

Banga-bhanga Protest, Swadeshi and Bengalee Hindu Tea Planters of Jalpaiguri: A New Perspective

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[Much have been said about different aspects of Banga-bhanga Protest Movements and Swadeshi. Some earlier findings have been reviewed by the great scholar Sumit Sarker. But still there is some local uniqueness with the issue. Here in this essay the role of the Jalpaiguri tea entrepreneurs has been highlighted from a different perspective.]

The district of Jalpaiguri as an administrative unit came into being on January, 1869 by the amalgamation of the Western Dooars district with the Jalpaiguri subdivision of Rangpur district¹. The three police thanas, Jalpaiguri (earlier known as Fakirganj), Boda, Rajganj (formerly Sanyasikata or Siliguri)² were transferred to the newly constituted district in 1869. The thana of Patgram was also separated from Rangpur and added to Jalpaiguri in 1870. The district of Jalpaiguri comprises two well defined tracts. The portion sliced from Rangpur was the Regulation area and lies for the most part on the west of the Tista. The other tract known as the western Dooars which was annexed from Bhutan in 1865 is bounded by the Tista on the west and the Sankush on the east and hemmed in between southern boundary of Bhutan and northern limits of Coochbehar. There is a qualitative difference between the area of land on the west of the Tista and the western Dooars. The country west of the Tista river is very much similar to the neighboring districts of Rangpur and Dinajpur. The vast plain of paddy land is intersected by bamboo groves, betel nut and palms and fruit trees and homestead land. Uncultivated land is very rare. But the tract of western Dooars is a flat, strip of country, featured by numerous rivers and hill streams, large tracts of sal forest and heavy grass and reed jungle. These grass and reed tracts are especially dense and luxuriant along the banks of the rivers and in some places they are impenetrable³. This flat land traversed by numerous streams appeared to be suitable for the new venture for tea cultivation in the area. Its soil and climate specially in the northern belt were found to be ideally suited to tea cultivation⁴. Along the said belt covering over one fourth of the total area, numerous tea gardens were to be opened and flourished in the following years.

Initiation of Tea cultivation in the Area

The districts of Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling situated at the foot hills of the Himalaya are well known for its tea industry. Tea was introduced into the western Dooars from the Darjeeling district. Tea was first planted in Darjeeling in 1839 and thereafter in Sylhet and Cachar in about 1855, in Terai in 1862 and in the Dooars in 1874⁵. The introduction of plantation economy was carried out with the active support of the colonial state. According to the District Gazetteer⁶, the first garden was opened at Gazilduba (Gazaldoba) in western Dooars by Mr. Richard Haughton, the pioneer of the tea industry in the Jalpaiguri district. The Gazildoba tea-garden was owned by Dr. Brougham. Fulbari was the next place to be planted and was opened by Mr. Pillans. It came to be understood automatically that the soil and climate of the western Dooars was suitable for

tea plantation. The support and co-operation of the district administration was also a countable factor for rapid extension of plantation enterprise and it is stated in Grunning's report that the Government offered land to investors (certainly, this time to the European entrepreneurs) on favourable terms and within two years after the Gazildoba was opened, there were 13 gardens occupying an area of 818 acres. By 1881, the number of gardens had increased to 55 and the acreage under tea plantation to 6230, that is the number of gardens had more than quadrupled and the area under cultivation had increased more than seven times in five years. According to Grunning's report, by 1901 the number of grants had increased to 235 with a planted area of 119 square miles. Thus we find that the entire period from 1874 to 1901 was one of remarkable expansion of tea plantation while after this period the extension of cultivation has been comparatively slow. In 1878, the Dooars Planters Association, a body totally consisted of European Planters was formed and till 1915 the Dooars Planters Association followed the policy of opening the membership to the European gardens only. Even after changing the policy of closeness to the Indian gardens, the DPA maintained its policy of safeguarding the interests of the European planters only. In fact, the feeling of racial affinity never ceased to exist in the DPA.

The Advent of the Bengalee planters in the field

The Bengalee Planters made a little bit entry into the field of tea plantation. In that respect, 1877 was a remarkable year. In this year the first Indian to take a grant was Munshi Rahim Baksh. He was a Bengalee from the district of Noakhali and working as peshkar at the Deputy Commissioner's Office. In all probability, this Bengalee Muslim gentleman by virtue of his privileged position as a peshkar could induce the Deputy Commissioner to allow him a grant for the purpose of cultivation of tea and this was the Jaldhaka Grant. The grant was made for 728 acres⁸. In 1878 more tea estates came into being. Next a significant venture was taken by one Mr. Johnson. This grant known as Kalabari Grant subsequently was passed on to Dr. Nilratan Sarkar, the renowned physician of Calcutta. Further one Babu Kali Mohan Ray and Smt. Durgabati Sen transferred their grant to Shri Beharilal Ganguly⁹. But Beharilal's story is also a passing episode in the history of Bengalee tea planters. He soon transferred the grant to Munshi Rahim Baksh. This grant is known as Altadanga grant¹⁰.

1879 is a great landmark in the history of tea plantation venture by the local Bengalee entrepreneurs. At the initiative of a number of energetic immigrant Bengalee legal practitioners of Jalpaiguri, the first Indian joint stock tea company was formed. This first tea company was named as the 'Jalpaiguri Tea Co. Ltd. The first general meeting of the shareholders was held on the 2nd June, 1879¹¹. Regarding the formation of the Jalpaiguri Tea Co Ltd., the role played by Bhagwan Chandra Bose, father of illustrious scientist Jagadish Chandra Bose should be mentioned with reverence. Bhagwan Chandra Bose, was posted then as Deputy Magistrate in Jalpaiguri. The successful ventures of Europeans in getting grant and opening the tea plantation in the Dooars stirred in him the imagination of Indian venture in this field. He felt that the existing prescribed norms to get a tea lease were within the limits of the interested Indians. Thus under his advice, the first joint stock tea company was formed in Jalpaiguri¹². At this point, it will not be out of relevance to allude to the episode of struggle of Jagadish Chandra Bose, a few years later, to get due recognition in the world of science against the ill motives of the colonial administrators of the Imperial Government. In this battle Jagadish Chandra had obtained the support and co-operation of Indian news papers and Indian thinkers. In fact the issue seemed to add a new dimension in the process of development of patriotic feeling and this struggle is known in history

as Bose war¹³.

Rabindranath, Nivedita and R.C. Dutta considered Bose's unique success as the glory of the Indian nation. Swami Vivekananda had great respect for Jagadish Chandra Bose. This feeling of reverence has been clearly expressed in a letter of Swamiji¹⁴. In reality Jagadish Bose had become a symbol representing national science. The saga of Jagadish Chandra may be contextualised with that feeling of Senior Bose that the Indians should come to the field of tea plantation side by side with the whites, and this feeling, it seems, obviously was equally inspiring for his son in evolving a sense of national pride and consciousness since his childhood. Amazingly, historical events may sometimes be circumscribed by unusual instances like this.

Next important development was the formation of Northern Bengal Tea Corporation in Jalpaiguri. The same promoters of Jalpaiguri Tea Co. Ltd. established the above mentioned corporation. Earlier success perhaps had been their inspiring force. However in the early decades, the growth of Indian entrepreneurship which has been chronicled by Birendra Chandra Ghosh and analysed by Shib Sankar Mukherjee was slow and in the thirty years between 1879 and 1910 only eleven companies were started¹⁵.

From the analysis of Prof. Dasgupta, one may discern the characteristic features of the entrepreneurship of the Bengalee bhadrals of Jalpaiguri. Firstly, the Bengalee planters were not son of the soil, they were immigrants, mostly from East Bengal and North Bengal district like Dacca, Noakhali and Pabna. Saha and Pal Choudhuris – Zamindar families of Nadia district had made an entry into the industry in 1890s.

Secondly, from the list of entrepreneurs preserved in the writing of B.C. Ghosh, it is revealed that there was no particular religious or sectarian community component in this entrepreneurship.

Thirdly, the entrepreneurs were mostly legal practitioners and engaged in various professional activities. Obviously the flow of capital came from legal practice, service and trade. The exact condition of the entrepreneurs may be stated in the words of B.C. Ghosh as follows: They started with very small capitals which they could gather. Practically it was an association of poor men determined to do a big thing¹⁶.

Fourthly, the people who had cash money at hand to start a tea garden did not hesitate to enter into the terra-incognita. The early Bengalee entrepreneurs were inspired by a sort of adventurous feeling or sometimes by national spirit. We have already noticed that how different factors like enthusiasm, closeness with the administrative personalities and a sort of national feeling combined together, facilitated the entry of the Indian entrepreneurs into the plantation field.

An additional factor, it seems probable, had acted in favour of the enterprise by the natives was the problem of shrinking of service opportunity of the Indian people, more specifically of the Bengalee people.

There happened so many incidents of humiliation, suspension and discharge of some of the dignified personalities of the then Bengal. Those incidents, it may be assumed, had functioned as eye opener of the educated and sensitive people of the province and led them to find out new

ways and means. Rangalal Bandopadhyay, the well-known poet was suspended from his service for trivial reason by the Governor Campbell in 1873¹⁷. Another victim to anti-Bengalee feeling of Campbell was poet Sashi Chandra Datta who had resigned from his post due to humiliation. So, many incidents revealing the real intention of the Imperial Government did occur in those years, that the educated Bengalee young men could hardly conceive of getting a satisfactory assignment in the government service. Sashi Chandra Datta published a series of writings on this issue under the title, 'Reminiscences of a Kerani's Life' in the 'Mookenje's Magazine' of Shambhu Chandra Mukhopadhyay, between June 1873 to June 1874¹⁸.

So, it may be assumed that the birth of a new district of Jalpaiguri had opened up a space before the English knowing people of the districts of Eastern and Northern Bengal.

From the chronicle of Dr. C.C. Sanyal, we can get a picture of the early settlers in Jalpaiguri who had migrated from their original settlements in eastern and northern part of Bengal in search of fortune¹⁹. Dr. Sanyal's records carry extra-ordinary significance in this sense that he had consciously documented their original place of residence, their professional status and the names of immediate elder or younger members of their families. The information obtained, make it explicit that the immigrant Bengalees mostly belonged to the elite section of the society and majority of them were attached to legal profession. Besides, there were people from different segments like government service, medical service, kabiraji, teaching profession, trade and business and profession of contractor.

So we find that the people who first came to Jalpaiguri, were not people of common and average qualities. It would not be illogical if we recognize them as those groups of people who are bent on doing something new and meaningful. Their zeal and agility were their real capital to advance and to keep pace in this new world. The first phase of the adventure in tea plantation was not an easy task. Many of the interested people had to carry on their activities in the face of unthinkable adverse situation. The degree of their sufferings may be viewed from the statement of B.C. Ghosh²⁰. Now a question may be raised did the Indian entrepreneurs face any other hurdles?

Difficulties faced by the Bengalee planters of Jalpaiguri

Along with the natural hurdles, the Indian tea planters had the additional disadvantage of carrying their whole programme of tea plantation in a completely alien environment under the British rule. 'Political, racial and social relationships between the rulers and the ruled did in fact play an important role in determining the relative performance of Indian and European business in India and the selection of Indian groups for collaboration with the British'²¹. On the basis of this argument, the dominance of the European entrepreneurs in tea plantation economy may be correctly analysed. 'The European businessmen very consciously set themselves apart from 'native' businessmen; they claimed a cultural and racial affinity with the British rulers of India which was denied to the Indians who might compete with them'²². The Europeans, practically speaking, belonging to any service either civil or military or any kind of business formed their own society; their clubs were open only to the Europeans. The European businessmen obtained all kinds of substantial and systematic advantages over their Indian rivals. They always enjoyed silent sympathy from the mystic bond of racial affinity with the rulers of the land. 'In fact, an entire series of administrative, financial and economic policies and measures were introduced and maintained over the years to prevent and impede the growth of the Indian entrepreneurship'²³.

Earlier, we have noticed that the growth of Indian entrepreneurship⁴ was slow and in thirty years between 1879 and 1910 only eleven companies were started. After 1910, the new problem appeared in the field that all the available wastelands were leased out to European planters. So the only alternative was to seek jotelands²⁴. But in 1914, the provincial government by an order restricted the use of jote land for tea plantation. So it meant that no land would be available to the indigenous entrepreneurs for opening new tea gardens. Prof. Dasgupta has worked out that only after much lobbying and displaying gesture of loyalist attitude, the Indian Tea Planters Association (1915) became successful in persuading the government to lift the ban in 1924. Still, the European planters exercised their personal influences to prevent the sale of jotelands to prospective Indian planters. Their grave concern with the issue of conversion of jotelands into tea gardens by the native planters was exposed when the DPA chairman deprecated any further conversion of jote lands into tea lands in his address to the DPA's annual general meeting of 1927²⁵. Another difficulty for the Bengalee entrepreneurs was the issue of capital financing. The European planter enterprises were buttressed by organized financial and banking systems which were fully under European control. Most of the large European controlled managing agency houses involved in the tea plantation either had grown up with tea industry or had made money in other fields and then entered into this field²⁶. On the other the indigenous enterprisers had to procure finance on their own even sometimes going to the limits of depositing their family assets as security for getting cash capital. A policy of systematic discrimination was practised against the Indian planters, in each and every segment related to the plantation industry, say it to the question of labour supply, allotment of railway wagons, coal supply, tea-tasting, broking auctions or anything like these. It has been mentioned by Prof. Dasgupta that Management of European gardens created various problems by obstructing transport of men and materials through their gardens. Along with these gross instances of material discrimination, their existed always a feeling of racial superiority. The level of their superiority complex reached almost a shameful degree which got expression in the policies and measures of Dooars planters Association (DPA) at different points of time. At the outset it was an exclusively European affair like those which clubs were organized in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. Even when DPA's membership was made open to the Indian owned gardens, its real interest was to safeguard the interest of the European planters by the implementation of the Dooars Labour Code for the success of which it was deemed necessary to accommodate the Indian planters within their own organization. The nakedness of the discriminatory attitude of the white planters of Jalpaiguri to the native people has been faithfully depicted by Dr. Sanyal. An excerpt from the writing of Dr. Sanyal may be produced here in order to catch the tune of the British attitude towards the native population of the country: sahare sada admi arthat saheb chhilo. Tara chhilo shasak dal. Ager amale patua (pat vyavasayi) sahebra 'Kala-admi' der sathe kichhu kichhu mishto, kintoo shasak O Cha-saheber dal sahare ekta 'Bilet' tairi karechhilo, setar nam 'Jalpaiguri Club' ba 'Planters' Club'. Ekhan PWD office jekhane sekhane ekti kharer ghare pratham suru 1885 sane. 1894 sane tetrish bighe jami niye birat soudhe clubti sthanantarita holo. Geter samne chhilo Jalpaiguri adhikarer ekti jayastambha. Ei bileter dhare kachheo tader adhin karmachari o chaprashi bade aar kono 'kala admi' jete partona — dhuti pare to nayai. Eder nach, gan, khaoa-daoa prabhriti sabi ekhanei hoto. Cluber sathe chhilo taderi ekti dokan. Sab jinish thakto, kono kichhu kinte jena 'kala admi' der dokane jete na hay. Tader prithak kabarkhanao chhila bartamane bara post officer pub dike. Mara geleo jena kala admir chhnoach na lage. North Bengal Mounted Rifle Club hayechhilo. Bachhare ek mash drill, shooting, polo, o Hockey khela hoto, ghor-daur o hoto. Eta sahebrai

karto, bodhoy juddha bidyata rapta kare rakhar janya — jadi darker hay kakhano. Takhan sab math-tai chhilo khola, gharbari ektio chhilona. Eisab khela sabaik dekhte deoa hoto, tabe anek dur theke²⁸. (Translation: There were white people i.e. sahibs in the town. Previously the patua sahibs (who dealt in jute) kept some working relations with the native people; perhaps they did it out of needs. But the bureaucratic administrators and the tea-planters had made their own land (Bilat) in the town. That was the 'Jalpaiguri Club' or the 'Planters' Club'. It was started in a thatched cottage in 1885 at the premise of the present PWD office. It was shifted to a large mansion built on a plot measuring 33 bighas of land in 1895. A victory pillar was set up in front of the gate symbolizing the capture of Jalpaiguri. No blacks were allowed an entry into this station other than their own employees or servants — natives dressed in dhuti could not be even imagined. This was the centre of their dances, singings and feasts. There was a shop adjacent to the club exclusively for them with a stock of all necessaries so that they could avoid any purchase from the shops owned by the blacks. Their separate graveyard was to the east of the present head post office. A touch of a black was to be avoided even after death. The North Bengal Mounted Rifle Club was established. They observed one month's programme of drill, shooting, playing of polo and hockey and also horse race annually. These were done all by the sahibs to keep themselves fit for a battle if needed. It was an open bare field. The people could watch it but from a certain distance. The European ladies and gentlemen used to reside in the club). The hatred of the Europeans for the blacks could be felt in each and every step of social life. The Europeans had their own church built in 1882. A separate church for the native Christians was erected in the town in 1896. Curiously, one can discover that even the bond of common Christian religion could bring no change in their mind and behaviour.

But the adverse situation could not dampen the spirit of the Bengalee entrepreneurs. They combated the hurdles, not always with a policy of antagonism but by a prudent policy of persuasion and compromise, which had arisen from their experience of work in the practical field. Already the Indian Tea Association was started at Calcutta with the Managing Agents on behalf of the companies floated outside India²⁹. The European managerial started Dooars Planters Association in 1878³⁰. The Indian planters also thought it necessary to form their own organization. They formed their own association, Indian Tea Planters Association in 1915. B.C. Ghosh, has given the date of its inception in 1919. It seems, he meant here the date of the formal registration. But even after the formation of the association, the native planters had to abide by the dominance of the Dooars planters. They always pursued a conformist policy to the European entrepreneurs. Any open conflict was to be avoided.

The first Chairman was Sri Tarini Prasad Ray, the first Vice-Chairman was Aminur Rahman and the first Secretary was Sri Jyotish Chandra Sanyal. In course of time the organization asserted its position as the only mouth piece of the Indian Tea Planters, even the British Government had to acknowledge it. Thus the European Planters had failed to monopolise the planters enterprise in this part of Bengal and 'a distinctive feature of the Duars enterprise was the emergence of a small but growing core of Indian entrepreneurship, mainly Bengali entrepreneurship. This feature was not present in the Darjeeling or Assam plantations.

Banga-bhanga protest and the Bengalee Tea Planters of Jalpaiguri

The days of awakening of the first phase of nationalist spirit among the Bengalee people had been synchronous largely with the early decades of plantation efforts of the people of Jalpaiguri.

In the face of all oppositions, these Bengalee people did not stagger back, they carried on with their mission. They were able to form a class of Bengalee planters, countable enough in the whole history of plantation economy in India. So the natural question relating to their role in the Banga-Bhanga protest needs historical investigation. On July 20, 1905, Lord Curzon issued an order dividing the province of Bengal into two parts: Eastern Bengal and Assam with a population of 31 millions and the rest of Bengal with a population of 54 millions of whom only 18 millions were Bengalees and 36 millions Biharies and oriyas. In Eastern Bengal and Assam, there were 1 million and 80 lakhs of Muslim people and 1 million 20 lakhs were Hindus. Though the British government tried to justify the partition on the pretext of efficient administration, yet their real intention was very clear to the Bengalee people from its initial planning. It is known to all that Risley wrote in an official note on 6 December 1904: Bengal united is a power. Bengal divided will pull several different ways³¹. The order was put into execution on October 16, 1905.

The Indian National Congress and the nationalist Bengal firmly opposed the partition. The leaders of the protest movement declared it to be a day of national mourning. People walked bare footed, bathed in the Ganga and observed fasting. Rabindrath composed the song 'Banglar mati Banglar jal. The crowds parading the streets were singing the song and the whole air was reverberated with the cries of Bande Mataram. The people tied rakhi on one another's wrists as a symbol of unity of the Bengalee speaking people.

In Jalpaiguri town too the day was observed in the same way³². A large crowd under the leadership of Jogesh Chandra Ghose who was a leading tea-entrepreneur walked through the roads of Jalpaiguri town. They were barefooted. Next, the people organized the programme of boycott of the foreign goods. Attempts of firing the foreign cloths at Dinbazar were met with lathicharge by the police force. Some could evade the arrest but Durgadas Chakrabarty, Adyanath Misra and Annada Biswas were put into jail. On the day of release after two-weeks' jail, Jogesh Chandra Ghosh went with a large group of boys to greet the brave prisoners at the jail gate. It was a great instance of courage and patriotic feeling for a planter because by doing this Jogesh Chandra practically had challenged the police administration of the colonial government³³.

The young boys started physical exercises with a view to preparing themselves for the struggle of liberation for their mother land. They all assembled at shibmandir on the bank of the pond of the Rajbari and got instructions from Jogesh Chandra. The song of Rabindranath 'Bangalir Ghare jata bhaibon ek hauk, ek hauk, he Bhagaban', was always floating in the air of the town.'

Side by side with these open activities, secret societies were organized. The first man to organize secret society in Jalpaiguri was Bireswar Gangopadhyay, a Lawyer. Besides, revolutionary worker like Jogen Sarker used to come from Calcutta to give training to the young people in secret activities. They lived at the house of Taraprasad Biswas.

Lawyer Annada Charan Sen and Trailokyanath Moulik participated in different sessions of the Indian National Congress as representatives from the district of Jalpaiguri.

Those youth who became associated with the secret politics were Panchanan Neogi, Satish Ghosh, Purna Das, Annada Biswas, Mahendra Sarkar, Durgadas Chakraborty, Jiban Roy, Biren Dattagupta and others. They got inspiration from Madhab Sanyal, Dinanath Goswami, Annada Charan Sen and Jogesh Chandra Ghosh. The workers of the secret societies chalked

out plans for collecting arms but under the guise of innocent activities like reading of the Gita, singing of Kirtans, playing mock fight etc.

Sashikumar Neogi a Lawyer converted into planter took great initiative in the establishment of a dramatic society in order to divert the attention of youths from the degraded activities to creative works. This society came to be known as Aryanatya samaj. Its own stage was built up in 1905. A series of great messages were put in front of the stage; these were: *uttisthata jagrata prapya baran nibodhata; Madyamadeyam-apeyam-agrahyam; Bande mataram; Sada Satya Katha balibe; Mantrer Sadhan kimba sharir patan*³⁴.

The aim of all these activities was to create patriotic feeling among the public. The National School too was established in the house of the Arya natya samaj in 1907.

The establishment of National School was also a challenge to the British system of education. Here the main initiative was taken by Sashikumar Neogi, Joychandra Sanyal, Madhab Sanyal, Ishanchandra Dasgupta, Tarini Prasad Roy, Tara Prasad Biswas, Sureswar Sanyal, Sashi Kumar Bandopadhyay, Trailokya Nath Maulik, Annada Charan Sen and others. Radhakumud Mookerjee and Binoy Sarkar came to inaugurate the school³⁵. Besides these, Bankubehari Pal, Jyotish Chandra Sanyal and some other taught in the National School. Available accounts show that large number of students in Jalpaiguri town joined the National School.

Two other mentionable names are Durga Charan Sanyal and Biren Dattagupta. Durga Charan Sanyal created sensation in contemporary Bengal when in 1907, he assaulted two white co-passengers who had obstructed him from boarding a train at Hili station though he had valid ticket. Consequently he was sentenced to four years imprisonment. He was a veteran lawyer of the Jalpaiguri Bar.

Another memorable name is the name of Biren Dattagupta who boycotted the final examination at the Jalpaiguri Zilla School and joined the Rangpur National School. Rangpur National School was center for seditions activities in the eyes of the British administration³⁶. Biren Dattagupta in a daring action killed Samsul Alam, a DIG of Police within the premises of Calcutta High Court. He was hanged³⁷. In 1907 the Jalpaiguri pioneer Weaving Mill was established. Jagneswar Sanyal was sent to Japan for special training in textile technology. But soon it withered away. Swadeshi efforts were made also by establishing match factory, oil mill. But none of these met with any success.

Analysis of the Dichotomy

To sum up, the period of Banga-Bhanga protest movement saw the sprouting of nationalism in the town and it is found that the main initiatives were taken by the middle class elite people. They were either legal practitioners, teachers, tea planters or holder of any likely professions. But a minute study reveals that among the leading personalities the most striking role was played by the tea planters and then by the legal practitioners.

It may be stated on the basis of evidences that the Bengalee tea planters like Joy Chandra Sanyal, Tarini Prasad Roy, Sashi Kumar Banerjee, Sashi Kumar Neogi, Tara Prasad Biswas, Annada Charan Sen, Sureswar Sanyal, Jyotish Chandra Sanyal and Jogesh Chandra Ghosh were some of the tea entrepreneurs who took leading role in showing demonstration, organizing National School, Swadeshi industries and character building programmes. They extended their

support to the physical exercise practice and the functioning of the secret societies even. We have already seen Jogesh Chandra Ghosh, a leading tea planter became a natural leader of the youths during the days of Banga-bhanga and Swadeshi. Later Tarini Prasad Roy and Jogesh Chandra Ghosh became the president and the vice president of Jalpaiguri Town Congress in 1921. Charu Chandra Sanyal, the famous personality of Jalpaiguri was the son of Joy Chandra Sanyal, tea entrepreneur cum legal practitioner. Charu Chandra also engaged himself in the service of the liberation struggle of the country³⁸.

Thus it may be stated in no uncertain terms that the Bengalee tea entrepreneurs of Jalpaiguri participated in each and every step of the Banga-bhanga protest movement and Swadeshi propaganda. The common phenomena of the movement that marked the phase of the struggle through the length and breadth of the province were also manifested at this small growing town and obviously in this phenomenal development, the Bengalee entrepreneurs showed their earnest involvement with the cause. Their undaunted attitude of protest against the policy of the British Government is evinced from the contemporary records and there is no doubt that their leadership was accepted by the people. But now the question arises why there was shift in the policy of the Bengalee tea planters of the locality who since the early days had been always following a conformist policy towards the Europeans. The possible reply perhaps lies in the general feeling of hatred and feeling of racial superiority of the white people towards the Indians. The natives who took interest in the emerging area of a new industry of tea plantation, were in no way incompetent in comparison to the European entrepreneurs. They were well educated and well ranked people of the society. But this fact had no bearing upon the racist Europeans. More over, these foreign enterprisers felt grave concern by the appearance of the Bengalee contenders in the field. We have already noted how the British Indian Government with the help of its provincial as well as district level officials provided all kinds of help to the Dooars planters and followed an opposite policy to the Indians. Still the Bengalee entrepreneurs could hardly raise any voice of protest against such vindictive policy. In 1915 the Indian Tea Planters Association was formed at the initiative of Tarini Prasad Roy, Aminur Rahman, Jyotish Chandra Sanyal, Jogesh Chandra Ghosh and other with the aim of protecting the interests of the Bengalee entrepreneurs. But still then the Indian planters as well as ITPA refrained from entering into any open or total conflict with the European planters. Rather they showed much loyalist attitude³⁹. A natural speculation may be made to justify the conformist policy of the Jalpaiguri planters that any bitterness with the ruling community might lead to a disastrous fate of the Bengalee gardens. They made an all out effort to maintain at least an apparent cordial relation which may best be described as intelligent business strategy.

An unbiased analysis of the practical situation prevalent at the time may justify the compromising attitude of the Jalpaiguri planters. To all intents and purposes, it was nothing but a part of business strategy. But repeated attempts of the Europeans to impede the growth of indigenous planters, their vindictive attitude and gesture of showing racial superiority had definite repercussion on their mind. As members of the ITPA too, they could not redress their grievances. The Banga-bhanga protest movement gave them a platform and they used it with all earnestness to ventilate their resentment. As planters the leaders were handicapped. They could not launch any protest against the repressive behaviour of the white planters. But the same people with all their patriotic spirit came forward to organize agitation against the imperialist policy of partition. Their helplessness in one sphere and compulsion to remain silent for the interest of

indigenous entrepreneurship found expression in the Banga-bhanga and Swadeshi movements. Other historical factors definitely were at work preparing the ground for such mass agitation, but the reverberation of the voice of protest by the Bengalee tea planters of Jalpaiguri may be viewed to a great extent as ventilation of their repressed psyche.

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13. Basu, S. P. Swadeshi Movement in Bengal and Freedom struggle of India, Kolkata, 2004, p. 72.
14. Dasgupta, S. R. Swamijir Bigyan Chetana in Lokeswarananda Swami *et. al.* (ed) Chintanayak Vivekananda, Ramkrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Kolkata, 1385 B.E. p. 374.

(১৯০০ সালে প্যারিসে অনুষ্ঠিত বৈজ্ঞানিক সম্মেলনে যোগদানকারী জগদীশ চন্দ্র সম্পর্কে চিঠিতে বিবেকানন্দের মুগ্ধ উক্তি - “এ বৎসর এ প্যারিস সভ্য জগতে এক কেন্দ্র, এ বৎসর মহাপ্রদর্শনী ... দেশ দেশান্তরের মণীষিগণ নিজ নিজ প্রতিভা প্রকাশে স্বদেশের মহিমা বিস্তার করছেন ... সে বছ গৌরবর্ণ প্রতিভামন্ডলীর মধ্য হতে এক যুবা যশস্বী বীর বঙ্গভূমির - আমাদের মাতৃভূমির নাম ঘোষণা করলেন, সে বীর জগৎপ্রসিদ্ধ বৈজ্ঞানিক ডাক্তার জে. সি. বোস! একা যুবা বাঙালী বৈদ্যুতিক আজ বিদ্যুৎসে পশ্চাত্য মন্ডলীকে নিজের প্রতিভা মহিমায় মুগ্ধ করলেন - সে বিদ্যুৎ সঞ্চার, মাতৃভূমির মৃতপ্রায় শরীরে নবজীবন-তরঙ্গ সঞ্চার করলেন! সমগ্র বৈদ্যুতিক মন্ডলীর শীর্ষস্থানীয় আজ জগদীশ বসু - ভারতবাসী, বঙ্গবাসী, ধন্যবীর!”
15. Das Gupta, R. Economy, Society and Politics in Bengal: Jalpaiguri 1869-1947. Oxford University Press, Delhi, p. 60.
16. Ghosh, B.C. *opict.* P. 290.
17. Mukhopadhyay, P., Kolkatar Gupta Samiti: Unish Satak, Praiti Prakashan, Kolikata, 1392 B.E. p. 24.

18. *Ibid.*

19. Sanyal, C.C. Jalpaiguri Saharer Eksha Bachhar in C.C. Sanyal *et. al.* (ed) J.D.C.S. (1869-1968).

20. Ghosh, B.C. *Opcit.* p. 291.

Duars was then terribly plagued by malaria, which took a considerable toll every year. Drinking water was scarce, only a few hill streams being available for the supply. Ferocious denizens of the forests wrought havoc in the gardens. Roads were few. Thus not only money but many lives had to be sacrificed to bring the tea industry in the Duars to its success. Many entrepreneurs e.g. Jatin Chandra Chakraborty, Satish Chandra Lahiri, Purna Chandra Das, Jagat Bandhu Sarkar and a host of other risked their lives to secure lands for the tea estates. But many of them have now passed into oblivion.

21. Bagchi, A. K., Private Investment in India 1900-1939. Orient Longman, 1980, p. 158.

22. *Ibid.* p. 165.

23. Das Gupta, R., *Opcit.* p. 63.

24. *Ibid.*

25. *Ibid.*

26. Bagchi, A. K. *Opcit.* p. 162.

27. Sanyal, C.C.”‘Jalpaiguri Sahare...’” *Opcit.* 100, transcription of the exact Bengali version is given so that the reader may have the actual feeling of the pungent taste of racial discrimination which were to be met with by the Jalpaiguri people during the colonial domination.

28. Ghosh, B.C. *Opcit.* p. 294.

29. Dasgupta, R. *Opcit.* p. 56.

30. *Ibid.* p. 59.

31. Chandra, B., Modern India, NCERT, Delhi, 1984, p. 240.

32. Sanyal, M., Swadhinata Andolane Jalpaiguri, in C.C. Sanyal (ed) JDCS, p. 322-323.

33. Sanyal, M. *Opcit.* p. 323.

34. Sanyal, C.C. *Opcit.* p.93.

35. Sanyal, M. *Opcit.*

36. Samanta, A. K. (ed). Terrorism in Bengal, Vol. III. Govt. of West Bengal.

37. Mukhopadhyay, J. G., Biplabi Jibaner Smriti, Academic Publishers, 1956, p. 285.

38. Sanyal, M. *Opcit.* p. 324.

39. Dasgupta, R. *Opcit.* p. 63.

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