

Conclusion

Political changes in perspective of Indian politics duly effected undivided Bengal and its northern counterpart. These changes were deeply rooted in socio-economic situation. Bengal politics before Gandhi surged extremism by Anusilan, Jugantar and other groups. Gandhi's intervention and *Satyagraha* Movement with the promise of gaining *Swaraj* in a year attracted a number of groups while others did not believe in the utopian concept. Swarajya Party of C.R.Das, named consequently, aiming to the goal Gandhi promised was unable to reach the end. After the death of C.R. Das, the tussle between Gandhi and Subhash Bose was the solitary feature of Bengal politics. Despite Bose's immense influence in Bengal, Gandhi was also strong in his position along with Sengupta, Sasmal, Khadi group and others. Bengal Congress was grouped, engaged to strengthen its own group. Likewise, Bengal leaders of North Bengal were mostly upper caste Hindus, dominating both left and right wings. Leaders of North Bengal were divided into Gandhi and Bose group. Subhash Bose established the Forward Block within the Congress with the support of Jugantar and other groups. While anti Subhash lobbies were strong in Calcutta, in the case of North Bengal districts most the new generation leaders joined F.B. Khagendranath Dasgupta, Charu Chandra Sanyal in Jalpaiguri, Debendranath Jha in Malda and Nishith Nath Kundu -all shifted to F.B. But the sudden demise of Sengupta and Sasmal and expulsion of Bose from India put Bengal Congress in the hands of 'inefficient big five' leaders who usually showed their activity during elections.

During the closing year of the First World War, Congress-Jotedar tie organised the no rent campaign and Haat transfer Movement, different from the movement organised by Kishan Sabha during the 1940. No rent campaign and Haat transfer Movement of the Congress was confined to the Duars region, where government assured the role of the Zamindar. This kind of

movement was not harmful for the Jotedars, but for the tea planters, who used to control (with the help of the authority) rise of the food price, so that workers of the tea gardens were not hostile towards authority. Congress organised movement for Haat transfer led by Jotedars, reflected the Jotedars' enmity against tea planters. On the other hand, Bose Brothers avoided the burning topic of the time and the abolition of the Zamindari system in the Jalpaiguri session of the provincial Congress. Peasantry came from long at first and was obstructed by the announcement of the visiting charge two annas and thereafter did not find their hearty point of abolishing Zamindari system from the topmost leaders of the Bengal Congress. It was the peasantry of North Bengal that came closer to the leaders of the Bengal Congress. Indeed, leaders ignored the message of the masses. At the time peasant movement like Haat Tola Movement or No Rent Movement was notable in North Bengal, Congress failed to organise mass movement or popular upsurge. Election onward political pattern was changed in North Bengal. In the rural areas of Dinajpur, leftist party C.L.I and Communists strengthened their power. Student politics was based on their attachment to subversive groups, since the success of any political movement in Bengal was dependent on the combination of three factors- patterns and activities of the revolutionary groups within the district, activities of the new generation inside the Congress and the participation of the rural masses, directed by leftwing Congressmen and Communists.

Socialist part of the Congress had separate working plan for the dislocation of communication system, which was not supported by the orthodox Congress leaders. Jayprakash Narayan, Achyuta Pattabardhan and Aruna Asaf Ali were behind the screen. The movement of Alipurduar, Malda had indirect link with the socialist leaders. The programme of dislocation of the railway, road and telegraphic wire was organised according to the plans of the socialist leaders of the Congress. Subversive groups were active in many districts of Bengal. Success of any movement depends on their organisation and decision of

participation. All the subversive groups in Bengal took the advantage of the Congress movement as an opportunity of seizing power. Netajee's F.B was an umbrella type organisation of supporters of a section of subversive groups. Bose's speech on Barlin Radio on 31 August 1942 again talked about those plans of dislocation. Sunil Sarkar and others inspired the Rajbansis of Kumargramduar with the reference of the speech of Subhash Bose. It seemed from this study that workers participated in the previous non-violence movement launched by Gandhi were absent or inactive in some areas of Northern Bengal. A long gap of nationalist movement launched by Gandhi, the politics during and after 1937 election changed the pattern of Zillah politics, and the organisational strength of the Congress lost its control over local situation. Regionally there also emerged a section of leaders like Prodyot Kumar Basu of Siliguri who felt comfortable to take part in the elections and avoided the political movements. Their tendency was to write articles in the newspapers and keep good relations with the administrative personnel. Narayan Ganguly portrayed this kind of Characters in his novel 'Mandra-Mukhar'. At the same time, Charu Chandra Sanyal and Khagendranath Dasgupta maintained relations with the Communists as well as old Congressmen. Satinath Lahiri was the man, example of a strict Gandhian Congress member; at the same time branch of Hindu Mahasava was established in his house. During CPI influenced Haat tola and Adhiar Movement, he was President of some committees. Kishan Sabha's movement against illegal tax directly threatened the control as well as economic interest of the Jotedars. Malay Sankar Bhatyacharya, the former researcher in this field, admits that the appalling crisis of food during the war years was one of the reasons behind the agrarian unrest of the Balurghat Sub-Division experienced in 1942.¹ Indeed, C.P.I tried to control the mob from looting the granaries of the Jotedars in Balurghat.² During Quit India Movement in Radhanagar and Patiram village of Dinajpur, Communist leaders had dissuaded the starving peasants' from looting the food grains of the Khamar of the Jotedars.³ This establishes that economic grievances were expressed by

the masses since that was the uppermost problem of that time. Not only Congress, but also Communists of Dinajpur and Rangpur had relations with the Jotedars up to 1946. So, they would not be able to turn the movement of 1942 against Jotedar-Zamindar- British trio. If they were able to do so, the movement of Balurghat and Gangarampur will be next to Midnapore. Hence, it was a class struggle in rural society of Jalpaiguri, Dinajpur and Rangpur with a typical nature. The attempt of the masses to loot food grains showed every possibility of the economic grievances. But no political organisation officially announced looting paddy as a scheme.

In front of the enquiry commission the Rajbansis of Kumargramduar told that, the scarcity of rice compelled them to attack the thana. After the end of the movement, the enquiry commission was set up for the measures to fulfill the scarcity of the rice in Kumargramduar. Peoples of various professions bought the lands in Dinajpur, Rangpur, Pabna, Rajsahi and some other districts. Some Bengali Bhadroloks had also share in the tea gardens. They however, did no favour the peasant or labour movement. The British were in addition quite cautious about the tribal movements from the previous experiences. Hindu Mahasava was also active among tribals of Malda and Jalpaiguri. Here the influence of Missionaries was obvious focus to protect. Tribals lived in secluded area; they were superstitious, illiterate, link less with nationalist politics, those were the factors while helped to penetrate them. Despite that, the tribal areas of north Bengal were disconnected from the towns like the towns of Bihar. As in Bihar, we find spontaneous tribal participation in the Quit India Movement, because Congress and F.B members were active among them. This was not seen in north Bengal.

It is interesting to note that as far as political participation goes, R.S.P. along with F.B. actively supported and took part in the movement of Balurghat. On the contrary, as in Alipurduar, R.S.P not only opposed but also helped the authority against socialist workers of the Congress and F.B. Many of the

leaders and cadres of the movement were economically downtrodden; Piyush Kanti Mukherjee, Sunil Sarkar, Sourindramohan Mishra, Saroj Ranjan Chatterjee and Anil Mukherjee did not come from rich families. In their memorial writings Piyush Kanti Mukherjee and Sourindramohan Mishra reflected on the gloomy economic condition of that time. They had yet not led any movement previously with such a responsibility. So, conflict and hesitation was quite natural in their mindset. A few rural oriented Gandhian workers like Nalini Pakrasi, organiser of the third stratum of the Congress, stayed behind. In the first half of his life, he was with Jugantar dal, and latter on got influenced by Gandhi. Upheavals in his political career was linked with the political agitations and ideological stand of Bengal politics. Pakrashi was not able to remain aloof from the socialist thought in the 1940's and also not able to deny his higher caste as well as Hindu soul. The leadership of Calcutta could not touch these local leaders nor they had enough courage to disregard them. For this, they hesitated to take decisions and had conflict within themselves. As Piyush Kanti Mukherjee did not favour to lead the movement from the front, he did not intend to be arrested. Nalini Pakrashi, breaking the schedule plan, left Falakata and went to Jalpaiguri to join in the procession of Khagendranath Dasgupta. Pakrashi was not sure about the success of the movement led by Mukherjee. Mukherjee did not agree with a movement directed by Jalpaiguri, whereas the town, Jalpaiguri, attracted Pakrashi. As in the case of Balurghat and Kumargramduar, the tendency of the towns was to incorporate villages. Ego problem of Duars leadership detached their movement from Jalpaiguri. Other than that Duars leadership followed the socialist way of dislocation while the movements of Jalpaiguri, Pabna, Rajsahi and Bogra were limited within the movement of the student's enthusiasm, processions and meetings. It can be argued that in the mentioned towns the Muslims opposed directly the movement. The clash between the students of the two communities was a common feature at that time. In these districts the process of self-strengthening against opposite community was primary concern than to take part in a mass movement. It was surprising that the areas of Malda active

during the movements of 1921, 30 and 32 were inactive in the said movement. Land oriented rich section of the Malda tried to keep themselves aloof from the issues regarding nationalist politics, and if not possible tried to go against it. Notwithstanding, municipality was used as a political platform in the nationalist movement and politics up to 1966. On the one hand, it was the crisis of eminent leaders like Sourindra Mohan Mishra, but it cannot be denied from his memorial that some leaders made those areas inactive purposefully as a result of the in-house clash of the Congress. Leadership came from the common people who were not really engaged in politics earlier or after the movement.⁴

The Congress leadership was not at all interested to start the movement in the rural areas. From August 1942 onwards price rise was obvious in almost every district of Bengal, but the Congress had not any plan to use the economic grievances of the people. The demand of the time and socialist section compelled the Congress to take at least resolutions in favour of the peasants. Likewise, Gandhi also looked ahead to the role of the peasants in his forthcoming movement somewhat radically. Logically, Quit India Movement was unable to find its root. It was estimated by Sardar Ballav Bhai Patel that the movement will not be restricted in character, and may not be able to control masses and may produce civil war and anarchy.⁵ The Communists, Bengal labour party, Hindu Mahasava and Muslim League, opposed the Wardha proposal. This was the result of the alternative politics to get enough strength between the long gap between C.D and Quit India Movement. Particularly after the promulgation of Indian Administration Act of 1935, the centre of politics shifted to rural areas. As in the rural areas of Bengal, Congress had no political base, particularly among the Muslim community. The rise of K.P.P with two slogans i.e. abolition of Zamindari system and Dal rice, did not match with objectives of the Bengal Congress. Congress was not able to form ministry with the K.P.P after the election of 1937 and Muslim League gradually subjugated K.P.P. When Quit India Movement was

launched, Muslim League was at the peak of its anti-congress propaganda in the rural areas of Bengal. The Census of 1941 and consecutive riots enhanced their propaganda. The vocation of League got momentum when during the 1940's the Hindu Mahasava strengthened its power in the districts where the Hindus felt insecure after the census of 1941. It tried to infiltrate into the mind of a section of Hindus that Muslim hegemony was the primary threat, uppermost problem coming nearer for them. British imperialism, though harmful, may be second question to solve. More important has for the imperialism to *Quit Asia* than *Quit India*. It was easy to say that criticism of Congress in the districts weakened its programme of Quit India Movement, started after a long gap. The economic prosperity of the Marwaris during the Second World War was the cause of the headache of the Muslim businessman and Zamindars. Moreover, their linkage with the Hindu Mahasava was a factor of concern as men like Birla influenced many decisions of Gandhi concerning Bengal. Scholars like Nirad C Choudhury think that Gandhi consciously worked in favour of the Marwaris.⁶ Marwaris by this time took the advantage of war, invested on the supplying of war materials and according to the study of Narayan Chandra Saha, they became money lenders from money investors. Haq once announced to wipe out the hegemony of the Marwaris in the economic sector. The present study reveals the enormous participation of the Marwaris, Naren Daga (Alipurduar), Siumangal Singh (Siliguri), Dwarika Das Agarwala (Dinajpur) and others in the Quit India Movement of North Bengal. The British Government officially declared the community responsible for the movement in North Bengal.

The Communal Award followed the Pona Pact and The Census of 1941 helped to establish Namasudras in the politics of Bengal. And since the lower caste Namasudras rejected the Zamindar oriented Congress, at last the Namasudras and the Muslims came closer and played an important role in Bengal politics from 1930 onwards. During the days of Quit India Movement, Namasudras were present in the anti-congress conferences of the League in

several districts of North Bengal. It seemed to the League that Gandhi was forming 'Hindu Raj' by the movement and Namasudras thought it to be 'Upper caste Hindu Raj'. The Rajbansi leaders who won the election of 1937 were standing on the issue of oppression of the Zamindars and the moneylenders. A larger portion of the Gorkha's of Darjeeling, who were loyal to the British, lived in a partly excluded area. They as soldiers suppressed the movement of Balurghat and elsewhere. They came to be treated as a hill community, supplying only loyal soldiers to the British. The Gorkhas demanded special position as a community in return of their service to the British. This demand was opposite to the desire of the nationalist movement. A large section found hegemony of the Bengali's as primary threat to their economic aspirations. On the other hand, nationalist movement came as a wave in the hills came via Calcutta. Anti -Bengali feeling threw them away from the nationalist movement. But there were many Gorkhas who took part in the Gandhian movement and met with Nehru in 1956 when he visited Darjeeling.

After the Census of 1941 and consecutive riots of Dhaka, Hindu Mahasava and Congress came closed all over in Bengal. The upper caste leaders of the Muslim oriented districts like Malda, Rajsahi, Pabna and other districts from then onwards were in closed terms with the Mahasava. Satish Lahiri of Jalpaiguri, Pakrashi of Duars, Atul Kumar of Malda had worked both for Mahasava and for the Congress. Pakrashi kept regular touch with Hindu Mahasava, took part on Mahasava arranged Satyanarayan Puja or conversion of the tribals to Hinduism. He was influenced by both Sahajananda Saraswati (Expelled from Congress for his attraction on the violence movements) and Subhash Chandra Bose. Pakrashi joined the Quit India Movement as a Congress socialist. Rabindranath Bhattayacharya (Pabna), Kamalendu Chakroborty (Balurghat) and others were associated with the Mahasava but did not follow the official line of the Mahasava. They actively participated in the movement. Kundu, Mukherjee and Pakrashi who were the dedicated members of the Congress, did not enjoy any concrete position in Congress.

Kundu arrested in Calcutta in connection with the activities of 42' Movement did not get the ticket in the 1937 Legislative election because of his incapability to bear the expenses of the election. Pakrashi helped to win Khagendranath Dasgupta to win the election of 1937; yet, his position in the party was not improved. Men like Kundu and Pakrashi tried to prove their organisational strength, earlier cashed for the election purpose, rather to organise a political movement. They had a good command of the Rajbansi language and over the Communists of Dinajpur. They tried to prove their ability by organizing mass movements. But they did not prefer to organise any class-conscious peasant movement. In this way, a section of them had relation with the Hindu Mahasava and therefore had no influence among the Muslim peasants. It was not only Nawab Mussaraf Hussain of Jalpaiguri who was able to prevent the Muslim peasants of his estate to participate in national movement. Muslims peasants of northern Bengal either in control of the League or C.P.I. too did not participate in the movement. Two things were common between the League and the C.P.I. in mobilizing the rural masses of Northern Bengal. Firstly, both stressed on the contemporary economic grievances of the Muslim tenants. Anti-Zamindari gesture of the K.P.P was quite appropriate with the class struggle of the Communists. Secondly, Pakistan proposal was favoured by the C.P.I. Thus, it becomes clear that why at the same time (some common areas too) both parties could be active among the Muslim peasantry of Bengal without any clashes.⁷ So, it was the hard luck of the movement that it was launched during the days of extremist communalism. Thus, the end of the movement was not only due to the British suppression management, but also for several inherent conflicts and contradictions within it. Finally, it affected the Bengali literature as also the independence with partition in a way supplying moral booster for the inclusion of the native state of Cooch Behar in independent India.

Notes and References

¹ Bhatyacharya Malaysankar –Agrarian unrest in Nortern Bengal, 1857-1947, *The Historical Review, Indian Institute of Oriental Study and Research, July-Dec, 1986*,p-119.

² *Janajuddha*, 30th September & 7th December 1942.

³ *Janajuddha*, 16th September 1942.

⁴ Mishra Sourindramohan – *August Andolone Maldaha, Gourdesh, First edition, 1966, Calcutta*,p- 71.

⁵ Chopra P.N(ed). *Quit India movement: British Secret Report, Thompson Press, (India) Limited, and Faridabad, 1976, p-249.*

⁶ Leonard Gordon's interview with Chowdhury cited in Ghosh Suniti Kumar- *Bangla Bibhajaner Arthaniti O Rajniti, New Horizon, 2001, Calcutta.*

⁷ I.B Files used in the research work of Chapter- 4.