

THE ROLE OF DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES IN THE NATIONALIST MOVEMENT OF MANBHUM

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Abstract

The political history of Manbhum districts on the south-western border of West Bengal is very glorious and important in the independence period. The contribution of the leaders of this district in the freedom struggle of India is also quite significant. Just as the people of other districts like Nibaran Chandra Dasgupta and Atul Chandra Ghosh have made significant contributions in the freedom struggle in this region, so also the people of different ethnic groups of this district have played an important role by participating in different ways. Although there was no nation-centered politics in Bengal or Purulia or its place in the political ideology. However, there is a subtle connection between nation-centered politics and politics in this region. An organized nation or community acts as a catalyst in spreading its political awareness or education through participation in the political activities of that nation or community. Again, the social order and unity of many races or communities play an important role in this. As a reaction to the oppression and exploitation of the Santal community during the rule of the company, the Santal people have revolted against them in various places in the entire jungle. In this case, their united mentality has had a great impact. Besides, the Santal people in different parts of Manbhum district have snatched their rights through their protests. Similarly, other ethnic groups in the district have tried to maintain their rights in different ways at different times. So many ethnic groups have participated in this district at different times, in different ways in the political background or in the field of work. The reason for this was the minority position of this community in the region and the social structure of this community was largely responsible. A review of the past history of these tribes shows that they are on the one hand anti-violence or anti-violence and on the other hand they are more self-centered and conservative. He preached Jainism and played the role of chief architect in the area. Later, when people from other communities come into conflict with this community, instead of resorting to violence because of their religious affiliation or ethnicity, they leave the area and seek refuge. Therefore, due to the minority position of this community in Purulia district, their religious thinking and ethnicity, the participation of this community in the freedom struggle cannot be noticed in that sense. Nevertheless, some members of this community are sporadically involved in various political activities in various regional fields. Although they were not recorded or there was any activity that stirred the political activities at the district and state level. However, the role of the people of this community in various regional events or activities can be seen in the regional context. A closer look reveals that the political connections of the Sarak community, as well as the spread of their education, reveal the sources of change in their social orientation or self-centered thinking. Therefore, in the forties of the twentieth century, the participation of the people of this community in various political activities in the local area can be noticed.

Keywords: Manbhum , Community ,Leaders , Movement , Participate, Resistance, Important.

Manbhum district was one of the districts of the east India during the British rule in India. The district

was created by regulation 13 of 1833 . The Jungle Mahal district was broken up and a new district called Manbhum was constituted with headquarter at Manbazar. The Manbhum district was very large in size and included parts of Bankura and Burdwan district of present West Bengal and Dhanbad, Dhalbhum and Saraikela-Kharswan district of present Jharkhand State. The whole Manbhum district formed the eastern part of Chotonagpur division of Bengal province , is in fact, the first step gradual descent from the elevated plateau of Chotonagpur properto the plains of lower Benga(1)l. The area of this district as surveyed in 1875 was 4914 square miles. According to first census report of 1872, the total inhabitants of the district was 9,95,750. When the district of Manbhum was in Chotonagpur division it was bounded on the north by the district of Hazaribag ,on the east by Burdwan and Bankura, on the south by Singhbhum and Midnapore , on the west by Ranchi and Hazaribag.A considerable portion of the northern and north-eastern boundary was marked by Barakr and Damodar River ,while west and south, the Subrnarekha River dividedthe district from Ranchi and Singhbhum 1.The district of Manbhum had all India significance because of its tropical location and its shape. Manbhum district has different religious and social group. (2)

Due to lack of agricultural expansion and heavy industry due to the uncertainty of significant rainfall, this region has always been an undeveloped, neglected and underdeveloped scheduled caste-scheduled tribe. So naturally people of different races and communities as well as coexistence can be noticed here. A classification of the various inhabitants of the Manbhum shows that they are divided into different groups ,races and tribes. The entire population of Manbhum is predominantly dominated by Adivasi ,and Harijans , a Non- Hindu caste . The upper caste Hindus are Brahmin, Kayastha ,Rajput and Bodyas , The underdeveloped communities include Santhal ,Sabar,Munda,Kormali ,Orang,Birhar ,Lohar etc., ,on the ontherhand , the Harijons include the Dom ,Hari .Chamar ,Sohis and Bauri.

The political history of Manbhum is full resistance movement and revolutions. On the one hand , the coexistence of different tribes living in the region and their distinct cultures can be observed, as well as the unity of these communities in the early stages of colonial rule against various oppression and exploitation. From the second half of the Eighteenth Century onwards , the east India company, through plunder,exploitation,oppression,arson etc,began to persecute the various tribal community of Manbhum especially the Bhumij community, they revolted against the company in 1769 to protect their traditional rights, freedom and uniqueness, known in history as Chuar rebellion (3). The revolt led by Dorjon sing, spread over a wide area of the Manbhum. The revolt then ended when the company adopted a policy of final repression.

In the early nineteenth century , the exploitation of the moneylender , the oppression revenue collectors , the burden of rent on the Cole tribe living in the Manbhum continued to increase . The Cole tribes staged a massive revolt.

Between 1831-1832 to re-established their traditional rights and gradually spread to different parts of Jungalmahal . Eventually the company put and end to the revolt with the help of strict repression .After the cole rebellion , the Bhumaj community again revolt under the leadership of Ganganarayan sing , known as a Ganganarayan Hangama in the history of Manbhum . Ganganarayan declared a revolt by uniting the Bhumij community against the excessive land rent of Barabhum Dewan Madhab sing . Under his leadership the rebellion spread over a wide area of Manbhum and there was a

temporary end to British rule until his death. (4)

The most extreme manifestation of the anti-British reaction in the history of modern India was the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857. As in other parts of India, the people of Manbhum also expressed their anger against the British rule. Under the leadership of King Nilmoni Singdeo of Panchokot, a Sepoy Mutiny broke out in Manbhum. When the Panchokot King Nilmoni Singdeo also took part, the Santhal society under his leadership took part in the revolt and spread the revolt in this region (4). Eventually, according to the British Govt. the rebellion in the region came to standstill when the Panchokot King Nilmoni Singdeo was arrested.

In the early part of the Twentieth century, the nationalist movement led by Gandhiji became the first mass movement, meaning active participation of the masses in political affairs of the country (5). The movement led by Gandhiji influenced all people of the society with his political ideology and personal life philosophy. Therefore, the nationalist movement led by Gandhiji had a special impact on the people of different communities of Manbhum. So the movement led by Gandhiji's political ideology became active through the spontaneous and active participation of all people. The people of Manbhum protested when the countrymen were protesting against the assassination of Jallianwallabagh in Punjab 13 April 1919 A.D. At the same time, when Gandhiji organized the nationalist movement on the basis of Hindu-Muslim unity during the anti-imperialist movement, an unprecedented pattern was observed in Manbhum. At this time a Muslim leader named Natu Khan organized the Khilafat movement in Manbhum, now Purulia, who was the only Muslim supporter of the movement (6).

When the Non-cooperation movement started under the leadership of Gandhiji in year 1920 A.D., there was an excitement all over India. Besides, when the proposal of Non-cooperation movement was passed in the twelfth session of the provincial conference held in Bhagalpur under the chairmanship of Rajendra Prasad, there was an unprecedented response in the Manbhum region of Bihar (7). In the same year, a special session of the Congress was held in Kolkata under the chairmanship of Lala Lajpat Roy, and Rajinikanta Sarkar joined as a representative of Manbhum, while inspired the entire Manbhum people (8). As part of the Manbhumi Non-cooperation movement, the introduction and promotion of indigenous textiles and picketing in liquor stores. During the Non-cooperation movement, Rajendra Prasad visited Purulia in Manbhum and boycotted the British court and called on the lawyers to join the movement. Later, under the leadership of lawyer Atul Chandra Ghosh, Mohan Dasgupta, Gobinda Chandra Bhattacharya, Jaganath Sing and others gave up their livelihood and took a significant role in organizing the movement at the district level. Inspired by them, people from different communities of the society left the Govt. jobs and joined the movement. Nibaran Chandra Dasgupta resigned as the headmaster of school in Purulia district and became the president of Manbhum district Congress committee. Later, under his leadership, the nationalist movement in Manbhum was conducted based on Gandhiji's political ideology. His ideal and consciousness were transmitted mainly to the middle class, especially to the Mahato community in Manbhum. By his political ideology, Nibaran Chandra Dasgupta was able to bring the peasant community of Manbhum, the indigenous community of Khatmajor, the forest dwellers of Sabor and Mahato community into the main stream of the anti-imperialist nationalist movement (9). Besides, the leaders of Manbhum planned various constructive programs such as the establishment of Tilak National School and political ashram called Shilpashram in the initiative of Nibaran Chandra

Dasgupta. The Shilpashram later become the epi-center of the nationalist activities of the Manbhum district congress committee(10).

Twelfth session of Bihar provincial congress committee was held in Purulia town of Manbhum district . In this session Gandhiji laid special emphasis on solving the problem of untouchability and he addressed the Harijans- “ I want to tell those brothers and sisters who have shown by raising their hands that Hindu regarded them as untouchables, that I am also a Dom , call me Bhangi or Dome and I am so”(11). Gandhiji's remarks on Harijans touched the hearts of the underdeveloped people of Manbhum, who took part in the nationalist movement in large numbers . In the year 1928 , a political meeting was held in a village called Ramchandrapur in Manbhum under the chairmanship of Subhash Chandra Bose . The main significance of this conference is that various youth leaders of Manbhum district like Annada kumar Chakraborty , Birrajibh Acharaya and their followers gathered at this meeting . Pramatha kumar Mandal , the first political figure of the youth leader Sarak community in particular and his followers enthusiastically attended the conference . In his presidential address , Subhash Chandra called upon the workers , peasants , Brahmins ,Hindu ,Muslim ,and all communities to unity in the nationalist movement . In keeping with the all India Independence day celebrations, the people of Manbhum district also celebrated Independence day on 26th January ,1930 under the direction of the all india congress committee. Sathyakinkar Dutta , the first martyr of Manbhum district, transformed the tsumela held in Jhalda in to his name .At this time, the congress workers of Manbhum district especially the Sabor leader Rebotikanta Chatterjee , were trying to propagate the congress in Sabor community , creating a movement oriented mentality in the tribal community and supporting the congress led nationalist movement.(12).

The quit India movement in Manbhum district had two aspects, one was public mass movement and the other was revolutionary . Congress worker of Manbhum district in the first phase of the quit India movement made the general public aware of movement by distributing leaflet and booklets . At the same time , the congress workers of Manbhum district gathered at Jitan village of Bandoyan police station and resorted to violence as a tactic of the movement . How many instructions did he give to the workers to make the movement to success , such as destroying all police station , crippling the administration , destroying govt.records etc (13). In order to make the movement successful as directed by the congress workers, thousand of people of Barabazar thana , kheria , sabor mahato etc. , under the leadership of Dhanjoy Mahato , occupied the Barabazar thana and hoisted the national flag there .(14).Then according to activities adopted at jitan meeting on sept 29 , several thousand Santhal , Kheria , Bhumij , Mahato community led by Bhajahari Mahato occupied Bandoyan police station (15). Then 500 congress workers set out to capture Manbazar police station and asked the police personnel standing in front of the police station for permission to enter the police station . But policemen opposed it and resisted. Then the police station to grab the hurdles at the forefront of the march Chunaram Mahato and Gabindo Mahato who was shot by police and 250 people were injured. Other police station in Manbhum district , especially in Patmada ,Jaypur ,Hura ,Kashipur police station also witnessed mass protests .

Men as well as women played a leading role in strengthening the quit India movement in the region. Lavanya prabha Ghosh , Kamala Ghosh Urmila Ghosh women activists of Shilpashram and Bhabani Mahato ,Santa Mahato from the underdeveloped community participated in the movement and were imprisoned . During the quit India movement in this region , like other district of Bengal , British

rule could not be overthrown and a parallel government could not be established. But the spontaneous and active participation all people in the region reflects a nationalist mentality against colonial rule .

Finally it can be said from end of the eighteenth century until the independence of the country, people from all communities united in the anti imperialist rule and exploitation and showed a militant mentality.

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