encounter with Dr Randhawa in 1985 at Sec-17, Chandigarh while Dr Randhawa was buying a pen from a roadside vendor. Dr Randhawa insisted on Kulbir Singh also to buy a pen but he was hesitant as to buy such poor quality pens, and even stopped M.S. Randhawa from doing so. Dr Randhawa answered instantly that the young man is trying to earn a livelihood through hard work. They must encourage work than begging and alms. Dr Randhawa had adopted Guru Nanak's philosophy of labour and equal distribution in his person.¹² Dr Randhawa had become the administrator but his spiritual mission was his ultimate goal. His official work did not interfere in his literary pursuits. He used his administrative style as a tool for his literary purpose. While reading Randhawa's life, a clear emphasis on promotion of literature and Punjabi culture along with the state administration is seen.¹³

Dr Randhawa encouraged Punjabi literature and writers by patronizing various literary institutes. In this context, Punjabi Sahit Akademi, Ludhiana is an active organisation in promoting Punjabi literature and culture which was established by Dr Randhawa. The foundation stone of 'Punjabi Bhawan' the Punjabi Sahit Akademi building was laid by the then President of India, Dr Radha Krishnan in 1966. Dr Randhawa became its president in 1970 and remained president till his death in 1986. Under his presidentship, Punjabi Sahit Akademi made a lot of progress. The Akademi started publishing a quarterly journal '*Criticism*' in Punjabi which played an important role in the field of Punjabi criticism and research. The Akademi's letters and its delegation were sent to the government for the development of Punjabi language from time to time. A delegation was led by Dr Randhawa on 2 December 1985 to then chief minister

Surjit Singh Barnala and gave a memorandum for Punjabi literature, language and cultural development.¹⁴

While still in college, Randhawa met artist Sobha Singh in connection with his dissertation for which he needed help for some diagrams.¹⁵ In the artist's studio Randhawa saw paintings, and although a student of science he was not blind to the beauty of arts and did not fail to appreciate them. In 1948, Sobha Singh went to Bombay in search of work. He stayed for a few months and managed himself to get some work to paint film hoardings. Meanwhile he got a letter from Dr. Randhawa who wanted him to come back to Punjab immediately.¹⁶ After that, he started work in Punjab with the help of his supporter Dr. M.S. Randhawa. He arranged an exhibition of Sobha Singh's painting in the Sirhind club, Ambala. A number of his paintings were purchased by the officers of the Indian Air Force. Here he also drew a portrait of Guru Gobind Singh which Dr. Randhawa purchased for the library situated in Ambala city.¹⁷

In 1940, when All India Fine Arts and Craft Society was established in Delhi, Randhawa was appointed its chairman in 1947 and he remained in office till 1959.¹⁸ Dr. Randhawa paid Rs. 50,000 for the construction of its building from his own pocket. Here, he also purchased the miniatures of famous Russian artist Nicholas Roerich to promote art. This society also publishes a journal 'Roop-Lekha' initiated by Dr Randhawa.¹⁹ The 39th issue of this journal was dedicated to Dr Randhawa. In this journal a separate column was dedicated to art and literature, through which many low-profile artists of Punjab were highlighted which included Paramjit Stonewala, Manjit Bawa, Krishan Khanna and Satish Gujral.²⁰

Dr Randhawa also established Punjab Arts Council in Chandigarh in 1981 to promote Punjabi art and culture. In a letter to Partap Singh Kairon, he stated that the museum of art in Punjab had been displaced due to partition. It was transformed from Lahore and had been temporarily established in the Moti Palace of Patiala.²¹ On the advice of Dr Randhawa, Partap Singh Kairon got the museum set up in the Art College building in Chandigarh. According to Dr Randhawa, development of art and skills is equal to the development of human race. Without art man remains an animal. For the preservation of Punjabi culture, Dr Randhawa inspired Kairon²² to purchase paintings from all over Punjab.

Dr Randhawa was immensely praised by professor B.S.Halden of London University when he apprised him of his scheme of museum of evolution.²³ After partition, when Randhawa became chief commissioner of Chandigarh,²⁴ he called upon Dr Grace Morley-the advisor of museums in the Ministry of

Education, Government of India. Randhawa designed the map of the museum and art gallery building based on Dr Morley's Report. In this library more than 3,000 books have been kept related to art and culture of Punjab. Many books and manuscripts in this library were gifted by Dr Randhawa from his personal library. In this building, the Gandhara sculptures including images, small images and 62 sculptures of Gandhara style have been kept which were brought under the supervision of Randhawa. It was under his supervision that 110 paintings of Russian artist Archard were purchased for the Chandigarh Art gallery. He also ordered for the purchase of paintings of another famous painter Sansar Chand related to Shiva and Parvati.²⁵ M.S. Randhawa breathes through the exclusive artistic collections which he set up in museums and art galleries developed by him. He organized an exhibition of famous artist Nicholas Roerich, which was inaugurated by the then Prime Minister Pandit J.L. Nehru. He motivated the elite of Delhi to purchase artistic works and give them to All India Fine Arts and Craft Society.²⁶ With the cooperation of people he developed libraries in various towns of Delhi. Under the supervision of Dr Randhawa, the National Gallery of Modern Arts was developed in Jaipur which was basically a palace accorded by the Maharaja of Jaipur. Hardev Singh, an artist was given the responsibility of setting up the gallery. Later Hardev Singh was appointed as a Founder Director in Arts College at Chandigarh on the advice of Dr. Randhawa. A similar art museum was created in Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana also.²⁷

He further insisted that the museums should have paintings on the historical events and portraits of the prominent personalities of Punjab, justifying it by the adage *pictures speak thousands words.* According to him, a visual lesson in history exceeds in creating an impression thousands times more than a lesson learned from digging into books. Likewise the art gallery in Anandpur Sahib and the Government museum and Art Gallery Chandigarh can attribute their existence solely to the tremendous efforts on Randhawa's part. He managed to convince the government to continue with the project of building an art museum in Chandigarh despite their policy to curb all unessential projects including the museum in the wake of the Indo-China war. He not only saved the project from being discontinued but on its completion donated his personal collection of Pahari Paintings to it.²⁸ This collection is one of the best in the country and has become the main attraction of the museum. Randhawa, in his speech on the inauguration of the museum had said, *'Art collection belongs to the whole nation rather than to any group of people. They are for the enjoyment of the people and provide research material to scholars and cannot be treated as material wealth to be shared*

and divided'.²⁹ The statement reflects his selflessness and open heartedness, quality seen not that frequently in our society.

As per the information provided by Nina Tiwana, Harpal Tiwana was appointed in Punjabi folk arts and theatre department in Punjabi University, Patiala. Tiwana was asked to visit the villages of Punjab and collect the folk songs, folk traditions, rituals and Phulkaris and after their collection they were displayed in a museum established in Punjabi University, this museum was also constructed under the guidance of Dr Randhawa.³⁰

A book titled *Punjab* was published by the Language Department of Punjab Government whose chief editor was Dr Randhawa. In this book, Ganda Singh wrote on *Sapta Sindhu*, Mulik Raj Anand wrote on State Paintings of Sikh times, Dr Randhawa wrote on Kangra Art Collection, Gurdit Singh on Fairs and Festivals, Davinder Satyarthi on Folk Songs and Folk Literature, Pritam Singh on Language and Script and Amrita Pritam wrote about the modern poetry.³¹ This book was published in 1969 and also known as Encyclopedia of Punjab. This work established him as an editor.

He wrote another book titled *Out of the Ashes*³² which is an insight into the resettlement of Refugees. Randhawa also wrote *History of Indian agriculture* on the instance of Indian Council of Agricultural Research. He has 50 very rigorous research papers on botanical Science to his credit. But most of his published work is on paintings. They mention about the paintings of the hill areas of the Punjab and those promoted under the patronage of the kings. Two very worthwhile books are about the art of the *Basoli Paintings*³³ and *Basoli Paintings of the Rasmanjri*.³⁴ Three books are about the paintings of the Chamba, Kishangarh and Guler Kingdoms. About the search of these pieces of art, Randhawa has recorded his experience in his book titled *Travels in the Western Himalaya in Search of Paintings*.³⁵ Before Randhawa, some scholars such as Kumara Sawami, Ajit Ghosh and G.C. French did research on paintings of hills, but he has given new information in the field of art through thorough research work. His major work is on *Kangra Ragmala Paintings (1958)*³⁶ *Chamba Paintings*,³⁷ *Indian Paintings*,³⁸ *Basoli Paintings (1959)*³⁹ *Krishna Legend in Pahari Paintings*,⁴⁰ *Kangra Painting of Love (1962)*,⁴¹ *Kangra Painting of the Bhagavata Purana; Geet Govinda (1964)*⁴² and *Bihari Satsai (1966)*⁴³ etc. Paintings of the hills make history of Indian Art.⁴⁴ Apart from paintings, he collected folk songs of Kangra, Harayana and Kullu with great intensity and arranged them in a book form.

M.S. Randhawa, as a writer of art, is greatly known for his contribution in bringing forth important information on Pahari Painting but his writings of modern

art in India are seldom acknowledged. Therefore, it is pertinent to mention that his first writing in the field of art was on the Brewster's. This was his first book before he turned his attention towards Pahari Paintings. An interesting incident that took place after his first book on art was published was when as an expression of goodwill, Randhawa sent a copy of his book to O.C. Ganguly, another art historian of that time, whom he considered a fellow critic. He also requested him to send a copy of his recently published work in return. Ganguly, in reply criticized Randhawa for wasting time on the Brewster's while the treasures of Indian art lay there to be explored in the hills.⁴⁵ This reply annoyed Randhawa and he tore the letter into pieces. In retrospect it seems that this may have influenced him to take a closer look at traditional Indian art, thus leading to his interest in Pahari Paintings. It was few years after this occurrence that Randhawa wrote his work on Kangra Paintings in the year 1954.⁴⁶ According to Sardar Sobha Singh, Indian people lost their vision due to slavery. Only art and literature can help them regain that vision. Dr Randhawa focused more on art and literature. His motive was development of deep interest in art and culture and establishment of libraries and art galleries.⁴⁷ He has provided information in books and articles about various aspects of Punjabi culture in Punjabi literature. He has introduced the lifestyle and culture of the people of Punjab, Kullu, Kangra and Haryana through the medium of his books.⁴⁸ For example, Rohtak is a degenerative form of Rohtasgarh. Towards the north of the present city of Rohtak and 3 miles away, they are still signs of displaced cities. They are remembered as Rohtasgarh.⁴⁹ In the book titled 'Kangra', he has highlighted the geographical and historical background of many places in the Kangra Valley.⁵⁰

Dr Randhawa was the confluence of art and science. Some writers before Dr. Randhawa heard the love stories of Punjab from the Marasi and Bhatt Community (Schedule castes In Punjab) and compiled them. The book of *The Legend Punjab* written by Richard Temple is one example in this context. It was the rampant efforts of Dr Randhawa that he edited *Preet Kahaniyan* by getting folk love tales written from different scholars.⁵¹ Dr Randhawa has double role in this book as a writer and as an editor. As a writer, the romantic story of *Roopmati and Baaz Bahadur* is written in a unique style by Dr Randhawa. In the introduction of this book, he makes a mention of his love for folk literature, the situation of its lack and also the process of his research for getting valuable information gathered in the form of a book.⁵² In The context of cultural development, it is understood that after Richard Temple, two sons of Punjab Davinder Satayrthi and Dr. Randhawa were the first to bring Punjabi culture in the context of folk literature. Dr Randhawa became the patron of many artists and writers like Nora Richards,

Devendra Satyarthi, Gurbax Singh Preetladi, Prithvi Raj Kapoor and Balraj Sahni etc.⁵³ Even more important than his literary contributions is his inspiring and patronising role for other artists and writers. He inspired many to the creative field. Dr Mohan Singh's appointment as Professor Emeritus of Punjab Agricultural University in his unemployed situation is one such example.⁵⁴

Dr Randhawa believed that Punjab was not a pre-eminent state of art and culture but he felt that people needed to be associated more with culture and art to lead a meaningful and fulfilling life. He strongly advocated art as a medium of revival of soul. Dr. Randhawa identified a generation of modern artists in Punjab which included Sohan Qadri, Rashpal Rania, Shiv Singh, Roop Chand and Jodh Singh etc.⁵⁵ The artists fondly called him a *Patron of Art*. Khushwant Singh, a renowned writer considers Randhawa as an *intriguing and unforgettable person*. In Dr Randhawa, there was a love for saving Punjabi culture, literature and art and taking it to the hearts of people of Punjab and the whole world as well.

Dr. Randhawa played a pivotal role in developing libraries for the purpose of flourishing Punjabi literature. During one of his interviews, he told about his guidelines to the municipal committees to create libraries and reading rooms in civil supplies warehouses. There was a building in Ambala city which was used as a civil supply warehouse. He created Guru Gobind Singh library by refurbishing it. Likewise he created libraries in Hisar, Rohtak, Gurgaon, Balabgarh and Jagadhari.⁵⁶

Dr. Randhawa's unique contribution to art was to create an art museum in Chandigarh and others places of Punjab. He also narrates the story in his autobiography 'Aap Beeti', 'I sincerely wanted to create such a museum in which the development of life should be shown. How were plants born? Which vegetation and trees were developed? How did human beings develop in life; so that people can see such a museum and enjoy the origin and art of life'.⁵⁷

Conclusion

In the end we can say that his multifaceted personality has established its unique identity in areas like science, administration and agriculture, but his contribution to the field of art, literature and culture is noteworthy and often ignored. His main objective was to delve into the minds of the people to give them an inspiration and to promote the culture, art and literature of Punjab. That is why Balwant Gargi called him *the choicest pearl of old generation*.⁵⁸ Gulzar Singh Sandhu called him *the Sixth river of Punjab*.⁵⁹ Novelist Jaswant Singh Kanwal said that, *God did not do any other work when he created Dr Randhawa*.⁶⁰

These bouquets of commendations from acclaimed personalities themselves do not leave a further room for elaboration and admiration. Dr. Randhawa's life in itself was a contemplation and reflection of Punjabi literature and culture and its sweetness. The impact of his contribution was so vital and strong that we are still building on it and reaping the benefits decades after his demise. After looking at his contributions and accomplishments in different fields it won't be wrong to call him Punjab's great Renaissance man.

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Cultural Construct of *Trivarga* in Early India An Inter-textual Exploration

Aradhana Singh

Research Scholar

Centre for Historical Studies

Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

Email.:aradgaba28singh@gmail.com

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Abstract

This paper attempts to explore the concept of trivarga or the three aims of life in early India, and the correlation between the three, namely, dharma, artha and kâma. The investigation rests upon an intertextual analysis of the earliest and most popular extant treatises catering to the demands of each tradition, i.e., the Mânnavadharmasûtra, Arthasûtra and Kâmasûtra, respectively. The first section of this article tries to explore the understanding behind the very conceptualization of trivarga at a particular historical moment and the ways in which it came to be defined. Drawing from this, I will go on to examine in detail the correlation between the three as exemplified in the person of the King. The idea behind taking up an analysis of this nature is to offer fresh insights on an important ideological and philosophical tradition of early India and its repercussions on the ethico-legal, social, political and cultural life of the times.

Keywords: *Trivarga*, early India, *sûtra*, inter-textuality, King.

‘I failed to master the knowledge needed to conquer the head of polemist abroad in the world. I did nothing to spread my fame across the sky on the rapier made to pierce martial elephants’ heads. I never spied the moonrise nectar from women’s beautiful, tender, blossom lips. Alas, I passed a futile youth, like a flaming lamp in an empty house’ (Bhart[ari]’s *Ātakaṭrayam*, 195).

The concept of *Trivarga*¹, commonly referred to as the three aims of life forms an integral part of the intellectual and philosophical milieu of early North India. Eagleton famously defines culture as a body of artistic and intellectual work; a process of spiritual and intellectual development; the values, customs, beliefs and symbolic practices by which men and women live; or a whole way of

life.² It is in this regard I reason that *trivarga* emerges as a fundamental cultural and literary construct in the early Indian context. It can be seen as ‘a way of life,’ for every individual (and particularly males) were ideally supposed to choose one amongst the three, or better still, maintain a constant balance between the triple tenets of *dharma*, *artha* and *kâma*.³ But, is this the only way in which *trivarga* was conceptualized in early India? In other words, what was the manner in which the composers of ancient Indian treatises formulate and define it? Did they equate *trivarga* with the three major goals of human life or considered its triple constituents as pursuits or activities which proved beneficial to the persons performing them?

We come across elaborate discussions and debate on the relative importance and usefulness of *trivarga* in an individual’s life in all the three traditions of literature used for this analysis, namely, the *Mânavadharmaûâstra*, *Arthauûâstra* and *Kâmasûtra*. But before going into the details, let me first elaborate upon the method used here for an analysis of these texts. The methodological thread which runs through this entire paper is that of intertextuality, *i.e.*, an attempt to analyze the interconnections or dialogues between similar or related works of literature. Julia Kristeva’s argument that ‘meaning is not transferred directly from writer to reader but instead is mediated through, or filtered by, ‘codes’ imparted to the writer and reader by other texts’⁴ is significant and I believe that a knowledge and appreciation of these codes definitely enhances the meaning of any text under scrutiny. Belonging to the *ûâstric* genre, often translated as technical treatises, the texts used here offer innumerable examples of such overlap or reciprocity, in language as well as content, theme and representational strategies. Separated by centuries from the time in which these texts were composed, when we pick them up for analysis today, our awareness and familiarity with the contemporary literary products provides an opportunity to see them together and make sense of the possible reciprocity and dialogue.

Before investigating how *trivarga* came to be constructed in different literary traditions, let me first briefly introduce the readers to its three constituents and the corresponding treatises. *Dharma*, a Sanskrit term that defies translation, constitutes a central feature of Indian culture and philosophy from the very beginning. It encompasses a wide range of aspects within its semantic spectrum, *i.e.*, law, ethics, religion, duty, social obligations and justice, to name a few. *Artha* stands for money, political power, profit and success, or in other words the acquisition of material wealth in all its variety. While *Kâma* comprises desire, love and pleasure (not just the sexual variety, but also sensual pleasure). The order and nature of the three pursuits has been a subject of debate and

disagreement for a long time. Malamoud offers an interesting insight, according to which the terms of *trivarga* in ascending hierarchical order takes us from the most subjective to the most objective, in other words, from the individual to the social.⁵ This observation is crucial for the present analysis, as it distinguishes the three pursuits based upon their individual or communal nature.

The three *ûâstras* or technical treatises being used for this analysis, deal with the concept of *trivargaby* focusing upon one particular goal, amongst the three. Vâtsyâyana offers an explanation behind the conception of these treatises as, ‘...when the Creator emitted his creatures, he first composed in a hundred thousand chapters, the means of achieving the three aims of human life, which is the vital link with what sustains those creatures’.⁶

It is believed that this all-inclusive text was further narrowed down by scholars, in order to give shape to separate works on *dharma*, *artha*, and *kâma*, which underwent further compression in years to come. These three traditions within the larger *ûâstric* genre represent each *trivarga* as the foundation of the other two. And the choice of the *ûâstric* genre appears to be based upon the nature and aim of this literary tradition, which is normative and instructional to the core, offering detailed guidelines on particular theme or category and codifying rules and regulations. Nonetheless, these instructional treatises are deeply connected with and derive from the historical context in which they come to be produced. While propounding norms, the *ûâstras* take into account a variety of situations and scenarios, the description is never one-sided. They might not agree with certain things and thereby tend to show them in poor light, but there is no denying the fact that the *ûâstras* present us with details on a range of day-to-day human activities, like marriage, ritual, food, inheritance, judicial procedure, punishment, penance, management of wealth, taxation, adoption, family, duties of members of particular caste or class, gender relations, so on and so forth. These situations and anecdotes when *read between the lines*, definitely gives one a glimpse into contemporary opinions and realities.⁷

Trivarga and the Three Treatises

The compositional style (entirely in *œlokas*) of the *Mânavadharmaûâstra* indicates that it was composed after the *Dharmasûtras* (the four extant *Dharmasûtras* of Gautama, Baudhâyana, Âpastamba and Vasismha are prose compositions).⁸ Placing the other metrical *Dharmaûâstras* like those ascribed to Yâjñavalkya, Nârada, B[haspati and Kâtyâyana, later than Manu’s text, Bühler has argued that the text was composed between c. 200 BCE-200 CE.⁹ Jayaswal further compresses this timeline by placing it in the ĆEuEga period, which witnessed Brahmanical revival post Aœokan reforms. He therefore placed the text during

the last two centuries before the common era.¹⁰ However, on the basis of internal and external evidence from contemporary sources, Olivelle assigns a lower limit of first century BCE and an upper limit of second-third centuries CE.¹¹ Comparisons with the *Arthauûstra*, generally ascribed to the Mauryan period and the *Kâmasûtra* which relates to the social and culture landscape of the Gupta empire and presents evidence of Manu's fame as the composer of an authoritative work on *dharma*, further corroborate these dates.

Regrettably, the extant text of the *Mânnavadharmaûstra* does not furnish any substantial information on the probable date, geographical location, and other biographical details of its author Manu. A number of myths and legends surround this figure who is frequently referred to as the progenitor of humankind. The most we can say about him with some degree of certainty is that he was a learned Brahmin, based in northern India. As the title itself suggests, the *Mânnavadharmaûstra* gives primacy and extensive space to the discussion of *dharma* (unarguably, the central topic of the treatise). Manu's understanding of *dharma* is not singular, but incorporates its varied aspects, and according to me, the two most prominent among these were ethics and law. The *dharmaûstras* can therefore be categorized as 'ethico-legal' texts, where the ethical (doing something for the larger good of the community or social group to which one belongs) and the legal (the administration of justice to get rid of the negative impact of one's unlawful deeds in this world, and the next) aspects are entangled in such a way that it gets difficult to separate one from the other.

The composition of Kaumilya's *Arthauûstra*, a detailed and first of its kind treatise on statecraft and rule, is located during the reign of Mauryan dynasty. The text defines *artha* as the sustenance or livelihood of men, very categorically placing it superior to *dharma* and *kâma*. Kaumilya recognizes the prevalence of earlier works on the subject, but like the two other *ûstras* used for this analysis, it is the first extant treatise dealing specifically with *artha*. The text at two instances, namely 1.1.19 and 15.1.73, states that it was composed by Kaumilya (also known as CâGakya and VicGugupta) who was appointed King Chandragupta Maurya's chief minister after he successfully helped him overthrow the Nandas. As per this traditional view, the *Arthauûstra* was composed sometime around c. fourth century BCE, when Chandragupta occupied the Mauryan throne. Kaumilya clearly underlines the importance of *artha*, by stating, 'material well-being alone is supreme (*artha eva pradhân iti Kaumilya*). For, spiritual good and sensual pleasure depend on material well-being (*arthamûlau hi dharmakâmâviti*)'.¹²

Like almost all literary productions of early India, the probable date and location of the *Kâmasûtra* abounds with debate and dissensions.¹³ Scholars now

mostly agree that the text was composed in the second half of the third century CE. The various reasons propounded behind this line of argument are firstly, the text's compositional similarities with another *ûâstra* belonging to a much earlier date, *i.e.*, the *Arthauûâstra*. There are also many implicit and explicit references to Kaumilya's treatise throughout the text. Secondly, while referring to nearby kingdoms and polities Vâtsyâyana presents a picture of the western Indian political scenario which was simultaneously ruled by the Abhiras and Andhras. Since we know from other contemporary sources that the Andhras ruled alone till 225 CE, there is strong evidence that the text was composed after that time. Thirdly, later texts like *Vâsavadattâ* of Subandhu, composed around the fifth century CE mentions *Kâmasûtra* by name. This indicates that composed prior to that period, Vâtsyâyana's treatise must have gained authority and popularity by that time.¹⁴ As the *Kâmasûtra* is devoted to *kâma*, Vâtsyâyana offers some defenses and tries to clear misunderstandings regarding the same. Refuting the opinion of Pragmatists that 'pleasure acts as an obstacle to both religion and power, which are more important' and that indulgence in pleasure makes a man 'careless, lightweight, untrustworthy and unacceptable',¹⁵ Vâtsyâyana draws an interesting analogy between pleasure and food, wherein both act as 'means of sustaining the body' and are life rewards for following the path of religion and power.¹⁶ However, as reward is offered for an achievement, the enjoyment of pleasure is dependent on the how far one is able to accomplish the other two pursuits, thereby again establishing the interconnections.

On the question of the relative ordering of the three goals and its implications, these texts follow the system of hierarchical ranking, the most widespread form in which early Sanskrit texts try to make sense of the world.¹⁷ Upon pondering over past opinions wherein some argue that law (*dharma*) and wealth (*artha*) are conducive to welfare; while others say that pleasure (*kâma*) and wealth (*artha*) lead towards welfare; and still others who pitch for law (*dharma*) alone or wealth (*artha*) alone, Manu states the entire triple set (*trivarga*) is conducive to welfare.¹⁸

Kaumilya, on the other hand, advises the King to devote himself equally to the three goals of life as they are bound up with one another. He further clarifies his position by stating that excessive indulgence in any one aim does harm to itself as well as obscures the likely benefits to be reaped from the other two.¹⁹ Vâtsyâyana begins his text by paying homage to religion (*dharma*), power (*artha*) and pleasure (*kâma*) as they are in 'mutual agreement'.²⁰ But this ideal scenario of mutual agreement is soon discarded and the text accepts the fact that

there might occur at some point competition between the three, and it is in such scenarios that each one is more important than the one that follows.²¹

Moreover, although evidence from all three *úâstras* used here suggests establishing mutual agreement or balance between the three aims, Vâtsyâyana provides another unique way of pursuing them with special attention and dedication. As per this view, if the ideal lifespan is considered to be a full hundred years (as is the norm in most texts of early India and found most prominently in discussions on the *âúrama* system or four stages of life), it is through division that a man can cultivate all three aims in such a way that they enhance rather than interfere with each other. This division of time was based upon the different stages and age-group to which the person belongs (to further rule out any confusion or controversy), i.e. childhood should be reserved for the acquisition of knowledge and power; youth is the time to indulge in pleasure; while old age should be devoted to religion and release.²² Vâtsyâyana does not rule out the uncertainties of life here, and therefore advises a person to pursue aims as and when the suitable opportunity arises, the only exception is that he should remain celibate until he has acquired knowledge.²³ Hence, Manu is not alone here as the Triad of *úâstras* dealing with *dharma*, *artha* and *kâma*, agree upon the fact that one should strive to achieve a balance between all three aims in a lifetime.

Trivarga and Social Category

Another significant idea regarding *trivarga* in our sources is that it is not the same for every individual or group, in other words, the concept of *trivarga* is 'constructed' upon the social category to which a person belongs. For example, in Manu's opinion, a *Snâtaka* or bath-graduate 'must never seek to obtain wealth (*artha*) with excessive passion, through forbidden activities, when he already has sufficient wealth, or from just anyone even in a time of adversity; nor shall he be passionately attached to any of the sensory objects out of lust but using his mind he should stamp out any excessive attachment to them'.²⁴ Manu in fact acknowledges and popularizes the idea of different *dharmas* (popularly known as *svadharma*) for separate social groups or individuals (based upon their socio-cultural standing); and goes into further details while discussing the *dharma* of the King (*râjadharma*), as the King was considered the prime wielder of justice and punishment (in other words, the arbitrator of Law). Besides, while *svadharma* incorporates the ethical or dutiful aspects (wherein an individual acted as part of a larger social group); the maintenance and disposal of *râjadharma* (legal duties, inclusive of the enforcement and maintenance of law) was an important part of a King's overall responsibility towards his subjects.

Vâtsyâyana refrains from offering a fixed order and it is quite later in the text that he states, 'a man who serves power, and pleasure, and religion in this way (read order) wins endless happiness (*sukha*) that has no thorns, in this world and the next'.²⁵ Further, in the section on courtesans, we again come across a different order of money, religious merit and pleasure,²⁶ respectively. Thus, Vâtsyâyana too suggests different sequences in which the three aims in life can be pursued, and this difference is based upon the social group to which an individual belongs. Therefore, in the sphere of *trivarga*, one's social standing plays an important part.

King as an Exemplary

Interestingly, the *ûâstric* genre roped in early Indian society's highest authority, *i.e.*, the King as the torchbearer of the *trivarga* structure. He was supposed to strike a balance between the three aims and set an example before his subjects. The *dharma*, *artha* and *kâma ûâstras* formed an important part of the King's educational curriculum,²⁷ and it was required of him to reflect upon these matters in consultation with his counselors and other learned people, almost every day once he becomes the ruler.²⁸ A King's political, economic and social position was designed in such a way that all three constituents of *trivarga* played an important role in the proper disbursement of duties. He was endowed with the ultimate authority of Law or justice in his kingdom; *artha* or the acquisition of immense wealth and power (for himself and his people) was his most important duty (*svadharma*); and he was especially vulnerable to the trappings of pleasure and lust, as the path towards the acquisition of justice and power was replete with intentional or unintentional introduction of love/women/sexual divergences, which needed to be handled very carefully²⁹ by exercising and making self-control a part of day to day life. For a King was prone to become a victim of several vices (*vyasanâ*), ten stemming from pleasure and another eight from wrath. But the vices stemming from pleasure were particularly dangerous as they cut him off from *dharma* and *artha*.³⁰ In order to maintain the status quo, Manu advises the King to reflect on matters concerning the *trivarga*, and how these may be acquired together when they are in mutual opposition, either alone or in consultation with his counselors, preferably at midday or midnight.³¹

This brings us to the conclusion that the concept of *trivarga* in early India was formulated by incorporating and connecting three very significant ideas of contemporary society, polity, economy and culture, *i.e.*, *dharma*, *artha* and *kâma*. The need to bring them together and vehemently vouch for their relative ordering and importance in an individual's life firmly establishes their position as the three major aims of human life, where a constant balance needs to be maintained

between them. Although exclusively dedicated to one single component of the entire triple set, the texts employed for analysis here do reflect a deep knowledge of the other two traditions, further suggesting ways to establish and practice mutual agreement between them. Secondly, the relative ordering of the three aims might undergo some changes depending upon the social category to which an individual belongs. Thirdly, by presenting the King as the exemplary here, who strives hard to maintain this balance and gains immense success and fame upon doing so, the composers of the *trivarga* doctrine succeed in further legitimizing the concept. Moreover, with its authoritative and imposing tone and structure, the *sâstric* genre too must have proved extremely beneficial in this regard.

Notes & References

¹The addition of *mokca* results in the constitution of another important aspect of Brahmanical ideology, i.e. the system of *purucârtha*. Malamoud encompasses it within his famous 3+1 framework, where a gap separates the first three terms from the fourth. In his opinion, *mokca* stands for +1 here, as 'the first three purucârthatogether make up the trivarga, in other words, 'dharma, artha and kâmamake up a self-sufficient whole with its own coherence; *mokca* on the contrary can only appear in the background as it were, and has meaning only in terms of the functioning of trivarga'. (Charles Malamoud, 'On the rhetoric and semantics of purucârtha' in *Way of Life: King, Householder, Renouncer*, Delhi, 1988, p. 37).

²Terry Eagleton, *Culture*, New Haven, 2016, p. 1.

³R.N. Dandekar, 'The Theory of Puruûârthas: A Rethinking,' *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, Vol.68, No.1/4, 1987. pp.661-671. 'Man is expected to pursue all the three puruûârthas (dharma, artha and kâma), which are independent values, conjointly and in a balanced way, for the achievement of an integrated human personality and the fulfillment of human life in this world' (p.664).

⁴Julia Kristeva, *Desire in language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, New York, 1980, p. 66.

⁵Charles Malamoud, 'On the rhetoric and semantics of purucârtha' in *Way of Life: King, Householder, Renouncer*, Delhi, 1988, p.38.

⁶*Kâmasûtra*., I.1.5.

⁷Pollock as quoted by Olivelle in the introduction to *Manu's Code of Law*, New York, 2005, p. 63, elaborates upon the relation between *ûâstra* and practice: '1. *ûâstra* could be viewed as offering a real blueprint for practice; 2. as merely describing, *ex post facto*, a cultural product and thereby explicating its components for the benefit of a cultivated person; 3. as providing, in the guise of normative injunctions, something like a standard of taste and judgement to critics, that is, as defining the 'classic'; 4. even as functioning in some cases to 'invent' a tradition; 5. as constituting, in the hegemonic manner of high cultures elsewhere, practices as 'sciences' for theoretical or actual control; 6. or-last in order but perhaps first in importance- as endowing a

practice with status, legitimacy and authority directly conferred by any 'Vedic' charter, something most *ûâstras* appear to become'.

⁸*Ēloka*s appear to have gained authority towards the centuries prior to the common era as the Upanicads too display this shift from mixed prose and verse to the later ones composed entirely in verse.

⁹Georg Bühler, *The Laws of Manu*, Oxford, 1886, p. cxvii. Lingat (1973, 96) and Kane (*History of Dharmauâstra* I, 344) agree with Bühler's dating.

¹⁰K.P. Jayaswal, *Manu and Yâjñavalkya: A Comparison and a Contrast*, 1930, p. 29.

¹¹Patrick Olivelle., *Manu's Code of Law: A Critical Edition and Translation of the Mânavaadharmauâstra*, New York, 2005, pp. 21-25.

¹²*Arthauâstra*., I.7.6.

¹³Richard Burton placed the text in a fairly large chronological time span between the first and the sixth centuries CE. *The Vatsyayana Kama Sutra*, 1883, Introduction.

¹⁴Wendy Doniger and Sudhir Kakar, *Vatsyayana Kamasutra*, New York, 2002, p. xi.

¹⁵*Kâmasûtra*., I.2.32-34.

¹⁶*Kâmasûtra*., I.2.37.

¹⁷Wendy Doniger, *Beyond Dharma: Dissent in the Ancient Indian Sciences of Sex and Politics*, New Delhi, 2018, p.13.

¹⁸*Mânavaadharmauâstra*., II.224.

¹⁹*Arthauâstra*., I.7.4-5.

²⁰*Kâmasûtra*., I.1.1-2.

²¹*Kâmasûtra*., I.2.14.

²²*Kâmasûtra*., I.2.1.

²³*Kâmasûtra*., I.2.6.

²⁴*Mânavaadharmauâstra*., IV.15-16.

²⁵*Kâmasûtra*., I.2.39.

²⁶*Kâmasûtra*., VI.6.5-6.

²⁷*Mânavaadharmauâstra*., VII.26.

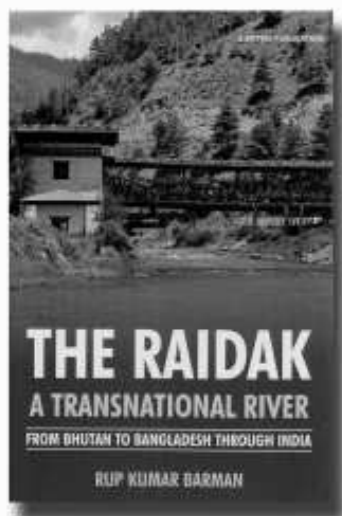
²⁸*Mânavaadharmauâstra*., VIII.151.

²⁹*Arthauâstra*., I.7.3. 'He should enjoy sensual pleasures without contravening his spiritual good and material well-being; he should not deprive himself of pleasures'.

³⁰*Mânavaadharmauâstra*., VII.45-46.

³¹*Mânavaadharmauâstra*., VII.151.

Book Review



Author: Rup Kurmar Barmah

Professor, Department of History
Jadavpur University, West Bengal
Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 2021
Price : Rs. 600/-

Dr. Rup Kumar Barman is a well-known scholar of social science. He has authored 12 books, two edited volumes and more than 100 research papers as published in various national and international academic journals. One of his recently published scholarly works is *The Raidak: A Transnational River: From Bhutan to Bangladesh through India* (New Delhi, Mittal Publications, 2021, pp.xxx+130, Price: 600/p INR). The title of this book itself narrates the scope of the work i.e. the journey of the *Raidak* River from Bhutan to India and eventually its confluence with the *Brahmaputra* in Bangladesh.

The Raidak: A Transnational River begins with an elaborate background of the study along with the experience and engagement of the author with the *Raidak* River. Dr. Barman has depicted a beautiful picture of the formation of the *Raidak I* with the *Dhowlajhora*, the *Ultanadi* and a branch of the *Raidak* at Chhoto Chowkir Bos surrounded by the forest of the Chhipra Beat and Naratahali Beat under the Buxa Tiger Reserve, nearby tea gardens and natural

phenomena. He has described his childhood at his native village (called Chhoto Chowkir Bos) and schooling at Mahakalguri Mission High School. His journey from this small village to University of North Bengal through Alipurduar College and his experience with nature and plural culture of beautiful North Bengal have been illustrated in the preface of this work. Dr. Barman has also analysed the trends of international, national and regional politics during the period of his studentship (1980-1999) as well as his teaching career in Darjeeling (2000-2001: St. Joseph's College) and Cooch Behar (2001-2002: ABN Seal Government College) along with their close relationship with the *Raidak* River. After joining Jadavpur University in 2002, Dr. Barman has engaged himself in research and teaching but he has not forgotten the *Raidak* River. Incidentally, Dr. Barman has mentioned a few incidents of his life which are the examples of discrimination, prejudice and soft casteism that he had to face. So this long preface of *The Raidak: A Transnational River* can also be accepted as a literary piece of Dalit Discourse.

The Raidak: A Transnational River consists of five main chapters. In the first chapter, the author has illustrated the journey of the *Wang Chhu* (*Raidak*) from Thimphu to the Indo-Bhutan border. This river is an important source of water, stones and sands. These sources and the construction of hydel power projects in the *Wang Chhu* at Chukha have contributed to the growth of GDP as well as national economy of Bhutan. Dr. Barman has also nicely analysed the population composition and cultural lives of the people of the *Wang Chhu* basin with an objective outlook. It is interesting that *The Raidak: A Transnational River* has focused enough light on the migration of people to the *Wang Chhu* basin, question of citizenship and nation building process in Bhutan.

The second chapter of *The Raidak: A Transnational River* has described the journey of two *Raidaks* from the Indo-Bhutan border to the *Brahmaputra-Sankosh-Dudhkumar* system. Simultaneously, notable villages and towns of the *Raidak* basin as well as each natural water bodies created by the *Raidak* system have been depicted by the author with every minute details. Description of such water bodies (including the Baro Beel (located at the Nararthali Beat), the *Mara Raidak*, *Rasik Beel*, *Bochamari Beel*, *Dhakeswari Beel*, *Changua Beel*, etc.) is an valuable addition for the researchers of the future generation.

In the third chapter, Dr. Barman has constructed a brief political history of the *Raidak* basin. It is divided into three parts. In the first part, the author has narrated the precolonial history of the region with authentic sources. Colonial intervention, transition of the Koch Kingdom into a Native State and the formation Alipurduar district due to the conflicts between Bhutan and the colonial Government

have been analysed in the second part. The third part, on the other hand, has described the post-colonial history of the *Raidak* basin including the impact of the partition of Bengal (1947).

The fourth chapter of *The Raidak: A Transnational River* is more interesting. Here, Dr. Barman has discussed about the society and culture of the *Raidak* basin of the Indo-Bangladesh part. An elaborate description on the inhabitants of the *Raidak* basin including the Meches, Rabhas, Koch-Rajbanshis, Rajbanshi Muslims, Nepalese, the Adibashis, and the migrants from other parts of the Indian subcontinent is really a unique one in terms of its coverage. This chapter has nicely presented the location of Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity and Islam in the *Raidak* basin. Moreover, Dr. Barman has highlighted the process of diffusion of the Vaishnavism, cultural synthesis and the linguistic issue of people of the *Raidak* basin. On the other hand, the fifth chapter of *The Raidak: A Transnational River* has critically examined the changing economic and environmental traits of the *Raidak* basin. According to Dr. Barman, the *Raidak* has distinct economic characteristics and its people have their engagement with the resources of this river in different capacities. Construction of power projects at the *Wang Chhu*, however, has been generating unwanted hazards for the people of the Indian part of this river. The growth of tea gardens and the side effect of the modern agricultural technologies have increased the vulnerability of this river. It is being multiplied due to the exploitation of sands, gravels and boulders and construction of dams and bridges in the Indian parts of the *Raidak*. However, Dr. Barman has paid less attention to the Bangladesh part of the *Raidak* basin (i.e. the *Dudhkumar*).

In my opinion, *The Raidak: A Transnational River* is a daring attempt of Dr. Barman to present a less-known river of South Asia with an international perspective. Its approach is free from biasness of any particular discipline. It can be accepted as a good work of anthropology, sociology, history, politics, cultural studies, geography and of course of river studies. Upcoming researchers will be highly benefited by reading this book as well as the sources it has used. I hope, the readers would enjoy *The Raidak: A Transnational River* with great enthusiasm for understanding a river of South Asia called the *Raidak*.

Ananta Das

Research Scholar

Sikkim University

Email :anantadas38@gmail.com

Guidelines to the contributors


The Mirror, a peer reviewed annual Journal (having impact factor 4.715), 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, academicians, historians 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:

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I am happy to see the high academic standards maintained in the journal. The paper by Olivier Chiron, Daljit Singh, Uma Shankar Singh, and Sandeep Kaur was of particular interest to me. I hope that the journal will keep the high standards you have set in the selection and the critical review of the submissions. In the last issue, you have published a well-documented piece on the Bengal Muslims and in this issue as well you have published another piece on the colonial impact on the institutions of Indigenous learning in the Bengal presidency. These are the articles that provide a connected view of the havoc caused during the rule of East India Company on the pre-colonial institutions of learning in the Bengal presidency. I hope the publication of such researches will open a new window.

Prof. S.Z.H. Jafri
Department of History
University of Delhi

I am extremely delighted to receive the latest issue of The Mirror, Vol.7, 2020. It is evolving on expected lines under you and your collaborating team. It has grown not only in size but in its horizon as well. The articles (17) do reflect your efforts in reaching out to a large variety of scholars and themes.

Prof. Ishrat Alam
Ex- Member Secretary (CEO)
Indian Council of Historical Research
Ministry of HRD, Govt. of India
Ex-Secretary, Indian History Congress

The Mirror, I believe that it a valuable addition to the scientific literature. The exposure to various topics ranging from history, to politics to ethics, tourism and environment will provide valuable insights to researchers.

Prof. Ranjana Mishra
Former HOD, SMDSMC
SNDT Women's University, Mumbai

I can easily be observed from the papers published in the Journal that a serious academic endeavour towards the extension of knowledge can be made from lesser known Colleges of Assam which also has participation of the scholars from other parts of India.

Prof. A.K. Thakur
Department of History
North-Eastern Hill University
Shillong, Meghalaya

Really great. This is the outcome of your meaningful efforts. Hats off to you and your energetic colleagues.

Dr. Rupam Saikia
Director
College Development Council
Dibrugarh University, Assam

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